



National Security Professionals and Interagency Reform: Proposals, Recent Experience, and Issues for Congress

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Summary

There is a growing consensus among many practitioners and scholars, across the political spectrum, broadly in favor of reforming the U.S. government interagency system to encourage a more effective application of all elements of national power. The reform debates have included proposals and initiatives to establish and foster an interagency community of national security professionals (NSPs) from all relevant departments and agencies. According to proponents, NSPs, through participating in activities that might include shared educational and training opportunities, and rotational tours in other agencies, would gain a better understanding of the mandates, capabilities, and cultures of other agencies. They would become better prepared to plan national security missions with counterparts from other agencies and to execute those missions at home and abroad, and eventually become better able to oversee their own agencies' efforts from leadership positions.

Such recommendations are not new, but real-world events over the past decade—the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and U.S. government responses to natural disasters at home, including Hurricane Katrina—gave the debates a greater sense of urgency by underscoring room for improvement in the ability of the U.S. government to integrate the various components of its efforts.

Congressional interest has emerged in both houses, on both sides of the aisle, and from multiple committees. That interest was manifested in part by the introduction of NSP-related legislation in the 110th, 111th, and 112th Congresses.

In the executive branch, in 2007, the Bush Administration launched the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program, based on the three pillars of education, training, and rotational service. The program included an oversight structure and participation by multiple agencies, including many not traditionally focused on national security. In 2011, the Obama Administration reinvigorated the NSPD program, giving it a streamlined new emphasis on accomplishing missions, and adopting Emergency Management as the initial focus area.

This report focuses primarily on analyzing key issues that Members of Congress may wish to consider in evaluating existing or proposed NSP initiatives, including the fundamental purpose; the concept of integration; the scope of participation; practical modalities for making the program work; the role of centralized oversight; incentive structures for individuals and agencies; recruiting; and congressional oversight. For context, the report also describes early NSP proposals; U.S. government strategic guidance; the experiences of the NSPD program to date; and significant congressional initiatives. It makes illustrative use of the military's Joint Qualification System, perhaps the closest U.S. government analogue.

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Introduction

There is growing momentum among many national security practitioners and scholars, across the political spectrum, broadly in favor of reforming the interagency system to encourage a more effective application of all elements of national power.¹ One subset of these interagency reform discussions has focused on the cultivation of a community of national security professionals (NSPs) from all relevant departments and agencies. According to proponents, NSPs, through some combination of shared education and training, and rotational tours of duty in other agencies, would gain a better understanding of the mandates, capabilities, and cultures of other agencies. Such preparation would enable NSPs to more effectively craft strategy and plan and execute national security missions together. These shared practices, proponents add, would eventually lead to broader organizational cultural change across U.S. government agencies, as NSPs, for whom interagency collaboration would become second nature, reach senior leadership positions.

Such recommendations are not new, but they were given a new sense of urgency by operational experiences at home and abroad over the last 10 years—from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the responses to Hurricane Katrina—which suggested insufficiencies in the ability of the U.S. government to integrate and apply the various components of its efforts.

In 2007, in response to growing concerns, the Bush Administration launched the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program, based on an Executive Order (E.O.) and a published national strategy. The program took shape slowly, and then endured a pause in its development at the change of administration, but in 2011, the Obama Administration revised the NSPD program and refined its focus. Meanwhile, over the last several years, Members of Congress have expressed interest in the cultivation of national security professionals by holding hearings, directing the conduct of independent studies, and introducing related legislation.

This report focuses on issues that Members of Congress may wish to consider in crafting or providing oversight for NSP initiatives. For context, it also describes key early proposals; the experiences of the NSPD program to date; current U.S. government strategic guidance; and significant congressional initiatives.

Background

Calls for the cultivation of national security professionals to help improve interagency integration date back at least to the immediate aftermath of World War II. They were given fresh impetus by lessons learned from recent operational experiences at home and abroad.

Early Reform Proposals

The largest major contingency of the 20th century, World War II, prompted some calls to use professional development tools to improve the nation's ability to apply all of its critical instruments of power more effectively. In the war's immediate aftermath, the War Department

¹ For an overview of the current national security reform debates, see CRS Report RL34455, *Organizing the U.S. Government for National Security: Overview of the Interagency Reform Debates*, by Catherine Dale, Nina M. Serafino, and Pat Towell.

commissioned a study of military officer education and tasked Army Lieutenant General Leonard Gerow to lead it. In February 1947, the study team issued its findings, including a recommendation for the establishment of a National Security University. The University would bring together and educate practitioners not just from the military but also from all other security-related agencies, broadly defined. The University would include the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF, which had already been established), as well as four new schools—a National War College, a joint administrative college, a joint intelligence college, and a Department of State college.² As it turned out, of the proposed new institutions, only the National War College (NWC) was established, and in 1976, ICAF and the NWC were brought together under the new National Defense University, designed to pool the intellectual resources of the defense community.

Fifty years later, in the aftermath of the Cold War and during a time of expanding U.S. government involvement in nation-building missions, the National Defense Panel (NDP) recommended the establishment of an interagency cadre based on long-term, multi-faceted career development.³ The NDP itself, a “nonpartisan, independent panel,” was established by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 1997 to assess and report on the execution by the Department of Defense (DOD) of the 1997 quadrennial defense review process.⁴ The NDP recommended creating:

an interagency cadre of professionals, including civilian and military officers, whose purpose would be to staff key positions in the national security structures. Such a cadre would be similar in spirit to the “joint” experience envisioned by the 1986 *Goldwater-Nichols Act*. Attention should be given to their education, development, and career development [sic]. A certain number of “interagency” slots should be identified within the national security community, including domestic agencies that have foreign affairs responsibilities (e.g. Justice, Commerce, Energy) and staffed by the interagency cadre.

The panel further recommended that to support the new cadre, a national security curriculum should be established, “combining course work at the National Defense University and the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, with a mix of civilian, military, and foreign students to receive training and education in strategic affairs.”⁵

² See John W Yeager, “Developing National Security Professionals,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 49, 2nd quarter 2008, p.155. Yeager cites Leonard T. Gerow, “Report of War Department Military Education Board on Education System for Officers of the Army,” February 1946, 10, Special Collections, National Defense University Library, Washington, DC.

³ Earlier that year, in May 1997, the Clinton Administration had issued Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD 56), which also aimed at fostering greater interagency coordination, but with a more immediate operational purpose and a narrower substantive focus. PDD 56 required the National Security Council, working with “appropriate U.S. Government educational institutions,” to “develop and conduct an interagency training program,” with the goal of training mid-level managers in political-military planning for complex contingency operations. Thus, the goal was training current practitioners to do their current jobs better, rather than fostering a new professional cadre through long-term career development that might include training as one component. See White House White Paper on Presidential Decision Directive 56, “Managing Complex Contingency Operations,” May 1997, available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd56.htm>.

