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Embassy in the Lead: Lessons on Interagency Unity of Effort for Today's U.S. Mission to Iraq from the 1947–1949 U.S. Mission to Greece

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Col. Arthur D. Simons Center
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Hanson's *Embassy in the Lead: Lessons on Interagency Unity of Effort for Today's U.S. Mission to Iraq from the 1947–1949 U.S. Mission to Greece* won second place in the Simons Center Interagency Writing Competition conducted from September 2011 through March 2012.

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Introduction: Uncharted Terrain

In Iraq, long-term success remains far from certain—and U.S. leaders in Iraq are on uncharted terrain. On December 15, 2011, the U.S. mission in Iraq became State Department-led, and all U.S. military activities became the responsibility of the U.S. Embassy's Office of Security Cooperation—Iraq (OSC-I). As the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James F. Jeffrey noted during testimony before the Senate in early 2011, success is critical as the Embassy takes the lead in Iraq to ensure that hard-fought gains do not slip away. Yet there are few, if any, well-known examples of such a transition in U.S. history that might inform civilian and military leaders in Baghdad. Indeed, U.S. Institute of Peace expert Beth Cole recently noted that, “We have not attempted this type of massive transition between our own agencies since the Marshall Plan.”¹ And, as Deputy Secretary of State Thomas Nides said, “We’ve spent too much money and kids’ lives not to do this thing right.”² Where can one look to find insight that might inform our future efforts in Iraq?

Recognizing how unique the post-2011 Iraq mission is, senior American officials from throughout government—to include former U.S. Army Combined Arms Center commander Lieutenant General Robert Caslen (who commands OSC-I today)—attended a conference in February 2011 hosted by the Institute of Peace and the Simons Center for the Study of Interagency Cooperation that sought answers to this question. Subsequently, the Simons Center published the insights from that conference in a 37-page pamphlet titled *Interagency Handbook for Transitions*.³ While the handbook laid out a number of considerations for strategic-level policymakers, it lacked specific operational-level recommendations for leaders like Caslen. Additionally, the handbook relied on lessons from only the past ten years. Yet, since the past decade has been dominated by Department of Defense (DoD)-led efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, its lessons might not be appropriate to inform the years ahead—when the embassy will be in the lead.

Fortunately, there is at least one useful example from history. In 1947, President Truman established the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG) within the U.S. Embassy in Athens to help the Greek government end an insurgency. Despite limited resources and declining U.S. political will, the U.S. mission in Greece achieved significant long-term success. Specifically, the U.S. Embassy in Athens effectively reformed Greece’s security sector and enabled the Greek government to finish off a resilient insurgency with only

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a few hundred non-combat troops under the Ambassador’s control.⁴

As the military assumes a supporting role in Iraq, U.S. leaders will face similar challenges to those of their predecessors in Greece. To succeed in Iraq, as in Greece, the United States will combine security cooperation efforts with broader economic development and governance improvement efforts as part of an approach that some experts call “security sector reform” (SSR). Because of the similarities of these missions, close examination of the Embassy-led SSR effort in Greece between 1947 and 1949 might offer useful lessons for similar efforts in Iraq. To glean lessons for today’s U.S. leaders in Iraq, this paper asks, What did the United States do in Greece to enable the Greek government to end an insurgency without the use of a single combat soldier?

This paper argues that the essential ingredient to success in Greece will likewise be the essential ingredient in Iraq—interagency unity of effort in the field. Of course, it should come as no surprise that SSR efforts like those in Greece and Iraq clearly require strong unity of effort between the embassy and the military. Nevertheless, embassy-led SSR missions—like the 1947 U.S. mission to Greece—require extraordinarily strong unity of effort. In Greece, the U.S. achieved this high level of unity by organizing itself in a non-standard way to meet unique mission needs, institutionalizing a shared vision, and placing the interests of the mission ahead of those of individual parent agencies in Washington.

To generate this kind of unity in Iraq, this study asserts that the U.S. Mission–Iraq (USM-I) must make fostering unity of effort a top priority. This paper concludes with three specific recommendations based on lessons from the Greek case that might inform U.S. civilian and military leaders at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Unity of Effort: The Key to Successful Security Sector Reform

In 2009, the DoD, Department of State, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) joined forces to publish a unique multi-agency paper titled “Security Sector Reform.” The paper defined SSR as “the set of policies, plans, programs, and activities that a government undertakes to improve the way [a host nation] provides safety, security, and justice.”⁵ Contrary to what one might think at first glance, SSR is far broader than mere security cooperation. In fact, as the Global Facilitation Network for SSR put it, “[SSR] extends well beyond the narrower focus of more traditional

security cooperation.” In short, what distinguishes SSR from other activities is the inclusion of security cooperation, governance, and economic development efforts.⁶

Interestingly, neither the U.S. Embassy–Baghdad nor OSC-I use the term SSR to describe what they do. OSC-I seems to prefer the term “enabled security cooperation,” which has been described as “similar to other OSC offices in places like Turkey and Egypt.”⁷ Yet, combined with the U.S. embassy’s extraordinarily broad efforts, what the U.S. is doing in Iraq is much more than security cooperation. In fact, a U.S. embassy spokesman recently described its efforts as “very wide,” including “economic cooperation, political and diplomatic cooperation, educational, scientific and technical cooperation, law enforcement and health care.”⁸ Regardless of what the Embassy calls it, this paper argues that SSR is precisely what USM-I’s mission is.

U.S. government interagency doctrine describes the key to successful SSR explicitly, stating, “The most successful outcomes will result only if the activities of other government departments and agencies are fully integrated.”⁹ Put another way, to successfully establish long-term security there without combat troops, the U.S. must unify the efforts of its military, diplomatic, and development agencies so that the combined effect of all U.S. effort is greater than the sum of its parts; therefore, it is important to consider what fostering unity of effort requires.

WHAT DOES UNITY OF EFFORT REQUIRE?

