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Breaking the Proconsulate: A New Design for National Power

MITCHELL J. THOMPSON

President George W. Bush, in the seminal 2002 *National Security Strategy*, declared, “The major institutions of American national security were designed in a different era to meet different requirements. All of them must be transformed.”¹ Few would argue with this laudatory goal, but by 2005 most changes within the US government as a whole have been ad hoc modifications to existing institutions. With the noteworthy exception of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, there have been few truly transformational changes to the institutions of national security themselves. As noted by one analyst, “We have reconfigured our institutions to better address ‘the spaces in-between’; but we have been far more reluctant to tamper with the basic institutions themselves. We have not fundamentally changed our habits of thought.”²

Examples of obvious absurdities abound—the fact that DOD’s division of the world’s nations in its Unified Command Plan bears no relation whatever to the State Department’s regional bureaus, which, in turn, are different from the Central Intelligence Agency’s regional groupings. DOD dutifully prepares its “National Military Strategy” (and now a “National Defense Strategy”), but there is no corresponding National Economic Strategy or National Information Strategy for two other key elements of power. “Unified Action” is a fine idea with a prominent place in DOD doctrinal publications; unfortunately, no one else in government pays much attention to DOD’s doctrine. Culturally and organizationally, the geographic Combatant Commands are by far the most structured tools with which the United States can wield all the elements of its national power. But despite innovations such as the Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs), evidence from Operations

Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom demonstrates that true unified action among the interagency construct remains a distant, elusive goal.

It is supremely ironic that an example from Vietnam, our only “lost” war, may offer a way out of this paradigm. The pacification program’s capstone organization, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), while ultimately unsuccessful in its stated mission, offers a lesson in true interagency coordination. Taking the CORDS example one step further, our current geographic Combatant Commands should be redesigned to break their heavy military orientation, and be transformed into truly interagency organizations, under civilian leadership, and prepared to conduct the full spectrum of operations using all elements of national power within their assigned regions.³

Unified Action—Theory and Reality

DOD’s doctrinal guidelines for unified action are outlined in Joint Publication 0-2, *United Action Armed Forces*. This publication states that unified action “synchronizes and/or integrates joint, single-service, special, multinational, and supporting operations with the operations of government agencies, NGOs [nongovernmental organizations], and IOs [international organizations] . . . to achieve unity of effort in the operational area.”⁴ Joint Publication 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, makes a weak attempt to delineate roles and responsibilities by stating that the “National Command Authority” integrates the elements of power, and, a bit more specifically, the National Security Council integrates the military and economic elements of power abroad, while the Ambassador and embassy country team take charge of diplomatic-military activities overseas. The informational element, perhaps not surprisingly, has “no single center of control.”⁵ To this vacuity of clear guidance for the strategic level, Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations*, flatly declares that at the operational level, “The JTF HQ [Joint Task Force headquarters] is the operational focal point for interagency coordination.”⁶

There is a clear implication here, echoed throughout DOD doctrinal publications, that the military Combatant Commander, or his subordinates at the Joint Task Force level, are first among equals for operational-level inter-

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agency coordination. Joint Publication 1 expounds on the unique capabilities offered by the military for interagency operations, including “responsiveness based on military training and readiness” and “robust organizational and planning processes.” After allowing that civil authorities retain their “primacy” within their spheres of responsibility, it goes on to claim for military commanders “the requirements to clarify the mission; determine the controlling legal and policy authorities; [and] task, organize, direct, sustain, and care for the organizations and personnel provided for the interagency effort.”⁷

All of this may amount to nothing more than simple recognition of the indisputable fact that DOD has far more resources than any other government agency. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that DOD grants to itself the authority to make these assumptions about the rest of the federal government in its doctrinal publications. DOD presumptuousness notwithstanding, the reality is that there is no single entity responsible for managing interagency coordination at the all-important nexus between the strategic and operational levels. In a striking passage for a doctrinal publication, Joint Publication 0-2 laments the utter absence of any government-wide doctrine or controlling authority:

There is no overarching interagency doctrine that delineates or dictates the relationships and procedures governing all agencies, departments, and organizations in interagency operations. . . . [T]here is no oversight organization to ensure that the myriad of agencies, departments, and organizations have the capabilities to work together.⁸

It is axiomatic that a vacuum will be filled, and there just happened to be five 800-pound gorillas more than willing to fill this one.

