The Sound of One Hand Clapping:
The Expeditionary Imperative of Interagency Integration

by Jesse P. Pruett

> *Two hands clap and there is a sound. What is the sound of one hand?*
>
> —*Hakuin Ekaku*

When the civilian and military elements of the United States government work together effectively, each element complements the other, just as when two hands combine to produce a clap. The value of an integrated, whole-of-government approach to foreign relations can be understood as such a reciprocal display. On the other hand, when interagency mechanisms fail, the result is similar to the sound of one hand clapping, a silence which serves as an ominous metaphor for the future of U.S. foreign policy. In the movement toward the interagency ideal, analysts have identified significant shortcomings and continue to focus on the reform of interagency institutions and frameworks writ large. This focus is a necessary component of the way forward but minimizes the significant body of knowledge gained at the operational and tactical levels. The U.S. foreign policy community must work to adequately recognize the on-the-ground experience of this expeditionary-level interagency and capture its defining characteristics or risk losing the most fundamental piece of any eventual comprehensive interagency solution—its application at the point of impact.

THE EXPEDITIONARY INTERAGENCY

Since 9/11, personnel from a variety of organizations of the U.S. government have found themselves thrust together in environments characterized by austerity and the pervasive threat of violence. The defining traits of intergovernmental composition and assignment into insecure environments abroad creates what can be termed the "expeditionary interagency." An interagency team may be assembled around any number of focal points, such as energy policy, counterterrorism, or counternarcotics; however, the most challenging and perhaps most relevant configuration is

centered on the civil-military nexus of the "3-Ds" of defense, diplomacy, and development, as manifest in atmospheres of conflict or crisis. These expeditionary interagency teams form the pioneering edge of U.S. foreign policy and serve as a prototype vehicle for the future projection of U.S. interests into the nontraditional foreign engagements that have emerged since the end of the Cold War.

For more than ten years, observers have analyzed the performance of the most prominent manifestation of this team concept, the provincial reconstruction team (PRT), which collocates members of the key expeditionary agencies of the U.S. government together in selected locations throughout Afghanistan and Iraq. Now that U.S. military involvement in Iraq is negligible, and coalition forces in Afghanistan are headed for the exit, it may be tempting to dismiss these constructs as relics of an uncomfortable era. Perhaps it may be enough to walk away from Afghanistan and Iraq with the clear lesson learned: avoid such large-scale and complex enterprises. A focus on this view minimizes what may be the most critical and far-reaching national security implication to emerge from these two conflicts: institutions, frameworks, and policies are important, but the integration of national power is only as effective as its ultimate application.

While the ambitious attempts to transform nations under the banner of the Global War on Terrorism are probably not templates for the foreseeable future of U.S. foreign policy, the debate remains over how exactly this future will be defined. There are elements of the post-9/11 world that will certainly contribute context to the definition, including the rise of non-state actors, the impact of low-technology responses to conventional military might, and a greater parity among national powers as the bipolar era fades deeper into history.

Responding to these realities, the U.S. is adjusting the way it approaches its relations with other nations. Rather than a sudden and dramatic pivot, this adjustment is a response to gradual shifts in the global reality foreshadowed at the close of World War II and into the Cold War period, expanded during what some have termed the "small wars" of the 1990s, and solidified through recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. Largely due to these developments, interagency dexterity has become an imperative component of an effective foreign policy tool kit.

The True Imperative

One interpretation of this imperative is to focus at government and policy levels in order to produce talented bureaucratic operatives who are able to successfully navigate the labyrinthine corridors of Washington, DC. The problem is defined in executive, national-security-apparatus terms, and many of the remedies enacted thus far carry this top-down perspective.

Bureaucratic skills are vital to the long-term health of any interagency system. However, the true foreign policy imperative is to cultivate a new class of practitioner, one who effectively pursues U.S. interests abroad through a complementary integration of the varieties of talent represented within the myriad institutions of the U.S. government. Many reform efforts pay little attention to the significant progress made in the ranks by those who have responded to the call, despite the imperfections of those sounding the clarion.

Organizations must evolve from the organic, bottom-up influence of these expeditionary veterans. Therefore, there may be value in revisiting some of the fundamental arguments framing the current debate and refocusing the lens on areas where success or failure was evident either in spite of or perhaps even because of insufficient institutional support mechanisms.

