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ABSTRACT: This article is the second part of a two-part series. Part one outlined how viewing bureaucracy as a domain of warfare can assist policy professionals in navigating its processes and procedures and then described the first three fundamentals (Politics, Personalities, and Pressure), which are externally imposed and must be navigated carefully. Part Two describes the last seven fundamentals (Principles, Perspective, Prediction, Persuasion, Privacy, Programming, and Permanence), which are internally influenced and controlled and can be developed and deployed as a foundation for enhancing success. Mapping the fundamentals for success in the bureaucratic domain will enable policy professionals to address and balance the complexities of the policy-making process to the benefit of US national security.

Keywords: bureaucracy, fundamentals, policy, politics, strategy

This article is the second part of a two-part series addressing the *bureaucracy domain* of warfare and the fundamentals of the “10 P’s of Policy.” As highlighted in part one, the *bureaucracy domain* of warfare is as real as the other military war-fighting domains of land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace. There, I defined the bureaucracy domain of warfare as the intellectual space in national security where policy professionals develop, coordinate, and recommend courses of action or statements of guidance for the US government to review, approve, and implement through national-level strategies, policies, and programs to achieve national objectives. For both articles, the term *policy professional* refers to “US federal civil service career members or US military officers assigned as policy advisers to mid-level or senior government decisionmakers in the US executive branch.”¹

Part one addressed the first three fundamentals of the 10 P’s of Policy—Politics, Personalities, and Pressure (see figure 1 below). These three fundamentals are externally imposed on policy professionals and must be understood and navigated carefully for success. The remaining seven fundamentals—Principles, Perspective, Prediction, Persuasion, Privacy, Programming, and Permanence—are internal, over which policy professionals have control, and can be developed

and deployed as a foundation for enhancing success. They are addressed below to complete the second part of the series.

1. Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partisanship ▪ Ideologies ▪ Say-do gaps ▪ Separation of powers 	3. Pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Big issues ▪ Fast tempo ▪ Short deadlines ▪ Coordination 	6. Prediction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defining end states ▪ Enemy vote! ▪ Partners and allies ▪ Desired timeline 	9. Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authorities ▪ Appropriations ▪ Understand PPBE ▪ Colors of money
2. Personalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ego vs. confidence ▪ Relationships ▪ Trust ▪ Vengeance/vendettas 	4. Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal ▪ Ethical ▪ Moral 	7. Persuasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pros and cons ▪ Building consensus ▪ Stay professional ▪ Win-win/win-lose 	10. Permanence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-medium-long ▪ Long legacy = staffing
Externally imposed	5. Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process matters ▪ Context is key ▪ Temporal dimension ▪ Yes /no/(maybe?) 	8. Privacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discretion ▪ Confidentiality ▪ Trust ▪ Integrity 	Internally influenced

Figure 1. The 10 P's of Policy: fundamentals for successfully operating in the bureaucracy domain of warfare (Source: Created by author)

Holistically, the fundamentals of the 10 P's of Policy enable policy professionals to maintain trusted access to senior decisionmakers; provide solid, objective advice; give realistic options and recommendations; and speak truth to power, in a manner that will be well received, to the benefit of US national security.

Principles

Principles are personal redlines that should not be crossed for any reason. Policy professionals are well served when they have reflected on legal, ethical, and moral issues in their personal and professional lives, know where these boundaries lie, and understand how these challenges will be addressed, should they arise. Challenges to principles are best dealt with from a strong foundation rather than rushed, improvised decisions.

While similar in that they constitute personal and professional boundaries, each principle is unique and draws its basis from different foundations. Illegal activities are defined as “not according to or authorized by law” and are thus determined by society. Policy professionals must know, understand, and abide by statutory authorizations and appropriations (for example, those that define military activities under US Code Title 10). Unethical activities are defined as activities that are “not in accordance with the standards or rules of conduct for a profession.” For federal civilian employees within the executive branch,

the Code of Federal Regulations Title 5, part 2635, formally outlines a range of issues that could interfere with the fulfillment of the civilian oath to “well and faithfully discharge the duties of office.” Military officers serving as policy professionals have similar standards of conduct. Specifically, Executive Order 10631 provides ethical guidance for their activities. Finally, immoral activities are defined as “not conforming to the patterns of conduct usually accepted or established as consistent with principles of personal and social ethics.” Moral lines are defined individually and, like a compass, provide a solid and constant course on which to steer one’s personal and professional journey.²

Conversely, policy professionals must know when proposed or real policies and actions do not cross legal, ethical, or moral boundaries. Policy making often occurs in gray areas, and policy professionals will likely encounter situations they consider unwise, ill considered, or imprudent that are not necessarily illegal, unethical, or immoral. Policy professionals may find these situations difficult to manage, and they must mitigate the risks from decided courses of action.