Former Homeland Security Council Chief Of Staff Joel Bagnal defined interagency unity of effort as “the [synchronization] of all the elements of national power to achieve common objectives.”¹⁰ Although Bagnal’s definition is useful, former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy spoke even more precisely about unity of effort in 2008, describing it as the “established mechanisms . . . [that enable] full integration of the activities of military forces and civilian agencies on the ground.”¹¹ The 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy goes into further detail by defining what the elements of national power are. Specifically, they are “the organizations, policies, and programs within the defense, diplomatic, economic, development, homeland security, intelligence, and the strategic communications realms of the executive branch.”

This paper recognizes the value of all three of the above definitions because taken together they clearly describe not only what unity of effort is, but also what achieving it requires. First, unity of effort requires tailor-made interagency organizations (as in Flournoy’s definition), which this paper calls “mission-focused

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organization.” Second, it requires shared objectives and efforts (as in Bagnal’s definition), which this paper calls “shared vision.” Third, unity of effort requires cooperation between all elements of national power (as described by the 2010 National Security Strategy), which this paper calls “selfless cooperation.”

In a mission-focused organization, form follows function. Flournoy claimed that unity depended on good horizontal integration; yet, examples of stove piping and infighting in today’s interagency organizations abound. Nevertheless, cases of agencies working well together do exist—and one important factor seems to be that the form of those organizations followed the identification of a required function. For example, an Army War College student described how the National Incident Management System helped improve unity and effectiveness not just by blending multi-agency capabilities, but by doing so in response to a specifically identified requirement to improve information sharing.¹² By identifying the requirement before forming the interagency organization, the incident management system mitigated the effects of competing requirements. Since unified effort does not occur merely by blending various agencies together, this study asked, How did U.S. government agencies identify operational requirements in Greece and how did they form their organizations to match the requirements?

The second requirement for unity of effort is shared vision. Another of Flournoy’s key concepts is vertical integration, where policy decisions translate into action in the field. Other writers have noted how it is essential that all elements recognize which agency has the lead.¹³ Shared vision blends both concepts. Specifically, shared vision should link actions in the field to the broader policy aim, identify a lead agency, and in turn, give each agency some understanding of how its efforts fit together with other agencies for a broader purpose. Therefore, when examining the Greek case, the question this study posed was, How do all elements achieve an understanding of how their efforts contribute to the broader policy goals?

The third requirement is selfless cooperation. Selfless cooperation occurs when various agencies act in ways that contribute to the overarching effort, even if those actions are contrary to their parent organization’s interests. Flournoy’s horizontal integration concept—where various agencies work together as a team—is an important part of selfless cooperation. However, this criterion takes teamwork one step farther, since it demands employees prioritize U.S. government interests over their parent agency’s interests, within the authorized limits. Unity of effort cannot occur only when it is convenient. Therefore, when examining the case, the question this study posed was, how did various elements resolve conflicts

between the interagency organization's goals and the goals of their parent organization?

Clearly, an interagency organization must meet all three requirements to truly achieve strong unity of effort. By examining a relevant historical case where U.S. leaders abroad successfully achieved each of these three requirements, one can glean specific and useful lessons that apply today. The U.S. mission to Greece between 1947 and 1949 is such a relevant historical case.

THE 1947–1949 U.S. MISSION TO GREECE: A RELEVANT CASE OF UNIFIED EFFORT

The U.S. mission to Greece from 1947–1949 is an example of an effective and unified, embassy-led, interagency SSR effort that ended a lingering conflict without the use of combat troops. There are many aspects of the Greek case that make it an appropriate historical analogy.

First, not unlike today, the years following World War II saw severely limited American political will to intervene overseas with combat troops. Today, President Obama noted how “the tide of war is receding,” and that, when possible, alternatives to combat troops are preferred.¹⁴ Likewise, despite some limited planning, policymakers never seriously considered deploying combat troops to Greece in the late 1940s due to political infeasibility.¹⁵ This trend came to its pinnacle in 1949 when the U.S. stood by as Chinese Communists took over mainland China during the Chinese Civil War.¹⁶ Like today, the U.S. in the late 1940s faced the onset of a period of extremely limited political will to commit ground troops to satisfy its foreign policy ambitions.

Second, with its limited resources, the U.S. began to square off in 1947 against degraded but not defeated enemies who enjoyed cross-border sanctuary. In March 1948 during the early days of the American efforts in Greece, AMAG's Chief, Dwight Griswold, described how Greek insurgents lost the initiative but were still highly capable because they could attack and control key population centers.¹⁷ Similarly, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq noted in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 2011, “al-Qaeda in Iraq is degraded but determined, [and] . . . Shi'a extremist groups continue to be a serious threat.” In addition, in 1947 and 1948, the Greek rebels enjoyed support from and sanctuary in Albania and Yugoslavia.¹⁸ Likewise, in Iraq, al-Qaeda and Iranian-backed terrorist sanctuaries have not yet been fully addressed, according to influential historians and strategy advisers Kimberly and Frederick Kagan.¹⁹

Third, in both cases, an ongoing political crisis threatens stability. The Kagans are among the most vocal of those who

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point out how the well-known and ongoing political crisis in Iraq threatens to undo hard-fought gains. Likewise, the U.S. in Greece faced similarly volatile divisions between Communist sympathizers, a right-wing authority often accused of oppression, and several other disaffected groups. In Greece as in Iraq, the U.S. sought an adequate but not perfect solution to governance. In a 1948 paper, the National Security Council staff described U.S. governance efforts as, “strengthen[ing] the Greek Government sufficiently to enable it to withstand Communist pressure.”²⁰ Similarly, in 2009, President Obama stated that, in Iraq, “What we will not do is let the pursuit of perfect stand in the way of achievable goals.”²¹

Clearly, similarities between the Greek and Iraqi cases abound. Because of these parallels, the U.S. mission to Greece might be among the best cases to inform contemporary efforts in Iraq.

THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE GREEK CIVIL WAR

During World War II, Nazi Germany brutally occupied Greece. During the occupation, a diverse group of factions united under Communist leadership. Most Greeks supported the movement because of its ability to frustrate the Germans. After the Axis withdrawal, British troops attempted to reestablish the status quo by reinstalling the pre-war right-wing government. The Communist-based resistance found this unacceptable and began to foment instability.²²

In August 1946, the Greek government asked London and Washington for help. By October, the resistance had evolved into a full-fledged Communist insurgency calling itself the Democratic People’s Army with ties to the Soviet Union. Beginning to see the need to counter a potential Soviet “encirclement” of free nations, U.S. officials began to recognize the growing threat at-hand.²³

EARLY 1947: THE PORTER ASSESSMENT AND THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

In January 1947, President Truman dispatched Paul A. Porter, a recently retired political appointee, to assess the situation in Greece and to make recommendations for what to do there.²⁴ Although the Administration called Porter’s mission the American Economic Mission to Greece, the State Department also instructed Porter to assess reconstruction needs and aid requirements. Porter maintained a meticulous diary of his observations, and on April 30 he submitted his report to the President.

Porter’s assessment and report were remarkably complete, objective, and thorough. Porter met with a wide array of Greek personalities and visited many locations. In his inquiry, Porter sought detailed, rather than broad answers. Instead of only meeting

government officials, Porter obtained counter-perspectives from experts outside of government, and he checked their claims with field observations. Porter also avoided making conclusions based on the input of any one official. Porter was often able to make recommendations that could generate both short and long-term benefits.

As Porter finished his report, important deliberations were taking place in Washington to determine what the U.S. needed to do in Greece to address Soviet expansion. In early March, Truman proposed an ambitious aid program to Greece and Turkey to blunt the expansion. His speech to Congress on March 12, 1947, titled, “Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey,” also became known as the “Truman Doctrine,” and it marked the beginning of the U.S. containment strategy.

While Truman’s March 1947 speech was a historic milestone, historians do not often cite the particulars of the speech regarding his approach to Greece. In it, Truman described three elegant lines of effort for Greece: 1) economic development (toward a “stable and self-sustaining economy”); 2) security force development (toward a Greek military that can “cope with the situation”); and 3) governance (toward a Greek government that can effectively conduct “public administration”).

Despite the detailed work behind his assessment, Porter’s final report to the Administration was similarly elegant. In a tightly-written 29-page report, Porter recommended specific economic and governance lines of effort and key objectives along each. In fact, Truman’s broad lines of effort seem to leap straight from Porter’s assessment.²⁵ Figure 1 on page 8, depicts the U.S. approach to Greece in both ways. Along the left side, the figure shows Truman’s lines of effort. Within those broad lines, Figure 1 also depicts Porter’s four economic and four governance lines of effort and the associated objectives. While no such diagram existed in 1947, it depicts how Truman and Porter might have conceptualized the U.S. effort in Greece.

Congress appropriated \$400 million (just over \$4 billion in 2011 dollars) in economic and military assistance to Greece in May 1947. President Truman established AMAG, appointed the politically ambitious former Nebraska Governor Dwight Griswold to lead it, and sent him to Athens to work alongside career diplomat Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh. AMAG’s mission was to “advance reconstruction and secure recovery in Greece as soon as possible.”²⁶ AMAG also established the 50-man U.S. Army Group-Greece, led by Major General William G. Livesay, which was to procure supplies and equipment for the Greek National Army. Throughout the summer of 1947, Ambassador MacVeagh, Griswold, and Livesay began their work in Athens.

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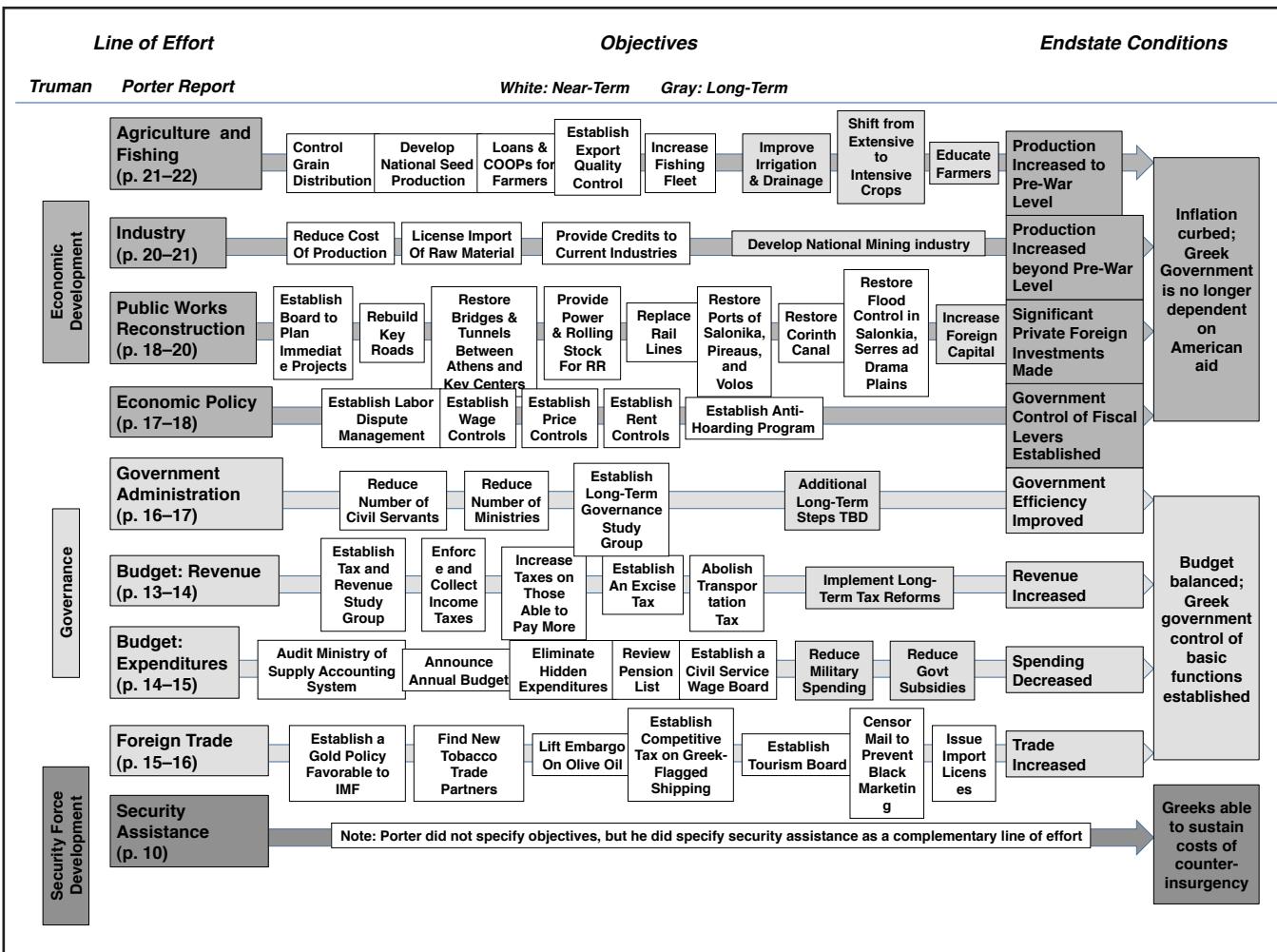