⁴ *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997*, P.L. 104-201, September 23, 1996. Section 924 provided the mandate for the NDP. Section 923 established the one-time requirement for the quadrennial [sic] defense review process that the NDP was to assess.

⁵ National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century*, U.S. Department of Defense, December 1997.

In February 2001, as part of a larger package of proposed national security reforms, the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century (the “Hart-Rudman Commission”) proposed the creation of an interagency cadre called the National Security Service Corps (NSSC) and spelled out its recommendations in detail. The goal would be developing leaders “skilled at producing integrative solutions to U.S. national security policy problems.” The program would include full-spectrum career development, including rotational assignments and professional education, and these experiences would be prerequisites for “hold[ing] certain positions or to be promoted to certain levels.” The scope of “national security” would be broadly defined—participating departments would include “Defense, State, Treasury, Commerce, Justice, Energy, and the new National Homeland Security Agency.” The proposals focused only on civil servants—the military, the intelligence community, and the Foreign Service would be excluded.

To help integrate the efforts by multiple agencies, the Hart-Rudman Commission recommended the creation of an “interagency advisory group.” The group would ensure that promotion rates for the NSSC were at least comparable to those elsewhere in the Civil Service, and would help establish guidelines for rotational assignments and for meeting professional education requirements. Departments would retain control over their own personnel and would continue to make promotion decisions. The Commission believed that specific legislative authority for such an initiative was not necessary.⁶

In 2005, the Beyond Goldwater-Nichols project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) made a very similar recommendation, noting its debt to the Hart-Rudman Commission. They proposed and described the creation of a “national security career path that would give career professionals incentives to seek out interagency experience, education, and training.” To the Hart-Rudman proposals, the CSIS team added that to make the program workable for civilian agencies, “Congress should approve a 10% float”—additional personnel—to allow participation in training, education, and exchange programs.⁷

Lessons Learned

In recent years, the interagency reform debates received a powerful jumpstart from the convergence of “lessons learned” thinking in the homeland security and traditional national security communities, developed to assess operational experiences, respectively, in response to Hurricane Katrina, and in Iraq and Afghanistan. Members of both communities concluded that fostering an interagency cadre of specialists would help improve coordination in the future. The convergence of national and homeland security thinking gave additional weight to the basic recommendation, but it also introduced a fundamental tension concerning the relative importance of national and homeland security considerations.

⁶ The United States Commission on National Security/ 21st Century (“Hart-Rudman Commission”), *Road Map for National Security: Imperative for Change, Phase III Report*, February 15, 2001, pp. xvi, 101 - 102.

⁷ Clark A. Murdock and Michele Flournoy, Lead Investigators, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era, Phase 2 Report*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2005, p. 40. The “10%” figure, frequently cited in discussions of the possible creation of a civilian “float,” was borrowed from the rough percentage used by the military services. In practice, civilian agencies might require a larger or smaller percentage float, depending on the formats of the education and training programs they adopt, on the modalities for rotational assignments, and on how backfill requirements are defined.

Homeland Security: Hurricane Katrina

In February 2006, then-Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Frances Fragos Townsend submitted to President Bush the report *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, which described the state of national preparedness before Katrina's landfall and assessed the responses in the immediate aftermath. The report highlighted numerous challenges responding organizations faced in trying to coordinate their efforts—for example, communicating with one another effectively, given that some communications systems were mutually incompatible and others were rendered inoperable by natural events. The report made 125 recommendations for change.⁸ Among those recommendations, the report called for the creation of a “comprehensive program for the professional development and education of the Nation's homeland security personnel,” with the goal of fostering “a ‘joint’ Federal Interagency, State, local and civilian team.” The scope of the proposed program would thus be broad, including federal, state, and local officials as well as emergency management personnel from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based and community groups.

To implement such a program, the *Katrina Lessons Learned* report, like the Hart-Rudman Commission report, prescribed a de-centralized division of labor with only limited centralized oversight. While the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) would establish the professional development program, each participating agency would determine which of its offices played homeland security roles, and what preparation they would need in order to execute those responsibilities. Each agency would establish its own professional development program, including “career assignments, education, exercises, and training.” The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in turn, would set up an interagency working group to establish shared goals and standards for measuring individual agency progress—a collaboration among equals.

The *Katrina Lessons Learned* report also called for making both education and rotational tours in other agencies prerequisites for “senior managerial positions.” It argued that legislation should be considered to support this provision.

National Security: Iraq and Afghanistan, and Goldwater-Nichols

Meanwhile, early operational experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan led many participants and observers to conclude that U.S. government interagency coordination in the decision-making, strategy-making, and planning and execution for national security activities left much to be desired. For example, in the case of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), some practitioners and observers suggested that an insufficiently rigorous National Security Council decision-making process failed to appropriately define objectives or to assign roles and missions among agencies ahead of time; that agencies conducted insufficient planning for post-war considerations; and that in the execution of the formal occupation of Iraq, from 2003 to 2004, agencies found it difficult to collaborate smoothly and seamlessly.⁹

⁸ Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, February 2006, pp.119-120, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned.pdf>.

⁹ See for example Nora Bensahel, et.al., “After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq,” RAND Arroyo Center, 2008. For an overview of OIF planning and execution, including summary of major critiques, see CRS Report RL34387, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results, and Issues for Congress*, by Catherine Dale.

At the Department of State, these and other operational experiences contributed to the decision to establish, in 2004, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), with the mandate to help develop policies and procedures to enable more effective integration of effort in planning and execution, in future contingencies.¹⁰

Within the Department of Defense, for many senior military officers, the apparent need for closer integration of effort across U.S. government agencies suggested that the military's experiences integrating the military services under the umbrella of "jointness," based on the *Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986*, might be germane. In 2004, then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Corps General Peter Pace, in a series of public speeches and addresses to DOD war college audiences, suggested that the nation might need a "Goldwater-Nichols for the interagency." He emphasized the value that "cross-pollination," trust, and understanding among agencies could have, and he stressed the fact that within DOD, the Services "had to be forced" into jointness by legislation.¹¹

Goldwater-Nichols is a touchstone for the uniformed military—both a watershed event for today's senior leaders, and a fundamental way of doing business for junior officers—so it is no surprise that it provides a basis of comparison for many, in thinking about possible interagency reform. In common parlance, "Goldwater-Nichols" refers to the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* itself (P.L. 99-433, October 1, 1986), and to the ongoing process of implementing and adapting the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, including follow-on amendments to Title 10, U.S. Code, and associated updates to DOD practices and policies.