Lives are at stake in many senior-level national security policy discussions and decisions, and zero-risk options rarely occur for military professionals. Policy professionals must clearly communicate with colleagues and seniors when they assess that legal, ethical, or moral lines are being approached (or crossed), but they should never conflate personal core principles with other situations that, while uncomfortable or even risky, do not cross legal, ethical, or moral lines. Policy professionals who make unnecessary objections to a policy on principle risk undermining their policy advice or professional reputation. Prior reflection on where one’s personal redlines are, therefore, ensures that policy professionals stay on the correct side of these lines.

Perspective

Perspective is the primary value added by thoughtful policy professionals when providing advice to senior decisionmakers. The context for every potential situation is key and depends upon where one sits. While it may be true that “all politics is local,” other views and equities should always be considered. Beyond the local view or impact are the bilateral aspects of how the situation or subsequent decision will affect the relationship between the United States and the local population. Each bilateral relationship is also nested within a broader regional structure. What may benefit or harm one partner or adversary may affect the whole region. Regions are dynamically situated in a global environment, so geostrategic perspectives also matter when balancing the costs-benefits calculus for evaluating potential policy recommendations. Additionally, the ongoing evolution of capabilities and dependencies within the new space

and cyberspace domains moves the geostrategic context beyond the terrestrial and adds complexity.³

Policy professionals can address the complexities of context primarily through framing or reframing. Framing is the ability to view a particular situation with proposed policy options through multiple lenses. The national security policy-making enterprise is essentially designed to bring disparate stakeholders together to force the synchronization of multiple bureaucratic lenses. This enterprise (bureaucracy) provides many views from different angles, each with its own stakeholders who have unique interests and equities. Framing should also address the historical and temporal dimensions. No situation is static, and no policy solution will last in perpetuity without impact or the need for reevaluation. Every policy prescription will have immediate, mid-term, and long-term ramifications.⁴

Addressing temporal perspectives can assist policy professionals to frame potential options through the lens of impacts over time and is a worthwhile approach for developing rapid policy options. Three potential options are available if policy professionals consider a short-term, medium-term, and long-term approach. The short-term option might involve a course of action that moves resources and forces quickly, within days or weeks, to confront the given challenge. The medium-term option would be a course of action that could continue for weeks to months, allowing time to mass capabilities or forces to address the challenge, possibly in conjunction with allies and partners. A long-term course of action, obtaining resources or forces strategically and deliberately over time, could take months or years to resolve the challenge. The short-, medium-, and long-term optionality allows policy professionals to consider the pros and cons of each approach and gives senior decisionmakers a trade space to consider the risks and benefits.

Perspective is undermined if policy professionals attempt to simplify context—or ignore it altogether—by leveraging so-called throwaway courses of action. Senior decisionmakers see through attempts to oversimplify situations or box them into predetermined outcomes. The classic scenario for throwaway courses of action would be recommendations regarding available policy options for senior decisionmakers as follows: Option A is global thermonuclear war; Option B is what the policy adviser wants the senior decisionmaker to choose; Option C is complete capitulation and total surrender. Policy professionals who attempt to pass off throwaway courses of action would likely only make this mistake once, as their credibility and objectivity would be immediately undermined and they would likely find themselves outside the policy option process for future challenges.⁵

A final aspect regarding perspective is that policy professionals must be keenly aware of when their senior decisionmakers may communicate a decision by not making an overt decision. Said another way, this scenario is when not saying “yes” is another way of communicating “no.” Sometimes no decision is actually a decision and occurs when senior decisionmakers are comfortable with the status quo. This situation can be frustrating to novice policy professionals who do not understand the fundamental nuances of policy making and may be inclined to push senior decisionmakers to make a decision. The status quo is usually an option, whether or not it is specifically stated as one. Policy professionals must be sensitive to when the “no decision” situation is in play, not only for themselves, but also to be able to communicate these situations carefully and tactfully with other stakeholders.⁶

Prediction

The *prediction* aspect of policy development involves assessing how key stakeholders will react to the policy options under consideration. Beyond the perspective element, prediction entails more than just understanding and appreciating the stakeholders’ views. Prediction involves assessing how these stakeholders will react and the actions they are most likely to take in response to a given situation. It is important to remember that the enemy always gets a vote in policy implementation. Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke reportedly said no plan survives first contact with the enemy. The difficulty with prediction neither translates into not planning nor thinking about what the enemy might or can do. Rather, it is the active role the enemy will play in response to US actions. A key function of intelligence is to help the policy professional consider the enemy’s intentions and capabilities and help predict possible responses.⁷