The Policy Realm

Influenced by realities encountered during operations in Somalia, Haiti, and the Balkans, the Clinton Administration recognized the changing global landscape and the requirement for corresponding reform. In 1997, the Administration issued Presidential Decision Directive 56, which identified that, "While agencies of government have developed independent capacities to respond to complex emergencies, military and civilian agencies should operate in a synchronized manner through effective interagency management and the use of special mechanisms to coordinate agency efforts."[1]

Since that time, many government initiatives have been launched to codify and catalyze the interagency system and its application. Some of these are presented in Figure 1.

Government Initiated Interagency Initiatives and Guiding Documents
Following are just some of the more significant documents and initiatives (along with the sponsoring branch or agency) which capture the efforts of government to improve the interagency reality. This list is illustrative of the many efforts undertaken, but is not exhaustive. *DoS and DoD actions are treated as independent of the executive
1997   Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56 "Managing Complex Contingency Operations" (Executive)
2001   National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 01 "Organization of the National Security Council System" (Executive)
2004   The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) (State)
2005   National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 "Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization" (Executive)
2005   Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05 "Military Support to Security, Stabilization, Transition and Reconstruction" (Defense)
2006   Joint Publication (JP) 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations, Volumes I and II* (Defense)
2006-2010 Section 1207: Security and Stabilization Assistance Funds (State from Defense from Legislative)
2007   National Security Professional Development (NSPD) Program (Executive)
2007   National Security Executive Leadership Seminar (NSELS) (State)
2007   Interagency Management System (Executive via National Security Council)
2008   *The Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act (Title XVI of Public Law 110-447)* (Legislative)
2008   *National Security Professionals Act* (Legislative)
2008   Civilian Response Corps (Executive via State)
2008 & 2010 Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) Studies (Legislative mandate to Defense)
2009   Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 3000.05 "Stability Operations" (Defense)
2009   Department of Defense Directive 1404.10 "Civilian Expeditionary Workforce" (Defense)
2010   The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) (State)
2010   *Interagency National Security Professional Education, Administration, and Development System Act (INSPEAD)* (Legislative)
2010   Complex Crisis Fund (USAID via Legislative)
2011   NSPD "2.0" (Executive)
2011   Joint Publication (JP) 3-08, *Interorganizational Coordination During Joint Operations* (Defense)
2011   *Interagency Personnel Rotation Act* (Legislative)

Figure 1. Government Initiated Initiatives and Guiding Documents

The results of these intensive, high-level efforts are uninspiring. A 2008 House Armed Services Committee study declared, "Although efforts have been made over the last seven years attempting to improve interagency coordination and cooperation, the government has not gone far enough or fast enough to support the people in the field or accomplish the nation's mission."[2] As recently as March 2012, Senators John McCain and Tom Coburn highlighted some persistent weaknesses of these interagency efforts in a letter to Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, stating, "The Department of Defense's efforts in [the stabilization, reconstruction, and humanitarian assistance] space are similar to State and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) efforts, so

interagency coordination is vital…But, each of these agencies have failed to successfully monitor and evaluate their own humanitarian efforts—much less coordinate activities. GAO [Government Accountability Office] finds that information-sharing among them has been particularly problematic."[3]

So then, what is to be done? Foreign policy journals frequently analyze the causes of interagency cooperation and integration and also suggest roadmaps to achieving the whole-of-government ideal.[4] Think tanks, scholars, and officials have offered their various top-down prescriptions to remedy the ailments of the system, ranging from a Goldwater-Nichols-type reform, to the creation of a new department-level umbrella organization, to the formation of regional interagency command centers modeled on current combatant command structures. These approaches propose that the interagency system as a whole must be fundamentally transformed to achieve the desired results. This leaves the practitioners, those operating within the interagency reality, stuck looking upward, as hatchlings in the nest, waiting for the "solution" to be offered from above.

Looking Upward

While observers tend to agree on the existence of a problem, there is less consensus or clarity as to its exact nature. Nevertheless, three interrelated problems are frequently identified: (1) insufficient resources for the civilian agencies, (2) an inadequate or outdated structure, and (3) an imbalanced foreign affairs posture. The consistency with which these issues appear in the literature lends them some validity. However, organizations and practitioners must be careful to avoid relying on anticipated solutions to these problems, treating them as if they were prerequisites to advancing their own missions and goals. Considering each in turn reveals that their solutions are elusive and problematic.