The 1986 act ushered in fundamental defense reorganization, aimed at reducing inter-Service rivalries and fostering greater "jointness" among the Services. The act began by defining what the new concept "joint" meant, thereby bounding the substantive scope of the act. It stated, "the term 'joint matters' means matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, including matters relating to—(1) national military strategy; (2) strategic planning and contingency planning; and (3) command and control of combat operations under unified command."¹²

¹⁰ For an overview of the history of S/CRS and related initiatives, see CRS Report RL32862, *Peacekeeping/Stabilization and Conflict Transitions: Background and Congressional Action on the Civilian Response/Reserve Corps and other Civilian Stabilization and Reconstruction Capabilities*, by Nina M. Serafino.

¹¹ General Peter Pace, USMC, Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Extemporaneous Remarks as delivered to the Marine Corps Association/ Naval Institute's Forum 2004," September 7, 2004, available at http://www.jcs.mil/vice_chairman/speeches/MCANavalInstituteFORUM2004.html, and Interview with Gen Pace, 2005.

¹² The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-433, §401, amended Title 10, U.S. Code, creating the new §668. The subsequent legislative history of the section suggests the premise that key concepts may evolve over time, in response to the changing global context; and also that clearly describing important concepts can be a challenge. The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §519(a), which amended Title 10, U.S. Code §668(a), revised and expanded the definition of 'joint matters' to mean: "matters related to the achievement of unified action by multiple military forces in operations conducted across domains such as land, sea, or air, in space, or in the information environment, including matters relating to (A) national military strategy; (B) strategic planning and contingency planning; (C) command and control of operations under unified command; (D) national security planning with other departments and agencies of the United States; and (E) combined operations with military forces of allied nations. The 2007 NDAA added that in this context, the term 'multiple military forces' refers: "... to forces that involve participants from the armed forces and one or more of the following: (A) Other departments and agencies of the United States, (B) The military forces or agencies of other countries, (C) Non-governmental persons or entities." This wording thus indicated—some observers believe unintentionally—that "unified action" by U.S. military forces qualifies as 'joint' only those forces are joined by other U.S. agencies, other countries' militaries, or NGOs.

To achieve greater “jointness,” the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* and related later amendments to Title 10, U.S. Code, created and elaborated a professional development system for joint qualified officers, including requirements for both education and joint duty assignments.¹³ The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2007* made an important revision, amending Title 10, U.S. Code, to establish a four-tiered system of joint qualification that emphasized career-long development and introduced more flexible options for meeting the requirements.¹⁴ As the amended Title 10 now states: “The purpose of establishing such qualification levels is to ensure a systematic, progressive, career-long development of officers in joint matters and to ensure that officers serving as general and flag officers have the requisite experience and education to be highly proficient in joint matters.”¹⁵

To make the new system work, the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* and follow-on legislation established links between “jointness” and career progression. In the first place, the legislation took steps to ensure that pursuing “jointness” would have no negative repercussions on individual career advancement, by supporting parity in promotion decisions concerning “joint” officers and their peers.¹⁶

In addition, in order to create a strong incentive for individual participation, the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* established joint service as a requirement for promotion to the rank of general or flag officer.¹⁷ The *NDAA for FY2002* strengthened the requirements for promotion to general or flag

¹³ The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-433, §401(a), amended Title 10, U.S. Code, by inserting Chapter 38 “Joint Officer Management,” including §661 through §668, which introduced the requirement for both education and experience to earn joint designation. The *Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005*, October 28, 2004, P.L. 108-375, §532(a), elaborated on education requirements by amending Title 10, U.S. Code, adding a new Chapter 107, “Professional Military Education,” §2151-2157. In addition to adding new language, the changes included striking some subsections of the previous Title 10 U.S. Code, §663 and transferring others to the new Chapter 107.

¹⁴ The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §516, amending Title 10, U.S. Code, §661. The amendment replaced the older term “joint specialty officers” with “officers who are joint qualified.” Under the revised system, all officers are approved for Level I qualification at commission; and on achieving Level III qualification, an individual is considered a Joint Qualified Officer (JQO). In July 2007, DOD unveiled its revised and renamed Joint Qualification System, reflecting the FY2007 NDAA changes. See joint briefing by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff, “Joint Officer Management: Joint Qualification System (JQS) 101,” July 2007, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/briefings/JQS-101-20070707.ppt>; and Department of Defense Instruction number 1300.19, “DOD Joint Officer Management Program,” dated October 31, 2007, incorporating Change 2, February 16, 2010, signed by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

¹⁵ Title 10, U.S. Code, §661(b)(1)(A), as amended by the *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §516(b).

¹⁶ Title 10, U.S. Code, §662, added by the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-433, §401(a), tasked the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the qualifications of officers assigned to joint duty assignments were such that officers serving on the Joint Staff, and officers who have the joint specialty were “promoted at a rate not less than the rate for officers of the same armed force in the same grade and competitive category who are serving on or have served on the headquarters staff of their armed force”; and that officers serving in joint duty assignments were promoted “at a rate not less than for all officers of the same armed force in the same grade and competitive category.” This measure may be seen as protection and support for those officers undertaking joint service, and also as insurance that services would select well-qualified officers to serve in joint assignments. The *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §517, amended Title 10, U.S. Code, §662 to remove the provision concerning promotion of officers with the “joint specialty” and leaving only those provisions concerning promotion rates for those officers serving on the Joint Staff and in joint duty assignments.

¹⁷ The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, P.L. 99-433, §404, amended Title 10, U.S. Code, §619 by adding subsection (e), which began: “(1) An officer may not be selected for (continued...)”

officer, to include serving a “full tour” of duty in a joint duty assignment, as well as achieving joint designation.¹⁸

The concept of a “Goldwater-Nichols for the interagency” was institutionalized in DOD strategic thinking in 2005, during the conduct of the congressionally mandated quadrennial defense review (QDR) process.¹⁹ The *QDR Report* called specifically for an interagency cadre: “the Department supports the creation of a National Security Officer (NSO) corps—an interagency cadre of senior military and civilian professionals able to effectively integrate and orchestrate the contributions of individual government agencies on behalf of larger national security interests.” In putting forward this proposal, the *QDR Report* also specifically invoked the joint duty assignment provisions of Goldwater-Nichols, noting, “Much as the Goldwater-Nichols requirement that senior officers complete a joint duty assignment has contributed to integrating the different cultures of the Military Departments into a more effective joint force, the QDR recommends creating incentives for senior Department and non-Department personnel to develop skills suited to the integrated interagency environment.”²⁰ The *QDR Report* was issued in February 2006, the same month that the *Katrina Lessons Learned* report was released.