The Proconsuls and the Elements of Power

America’s geographic Combatant Commanders are senior military officers who have been aptly likened to Roman proconsuls.⁹ Wielding enormous power across wide swaths of the planet’s surface, their responsibilities and influence transcend military matters and encroach into all the elements of national power. Though created as early as 1952 (European Command), the Combatant Commands really did not come into their own until the watershed Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 enhanced both the authority and the responsibilities of the Combatant Commanders, then called CINCs (for Commanders-in-Chief). Enormous resources relative to other government agencies, open-ended mandates, and a general policy void in the immediate post-Cold War era allowed the Combatant Commanders to conduct virtually autonomous foreign policies.¹⁰ By 2002, according to one analyst, “The primary instrument of national power responsible for implementing foreign policy is arguably the Department of Defense.”¹¹

It is relevant that both the unified commands and the Goldwater-Nichols Act that strengthened them are products, perhaps even relics, of the Cold War. As DOD entities, the Combatant Commands are inherently all about the military element of power and projecting it into their respective “areas of responsibility” (AOR). Even when the Combatant Commanders exert diplomatic, economic, and informational power, they do so largely through military programs, personnel, and entities. Moreover, the “AOR” itself is a hubris-laden and paternalistic concept that evokes the Cold War’s “spheres of influence.”

The problem with this is that the Global War on Terrorism defies purely military solutions. As one wag memorably put it:

Wars have typically been fought against proper nouns (Germany, say) for the good reason that proper nouns can surrender and promise not to do it again. Wars against common nouns (poverty, crime, drugs) have been less successful. Such opponents never give up. The war on terrorism, unfortunately, falls into the second category.¹²

The Global War on Terrorism is characterized by such messy endeavors as military operations other than war (MOOTW), including stability operations, counterinsurgency operations, and, above all, a search for conflict termination strategies. A perusal of the relevant doctrine and other literature on these topics shows there is near universal recognition that these are interagency, not strictly military, problems and that we have yet to solve them. According to the joint doctrine for MOOTW, “In MOOTW, political considerations permeate all levels and the military may not be the primary player.”¹³ A paper published by the Joint Experimentation Directorate of the US Joint Forces Command states that stability operations are “multi-agency operations that involve all instruments of national and multinational power.”¹⁴ The US Army’s manual on counterinsurgency operations laments for “a single, controlling agency to direct all efforts with one person in charge of all military and US agency operations. The purpose of this agency is to produce a unified goal and direction.” Regrettably, no such entity exists. The Civil-Military Operations Centers (CMOCs), while extremely useful, “rely upon perceived levels of trust, shared visions, common interests, and communications capabilities to obtain interagency coordination. . . . The myriad agencies involved will coordinate their activities only if they feel it is in their best interest to do so.”¹⁵ This is hardly a recipe for success. Most depressingly of all, a National Defense University analyst writes that “one searches official US military planning doctrine in vain for guidance on how to think about and plan for war termination.”¹⁶ Joint Publication 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, discusses conflict termination in general terms, but is exceedingly short on

“Our current geographic Combatant Commands should be redesigned to break their heavy military orientation, and be transformed into truly interagency organizations, under civilian leadership.”

specifics. Despite ad hoc organizational reforms in recent years, nothing in Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom would suggest that DOD’s Combatant Commands are equipped, organizationally or culturally, to handle these interagency challenges.

The Birth of the JIACGs

The cataclysmic events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent Global War on Terrorism accelerated efforts toward interagency coordination, though Joint Forces Command already had been working on ways to achieve better integration at the strategic and operational levels. In October 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed that each Combatant Command form a “Joint Interagency Coordination Group” (JIACG) for a six-month trial period. The Secretary’s guidance to the Combatant Commanders stated, “JIACGs will be organized to provide interagency advice and expertise to Combatant Commanders and their staffs, coordinate interagency counterterrorism plans and objectives, and integrate military, interagency, and host-nation efforts.”¹⁷ This was clearly a more expansive mandate than anything previously envisioned. The November 2003 *Joint Operations Concepts* continued to wax eloquent on the value of the JIACGs:

JIACGs at each Combatant Command headquarters will significantly increase civilian and military coordination and enable a more complete understanding of policy decisions, missions and tasks, and strategic and operational assessments. They enable collaboration to integrate the capabilities from all instruments of national power to more effectively achieve the desired end state.¹⁸

