

## CHAPTER 12

### PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP AND NATIONAL SECURITY POLICYMAKING<sup>1</sup>

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#### Background

The Ninth Annual Strategy Conference, held at the U.S. Army War College in 1998, addressed the theme of "Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can America be Defeated?" In the course of that event, a number of speakers and participants, including the author, reflected on our existing policymaking process and our existing force structure, but without making recommendations for specific changes.

In the largest sense, the Ninth Annual Strategy Conference called into question every aspect of *Joint Vision 2010* and clearly identified a need to come to grips with several asymmetric threats for which our existing force structure is not well suited as a primary defense. A summary of the conference was subsequently published and is readily available online.<sup>2</sup>

In the aftermath of last year's conference, and again at the invitation of the Army War College, the author undertook the task of considering and integrating three aspects of presidential leadership and national security policymaking:

1. Implications of the symmetric threat;
2. Organizational pathologies in policymaking;
3. Potential Information Solutions.

<sup>1</sup>"Presidential Leadership and National Security Policymaking", in Douglas T. Stuart (ed.), *Organizing for National Security* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2000), pp. 245-282.

Out of that reflection and in keeping with guidance to the effect that one should seek to provoke with “big ideas” that might or might not be immediately or practically amenable to adoption, the author selected the following three ideas for presentation to the Tenth Annual Strategy Conference:

1. Four threat types need four forces after next;
2. Must modify White House staff and leadership method for three departments;
3. Need a national information strategy and a virtual intelligence community approach.

When considered together, these three ideas suggest that we must simultaneously reinvent how we think of the threat, how we organize to deal with the threat, and how we communicate both internally and externally as we make plans and execute operations to confront the threat. At root, our challenge is neither technical nor financial but rather intellectual—how do we modify our perceptions, our information collection, our information processing, and our information sharing so as to permit the president to be much more effective in understanding the threat, confronting the threat, and neutralizing the threat?

### **Setting the Stage.**

As we consider how best to restructure the manner in which the president provides leadership with respect to national security matters as well as how that leadership is implemented, we must face three realities.

First, the Department of Defense (DoD), whatever course it is directed to follow in the early decades of the 21st century, is severely underfunded. As one distinguished former Secretary of Defense stated in congressional testimony early in 1999:

. . . the course on which we are now embarked involves increasing strains and growing costs in the short term, and is unsustainable in the long run.

. . . we shall need gradually to increase procurement outlays to \$100 Billion per year (from \$40 Billion).

(this does not address) homeland defense . . . which) would include protection against chemical and biological weapons, protection of the critical infrastructure against cyber attacks, space control . . . and certain other areas.<sup>3</sup>

Of special interest to us all is the noted reference to the fact that "traditional" DoD funding shortfalls are being put forward that do not provide for homeland defense. The concepts and doctrine as well as the legislation needed to determine who is responsible for homeland defense, and how that is handled in relation to DoD as well as other departments of government, do not exist.

Second, even if the president were to choose a rational course and seek to make substantive changes in how we make policy and execute national security initiatives, it will take many years—from 5 to 25—before such change is agreed to by Congress, accepted by the public, and fully institutionalized.<sup>4</sup>

Third and finally, we come to the complex nature of bureaucracy. No matter what the president may decide and what Congress may legislate, ultimately it will take years to effect substantive change within the U.S. Government bureaucracy if we adhere to traditional forms of change—this paper proposes a nontraditional solution that can be implemented immediately.

### **Four Threat Types.**

As the United States prepares to enter the 21st century there is much discussion about *Joint Vision 2010* and the "force after next." Unfortunately, the net assessment process, so well-regarded during the Cold War, has failed us. Furthermore, the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) is nothing more than a perpetuation of our fascination with technical solutions, and fails completely with regard to the much more complex issues of human conflict, culture,