Figure 1. Author's depiction of the April 30, 1947, Porter Report.

While there were several problems with the U.S. approach in 1947, poor coordination between civilian leaders and military leaders within the embassy stood out as among the worst.

LATE 1947: LACK OF UNITY CAUSES AMAG FAILURE

Despite loosely following the plan in Paul A. Porter's report, the initial U.S. efforts were disorganized and, consequently, inadequate. While there were several problems with the U.S. approach in 1947, poor coordination between civilian leaders and military leaders within the embassy stood out as among the worst.

Indeed, in 1947 a paralyzing friction between Ambassador MacVeagh and Governor Griswold quickly set in. While the initial arrangement specified that MacVeagh was to focus on diplomacy and governance, and that Griswold was to focus specifically on the distribution of economic and military aid, Griswold found it difficult to stay in his lane. For example, when MacVeagh argued against deploying U.S. combat troops to Greece, Griswold sent a telegram directly to Secretary Marshall favoring the opposite.²⁷

And, even though Griswold was told to avoid interfering in Greek political matters, he used aid funds to leverage personnel changes in the Greek government, despite MacVeagh's intent to take a more deliberate approach. In fact, Griswold went so far as to tell officials in Washington that, in his opinion, MacVeagh's approach "alarmed" him and suggested that MacVeagh's ideas threatened the overall mission.²⁸ The friction between MacVeagh and Griswold finally came to a head when Griswold appeared complicit in the release of *The New York Times* article titled, "Griswold, Most Powerful Man in Greece," which further increased the divide between the Ambassador and the AMAG chief. By the end of 1947, it was clear to policymakers in Washington that something had to change.

Original documents also suggest that General Livesay's efforts were not optimally integrated into those of the overall mission. For example, during the important policy discussions in Athens and Washington in the summer of 1947 about the question of U.S. troop presence, Livesay's name is noticeably absent from the discussion. In fact, not a single document in the official historical record mentions any advice from Livesay on this question.²⁹ Notably, as senior U.S. officials in Washington and Athens began to realize that their limited approach was not working, MacVeagh said that a "superior officer of broader vision" was needed. In early 1948, as policymakers considered a new way forward, Secretary of State Marshall concluded that the U.S. mission needed "a more impressive personality at the head of the military contingent," and that this need was "urgent."³⁰

Due to lack of unity between the various civilian and military elements within the U.S. Embassy in Athens, signs of AMAG's progress in 1947 were few to nil. Despite the arrival of new military aid, according to some estimates, the strength of guerilla forces increased sharply in 1947.³¹ A Greek government-led military campaign failed to isolate the guerillas. By the end of 1947, the Greek army found itself back in the static defense of major population centers. In addition, governance and economic conditions were no better than they were a year before. On January 6, 1948, the newly established U.S. National Security Council circulated a classified assessment throughout the government and concluded, "the Greek Government rests upon a weak foundation and Greece is in a deplorable economic state."³² Clearly, in 1947, little had been accomplished in Greece.

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JANUARY 1948: UNITY OF EFFORT BECOMES A TOP PRIORITY

In September 1947, the State Department asked Army Chief of Staff General Dwight Eisenhower to send a special representative to Greece to survey the military situation and make recommendations

on how to improve it. On October 20th, Army Major General S. J. Chamberlin, submitted his report to Eisenhower with straightforward recommendations—to succeed in Greece, the U.S. mission needed to provide more effective advice to the Greek army and better unify its efforts in the field.³³ In a January 1947 paper, the National Security Council staff concluded that, since “effective implementation of U.S. policy [has been] hampered by lack of centralized control,” future U.S. efforts must be better coordinated and that one individual oversee all U.S. activities in Greece.³⁴ Clearly, by making unity of effort a top priority while still refraining from employing combat troops, the U.S. would begin to apply the full measures of SSR.

In December 1947, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal established the Joint U.S. Military Advisory and Planning Group (JUSMAPG) for Greece, and in February 1948, General Eisenhower appointed former WW II, corps commander Major General James Van Fleet as its first director, offering him a promotion to lieutenant general. Eisenhower told Griswold that Van Fleet was “one of the outstanding aggressive fighting corps commanders of the campaign in Europe.”³⁵ On the civilian side, illness forced Ambassador MacVeagh to return to the U.S. in October 1947, leaving Governor Griswold as the *de facto* overall leader of the U.S. mission. While Griswold stayed on in Athens for several more months, Truman appointed long-time diplomat and international commerce expert Henry F. Grady as the next U.S. Ambassador to Greece in May 1948, and told him that he would have overall control of the embassy and AMAG.

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1948–1949: ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH UNITY OF EFFORT

While most accounts of the Greek Civil War focus on the military campaigns of 1948 and 1949, the economic and governance efforts during the same period are often overlooked. Consequently, the real story of America’s unified approach in Greece has yet to be fully told. By focusing on unifying and synchronizing its efforts, the U.S. fully implemented SSR and achieved long-term success in Greece.

