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- *Simons Center*

Global health security team disbanded

Rear Admiral R. Timothy Ziemer has left the National Security Council (NSC) and the global health security team he oversaw has been disbanded. Ziemer, described as “one of the most quietly effective leaders in public health,” was the Trump administration’s senior director for global health security and biodefense at the NSC, and he will not be replaced.

The move to dissolve the global health security team comes from national security advisor John Bolton on the same day that a new Ebola epidemic was declared in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While a spokesman stated that the NSC “remains committed to global health, global health security and biodefense,” there are concerns that Ziemer’s departure and loss of the global health security team leaves the U.S. at increased risk of pandemic or bioterrorism attack.

J. Stephen Morrison, senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, spoke on the subject, saying that “Health security is very fragmented, with many different agencies,” and that “means coordination and direction from the White House is terribly important.”

- *The Washington Post & The Atlantic*

USAID, State, DoD to release Stabilization Assistance Review

An interagency review of U.S. government stabilization efforts is expected as early as this month. The Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR) examines how the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of Defense (DoD) coordinate their diplomacy, aid, and military operations, primarily in Syria and Iraq.

A State Department official spoke of the SAR, saying “The SAR establishes a U.S. government-wide definition of stabilization as a political endeavor to create conditions where legitimate authorities and systems can manage conflict and prevent violence.”

According to a DoD spokesperson, “The SAR specifically outlines steps to establish a State Department-led interagency process for developing political strategies for all future stabilization engagement,” and will allow DoD, State, and USAID to take advantage of each other’s efforts to stabilize conflicted areas.

“Our success — USAID’s success — depends upon the success of the State Department in mobilizing international resources in their role, but also, of course, DoD helping us to have access and security. Without their success, we can’t possibly do what it is that we seek to do,” said USAID Administrator Mark Green.

Work on the SAR began in May 2017. State, USAID, and DoD – in consultation with the National Security Council – conducted research throughout 2017, finalizing the SAR in December. The SAR was distributed to congressional committees for review in April of this year and is expected to be publicly released shortly.

- *DevEx*