Insufficient resources

If Congress would only give "us" more of what they give "them," then we would be fine. This view contends that there are too few people with too little funding in the civilian agencies, most notably the Department of State and the USAID. Too often this argument seems to hinge on civilian agencies' budgets and manpower in direct relation to that of the Department of Defense (DoD). It is true that the disparities between the size and funding of DoD and any other expeditionary contributor are stark, even accounting for natural economies of scale (no need for USAID naval fleets or State Department fighter squadrons). However, this distracts from the more critical reality that in absolute rather than relative terms the demand for the expeditionary services of these organizations has increased, while staffing and budgets have been reduced. The leadership at DoD has been unequivocal in its support. Secretary Gates argued for "a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national power."[5] Secretary Panetta, appearing alongside Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the National Defense University, reinforced the notion that ". . . our national security is our military power, our Defense Department, but it's also our diplomatic power and the State Department. . . [budget that is] absolutely essential to our national security."[6]

However legitimate and accepted the claims may be, institutions and practitioners must remain mindful of two constraining factors: (1) the budget line for Function 150 (international affairs) and related efforts may simply never be what advocates want it to be (as evidenced by the slight, below-the-rate-of-inflation budget increase requested in the State Department fiscal

year 2013 budget request[7]), and (2) the specific aspects of Iraq and Afghanistan, which demanded such unachievable elasticity of the civilian agencies, are unlikely to be replicated (e.g., scale of operations and simultaneity).

Given these realities, organizations may find value through capturing and internalizing the considerable talents and efficiencies that evolved in the past decade of in-the-field responses to demands with insufficient resources. For example, in testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Ryan Henry identified the disparity between the way the interagency works in the field and at headquarters, remarking, ". . . in the field, they can work interagency a lot of times much better than we can inside the beltway."[8] Many published reviews, audits, analyses, and reports include, along with their litany of suggested improvements, a fundamental agreement that at the operational and tactical levels personnel responded well and achievement was evident. In one comprehensive assessment, reviewers from a Princeton University-sponsored effort concluded, ". . . PRTs have reported enough positive feedback to suggest that sponsoring countries should continue funding them and expending energy and resources toward their improvement."[9] Clearly, there are lessons to be learned.

Inadequate structure

The institutions are anachronistic hold-overs of a bygone era that cannot hope to find relevance in a modern world that is changing more rapidly than its ability to adapt. In this view, the fundamental problems facing the interagency are structural: organizations themselves are unable to support a true interagency approach because of outdated mandates and inherent flaws in their construction. The interagency field has produced a spectrum of ideas, but there are no real, sweeping, reform measures being seriously considered by the executive or legislative branches. Absent an entirely new architecture, the theory holds that if new offices are established and new positions created, then we must be moving in the right direction. In fact, some of these efforts may actually exacerbate the problem: "Creating additional offices and institutions that have the appeal of 'signature initiatives' is more politically viable than broad institutional reform, even though this often compounds the problems of fragmentation and dilution of America's civilian tools of power."[10] As one author puts it, "Calls for institutional reform can sometimes feel like moving around the deck chairs on the Titanic. . . ."[11]

One prime example of the limitations of structural remedies is the State Department's experiment with its Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Created in 2004, it never really achieved the critical mass necessary to fulfill its role effectively. One critique argued that S/CRS was ". . . too weak to become an effective interagency lead for stabilization and reconstruction operations, and the causes of its weakness seem unlikely to be rectified soon. It is faced with limited interagency authority, resources, and capabilities."[12] Its functions were subsumed into the new Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) in 2011. It remains to be seen if CSO will enjoy a greater success than its predecessor, but there are encouraging signs that it is more aligned with expeditionary realities. As described in the State Department's fiscal year 2013 Executive Budget Summary, "The restructuring was designed to make the bureau more agile and expeditionary, with a greater emphasis on creating a flexible response capacity with a smaller staff. This will produce greater deployment capacity, but with significantly less overhead."[13] Regardless of CSO's specific performance, a realistic evaluation of the current playing field reveals the necessity of creative approaches at the operational levels and

below, since less, not more, will be provided from above.