The military successes of 1948 and 1949 were far from insignificant. Van Fleet and his Greek counterpart designed a brilliant offensive campaign that exploited the success of small-scale clearing operations to build the army’s confidence and enable subsequent decisive operations to isolate and then destroy guerilla strongholds in the mountains of northern Greece.³⁶ Yet, taken together with a more detailed security assistance line of effort, the U.S. in Greece significantly revamped the military aspects of the overall mission. Although the military campaign lasted two years instead of one as planned, the U.S. mission in Greece had achieved

nearly each objective along all lines of effort by the end of 1949.³⁷ Consequently, Greece defeated a Communist insurgency with only material and advisory support from the U.S.

Yet, despite significant military success, perhaps the most significant progress was non-military. In fact, AMAG moved aggressively along both the economic and governance lines of effort and by March 1948 had achieved what Truman called “limited but measurable success.” In its first quarterly report to Congress since reorienting its efforts, AMAG specifically addressed nearly every objective along the established lines of effort. For example, along the agriculture and fishing line of effort, AMAG reported an increase in fishing fleet capacity due to the installation of refrigeration and the increase of agricultural output from 60 to 85 percent of pre-war levels. Other significant objectives achieved included the drafting of civil service reform legislation, the establishment of effective rent controls, the announcement of a balanced budget proposal, and the implementation of inflation control measures—each a specific objective in the Porter report.³⁸ In a subsequent quarterly report, Truman cited similar details, claiming that non-military efforts significantly contributed to the momentum of military gains. By mid-1949, the U.S. mission saw progress along all lines of effort, reporting, “growing confidence in the [Greek] Government,” “increasing military effectiveness,” and, most importantly, declaring inflation “arrested.”³⁹

By 1950, the U.S. mission’s success was remarkably evident. In May 1950, President Truman sent letters to MacVeagh, Grady, Griswold, and Van Fleet personally thanking them for the “success,” calling it a “significant achievement of American foreign policy” and nothing less than a “victory.” In a 1952 report, the State Department noted that, “internal security had been established” by 1950.⁴⁰ Of note, when remnant guerilla forces attempted to mount an uprising in July 1950, the Greek Army suppressed the uprising without any significant external assistance. As another sign of success, the Greek army deployed a 1,200-man force to fight in the Korean War. Clearly, while the military successes in the Greek Civil War are important, any story that focuses solely on the military aspects of the campaign is incomplete. Indeed, the military successes might not have amounted to much at all if the U.S. mission in Greece had not been able to unify its efforts and create complementary successes across a broad range of efforts.

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ACHIEVING UNITY OF EFFORT IN GREECE

In contrast to the disjointed efforts of 1947, the U.S. government effort in 1948 and 1949 was better unified and, consequently, more effective. This raises the question: How did the U.S. mission in

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Greece unify its efforts? This paper asserts that the U.S. succeeded in Greece because it achieved a remarkable degree of unity, meeting all three criteria described earlier. This section examines precisely how the U.S. was able to unify its efforts in Greece and, in turn, create a Greek military that the State Department would describe in 1952 as “among the best [in the region].”

How Did AMAG Organize Itself to Accomplish the Mission?

The U.S. mission to Greece achieved its goals in two important ways. First, AMAG organized itself to address the requirements identified by the 1947 Porter assessment. By organizing itself in a non-standard way to ensure form followed function, AMAG was much more effective than it would have been if it had been organized with traditional staff sections. Second, U.S. civilian and military elements in Greece achieved a remarkable degree of integration. In fact, the real success story of the U.S. mission to Greece is less about Van Fleet’s military campaign and more about how the military and civilian agencies worked together to achieve economic and governance objectives.

A large part of AMAG’s success was its ability to ensure form matched function. According to an AMAG organizational chart from June 1948 (see Figure 2), AMAG mirrored the lines of effort in the Porter report.⁴¹ The agriculture, industry, reconstruction, government administration (the Civil Government Division), and foreign trade (Commerce and Supply Division) lines of effort each had a dedicated division. Perhaps because of its importance, the economic policy line of effort mentioned in the Porter report resided within both the Labor Division and with the office of the Economic Advisor. The Public Finance division performed the revenue and expenditure lines of effort in the Porter report. Of course, the military lines of effort resided with the Army Group-Greece (and later JUSMAPG). The additional functions, including public health, welfare, and aid distribution supported the other lines of effort. The alignment between the lines of effort in the original Porter report and AMAG’s organization is truly remarkable evidence that form followed function.

The military efforts of JUSMAPG were well-integrated within AMAG’s approach. As one official noted, “coordination without a coordinator is not to be expected.”⁴² While Ambassador Grady’s appointment as the most senior U.S. official in Greece was helpful, more telling was how AMAG and JUSMAPG worked together without being formally directed to do so. For example, the military decided against buying wool uniforms because the embassy warned that the purchase would place undesirable inflationary pressure on