When dealing with prediction, policy professionals should be aware of the linkages between the classic ends, ways, and means model. While it would be best to determine the desired end state before starting to develop policy options, this step is often easier said than done in the interagency policy-making process. To create well-grounded policy options, policy professionals and senior decisionmakers must define the desired end state and answer the “what” and “why” questions at the beginning of a policy challenge. Clarity on the desired end state up front will help avoid confusion later in the policy-making process or wasting time considering options that may lead to undesired results.⁸

Friends, partners, and allies will also react to policy options under consideration, and their responses must also be accounted for, since they, too, have critical roles to play. American national strategy and policy has long positioned partnerships and alliances as fundamental for achieving US strategic goals. Recent examples include the United States leveraging NATO regarding Russia and Ukraine or the US approach with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the “Quad”) regarding China and East Asia. Allies’ and partners’ potential responses can be determined in numerous ways, such as asking them outright about their plans, when appropriate, or analyzing and assessing them through other methods when not. Determining how well potential US policies align with partners’ and allies’ unique interests or their policy objectives is key. Common interests and objectives lead to greater consensus and stronger support—and the opposite is true where interests and objectives potentially do not align.⁹

Finally, like perspective, prediction also has a temporal aspect. Are decisionmakers seeking a result in days, weeks, months, years, decades, or longer? Prediction is never easy. Its difficulty expands exponentially the longer policy professionals look into the future. Yogi Berra, the famous baseball-playing philosopher, reportedly said, “It’s tough to make predictions, especially about the future.” Prediction is an art, not a science, but policy professionals have several valuable analytic approaches available to them.¹⁰

Persuasion

At their core, policy professionals must employ *persuasion*. Colin Powell famously advised policy professionals to “promote a clash of ideas” and “be prepared to piss people off,” but there is a time and place for being aggressive in policy making. The best idea or proposal will not matter if policy professionals cannot persuade peers, colleagues, and, ultimately, senior decisionmakers to approve their recommendations. The goal of persuasion is to build consensus and coalitions toward a recommended option or decision. Consensus in the policy-making bureaucracy is like force in the physical world, which Albert Einstein defined as mass times acceleration, or $F = ma$. Translated into bureaucracy domain terms (see figure 2 below), the overall strength of a policy option or proposal (the “force”) equals the sum of the overall number of supporting stakeholders and organizations with equities (the “mass”) multiplied by the intensity of the consensus or agreement across these stakeholders and organizations (the “acceleration”).¹¹

Comparing “Force” between the Physical World and the Bureaucracy Domain	
“Force” in the Physical World	“Force” or “Strength” in the Bureaucracy Domain
<p>$F = M * A$</p> <p>Where:</p> <p>F = Force</p> <p>M = Mass</p> <p>A = Acceleration</p>	<p>$S = O_n * I_c$</p> <p>Where:</p> <p>S = Strength of the Policy Option</p> <p>O = Number of Organizations in Support</p> <p>I = Intensity Level of Consensus</p>

Figure 2. Comparing “force” between the physical world and the bureaucracy domain (Source: Created by author)

To be persuasive, policy professionals should focus on pros and cons of options, not on right or wrong options. Using only qualitative terms in policy debates risks moving the discussion from professional considerations into more personal or emotional spaces. Policy is mostly about gray areas; black-and-white situations rarely occur. Often, the only available policy solution is the so-called least bad option. A risk-based analytic framework addressing suitability, feasibility, and acceptability can help policy professionals articulate the optionality of proposals or considerations in a way that allows senior decisionmakers decision space within which to balance risks.

- Suitability – Are the recommended options appropriate to the situation?
- Feasibility – Do capabilities exist and are forces available to support the recommended options?
- Acceptability – Will the US public, allies, and partners support the recommended options?

By addressing these or other risk factors regarding policy options in recommendations to decisionmakers, policy professionals can strengthen proposals through analysis and logic.¹²

Policy professionals also enhance their persuasion capabilities by remaining professional. It is important to remain calm and avoid making policy-related issues and disagreements personal. The policy issues being discussed in the upper

levels of the national security environment already have serious aspects and significant complexities without adding unhelpful factors to the conversation. Power within the bureaucratic domain is fungible; it waxes when policy positions are selected and wanes when they are not. Policy professionals know that, while it can be difficult for their seniors to lose policy debates over substance, negative consequences magnify if real or perceived personal aspects are involved. Part one stated that losers never forget, which is as true for maximizing persuasion as for *politics* and *personalities*. Effective policy professionals, therefore, seek options that will result in win-win solutions between senior decisionmakers and their respective departments or agencies. “Win-lose” situations can also occur but should be avoided, as burning bridges will only complicate the winner’s situation in the inevitable future policy battles.¹³