Recent Developments

In recent years, the George W. Bush and then Obama Administrations have supported fostering a community of national security professionals, both by establishing and maintaining an NSP program and by issuing strategic guidance. Simultaneously, some Members of Congress have pursued the cultivation of an NSP community by mandating studies, conducting hearings, and drafting legislation that would establish a permanent NSP requirement. Until recently, these relatively low-key executive and legislative branch efforts took place largely in isolation from one another.

Administration Initiatives: National Security Professional Development Program

In May 2007, as a direct outgrowth of the convergence of national and homeland security “lessons learned,” the Bush Administration launched the original National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program.²¹ Under the Obama Administration, after an initial period of

(...continued)

promotion to the grade of brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) unless the officer has served in a joint duty assignment.” Section 619(e)(2) described conditions under which the Secretary of Defense might waive that requirement. The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994*, November 30, 1993, P.L. 103-160, §931(a) amended Title 10, U.S. Code, Chapter 36, by relocating these provisions from §619 to a new §619a.

¹⁸ The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002*, December 28, 2001, P.L. 107-107, §525(a), which amended Title 10 U.S. Code, §619a(a).

¹⁹ The permanent QDR requirement is found in Title 10, U.S. Code, §118, added by the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000*, October 5, 1999, P.L. 106-65, §901.

²⁰ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 6, 2006, p. 79, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf>.

²¹ The acronym was potentially confusing because during both terms of the George W. Bush Administration, “NSPD” also stood for National Security Presidential Directive.

relative stasis, the program was revived in substantially revised form. Under both Administrations, the most basic aim of the program has been to improve interagency collaboration by cultivating a community of national security professionals (NSPs).

NSPD Under the Bush Administration

Under the Bush Administration, despite apparently broad and long-standing support for the establishment of such an initiative, the NSPD program was launched quietly and without much fanfare, and few senior officials spoke about it publicly.²²

Mandate

There was no legislative mandate for the creation of the NSPD program. It was established on the basis of Executive Order (E.O.) 13434 issued in May 2007, and further elaborated by the *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals* (“*National Strategy*”), released in July 2007.²³ The *National Strategy* recognized both *Katrina Lessons Learned* and the 2006 *QDR* as direct inspirations for the creation of the program.

According to the E.O., the broad purpose of the NSPD program was “to enhance the national security of the United States, including preventing, protecting against, responding to, and recovering from natural and manmade disasters.” The program aimed to achieve such enhancement by providing opportunities in three areas, or “pillars”—education, training, and professional experience—and by linking progress through the program with career opportunities.²⁴

Scope

One of the most fundamental challenges the designers of the NSPD program faced was to define the program’s scope in terms of both substance and participation: how far ought the parameters of “national security” extend? And who exactly should be included?

From the outset, the program pointedly defined “national security” to include both “traditional national security and homeland security missions.”²⁵ The *National Strategy* attempted to refine

²² One exception was a reference by then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in January 2008, who, naming the NSPD program as one of a number of recent interagency reforms, mentioned one of its components and described it somewhat incorrectly. He said: “A new Executive Order on national security professional development encourages Foreign Service officers and civil servants from State as well as the military and other departments to serve tours in other agencies in a way that enhances their career and promotion prospects.” NSPD welcomed the participation of military officers and Foreign Service Officers in its activities but did not formally mandate their participation. See Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Remarks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 26, 2008, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1211>.

²³ Executive Order 13434, May 17, 2007, “National Security Professional Development,” available at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070517-6.html>; and *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, July 2007, available at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/ASSETS/13DCDB52B7D7453A9F78343E46F11F99/National%20Strategy%20for%20Professional%20Development.pdf>.

²⁴ E.O. 13434, Section 1.

²⁵ *National Strategy*, p. 1.

that definition by stating, somewhat circularly, that “national security missions” were those necessary for the implementation of a series of national strategies:

among others, the *National Defense Strategy*, the *National Drug Control Strategy*, the *National Intelligence Strategy*, the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, the *National Strategy for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*, the *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, the *National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets*, the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Response Plan*, the *National Cyber Security Strategy*, and the *War on Terrorism National Implementation Plan*.²⁶

This statement provided practical but not conceptual guidance concerning the bounds of “national security.”

Without a crisp definition of “national security” itself, the NSPD program struggled to determine which categories of personnel ought to participate.

- **Levels of Government:** While the initial intent of the NSPD program, which pointedly included homeland security in its conceptual scope, appeared to be to include all levels of government, the focus subsequently narrowed to the federal level. The NSPD E.O. stated that the NSPD program’s “opportunities shall be provided across ... levels of government”; and it directed that the Secretary of Homeland Security “develop a program to provide to Federal, State, local and tribal government officials education in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery plans and authorities, and training in crisis decision-making skills.”²⁷ Yet the language of the *National Strategy* repeatedly suggested that NSPs are exclusively federal government employees. For example, the *Strategy*’s first paragraphs asserted that success depends on “heightened collaboration and a mutual understanding ... across the Federal Government.” The *Strategy* also noted: “A national security professional development framework must utilize existing and new opportunities to develop Federal Government professionals with the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences necessary for them to carry out their national security responsibilities effectively.”²⁸
- **Three Special Categories:** The NSPD E.O. created special conditions for three categories of federal professionals: the military, the Foreign Service, and the intelligence community. According to NSPD officials, as the E.O. was being drafted, these communities, all of which already maintained their own robust career development programs, expressed concerns that full incorporation into the NSPD program would impose undue additional burdens in terms of time and resources required.²⁹ The E.O. clearly indicated the intent that these three communities contribute to the implementation of the *National Strategy*. At the same time, it specifically freed them from oversight by the NSPD program governing hierarchy. Instead, it tasked their respective agency heads to “issue rules or guidance on professional development programs ... to implement the

²⁶ *National Strategy*, p. 2.

²⁷ E.O. 13434, Sections 2, 5(e).

²⁸ *National Strategy*, p. 1, 3.

²⁹ Communications from NSPD officials, 2008.

national strategy,” and directed that in doing so they “shall coordinate such programs to the maximum extent practicable with the [NSPD] Steering Committee.”³⁰

Within these parameters, the original NSPD program used positions—or billets—to determine individual participation. The E.O. specifically defined national security professionals as “current and future professionals in national security positions.”³¹ Agencies were tasked to identify NSP billets, and current occupants of those billets were “in” to the program by virtue of the seats they occupied. Missing, according to some officials, was a mechanism for identifying “future” NSPs, in the language of the E.O., as well as a system for tracking and effectively utilizing NSPs once they had completed program requirements and left designated NSP billets.