Joint Forces Command and European Command created free-standing directorates, while Pacific Command, Central Command, and Special Operations Command embedded their JIACGs within their respective Operations Directorate (J-3). The JIACG is usually headed by a civilian director at the senior

executive service level, with approximately 11 on-site civilian and military personnel. The civilian members may include representatives from the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Departments of State, Treasury, and Justice. This is conceptually enhanced by “virtual” (i.e., electronic) representation from other agencies. JIACG functions include participation in the full range of Combatant Command planning activities; advising on civilian agency campaign planning activities; presentation of agency perspectives, approaches, capabilities, and limitations; and providing habitual linkages to Washington, D.C., planners.¹⁹ As Colonel Harry Tomlin notes, the JIACGs bring “developed national and international contacts and networks that were previously unavailable to the Combatant Commander.”²⁰

But the JIACGs have critical, even crippling, deficiencies. First, it is not possible, absent legislation, to mandate non-DOD participation. Indeed, the list of participants in the European Command JIACG as late as July 2003 was depressingly thin. As of February 2005, Central Command (CENTCOM) asserted that it conducted daily interagency coordination with the Departments of State and Treasury, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the FBI in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, but it is unclear which of these were actually represented on the JIACG or how institutionalized this support actually was.²¹ The non-DOD agencies are usually operating on far more limited resources than the military, and the costs of JIACG participation often outweigh any perceived benefits. Second, there are strict limitations on the roles and responsibilities of the JIACGs. They cannot task civilian agency elements or personnel, reorganize civilian agency elements, prioritize the efforts of civilian elements, or unilaterally commit agency resources. They are a coordinating element only. Likewise, the Combatant Commander’s authority is “exclusively exercised over military organizations and units. [The JIACG] does not authorize or entitle the Combatant Commanders to direct the actions of those elements in theater representing non-DOD agencies, institutions, and organizations.”²² Third, and most fundamentally, the vastly differing organizational cultures of the civilian and military agencies that constitute the JIACG greatly hinder its smooth functioning. Tomlin writes that “few [non-DOD agencies] have cultures that embrace doctrinal structure, and it is often perceived as being confining and rigid. The absence of formalized procedures pertinent to interagency cooperation and interoperability can challenge and impair the JIACGs’ potential.”²³ Even Joint Forces Command admits that there is a “hesitant buy-in” by the civilian agencies, who perceive “coordination” with DOD as tantamount to ceding control.²⁴ The JIACGs have served a useful purpose; however, they are clearly not the final answer for interagency unity of effort at the strategic or operational level.

The (Dis-)Proving Grounds of Afghanistan and Iraq

The intervention in Afghanistan coincided with the early development of the JIACGs. Nonetheless, a recent RAND study characterized interagency relationships for Operation Enduring Freedom as “ad hoc at CENTCOM and makeshift in the field.”²⁵

On a positive note, both the Department of State and USAID maintained liaison cells at CENTCOM and successfully lobbied for the inclusion of representatives from international organizations and nongovernmental organizations as well. CENTCOM’s Coalition Coordination Center (CCC) stood up on 10 October 2001, and included representatives from the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and World Food Program and InterAction, a consortium of 160 NGOs. NGOs were extremely uncomfortable with too close an association with the US military, particularly when the American Secretary of State, former General Colin Powell, called NGOs a “force multiplier, essential contributors to the United States’ combat team.”²⁶ Nonetheless, the coordination proved mutually beneficial despite the cultural chasm and distrust among the different parties. For example, NGOs were able to provide CENTCOM planners with “ground truth” based on their longtime experience in conducting humanitarian operations, while the military provided logistical support to NGO efforts in-country.

Interagency cooperation in Afghanistan was less impressive. The CIA was virtually an independent actor, and often did not bother to coordinate its operations with military forces in the field, causing great confusion among both the US military and Afghans. Numerous smaller agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control, actually had personnel on the ground in Afghanistan with no means of communication with the US military. USAID personnel could not effectively perform their missions outside of Kabul, as they fell under State Department responsibility but the department had no means of safeguarding them. The Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC), which obviously did have those means, did not have any organizational responsibility for such a mission. Non-DOD agency interest, and their perceived benefits, in coordination with CENTCOM quickly waned in the aftermath of the fall of the Taliban regime.²⁷ This assessment of diminishing returns appears to have been mutual; USAID officials stated that access to the senior CENTCOM staff decreased markedly.²⁸ In the absence of any legislative or National Security Council-imposed interagency guidelines, both the State Department and USAID withdrew their representatives from CENTCOM in early 2002.