Policy professionals must also know when and when not to challenge their seniors on particular ideas and positions. This aspect of persuasion should be calibrated based on the personalities within policy professionals’ environments. Different senior decisionmakers have different styles of leadership, which must be understood. Some senior leaders have a collaborative style and are not threatened by hearing different approaches or ideas presented in the decision-making process. Other senior leaders are less open, and differing views or ideas must be presented carefully so as not to appear as challenges to their expertise or experience. Policy professionals can also use periods of evaluation or debate to refine, modify, or change aspects of policy proposals. Once senior decisionmakers settle on a course of action, however, policy professionals must direct their full energy toward implementing that decision (unless it crosses a legal, ethical, or moral redline). To do otherwise would undermine the policy-making process.¹⁴

Finally, policy professionals must maintain perceived objectivity inside and outside the office. Social media poses significant dangers to maintaining perceived objectivity, as policy professionals’ posts, likes, and comments on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn can reach a much broader audience than intended. Perceived objectivity and professionalism are vital to persuasiveness. Like a reputation, objectivity must be established over time and actively protected. Openly questioning policy positions or attacking specific policy decisionmakers publicly via social media has consequences. These activities place policy professionals on a side and undermine their ability to provide objective advice and recommendations. Policy professionals who want to be taken seriously should minimize or refrain from social media engagement.

Privacy

Privacy is and always will be necessary for the national security enterprise. For policy professionals, privacy means having a solid foundation of trust with their superiors. Thus, a relationship of trust between policy professionals and the senior decisionmakers they report to is necessary to avoid friction or miscalculation and to allow for a safe environment to share ideas and develop policy. Trust is the “reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety etc., of a person or thing.” Trust between bosses and subordinates matters in the national security enterprise, as do individual honor and integrity. Trust allows for open and frank discussions on issues, challenges, options, potential solutions, and risks. Trust in policy making is a central coin of the realm, enabling colleagues to depend on each other and avoid the fear of unknown positions or hidden agendas. A lack of trust between policy professionals adds friction and risks miscalculation in policy development due to narrow views, or sometimes groupthink, that may not be well informed from a broader constituency. Without their superiors’ trust, policy professionals will not be in the room for important discussions and will be unable to provide their perspectives and advice actively. Trust in policy making stands on two legs—confidentiality and discretion.¹⁵

Confidentiality is the principle that one will not disclose privately shared information. Maintaining confidentiality with information privately discussed with superiors or closest policy colleagues preserves options and decision space until all the internal issues are debated, assessed, and resolved. Confidentiality entails more than what normally relates to protecting classified information and includes keeping political, organizational, reputational, or otherwise sensitive discussions with your seniors private. Leaks are cancerous to confidentiality. They significantly undermine the policy-making process in general and are particularly harmful to national security. Leaks undermine overall trust in the process and call the integrity of all policy players into question. Leaking is unethical based on the code of conduct for federal employees (and military officers). Policy professionals may disagree with a course their superiors select or consider a decision unwise, unsound, or ill considered, but they must remember and respect the differences in responsibility between themselves as policy advisers and their superiors as policy deciders.¹⁶

The second leg of trust is discretion, more specifically, granting one’s superiors the ability to decide or act according to their judgment. Discreet policy professionals protect their superiors, the office, and the broader organization. Discretion shields an office or organization, allowing internal consensus to be built appropriately while minimizing external influence or pressure until the

proper time in the process. At its core, policy making is a process, and while levels of transparency are required, complete transparency with every step and facet of the process undermines the development of sound policy. Policy professionals must provide policymakers the time necessary to work through the predecisional space and develop positions in a manner that will result in policy decisions based on sound analysis and judgment, not partisanship or pressure.¹⁷

Programming

Having the resources necessary to implement any policy decision is key, and policy professionals must account for *programming* issues and impacts when they assess situations and prepare options and recommendations for their leaders. The term *programming* in this context refers to the process the Department of Defense (DoD) uses to consider and assess resources. Policy professionals must carefully consider resource implications as they prepare their advice and recommendations for senior decisionmakers. Vision minus resources equals hallucinations, and saying something does not necessarily make it so. Besides money, resources include people, materiel, and capabilities.¹⁸

Many of the resourcing considerations are addressed when answering the legal or “may we” element of policy making. Lawyers across the interagency assist policy advisers in determining whether Congress has authorized or appropriated the options under consideration. Policy advisers are sometimes accused of practicing law without a license because they work with (and sometimes push) legal counsel staff to flesh out the scope and scale of what may be possible. As such, effective policy advisers are knowledgeable of and conversant in statutory authorities and appropriations. Having congressional authorization and appropriation is best for any option being considered, since they provide departments and agencies with permission and money. Having only an authorization is next best, as it provides congressional permission but forces departments and agencies to find and reprogram money from other accounts—which requires approval from the Office of Management and Budget and Congress. Congressional connections with staff in the authorizing and appropriations committees are leveraged, as required, to maximize policy flexibility for senior decisionmakers.