In 2008, the NSPD program provided a rough order of magnitude estimate that the program would eventually include approximately 20,000 federal government employees, of whom about 1,500 would be Senior Executive Service members, and the rest GS-13s through GS-15s (and their rank equivalents).³² At the time, some officials familiar with the program suggested that these numbers seemed low, and they wondered which positions at the Department of Defense, for example, would not logically fall under the rubric of national security. Others suggested that the relatively low numbers had a practical explanation—the NSPD program tasked individual departments and agencies to produce lists of their respective NSP positions, but provided no additional resources to support NSP education, training, or other programs, so agencies may have had an incentive to lowball the total numbers reported.

Organization and Structure

In general, governance of the original NSPD program was characterized by relatively weak central administration and largely decentralized execution. Specific leadership roles, and the relationships among key NSPD bodies, shifted during the course of implementation.

The May 2007 E.O. created an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to provide senior-level oversight of the NSPD program. The E.O. specified that the ESC would be chaired by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The ESC’s relatively extensive membership, reaching beyond the bounds of those agencies traditionally concerned with national security, included the principals or their designees from the Departments of State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, Education, and Homeland Security; as well as the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In practice, according to participants, once the program was established, agency designees tended to be senior human capital professionals.³³ In late 2007, leadership of the ESC shifted—rather abruptly, some observers noted—from OPM to OMB, under the personal direction of then-Deputy Director for Management Clay Johnson. The shift took place after OPM, in accordance

³⁰ E.O. 13434, Section 5. The E.O. referred to “DOD military personnel,” leaving open the possibility that the non-DOD military service, the U.S. Coast Guard, might be included.

³¹ E.O. 13434, Section 1.

³² Communications from NSPD officials, 2008.

³³ For example, the representative for the Office of the Secretary of Defense came from OSD (Personnel and Readiness). The Joint Staff, which had a separate seat at the table, was represented by the J7, which is responsible for joint force development.

with Section 3 of the E.O., had met a major program milestone by submitting the initial plan for the *National Strategy*.

The E.O. provided that the ESC report jointly to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs—a dual reporting chain that emphasized the program’s combined emphasis on national and homeland security matters.

As established by the E.O. the ESC’s broad mandate—to “facilitate the implementation of the *National Strategy*”—was relatively weak, and individual agencies were designed to be the primary engines of the effort. Agencies were tasked to craft career development initiatives under the NSPD umbrella, and it would be the function of the ESC to “coordinate, to the maximum extent practicable, national security professional development programs and guidance issued by the heads of agencies in order to ensure an integrated approach to such programs.”³⁴ The *National Strategy* elaborated on this theme, arguing that core competencies and requirements differed among agencies, and therefore the goal was not “a single human resource or career development standard,” but rather the “integration of national security professional development resources and opportunities.”³⁵

In early 2008, the NSPD Integration Office (IO) was established with the mandate to coordinate NSPD-related activities among agencies on behalf of the ESC. The NSPD IO was led, under the Bush Administration and in the first years of the Obama Administration, by retired Army Major General William Navas, Jr., a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. He was supported initially by a senior executive detailed from the Central Intelligence Agency and a handful of staff provided by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. DOD provided the office with a limited operating budget. With its skeleton staff, relatively limited resources, and limited authority, the IO performed a monitoring rather than an enforcement function: conveying ESC guidance to participating agencies, encouraging and tracking agency implementation, coordinating efforts among agencies, and reporting back to the ESC.

The structure of the original NSPD program also included the National Security Education and Training Consortium (NSETC), a virtual network of public and private institutions providing relevant national security education and/or training. The NSETC was led by a board of directors, created in late spring 2008 and mandated to establish criteria for admitting new members to the consortium, to facilitate coordination and information-sharing among members, and to address any identified gaps.³⁶ The board included representatives from NSPD participating agencies, and it enjoyed significant support from the U.S. Institute of Peace.

³⁴ Executive Order, Section 3(c).

³⁵ *National Strategy*, p.3. The strategy added: “It is the responsibility of each Federal department and agency with a role in national security to reform and enhance its professional development programs in conformity with Executive Order 13434 and this Strategy,” p. 4.

³⁶ See William Navas, Jr., Statement for the Record, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, April 30, 2009.

Program Pillars: Education, Training, and Experience

In accordance with the guidance in E.O. 13434, the original NSPD program focused on three “pillars”: education, training, and rotational service in other agencies. These pillars broadly echoed the basic planks of the military’s Joint Qualification System. In practice, in NSPD’s decentralized construct, the pillars were implemented to varying degrees and in varied ways, from agency to agency, frequently drawing on and modifying their own pre-existing programs in order to meet NSPD intent.

For the education pillar, the NSPD *National Strategy* stated that the federal government would “establish a broad interagency education system.” To that end, rather than create new programs from scratch, the ESC was tasked first to inventory existing programs inside and outside government, to synchronize and provide curricula as needed, to enable virtual connectivity among agencies and educational institutions, and to consider a wide array of possible formats including short-term programs and distance learning.³⁷

The educational pillar of the NSPD program drew on a pre-existing effort at the Department of Defense aimed at pooling educational resources under the broad banner of national security. The 2006 *QDR Report*, borrowing terminology from a 1947 study by the War Department, had called for the transformation of the National Defense University (NDU), located at Fort McNair in Washington, DC, into a “true National Security University.” As the *QDR Report* described it, the new institution would be “tailored to support the educational needs of the broader U.S. national security profession. Participation from interagency partners will be increased and the curriculum will be reshaped in ways that are consistent with a unified U.S. government approach to national security missions, and greater interagency participation will be encouraged.”³⁸

Some leading proponents of Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) responded to the QDR recommendations with concern. Representative Ike Skelton of the House Armed Services Committee, long a strong proponent of professional military education, wrote a letter to then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, urging him not to take a step that might impinge on JPME.³⁹ General Pace, by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reportedly agreed and gave guidance to make sure that any new interagency-focused initiatives at DOD schoolhouses would not interfere with the fulfillment of the military’s own existing educational requirements.⁴⁰

As a result of such concerns, instead of transforming itself into a “National Security University,” including new bricks-and-mortar facilities, NDU began exploring options for creating virtual communities with counterpart institutions affiliated with other U.S. government agencies, including the Foreign Service Institute, and the National Intelligence University. This approach, known for a time as the National Security Education Consortium, also reportedly eased the

³⁷ *National Strategy*, pp. 4-5.

³⁸ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 6, 2006, p. 79, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf>.

³⁹ See Ike Skelton, “Letter to the Honorable Donald L. Rumsfeld,” dated April 4, 2006, Special Collections, National Defense University Library, Washington DC; cited in John W. Yaeger, “Developing National Security Professionals,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 49, 2nd quarter 2008, p. 117.