FOREIGN POLICY IMBALANCE

Those in uniform hold disproportionate influence in foreign policy decision making and resource allocation, leading to a dangerous civil-military imbalance and projecting a dangerous military "face" on our international engagements. This position holds that the interagency cannot advance because the military is too powerful to be a partner. A fundamental tenet of this position is the presumed distinction between military and civilian areas of responsibility and the corollary belief that the military is encroaching upon civilian areas. The presumption itself is controversial, with its strongest arguments based on perspectives from within the nongovernmental or private voluntary humanitarian response community, whose expectations of a neutral "humanitarian space" are the most legitimate. But applied to the U.S. interagency community, it stands on shakier ground.

Since World War II, U.S. military involvement in traditional civilian domains, such as governance, economic development, and rule of law have usually come only in the shadow of armed conflict, when external civilian institutions were unable or unwilling to establish their support mechanisms within the impacted country. A contemporary demonstration of this occurred in 2003 when a series of car bombs in Iraq targeted key international civilian agencies including the headquarters of both the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. As a result of the violence, most agencies became marginalized. They retreated to neighboring countries, were sequestered behind fortified locations (as the supporting security apparatus had yet to be installed), or abandoned the effort altogether. This dilution of civilian-support capacity coupled with a corresponding increase in the support requirements of the populace left few options. The military, as unprepared and untrained for this mission as it was, became the default "best" choice to fill the void.

The incidents in Iraq were pivotal. Their aftermath marked the graduation of the civil-military interagency construct from an important but perhaps unnecessary or occasional aspiration to the level of a fundamentally, vital component for the implementation of a successful foreign policy in crisis and conflict situations. Further, the template for disruption that was provided to future spoilers meant that this component must endure beyond the immediate conflict. Simply put, it is irresponsible to not factor in military capability when contemplating intervention in a conflict/post-conflict or crisis scenario.

Yet it is precisely the military's role in the complex operations of Afghanistan and Iraq that fuels much of the operationally-based (as opposed to budgetary-based) claims of military intrusion into civilian space.

However, there is research that supports an alternative view. Civilian roles have also adapted in response to changes in the world, perhaps even moving into the traditional military space of conflict. One report by The Center for a New American Security identified significant growth in recent demand for State Department and USAID participation in "operations abroad that respond to conflicts and humanitarian and natural disasters," stating also that "requirements for these types of operations will likely continue well into the future."[14] Another study from the Center for Complex Operations evaluated complex operations from throughout the last century and concluded that, in fact, it is the U.S. military which has traditionally occupied this space and that civilian actors are the new players.[15]

The debate is, itself, a bit of a red herring, as the nature of an increased civil-military partnership is now an established reality. But it does serve to illustrate the interagency imperative, which has come about largely due to the dissolution of the traditional "black and white" divisions of responsibility and a corresponding increase in "gray space," which is neither entirely military nor civilian in scope. To facilitate mission execution within these gray spaces, agencies have modified their mandates. The military has embraced stability operations as a core mission "given priority comparable to combat operations and [to] be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DoD activities."[16] Civilian agencies themselves respond through making "conflict prevention and response a core mission," as highlighted in the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.[17] Thus, seemingly, with the representatives of defense, diplomacy, and development deliberately adopting overlapping missions, the expeditionary arena will continue to feature the nexus of civilian and military actors as the expectation rather than the exception.

THE LINES OF SIGHT

The institutional and policy level approaches are worthwhile in developing the systemic framework to facilitate long-term solutions and synchronicity among the elements of national power. Wholesale reform may indeed provide a top-down panacea for decades of a disconnected interagency. However the lack of results delivered so far and the necessities born of the operational environment have produced real, substantial lessons that can inform future success, even in the absence of significant increases in resources, structural reform, or a reduction in military involvement.

Expeditionary interagency practitioners have stood below, looking upward for the appropriate and necessary reform to be delivered from on high. Leaders and personnel at the expeditionary level can be left feeling as if the only alternative to this upward stare is to cast a downward glance and wait patiently for it to be sorted out. However, the development of the expeditionary interagency can progress, even as sponsoring organizations continue to craft a cohesive and comprehensive institutional plan. Continued development requires leaders and individuals to change their sight patterns from the vertical, looking-up-or-down paradigm and expand their vision by looking back, looking around, and looking forward to discover the already available potential. A proactive program of engagement by leaders and individuals within the expeditionary arena can complement and reinforce any broader institutional efforts.