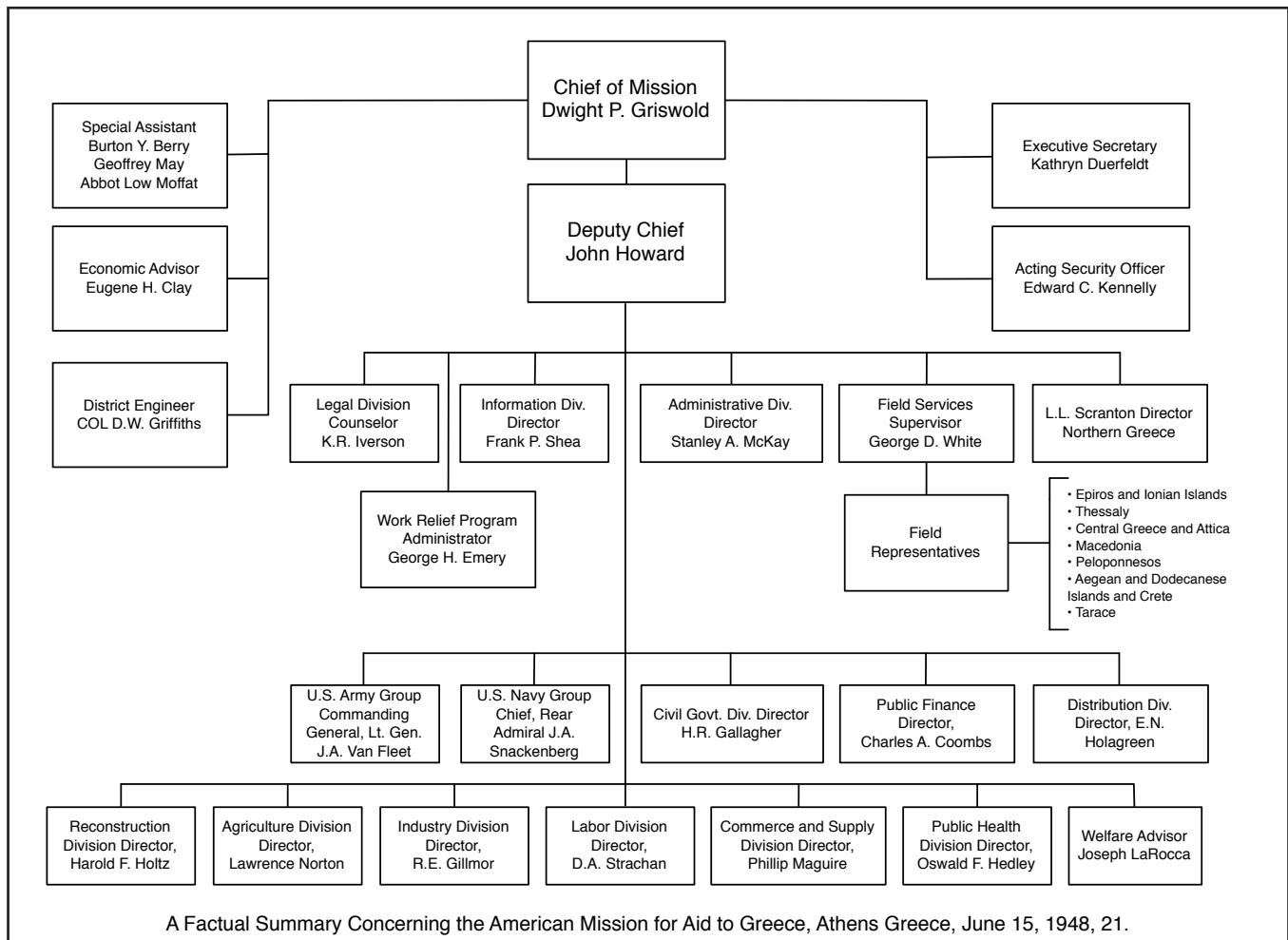


Figure 2. AMAG non-standard organization
(The American Mission for Aid to Greece, courtesy of the Truman Library)

clothing prices.⁴³ On another occasion, the embassy procured cold storage and distributed refrigerated trucks in locations that would benefit both the fishing industry and the Greek army food supply system to achieve a dual benefit. In fact, the Embassy sought dual purposes in many projects to include prioritizing road reconstruction to facilitate planned military operations and rebuilding a tire regrooving plant to support civilian industry and Army maintenance requirements.⁴⁴ One possible factor in producing this high degree of integration could have been that the embassy assigned a significant number of military personnel to non-military efforts and offered up several of its own civilian employees to work in JUSMAPG.⁴⁵

In any event, by forming its offices after identifying critical requirements and developing projects that achieved both military and non-military effects, the U.S. mission in Greece was able to achieve mission-focused organization.

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How Did the U.S. Agencies in Greece Establish a Shared Vision?

Among the various U.S. agencies in Greece, shared vision did exist, and this shared vision was perhaps the most important component of U.S. efforts there. Specifically, the U.S. leaders in Greece did at least four important things to develop and sustain this shared vision. Taken together, these four important actions helped U.S. agencies in Greece develop one overarching vision—another essential component of unified effort.

First, the U.S. Embassy in Greece and AMAG worked aggressively toward achieving specific objectives in the original Porter report. Not unlike how AMAG aligned its divisions to the specific objectives and lines of effort in the report, AMAG's quarterly reports to Congress spoke specifically to each line of effort. Information that did not address a specific objective in the original Porter report rarely appeared in the reports to Congress. The fact that the reports focused so keenly on the Porter objectives and disregarded extraneous information suggests that employees did the same, and that they had a precise understanding of the specific tasks needed to achieve U.S. goals.

Second, the fact that the U.S. mission in Greece set focused and realistic objectives indicates that employees did not waste their time performing superfluous tasks. In other words, the U.S. mission in Greece did not set out to do everything, nor did it seek to do everything perfectly. In being focused, the U.S. mission in Greece chose to either not address certain issues or at least to address certain issues indirectly. For example, while the issue of land reform was certainly one driver of instability in Greece, the U.S. mission in Greece chose to address agricultural production instead—which was an even greater driver of instability. Paul R. Porter, who administered the Marshall Plan in Greece from 1949–1950, (not to be confused with Paul A. Porter, the author of the important 1947 report) described how “land reform was not a problem” and how the U.S. leaders made a conscious decision to prioritize the production of rice instead.⁴⁶

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In being realistic, the U.S. mission in Greece understood that it would have to settle for less-than-perfect. For example, in a letter dated December 1949, Ambassador Grady wrote, “the key...is not to be too ambitious,” and that the U.S. mission in Greece must “cut [its] suit from the cloth we have.”⁴⁷ The U.S. mission in Greece also sought to ensure that the Greek army was not perfect but “sufficient to get the job done.” For example, at one point, when the Greeks asked for more trucks, the embassy chose to buy mules instead because they were less expensive and better suited for mountain operations. Likewise, the *USAGG History* noted, “no consideration was given

to the natural national aspiration of the Greek government for a large and permanent armed forces,” because the goal was merely to “assist the country in meeting an existing situation.” Clearly, by focusing efforts toward realistic objectives, the U.S. mission in Greece would be able to achieve more success with limited resources.