⁴⁰ Interviews with DOD officials. Officials suggested, for example, that interagency educational efforts could conceivably impinge on JPME by taking classroom seats from the military and giving them instead to civilians, or by changing the core curriculum, allowing less time for JPME-focused course work.

concerns of some civilian agencies that developing interagency educational programs within a physical, DOD-owned facility might give the program too much of a defense focus.

After the NSDP E.O. was signed in May 2007, these ground-up NDU-led educational efforts were subsumed under the NSPD program. While NDU's early efforts to expand interagency education had been guided primarily by educators, under the NSPD umbrella, human capital professionals, responsible in general for establishing competencies to guide educational requirements, assumed the lead role.⁴¹

One early major NSPD educational initiative was a pilot program hosted by NDU, during the 2007-2008 academic year, at three of its schoolhouses—the National War College (NWC) and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) at Fort McNair, and the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) in Norfolk, VA. According to its mission statement, the goal of the pilot program was to produce professionals able to “analyze, at the strategic and operational level, the capabilities, organizational cultures, procedures, and roles of U.S. departments and agencies in the planning and conduct of complex operations in peace, crisis, war and post-conflict overseas and in homeland contingencies.”⁴²

A total of 38 students took part—15 at the NWC, 15 at ICAF, and 8 at the JFSC. Of those, 11 were military officers, including some members of the U.S. Coast Guard. Participating civilian agencies included the CIA, and the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, and Energy, and the Congressional Research Service.⁴³ At each institution, NSPD students enrolled in all of the regular core curriculum courses, but selected their elective courses from special lists.⁴⁴ At the NWC and ICAF, 12 electives were available, including—illustratively—“Intelligence and National Security,” “Homeland Security,” “Stabilization and Reconstruction,” and “Interagency Negotiation.” At the JFSC, available electives included “Case Studies in Interagency and International Operations;” “Homeland Security, Transformation and the War against Terrorism;” “Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance;” and “Just War to Jihad: Ethics in an Age of Uncertainty.”

The pilot program participants, who graduated on June 12, 2008, were to receive a designation in their personnel records that they had completed the NSPD education pillar. According to NSPD officials, eligible participants would still be required to complete the training and professional experience pillars, in order to be designated “national security professionals.” At the time of graduation, however, the qualification requirements for those pillars had not yet been developed.

“Lessons learned” efforts, including a series of focus groups conducted by NDU, and informal feedback volunteered by students, suggested a few concerns with the pilot program's execution.⁴⁵ Some observers reportedly commented that it was not obvious how the NSPD educational

⁴¹ The original NSPD program established a working set of competencies—“National Security Professionals Shared Competencies for Interagency Operations”—which, in part, helped inform the content of NSPD-affiliated educational initiatives. Communications from NSPD officials, 2008.

⁴² Joint Staff Briefing (to the Military Education Coordination Council) “National Security Professional Development,” National Defense University, National Security Education Consortium, Pilot Program Update, April 17, 2008. The mission statement was annotated to clarify that analysis at the operational level pertained only to the JFSC program.

⁴³ Joint Staff Briefing, April 17, 2008; and interviews with NSPD officials.

⁴⁴ According to officials, the elective courses were selected by NSPD officials from among existing NDU course offerings for their relevance to NSPD concerns.

⁴⁵ Joint Staff Briefing, April 17, 2008, and interviews with NSPD officials.

objectives differed from those of the normal NDU programs. This observation might be considered a vote of confidence in the adaptability of NDU programs, which have been revised and updated in recent years to reflect greater concern with interagency issues.⁴⁶ Some pilot program participants advocated greater flexibility in selecting their elective courses, suggesting that the concept of what is relevant to national security professionals might usefully be expanded. Others reportedly suggested that an NSPD educational program should be more robust and intensive—for example, it might include additional seminars or discussions, outside the usual coursework, exclusively for NSPD participants, to delve more deeply into key interagency issues and case studies.⁴⁷ The NSPD educational pilot program was not continued in the following academic year.

Meanwhile, the Department of State also leveraged existing initiatives to support the education pillar of the NSPD program. In spring 2007, State piloted its new National Security Executive Leadership Seminar (NSELS) at its Foreign Service Institute (FSI). NSELS, initially envisaged as a replacement for an earlier, nine-month residential executive course, was developed in parallel with the NSPD E.O. and refined to meet its intent. Like the DOD courses, the NSELS program focuses on both national security and interagency concerns, utilizing a variety of assigned reading and guest speakers. NSELS is also deeply “interagency”—about half the participants in each NSELS course come from agencies other than the State Department. Unlike the DOD courses—which are nearly a year long and full-time residential—NSELS students participate two days a month for five months. This approach allows students to continue to do their day jobs without a backfill.⁴⁸

Some NSPD-affiliated educators and observers have raised questions about what properly constitutes “education,” and they have suggested that short-form courses like NSELS might more appropriately be considered “training.” Some further point to the very name of the facility that hosts NSELS: the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs *Training* Center (emphasis added). Others, however, argue that the distinction between education and training should depend more on content than on course length.⁴⁹ The NSPD *National Strategy* defines the two terms this way:

- **Education:** Opportunities to enhance a person’s capacity for critical and innovative thinking, and level of understanding of authorities, risks, responsibilities, and tools to perform a current or future national security mission successfully.
- **Training:** Opportunities to enhance, exercise, or refine a person’s ability to apply knowledge, skills, and abilities in performing national security missions.⁵⁰

State’s NSELS program is not unique in adopting a format that allows participants to continue serving in their current billets. For example, DOD’s Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP), established in 1985, provides DOD civilians (GS-12 to GS-14) with deep exposure to

⁴⁶ A course-by-course description of the NWC core curriculum, for example, is available on the NWC website, at <http://www.ndu.edu/nwc/index.htm>.

⁴⁷ Joint Staff Briefing, April 17, 2008, and interviews with NSPD officials.

⁴⁸ Communications from NSELS officials, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; and participant observation as a frequent guest lecturer.

⁴⁹ Communications from DOD, State, NSPD officials, 2008.

⁵⁰ See *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, July 2007, p. 3. Some practitioners suggest the shorthand, “training teaches you what to do, while education teaches you how to think.”

DOD joint roles and missions. Over the course of 10 months, students—who remain in their current jobs—convene first for two weeks of classroom education, and then monthly for one-week field visits to various DOD commands around the world.⁵¹ Proponents argue that such formats can make educational opportunities available to those cannot leave their day jobs for a significant consecutive length of time and would thus otherwise be unable to participate; and that, compared to online coursework, they have the advantage of facilitating in-person relationship-building.