LOOKING BACK

Do Iraq and Afghanistan matter? Some in the current interagency literati seem to consider the past decade an aberration. Iraq and Afghanistan have little to teach us because we shall not pass this way again. One prominent scholar/observer declared, ". . . operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are not the best guidelines for future reform in the interagency space. Interagency needs of the future cannot be extrapolated from these cases because future commitments likely will not be the result of a sizeable deployment of military forces."[18]

Certainly, it is prudent to guard against an over-reliance on models which may not reflect anticipated realities, especially when discussions center on institutional architectures. However, to dismiss the expeditionary interagency lessons either because of the scale of conflict or because of the significant military role misses two key points from the interagency point of view: (1) the conflicts

do not represent single, monolithic experiences, rather they are collections of interconnected but microcosmic experiences, and (2) these microcosmic experiences absolutely do contribute relevant guidelines for the future of interagency activities in the field.

The current expeditionary interagency class has already emerged from the forge of two of the most intricate, complex, and longest-lasting conflicts encountered by the U.S. They carry with them the scars of failure but also the blueprints for triumph in the face of conflict and chaos, and they have done so in the absence of an organized, well-defined, and systemic support or preparation architecture.

One RAND study identifies the experiences of the post 9/11 period as particularly fertile for producing ground-level interagency lessons, stating:

> It is striking that lessons learned and best practices in this area have emanated mostly from the field rather than at the national command level in Washington (or at NATO-Brussels). More often than not, lessons with the greatest utility for the future have emerged from what individual commands, missions, units, and individuals have done in practice in order to complete their assignments and achieve their broader goals. This has led to innovation and cooperation across institutional bureaucratic, and cultural boundaries, both military and civilian, and between U.S. government entities, international institutions, and nongovernmental organizations.[19]

The next generation of interagency platforms may span a spectrum of formats and configurations. However they are constructed, they will share many of the same characteristics and will need to overcome many of the same challenges as those encountered in the various PRT formats from Iraq and Afghanistan.

A new tradecraft. The changing face of the new expeditionary interagency is, as Secretary Clinton describes, ". . . deployed. . . to hot spots in more than 30 countries around the world. . . often in some of the most remote and least governed places on earth. They can be found camped alongside special forces, sleeping under mosquito nets in campsites hacked out of the jungle by machete, eating MREs [meals, ready to eat], hitching rides in the back of pickups to meet with local leaders—not the common image of a diplomat. But they are among the hundreds of State and USAID employees practicing a tradecraft that now lives at the intersection of diplomacy, development, and security."[20] Clearly, professionals arriving at this intersection can build upon the lessons provided from the past decade of tradecraft experience.

There are relevant and timely lessons to be harvested, and their application increases the potential for operational success. Such potential exists even if "there is little effort by the national security system to codify lessons learned from interagency team experience."[21] In the absence of an institutionalized harvesting process, leaders and individuals can create local lessons-learned centers where returning personnel provide input to an expanding database of extremely targeted lessons to be shared within the immediate office and perhaps among other internal and external consumers. At a minimum, leaders can familiarize themselves with the significant existing literature and create more informed and prepared team members, which will contribute to more successful interagency team experiences. The Center for Complex Operations, the United States Institute for Peace, the U.S. Army Center for Lessons Learned, and The Simons Center for the Study of Interagency Cooperation are just a few organizations that have conducted in-depth research and

published collections of lessons learned that are applicable at operational and tactical (or team) levels. Understanding the challenges, responses, and results of these team experiences may allow organizations to identify mechanisms that can bridge the gap of seemingly glacial institutional changes.

LOOKING AROUND

Existing templates. PRTs provide a wealth of tangible lessons, but there are other contemporary examples that may provide insights as well. Other organizations have been addressing interagency issues for some time, usually coalescing around specific problems sets, such as counterterrorism or counternarcotics. While the general lesson to be learned from these enterprises (as well as from the more directly-salient PRT experiences) is that the interagency can function effectively at the point of impact; the more valuable insights are gained by examining how they have achieved that effectiveness.

Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South) leverages the skills and abilities of a spectrum of agencies toward the shared goal of counternarcotics. Its model is not a direct corollary to the expeditionary interagency discussed here: JIATF-South relies on some significant institutional support, benefits from a relatively clear mission, and the cultural divides among participants' home agencies may be less pronounced (people-with-guns relating to people-with-guns). Nonetheless, its model "has earned a reputation as the 'gold standard' and 'crown jewel' of interagency cooperation and intelligence fusion."[22] Therefore a review of their maturation process and their emphasis on cultivating the interagency team may be instructive for those at various levels within the broader interagency.

The Special Operations community offers accessible interagency training, authors informative interagency reference handbooks (albeit focused on the counterterrorism mission), and draws from lessons learned in less explored areas (such as OEF-Philippines and Plan Columbia) to inform its future planning and operations. A review of its methodologies can provide insight to the military approach to "teaming" as well as demonstrating tangible lessons learned that may be considered for application or adaptation across the interagency spectrum.

In each of these representative cases, the organizations have documented and analyzed their own development and identified critical aspects of their evolution. The processes themselves are as informative as the results of these processes. An honestly introspective organization, at any level, allows its partners a level of insight that fosters the trust and understanding fundamental to interagency success.

"Left of boom." The term "left-of-boom" is instructive. In the fight against improvised explosive devices, one measure of progress is how effective U.S. countermeasures are at moving from reacting to the explosion ("the boom") to getting "left-of-boom" (before the explosion), either through identifying the device before it explodes or, ideally, interdicting the network behind the device so that it is never implanted in the first place. Applying this mindset to the interagency scenario, it is least effective to drop team members into the fray and force them to simply react to the new cultures they encounter. Instead, personnel must get "left-of-boom" to gain interactive, face-to-face exposure to the organizational cultures they will encounter. The ideal circumstance of individuals preparing in advance with the other members of the team may be unattainable. However, individuals should not be encountering the organizational cultures of their counterparts

for the first time in the crucible of the deployment zone.

To address this, current pre-deployment training incorporates, to varying degrees, civil-military components. The two-week Afghanistan pre-deployment training plan for USAID personnel includes a four-hour block of civil-military coordination (although aspects of the civil-military relationship are infused throughout the curriculum). Likewise, the sister sites of Camp Atterbury (DoD) and Muscatatuck (State Department) in Indiana serve multiple roles as training grounds for military and civilian personnel preparing to deploy to Afghanistan.

Policy and institutional level efforts consider the need for civil-military exposure through the advocacy of rotational assignments and shared training environments, some of which have already begun to bring diverse agency audiences together. But until these or similar initiatives become ingrained and expand to touch a more comprehensive set of expeditionary professionals, operational leaders and individuals are left with few viable options. They may adopt a passive stance and wait for Assistant Deputy Secretaries to pen Memoranda of Understanding before addressing this shortfall. Alternatively, they may proactively seek out remedies through informal partnerships with their counterparts. These remedies can include attending organizational functions, providing capability briefings to targeted groups of partner agencies, and invitations to observe or participate in training. Additionally, various training courses on a variety of relevant topics are offered to interagency audiences by the main organizational players and related bodies.[23] The training offered may itself be valuable, but the value is compounded by the opportunity for interagency exposure and development.

New Horizons. Beyond the opportunities presented by U.S.-based training, creative leaders and individuals can leverage existing or create new, systematic opportunities to train and interact in real-world circumstances that are free of the pressure or scrutiny of a combat or crisis zone. In these scenarios, the interagency practitioner is exposed to the austerity of the expeditionary environment but does not encounter the same level of pervasive insecurity. In this way, personnel may gradually improve their skill sets before the deeper test of conflict or crisis emerges.

One such example is Operation New Horizons, an ongoing set of actual military operations that may provide opportunities for this type of interaction. In these activities, military units deploy for training purposes to a Latin American or Caribbean nation, where they provide their particular expertise in support of a real-world need. Thus, for example, an Army National Guard well-drilling unit drills wells, Air Force light construction units address other infrastructure needs like bridges or roads, and military police units conduct training with indigenous forces in neglected areas of nations like Nicaragua or Haiti. Coordinating with relevant State Department, USAID, and Department of Agriculture components increases the value of the opportunity, providing the technical expertise of the agency representatives, while expanding the interagency fluency of all involved. These sorts of opportunities allow for new interagency professionals to experience a real-world expeditionary environment in less critical or threatening circumstances. Personnel are afforded the chance to explore the cultural differences and apply their skills in the context of actual operations, adding depth and texture to their interagency experience.