Third, the existence of phased and sequenced objectives suggests that people working along one line were aware of how their work affected the work of others. Van Fleet’s military campaign plan is an excellent example of the use of phases to consolidate gains in one effort before proceeding to the next. Yet, what many case studies on the Greek Civil War fail to recognize is how governance and economic development efforts were similarly phased. For example, Paul R. Porter noted that U.S. leaders knew that security improvements would pave the way for many development projects.⁴⁸ More specifically, however, in his third quarterly report to Congress in May 1948, Truman described how the U.S. sought to control inflation and establish the foundation for agricultural production. Truman continued, stating that there would be further efforts to exploit agricultural progress by establishing trade agreements and by improving the Greek government’s ability to manage its budget.

Fourth, by employing consolidated metrics to monitor their progress, both civilian and military employees had a shared understanding of overall progress. For example, in the embassy there was only one set of metrics—JUSMAPG did not have a separate set of its own. In fact, all reports to Washington went through the embassy. Furthermore, the measures they chose were meaningful. For example, by monitoring the trends of the number of people who traveled on the roads between cities and rural areas, officials could determine if security improvements were improving the population’s freedom of movement and economic activity.⁴⁹

Despite occasional friction between Van Fleet and Grady, observers in 1948 noted that the U.S. mission was getting results because all parties were now working toward the same overarching purpose. In fact, a visiting official noted that giving Grady overall responsibility did much to improve the situation from the way it was in 1947.⁵⁰ And, unlike the situation with Griswold in 1947, Van Fleet continued to forward his correspondence to Washington through Grady no matter what tensions arose.

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HOW DID AGENCIES PLACE THE INTERESTS OF THE OVERALL MISSION FIRST?

This study found that selfless cooperation was another essential component of unified effort in Greece. At least three examples show how a U.S. senior official set aside his parent agency’s interests to pursue the interests of the interagency mission in Greece.

In the first example, Van Fleet set aside his interest in an expedient end to the insurgency to accommodate Ambassador Grady's governance interests. In January 1949, certain members in the Greek and U.S. governments favored placing the top Greek general atop a new Greek authoritarian regime. Although Van Fleet surely understood the benefits to his military mission of having a more powerful partner who could bring effective leadership to the Greek military, Van Fleet remained silent in the January discussions among U.S. policymakers.⁵¹ It appeared that Van Fleet set aside any interests of having a strongman leader and deferred his interests to Ambassador Grady's interests in promoting a more representative regime.

In the second example, Grady set aside his interests in having positive diplomatic relations with Britain to pursue Van Fleet's military interests. In the spring of 1949, under pressure from London to show more rapid progress in Greece, the head of the British military mission urged the Greek army to focus in northern Greece and Greek Macedonia.⁵² Preserving positive relations with the British in Greece was important in those days, since the U.K.'s presence in Greece—albeit small—was critical to portraying a unified Western front against Communism. Nevertheless, Grady set diplomatic interests aside to back Van Fleet's plan to put off operations in northern Greece and pursue a more deliberate approach instead.

In the third example, Grady resisted calls from the State Department to pursue a negotiated settlement to the conflict. In the summer of 1949, the Greek government dealt a significant military blow to the insurgents, accumulated increased popular support, and saw the disappearance of a key guerilla sanctuary. Yet, rather than succumbing to several calls to seek an early negotiated settlement (including one from White House Chief of Staff Dean Rusk), Grady instead put his faith in Van Fleet and his plans for a final decisive military blow to the rebels.⁵³

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Each of these examples suggest that, on several occasions, State and Defense Department officials set aside the parochial interests of their agency in favor of the interests of the overall U.S. mission to Greece. Yet, this spirit of selfless cooperation did not simply emerge on its own. By establishing a mission-focused organization, fostering a shared vision, and ensuring selfless cooperation, the U.S. mission in Greece in 1948 and 1949 was able to achieve an effect that was truly greater than the sum of its parts.

Implications for Embassy-led SSR in Iraq

Despite lingering violence in Iraq, President Obama described how he intends to establish lasting peace and security in Iraq through unified governance, economic, and security cooperation efforts without the use of U.S. combat troops. As it did in Greece, the U.S. is once again trying to use embassy-led SSR to finish off an insurgency. As Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Stuart Bowen wrote, Iraq “remains imperiled by roiling ethno-sectarian tensions and their consequent security threats.” And, as the Kagans noted recently, the two principal challenges in Iraq remain the tenuous security situation and the worrisome political situation.

The OSC-I and the U.S. Embassy–Baghdad is well aware of these challenges, having written, “Iraq remains a bureaucratically difficult and semi-permissive environment.”⁵⁴ As formidable as these challenges might be, the Greek case suggests that there is a third and even greater challenge for the USM-I—the challenge of achieving the remarkably high degree of unity of effort that a State-led, post-transition SSR mission requires.

The formative months ahead at the U.S. Embassy–Baghdad provide an opportunity to make sure the big ideas are right. In fact, in a February interview with the *San Francisco Examiner*, former Undersecretary of Defense Flounoy stated that the nature of the long-term U.S.-Iraq security partnership has yet to be fully defined, and that bilateral discussions on these important issues will take place in the months to come. This study indicates that there are at least three implications from the Greek case that USM-I leaders should consider as it shapes the future U.S.-Iraq relationship. First, the Greek case reinforces the importance of using a thorough assessment to guide SSR efforts. Second, the Greek case shows how U.S. military efforts must be extraordinarily well-integrated with embassy efforts and oriented toward the key issues identified in the assessment. Third, the Greek case demonstrates the importance of identifying specific objectives and metrics—especially regarding non-military efforts.