For the training pillar of NSPD, the *National Strategy* called for “ample training opportunities to refine skills through instruction, drills, and exercises.”⁵² According to the *Strategy*, the first step—as in the education pillar—was to be identifying existing programs, facilities and institutions that could support the NSPD program. The survey was to consider federal programs first, but also state, local, territorial, tribal, academic, non-governmental, and private sector programs. The newly constituted National Security Education and Training Consortium (NSETC) Board of Directors was assigned the responsibility to recommend training as well as educational courses for inclusion in the NSPD program. The *National Strategy* also tasked the ESC to promote existing federal government training consortia concerned with aspects of national security, “in order to promote a sharing of best practices.”⁵³

In general, the original NSPD program acknowledged great variation among the roles and responsibilities of NSPs across the government. The *National Strategy*, for example, recognized “the reality that the core competencies needed for each mission area and institution will vary, and therefore professional experience, education, and training programs must be customized in each mission area and institution.”⁵⁴ What the NSPD program’s strategic documents did not directly address is that the variation in requirements might be substantially greater for training than for education. Education in strategic planning, problem-solving, and leadership, for example, might be appropriate for all NSPs. Training requirements, however, are typically much more specific, focused on mastering tasks to be executed during contingencies, including requirements to coordinate with specific colleagues in other agencies, and thus might reasonably vary significantly among NSPs.⁵⁵

The earliest NSPD training efforts were focused on creating an appropriate orientation for all participating NSPs. According to NSPD officials, the purpose of introductory training would not be to create instant experts, but rather to introduce participants to the full spectrum of NSPD

⁵¹ For more information, see the DOD Civilian Personnel Management Service website at http://www.cpms.osd.mil/lpdd/eldp_index.aspx.

⁵² *National Strategy*, p. 6.

⁵³ *National Strategy*, p. 7. One example would be the Consortium for Complex Operations (CCO, see above). See the CCO web portal at <https://www.ccoportal.org>.

⁵⁴ *National Strategy*, p. 3.

⁵⁵ The descriptions of the substantive purpose and content of training in the *National Strategy* struck some observers as incomplete. The *Strategy* stated, p. 8: “A successful training program must ensure that Federal, State, local, and tribal government leaders are cognizant of their preparedness roles and responsibilities, trained in carrying out their assigned functions, and prepared to be immediately effective in interagency, inter-governmental, and international emergency operations.” To some observers, that emphasis on other levels of government, “preparedness,” and “emergency operations” sounded like an only slightly modified description of homeland security training concerns, which excludes such interagency national security activities as steady-state diplomacy and security cooperation.

agencies and concerns.⁵⁶ In practice, orientation training was bifurcated between homeland and traditional national security concerns.

On February 4, 2008, the Emergency Management Institute of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), part of the Department of Homeland Security, unveiled an online, three-hour orientation course entitled, “National Response Framework: An Introduction.” The course, like the framework itself, had been developed in response to lessons learned from responses to Hurricane Katrina. The FEMA course outline stated that material covered included the framework’s purpose, response doctrine, the roles and responsibilities of participating entities, and multi-agency coordination. The course was intended for “government executives, private-sector and non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders, and emergency management practitioners.”⁵⁷ The course was adopted pragmatically by the NSPD program to meet at least part of its own training requirements.

Meanwhile, in the absence of a pre-existing product, National Security Council staff worked to develop a traditional national security-focused introductory online training module, entitled “National Security Objectives, Structures and Processes: An Introduction.” At the time, some officials noted that this pragmatic dual-track approach to orientation missed a key opportunity to underscore and elaborate on a fundamental premise of the NSPD program—that, as the *National Strategy* stated: “The Nation cannot view the missions of national security and homeland security as separate and distinct.”⁵⁸

Professional experience—or interagency rotation—was the third pillar of the NSPD program established by the May 2007 E.O. Other than interagency rotation programs that were already in place, this pillar was the least developed of the three under the original NSPD program, arguably because rotations require more refinements to personnel systems and more coordination among agencies than either shared education or shared training. The original NSPD program consistently adopted a highly de-centralized approach toward rotational opportunities.

The *National Strategy* spelled out the tasks to be undertaken to support the interagency experience pillar, including designating certain activities as “interagency duty assignments,” developing a “formal mechanism” for rotational and temporary detail assignments, and linking career advancement to participation in such rotational assignments.⁵⁹ The *Strategy* assigned these responsibilities to the “relevant departments and agencies,” while the role of the ESC would be simply to “coordinate the completion” of the tasks.⁶⁰

In March 2008, the NSPD IO coordinated the compilation of a checklist of proposals to the ESC for decision and action. This “Action List” echoed the *Strategy*’s highly de-centralized division of labor for interagency rotation issues. It recommended tasking individual agencies to develop the “criteria for acceptable mission-related experiences that are appropriate for their NSP positions;” to identify positions available for rotational opportunities; and, “to the extent permitted by law,” to draft regulations “designed to create rules stipulating that candidates for Senior Executive

⁵⁶ Interviews with NSPD officials.

⁵⁷ See <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is800b.asp>. The course slide show begins at <http://emilms.fema.gov/IS800B/index.htm>.

⁵⁸ *National Strategy*, p. 1.

⁵⁹ *National Strategy*, p. 9.

⁶⁰ *National Strategy*, p. 8.

Service (SES) positions (or other equivalent senior-level federal executive positions) for identified national security positions across the Federal government must have documented rotational or interagency national security professional experience.”⁶¹

In November 2008, OPM, in coordination with the ESC, acted on some of these proposals by issuing guidance to NSPD participating agencies, in which they “encourage[d] agencies to implement a qualification requirement for specific NSP-designated SES positions,” based on individuals’ “demonstrated ability to lead inter-agency, inter-departmental, inter-governmental activities, or comparative cross-organizational activities;” and recommended “a multi-agency or equivalent experience for selection into NSP SES positions.”⁶² This OPM guidance cast a broad net in defining the boundaries of “interagency” experience, including “Federal, state, local or foreign government entities, non-profit or non-governmental organizations, private sector organizations, international organizations such as NATO, and/or academic institutions.” Like the *National Strategy*, the OPM guidance gave agencies a great deal of leeway in general, including the flexibility to include internal rotations among their own components, and the discretion more broadly to define the qualification requirements based on their own needs.⁶³

NSPD Under the Obama Administration

Since the mandate for the NSPD program is an executive order, the January 2009 change of administration introduced deep uncertainty about the future of the program—would the Obama Administration rescind the E.O., or extend and perhaps expand on it, or simply let it die a quiet death?

Strategic Pause

Coming into office, the Obama Administration did not rescind the NSPD E.O., but neither did anyone at the White House immediately assume the mantle of leadership for the program. Then-NSPD IO Director Navas reportedly posted a sign in the office: “If the boss calls, get his name and number!”⁶⁴ Many referred to this period as a “strategic pause.” However, that term is something of a misnomer, in two senses: NSPD program activities did continue, albeit at a lower tempo; and specific efforts were launched during that time to refine the program’s strategic direction.