If the war in Afghanistan was characterized by a regression in interagency coordination, Operation Iraqi Freedom represented a headlong retreat. By the time the operations began, CENTCOM’s JIACG was fully up and run-

ning, but the stove-piped planning efforts for postwar Iraq being conducted in the unified command and in the State Department illuminated the JIACG's deficiencies as a mechanism for interagency policy coordination at either the strategic or operational levels. Most interagency planning, such as it was during this critical period, was conducted at the principals' and deputies' levels of the National Security Council. When General Tommy Franks, CENTCOM Commander, briefed President Bush in late 2001 and early 2002 on Iraq war planning, he "made several assumptions that quickly turned into taskings for the State Department (and other agencies) without prior consultation."²⁹

The JIACG does not appear to have played much of a role at all throughout 2001 and the first half of 2002. This was a critical lost opportunity. During this period, the State Department had begun postwar planning in the form of its Future of Iraq (FOI) project. In this effort, Iraqi exiles, academics, and State Department regional experts conducted a lengthy series of workshops that ultimately resulted in a huge, 13-volume report that was not so much an actionable plan as it was a research project. An Iraqi academic who participated in the meetings, Kanan Makiya, described the proceedings as "nothing other than dialogue; a discussion for discussion's sake. No synthesis at all. No direction, no project."³⁰ Meanwhile, at CENTCOM, and in complete isolation from the FOI project, planners were overwhelmed by the preparations for the actual warfighting phase. To the extent they planned for Phase IV, the postwar phase, they relied on rosy assumptions driven by the Office of the Secretary of Defense that would enable them to quickly redeploy US forces.³¹ The upshot of all this is that one government agency, having ample time, multifaceted regional expertise and knowledge, but no planning skills whatsoever, and another government agency, having no time, single-focused regional expertise and knowledge, but prodigious planning skills, proceeded in complete isolation from one another to prepare for the most important postwar reconstruction effort by the United States since World War II. The enormous potential for an effective political-military postwar plan that was utterly squandered due to the absence of interagency discipline is troubling to contemplate in light of the continuing US difficulties in Iraq more than two years after "major combat operations" ended.

Interagency coordination did not begin in earnest until July 2002, with the formation of the Interagency Coalition Working Group that met regularly at the Pentagon to "coordinate military requirements, diplomatic strategy, and strategic support to build and maintain coalition support."³² Although collaboration with the State Department in this coalition-building effort was generally quite good, the postwar interagency coordination effort continued to founder. What few State Department officers there were at CENTCOM headquarters, presumably in the JIACG, were assigned for the coordination of coalition diplomacy

and not for Phase IV planning. CENTCOM, overburdened with war planning, washed its hands of the entire postwar reconstruction planning effort and turned it over to Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-4 in January 2003. This Joint Task Force was then absorbed into the CFLCC, though in neither case was there any State Department representation. By the time the President created the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) to horizontally integrate the various postwar plans, it was far too late. Retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner, who was given this impossible task, went to Iraq with no coordinated political-military plan, a noteworthy regression from earlier American efforts in Kosovo. As one analyst recently concluded, “Iraq demonstrated that partial State-Defense integration, which occurred primarily at the highest levels, was insufficient for an undertaking of this magnitude.”³³ The United States can do better than this; indeed, we have done much better.

Unified Action in Action: Vietnam and CORDS

The Joint Experimentation Directorate of Joint Forces Command today defines stability operations as “activities conducted by military and other government components to establish, reestablish, or support a foreign government’s ability to assure rule of law and internal security, to provide basic human services (healthcare, water, electricity, education).”³⁴ Forty years ago, something very much like this was called pacification, or “The Other War.” American Ambassador to South Vietnam Ellsworth Bunker disliked the latter formulation, saying in strikingly modern terms, “To me this is all one war. Everything we do is an aspect of the total effort to achieve our objectives here.”³⁵ But by January 1967, American pacification efforts in Vietnam were characterized by poor coordination between the military and the numerous civilian agencies involved. The results of this critical component of the overall effort were not impressive. In May 1967, President Lyndon Johnson appointed a close friend and confidante, Robert Komer, as a civilian operational deputy to General William Westmoreland, commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). The President appointed Komer with ambassadorial rank, and charged him to bring unity of effort to the entire pacification campaign.³⁶