First, as the U.S. Embassy and OSC-I embark upon their new missions, they should do so guided by a good assessment. This study describes how the Paul A. Porter assessment guided U.S. efforts in Greece. For Iraq, such an assessment already exists. The 2002 Future of Iraq assessment is strikingly similar to Paul A. Porter’s 1947 assessment, and it could prove equally useful if updated. From July 2002 through April 2003, the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs convened a series of working groups composed

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of a diverse group of Iraqi experts. The Near East Bureau produced a classified, 1,200-page assessment with specific recommendations along 12 distinct, post-invasion lines of effort. Much of this assessment has now been declassified and is available online.⁵⁵ Like the Porter assessment, the Future of Iraq assessment did not recommend all-encompassing nation-building; rather, it focused on key objectives along critical lines of effort. For example, the economy and infrastructure report identified six essential objectives including the establishment of a foreign investment outreach entity and the cessation of certain central bank policies that exacerbated inflation. The Greek case shows how an assessment like this might prove invaluable in unifying U.S. government efforts and help Iraq end its insurgency.

Second, USM-I should ensure that its civil-military efforts are extremely well-integrated and oriented toward the requirements identified by the assessment. It is clear to all U.S. military personnel in Baghdad that their boss, Lieutenant General Caslen, reports to Ambassador Jeffrey. Yet the Greek case shows how unity of command in itself is not enough to generate true unity of effort—where the whole effort is greater than the sum of individual agency efforts. OSC-I's draft mission statement and lines of effort expressed in their strategic plan indicate that it is off to a good start in nesting its efforts with those of the Embassy. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement, and the Greek case could help identify additional opportunities for improved cooperation. For example, OSC-I describes several Iraqi Security Force modernization objectives, including foreign military sales, equipment procurement, sustainment, and facility improvement.⁵⁶ These areas are where the Greek example of overlapping economic development efforts at the military truck tire manufacturing plant could be informative. OSC-I and the Embassy should look for every opportunity to similarly integrate security force modernization objectives with economic development objectives.

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Further, U.S. Embassy-Baghdad and OSC-I should ensure their staffs match the specific lines of effort identified by an assessment, as AMAG did in Greece. Although current USM-I organization tables were not publicly available at the time of publication, this could involve significant reorganization. Yet, by overlapping civil-military efforts, developing a common approach toward common objectives, and ensuring form follows function, USM-I can maximize its ability to unify efforts and generate lasting results in Iraq.

Third, the U.S. Embassy-Baghdad and OSC-I should develop shared metrics. In the Greek case, the U.S. Embassy-Athens consolidated input from the civilian and the military sides and submitted one quarterly report based on shared metrics. The Greek

case demonstrated how ensuring that U.S. civilian and military personnel in Greece used the same set of metrics became a key enabler of unified effort. In contrast, Congress has been receiving at least three separate reports on Iraq: one from State, one from DoD, and one from the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction. Although Congress is responsible for dictating the reporting requirements, finding a way to consolidate reports to meet all of Congress's needs could go a long way toward further improving interagency unity of effort. And, while there is no evidence in open sources that suggests Congress is revising its reporting requirements, it is highly likely that it is, given the profound shift of the mission in Iraq. If USM-I were to produce an updated assessment that oriented efforts as clearly as the Porter assessment did in the Greek case, then it would be easy to imagine how appreciative Congress might be as it develops its new reporting requirements.

Undoubtedly, after years of war, the men and women at the U.S. Embassy–Baghdad and OSC-I are well-prepared to tackle the challenge of interagency cooperation. Nevertheless, the case of the U.S. response to the Greek Civil War suggests that unifying interagency efforts is among the essential ingredients to a successful State-led effort to conduct SSR and to defeat a lingering insurgency without any combat troops on the ground. And, as seen in the Greek case, the degree of unity of effort needed to perform embassy-led SSR is extraordinarily high. That said, the Greek case's implications for Iraq are particularly important. By updating the 2002 Future of Iraq assessment, USM-I can develop a shared civil-military understanding of the lines of effort and objectives that both U.S. Embassy–Baghdad and OSC-I must pursue. By developing their lines of effort and objectives together in a common setting on a common document, both the Embassy and OSC-I can ensure they are oriented and organized to get the most out of their efforts. And, by developing a set of shared metrics, USM-I can further improve unity of effort and develop a consolidated report that could facilitate, among other things, streamlined Congressional oversight.

Conclusion

Neither Ambassadors MacVeagh or Grady nor Lieutenant General Van Fleet went on to achieve great fame; nevertheless, their efforts in Greece were extremely consequential, ensuring that Greece would never again fall under Soviet influence. In 1948, President Truman called upon MacVeagh once again to serve in a critical post in Lisbon during the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Grady went on to serve as Ambassador to Iran. And,

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in 1951, the Army sent Van Fleet to Korea where he led the Eighth U.S. Army to several stunning military victories. Although none of them sought the limelight, it is clear that MacVeagh, Grady, and Van Fleet were exceptional leaders of their time, and their actions are truly worth emulating. In Greece, their ability to unify the efforts of their organizations—arguably unlike any U.S. interagency effort before or since—enabled the U.S. to defeat a residual insurgency without the commitment of a single U.S. combat soldier.

This paper highlights the extraordinary level of unified effort needed to successfully perform embassy-led SSR. In Iraq, as in Greece, civilian and military leaders must sharpen their shared understanding of the situation, integrate their efforts, and establish well-defined objectives and metrics. Informed by the Greek case study, this paper recommends that the U.S. Embassy-Baghdad and OSC-I update the 2002 Future of Iraq assessment, develop common lines of effort and objectives based on that assessment, and develop specific metrics to monitor and maximize their efforts.

Amid growing resource constraints, interagency cooperation will increasingly be an essential component of future U.S. endeavors. Although some have claimed that the problem of unifying effort is a new one, history reveals that the problem is not new at all. Indeed, the Greek case demonstrates how history can be an important guide. Although Iraq is a far less dangerous place than it was years ago, security remains tenuous. And although the U.S. continues to send its very best to Baghdad to solidify the gains so many have fought so hard to produce, this paper offers a sliver of perspective that might help them along the way. **IAP**

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