Within the Department of Defense, the most effective policy advisers also know, understand, and leverage the programming, planning, budgeting, and execution (PPBE) process. Established under Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in 1961, the PPBE process is the internal methodology used to allocate resources to provide capabilities deemed necessary to accomplish DoD missions. It runs on an annual schedule, linking future budgets to discrete requirements that span multiple future years to provide (theoretically) sound and synchronized budget decisions.

This methodology also involves numerous “colors of money,” an unofficial term referencing official appropriations categories: research, development, test, and evaluation (or RDT&E); procurement; operations and maintenance (or O&M); military personnel (or MILPERS); and military construction (or MILCON). Depending on the policy option being considered, these different appropriations categories can provide the financial resources necessary to enable DoD action. Understanding and leveraging the PPBE process, when needed, within the Department of Defense strengthens policy advisers by giving senior decisionmakers the financial resources to carry out potential policy recommendations.¹⁹

Permanence

Policy professionals must understand and appreciate the temporal aspects of the proposed policy recommendations they submit to their senior leaders for a decision. More specifically, they must ask: what degree of permanence does the decision require? *Permanence* drives the means that policy advisers and their senior decisionmakers use to enshrine a decision. Some decisions only need to last a few days or weeks, and in these cases, an e-mail or verbal order may suffice. Consider, in recent memory, the impact of a tweet as a mechanism for passing guidance and decisions.²⁰

For decisions to last months or a year beyond the immediate time frame, the mechanism policy professionals should use is a letter or memorandum, allowing senior decisionmakers to sign it for the record. Other signed documentation examples include strategies and implementation plans. Signed documents allow decisions or guidance to be promulgated within and across executive branch departments and agencies, drive action through official mechanisms, and act as formal references.

Experienced policy professionals know that within the Department of Defense the documents with the longest legacy are official issuances. Issuances are the directives, instructions, manuals, directive-type memoranda, and other administrative instructions that most formally establish and implement DoD policies. These documents outline roles and responsibilities across DoD components and organizations and drive fundamentals related to doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership (and education), personnel, facilities, and policy, collectively referred to in the Department of Defense as DOTMLPF-P. Due to their impact and longevity, issuances also take the most time to develop, coordinate, and finalize. As such, organizations are sometimes biased against using issuances to further policy goals. Still, issuances can last years,

and policy professionals who successfully help senior decisionmakers navigate and negotiate this bureaucratic process enable them to leave a lasting legacy.²¹

Conclusion

As highlighted in part one, policy professionals in the defense community should approach bureaucracy as a sixth domain of warfare because, in doing so, they can successfully handle its processes and procedures. Representing a federal department or agency at an in-person Interagency Policy Committee meeting or making policy proposals to senior decisionmakers behind closed doors can have a significant strategic and operational impact on US national security. To be successful, policy professionals must navigate the critical elements of the bureaucracy domain. This two-part article described the nuances of this domain, spanning externally imposed fundamentals and internally managed and controlled fundamentals. Although imperfect and inefficient, the bureaucracy domain, a part of the necessary fabric of the US system of government, ensures that policy decisions and actions align with the law, ethical standards, and the public's best interest. While the dynamic aspects of the bureaucracy will evolve, the fundamentals will remain the same.

History suggests that several obstacles will remain in the path of significant changes in the interagency process, which itself will be required to work better and faster in the years ahead. Current organizational models geared around departments and agencies will need to be increasingly flexible to integrate the various tools of national power, particularly at the strategic and operational levels, to cope with new transnational challenges . . . facing every nation.²²

Learning these 10 policy-making aspects and operating within their nuances and complexities, policy professionals can maximize their individual impact with senior decisionmakers, peers, and subordinates across the US national security policy-making enterprise. Policy professionals will face the challenge of addressing and balancing the complexities of the 10 P's of Policy fundamentals simultaneously, maintaining trusted access to senior decisionmakers, providing solid and objective advice, giving realistic options and recommendations, and speaking truth to power in a manner well received by decisionmakers, to the benefit of US national security.

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