Westmoreland and Komer named the new entity “Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support” (CORDS), and Komer’s title was “Deputy to COMUSMACV for CORDS.” He ranked third at MACV, after Westmoreland’s deputy, General Creighton Abrams. This status gave him direct authority over everyone in his organization and direct access to Westmoreland, without having to go through the MACV Chief of Staff.³⁷ Komer did not have command authority over military forces, but he was now the sole authority over the entire US pacification effort, “for the first time bringing together its civilian and military aspects under unified management and a single

chain of command.”³⁸ Komer appointed new deputy commanders for pacification in each of the four corps regions, giving them the same command relationship to their respective corps commanders that he had to Westmoreland. These four individuals (usually civilians, one of them was John Paul Vann), “were, in effect, his corps commanders.”³⁹ Serving under these “Corps DepCORDS” were Province Senior Advisors (PSAs) in each of South Vietnam’s 44 provinces. The PSAs were roughly half military and half civilian, though those in less secure provinces were usually military. They were in charge of fully integrated military and civilian agency province teams; under them were small, usually four-person, district teams in each of the 250 districts. The district teams were, again, a mixture of military and civilian agency personnel. CORDS activities varied by province. In more secure areas, they were able to focus on economic development, but security concerns and refugee issues were the priorities in contested areas. The allocation of South Vietnamese territorial militia from the MACV J-3 to CORDS gave the latter a meaningful capability to deal with local security issues.⁴⁰

The interagency integration at all levels was a most impressive feature of CORDS. In addition to the military, the State Department, CIA, AID, the US Information Agency, and even the White House staff were all represented at all levels in its ranks. Throughout the hierarchy, civilian advisors had military deputies and vice versa. Civilians wrote performance reports on military subordinates, and military officers did the same for Foreign Service Officers.⁴¹ South Vietnamese officials were also integrated at every level from MACV to hamlet with their American counterparts.

Obviously, CORDS in the end failed to bring about the progress in the pacification campaign for which it had been designed. Yet that failure should be attributed not to institutional shortcomings so much as to external causes, including the relatively late date in the overall Vietnam campaign in which it was instituted, and the rapid dwindling of US popular support for the war, particularly in the aftermath of the 1968 Tet offensive. In terms of organizations and their cultures, CORDS was decades ahead of its time. CENTCOM’s Strategic Lessons Learned document on Operation Iraqi Freedom implicitly recognized that a thoroughly integrated interagency effort at all levels from Tampa to Tikrit, instituted from the very beginning of policy formulation and campaign planning, would have resulted in a far more efficient and effective Phase IV campaign.⁴² The CORDS model can serve as a useful starting point with which to refashion the future structure of DOD’s Combatant Commands.

Breaking the Proconsulate

DOD has identified “effects-based operations” as the means of applying all elements of power to achieve national policy objectives, or ends, in

the 21st century. (Network-centric warfare provides the ways.) Joint Forces Command defines effects-based operations as “operations that are planned, executed, assessed, and adapted based on a holistic understanding of the operational environment in order to influence or change system behavior or capabilities using the integrated application of selected instruments of power to achieve directed policy aims.” Moreover, effects-based operations require “full interagency integration in strategic, operational, and tactical planning, execution, and assessment—DIME (Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic) actions.”⁴³ The overall poor performance of the interagency coordinating process in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrates that the Combatant Commands are, by their single element of power nature and orientation, not up to the task of planning and conducting effects-based operations. On the other hand, the success of CORDS in Vietnam in promoting unity of effort among the interagency elements offers a strong hint of the synergistic capabilities that could be achieved by truly interagency commands.

Roman proconsuls were military governors, but a “holistic understanding of the operational environment” in any AOR today would have to recognize that the military element of power will often not be predominant. Indeed, one draft “Joint Operating Concept” states, “During conflict the joint force is the ‘supported’ agency. In prevention and reconstruction operations, the joint force is the ‘supporting’ agency.”⁴⁴ The Department of Defense early on took the lead in the planning and execution of the Global War on Terrorism, with the quiet acquiescence of the National Security Council. This was despite the proclamations of the President, and near universal recognition in the federal government, that the Global War on Terrorism is a multiagency effort. This was partly due to the practical reality that the resources available to DOD dwarf anything else in the US government, but it was also due to institutional habit and inertia. The Department of Treasury is not accustomed to campaign planning, but CENTCOM does it for a living. Nonetheless, success in a conflict such as the Global War on Terrorism requires that the US government break these old habits and the proconsulate system that sustains them.