LOOKING AHEAD

Intercultural competence. Organizations have rhythms and personalities all their own. Most practitioners understand, for example, that the DoD and State Department have distinct personas.

Regardless of institutional specifics, it is critical that the very real existence of such cultures be not simply recognized, but highlighted, and their impact explored.

Culture, in general, is a clear focus for the primary expeditionary agencies. Military personnel today receive various pre-deployment classes that provide exposure to the language, customs, and culture of a destination country. Likewise, the State Department's Foreign Service Institute trains Foreign Service Officers and others in the language and national culture relevant to areas where they will serve. In both cases, interagency personnel deploying today receive a far greater level of cultural preparation than earlier expeditionary pioneers, who enjoyed little targeted pre-deployment training.

This level of cultural exposure is only addressing one facet of the total requirement. Successful expeditionary interagency practitioners recognize the fundamental requirement to develop at least a familiarization with, and ideally an eventual mastery of, not just the national cultures they will encounter, but also the cultures of the partner-agencies that comprise the team.

Leaders must foster a bottom-up approach to developing the cultural underpinning of the interagency. They must develop cultural literacy within their ranks by encouraging personnel to become adept at recognizing and integrating into not just national cultures, but the variety of cultural presentations they will intersect, including the organizational cultures of the interagency. This is what Dr. Milton J. Bennett, the founding director of The Intercultural Communication Institute, refers to as "intercultural competence."[24] Personnel must themselves also accept ownership of this aspect of the expeditionary interagency reality and seek out self-development opportunities to enhance their effectiveness and increase their own level of comfort. The development of an expeditionary culture within the government can help to usher U.S. foreign policy into the new role now demanded by the contemporary environment.

The expeditionary culture capitalizes on the independent capabilities and attributes of diverse organizational cultures to forge a shared set of team characteristics and operational constants that is flexible enough to respond to unique circumstances, yet solid enough to retain the shape of its core principles and goals. The ideal is to present an integrated team that leverages individual agency strengths toward achieving the U.S. mission abroad, despite the inherent situational challenges of insecurity and ambiguity.

IN SUMMARY

The teams that have defined the expeditionary interagency since 9/11 have emerged as a response to the unique situations encountered in Afghanistan and Iraq. While it is unlikely that the landscape for expeditionary interagency teams in the future will encounter the same large-scale military operations, they can still be expected to feature a significant, if limited, military presence. Regardless of any anticipated shift in the atmosphere for the deployment of expeditionary interagency teams, the fundamental lessons derived from their employment in Afghanistan and Iraq provide the richest vein of insight into the difficulties that future interagency constructs may face. The experiences of the PRTs provided a laboratory to explore the inherent realities of the expeditionary interagency and have done so in circumstances likely more difficult than future manifestations are anticipated to encounter.

Looking up provides an organization with a view of a multitude of high-level efforts designed to establish a responsive and relevant set of interagency support mechanisms. Someday these

reforms may deliver the ideal resources, structures, and balance to facilitate a seamless integration of interagency efforts. Until then, agencies, their mid-level leaders, and individual personnel can pursue an agenda of increased interagency competency and intercultural fluency. To this end, organizations should consider the **look back** and take advantage of the hard-earned lessons of PRT and other lines of insight in order to identify the critical factors most relevant to their role. Organizations should consider a **look around** for the successes of other contemporary interagency endeavors and for opportunities to prepare their personnel with interagency contexts outside of the intensity of conflict or crisis. Finally, the recognition that significant achievements were generated outside of ideal institutional conditions should catalyze the expeditionary offices of relevant agencies to **look forward** and foster an organizational climate that is conducive to expeditionary and interagency culture. Harnessing the combined perspectives from these looks can enable agencies to take positive action that is not dependent on reform measures.

To return to the titular dilemma of one hand clapping; one hand requires the other to produce the clap. But it is not merely the existence of the other hand or even its immediate presence that creates the sound. The clap is the result of the synchronized and deliberate purpose of each hand acting in concert with the other. Only through developing this ground-level understanding and execution in its expeditionary interagency professionals can the U.S. hope to produce the synchronized ovation sought through its broader institutional reforms. *IAE*

ENDNOTES

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