The CORDS model offers a way out of the current institutional sclerosis, but only as a starting point. There is no good reason that the commander of a US unified command in the post-9/11 world should be a uniformed military officer. Turning the CORDS model on its head, the commanders of geographic commands could be senior civilians with the experience of long and distinguished careers representing key governmental agencies in the National Security Council. The President would nominate them to their new role with full ambassadorial rank, and they would report to the National Security Advisor. Interagency synergy would be achieved through deputy director positions based on the elements of power—DIME. Reversing the command re-

lationship in CORDS, the military director would be the current four-star Combatant Commander. This officer would retain command authority over military forces, and responsibility for planning efforts, albeit with augmentation from the diplomatic, informational, and economic directorates. Military billets might be staffed by officers from an “Interagency Officer” career field, proposed by Colonel Harry Tomlin, with the same underlying philosophy as the Army’s Foreign Area Officer field.⁴⁵ Diplomatic, informational, and economic directors, each with ministerial rank, would come from appropriate Cabinet departments and be responsible for integrating planning with the military within their spheres of expertise, and for coordination and interface with embassy country teams. Interagency intelligence centers, staffed by regional and topical specialists from the Defense Intelligence Agency, the CIA, and the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), would replace the current Joint Intelligence Centers at the commands.

A recent State Department initiative dovetails well with and complements this concept of interagency commands. A new Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) has the mission to “lead, coordinate, and institutionalize US government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy, and a market economy.” Joint Forces Command is working closely with the State Department on the S/CRS concept development and facilitating the department’s participation in Combatant Command exercises and experiments.⁴⁶ A particularly intriguing proposal would have Advance Civilian Teams (ACTs) embedded with military forces at the Corps/MEF, Unit of Employment (Division), and Unit of Action (Brigade) levels. These ACTs, comprising State Department, USAID, and military civil affairs personnel, would deploy with the military units and would coordinate all civilian and military resources in a given operating area.⁴⁷ This excellent concept, reminiscent of the CORDS organizations at the corps level and below, would be most effectively and efficiently coordinated and implemented by an interagency regional command.

Conclusion

General Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in an April 2002 briefing when he was Vice Chairman, rightly credited the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act for having “forced the military together.” He went on, however to bemoan the fact that the “jointness” engendered in DOD by Goldwater-Nichols did not extend to the broader interagency construct, admitting somewhat plaintively that “I don’t know what it is that will help us force all our agencies together.”⁴⁸ The multi-agency imper-

ative of the Global War on Terrorism, the poor interagency coordination in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and the successful historical example of CORDS all indicate that nothing less than a Goldwater-Nichols act for the interagency structure will suffice to meet the challenge. Ad hoc reforms, such as the JIACGs, have been nowhere near sufficient. Experience in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrates clearly that there are powerful, probably insurmountable, barriers rooted in institutional cultures that prevent military and civilian agencies from working together synergistically and at all levels beyond short-term crises. In order to change these cultures, it is necessary to transform the institutions.

Within the Department of Defense, the men and women serving in America's Combatant Commands are the nation's best and brightest, and yet the commands themselves, conceived and developed in the Cold War, are relics of a bygone era. The institution of the Combatant Command is inherently single-agency focused, and it is incapable of fundamental transformation. But this is only one part of the problem. The salient, and usually overlooked, point of President Bush's call to transform "the major institutions of American national security" is that it does not apply to DOD alone. What is required is the transformation and integration of the entire national security interagency apparatus. Any tangible success in a war against the "common noun" of terrorism absolutely requires that we tear down our inherently stove-piped Cold War institutions and recreate them for the 21st century. The unified command, located at the critical juncture of the strategic and operational levels of engagement, and with its existing infrastructure, is the ideal place to bring about this transformational integration. Only civilian leadership, with significant interagency experience, can recreate these commands into truly interagency organizations capable of harnessing and projecting America's "soft" power, arguably the most potent weapon in its arsenal, along with its military force.

NOTES

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8. Joint Publication 0-2, p. I-11.
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27. Ibid., pp. 62, 84-85.
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