In 2009 and 2010, some NSPD participating agencies continued to take the initiative in making training and educational opportunities available to their own designated national security professionals (NSPs) as well as to NSPs from other agencies. For example, the State Department continued to conduct its NSELS educational course for full houses of State and non-State “students,” and its Foreign Service Institute conducted germane training courses for State and non-State participants, such as the workshop “Interagency Effectiveness: Strategies and Best

⁶¹ National Security Professional Development Integration Office, “Action List” for Short-Term Implementation, March 14, 2008, pp. 4-5.

⁶² Office of Personnel Management Memorandum, “Recommended National Security Professional Qualification for NSP SES,” November 13, 2008.

⁶³ *Ibid.* Large and multi-faceted agencies such as DOD and DHS, and the intelligence community, which have some internal rotation mechanisms in place, had sought to make use of those mechanisms for NSPD purposes, Communications from NSPD officials, 2008.

⁶⁴ Communications from NSPD officials, 2009.

Practices.”⁶⁵ In August 2010, the Department of Defense (DOD) hosted a National Security Professional Symposium at the National Defense University. The event was designed not to map out the next phase of NSPD program activities, but rather to continue the NSPD process by “bringing together professionals from a wide variety of agencies to collaborate and learn together.” DOD reported that the event drew 266 participants from more than a dozen federal agencies.⁶⁶ In November 2010, the Department of Commerce hosted a half-day “NSPD Agency Awareness” event, with participants from at least 10 agencies. The event was designed to give NSPs “the opportunity to network with other NSPs from across the federal government while also learning about the history, functions, and cultures of other departments.” The event included “101”-style overviews by three agencies: the Departments of Commerce, Energy, and Transportation. Despite the lack of robust overall program guidance at that time, the level of individual interest in participating in the NDU event was reportedly reasonably strong.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, during the so-called pause, the National Security Staff (NSS) sought to reinvigorate and refine the focus of the NSPD program. Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates, then the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor for Strategic Planning, who had led efforts across the Administration to produce the 2010 *National Security Strategy*, was given policy responsibility for the NSPD program and established an Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) to oversee the effort.⁶⁸ Ambassador Yates’ staff, working through an interagency sub-IPC, reportedly made substantial progress revising the Bush Administration’s *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, which had been issued in July 2007, with the intent of using a clear, agreed new NSPD strategy as the basis for developing and issuing an updated NSPD executive order.⁶⁹

In addition, Ambassador Yates’ NSS team led an effort to craft and gain IPC approval of a revised list of desired “shared capabilities” that would apply to all NSPs. The objective, according to NSS and agency officials, was to provide all NSPD participating agencies with refined, broad intent to serve as a basis for their respective NSPD program planning efforts.⁷⁰ The revision effort grew out of discussions that took place during the August 2010 NSPD Symposium hosted by NDU. After the NDU event, the National Security Education and Training Consortium (NSETC) put together a curriculum working group which, under NSS leadership, revised the Bush Administration-era document, “National Security Professionals Shared Competencies for Interagency Operations.” The new document, “Shared Capabilities,” identified the same basic eight qualities named in the earlier version—strategic thinking; critical and creative thinking; leading interagency teams; collaborating; planning and managing interagency operations; maintaining global and cultural acuity; mediating and negotiating; and communicating—but refined the descriptions of each.

⁶⁵ Communications from State Department and NSPD program officials, 2010.

⁶⁶ Communications from Symposium organizers, 2010. See also the event website, http://www.cpmis.osd.mil/LPDD/nspd/nspdsymposium_index.aspx, which includes the event program and detailed participation information.

⁶⁷ Communications from NSPD officials, 2010.

⁶⁸ For a description of the role of IPCs in the overall NSC system, see Presidential Policy Directive 1, “Organization of the National Security Council System,” February 13, 2009, available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/ppd/ppd-1.pdf>.

⁶⁹ *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, July 2007, available at http://www.nspd.gov/NSPD_Resources/Documents/National_Strategy_for_Professional_Development; and Communications from Administration officials, 2010.

⁷⁰ Communications from Administration officials, November 2010.

Substantively, all of the categories in the revised “Shared Capabilities” paper were broadly applicable to any contingency, rather than being mission-specific. The paper did not describe how much of each capability an individual required. Practically, the shift away from the use of the word “competencies” was deliberate—the revised paper began, “It is important to note that the list does not include specialized competencies.” The change was significant from a human resources (HR) perspective—in that community, the term has technical ramifications for hiring and career progression. While the HR community reportedly was eager to shed the term, other NSPD officials apparently lamented the loss of the leverage that might be gained from pinning desired outcomes to mandatory HR procedures.⁷¹

All of the NSPD efforts spearheaded by the NSS in 2010—on strategy and on shared capabilities—reflected a new, narrower substantive emphasis on the “interagency.”⁷² In 2010, NSPD officials noted that the tighter focus on the interagency—including those individuals who work primarily in an interagency context, and those issues that are clearly and primarily cross-cutting—was an effort to more appropriately scope the NSPD program, improving both its effectiveness and its efficiency.⁷³ That new emphasis, officials indicated, would be reflected in the revised NSPD *National Strategy*. The “Shared Capabilities” paper also underscored the new emphasis in its new preambular language, which noted that every response to national security threats and opportunities shares “the need for integrated interagency engagement,” and that “recognizing this, the Executive Steering Committee opted to focus on the shared capabilities NSPs need in order to succeed in any *interagency* environment.”⁷⁴

NSPD 2.0: Mandate and Scope

In 2011, the Obama Administration launched a significant reorientation of the NSPD program—referred to by some key practitioners as “NSPD 2.0”—including changes to its structure, organization, and focus.

After Ambassador Yates transitioned to a new role on the NSS as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs, her team’s mandate to revise the *National Strategy* and the E.O. was apparently not transferred to her Strategic Planning successor. Instead, in February 2011, the Resilience Policy Directorate of the NSS, led by Richard Reed, Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Senior Director for Resilience Policy, assumed policy leadership of the NSPD program. The Domestic Resilience Group (DRG) IPC, led by the Resilience Directorate, became the senior-level forum for providing strategic direction.

In terms of its mandate, NSPD 2.0 continues to rely on the formal mandate provided by the original NSPD E.O. 13434. A new Charter for the program’s Executive Steering Committee (ESC) states clearly that the program does not seek any additional authorities.⁷⁵ At the same time,

⁷¹ Communications from NSPD officials, 2010, 2011.

⁷² The attempt to focus the NSPD program more narrowly on interagency matters was not new. For example, in its March 2008 “Action List,” the NSPD IO proposed—for consideration by the ESC—the introduction of “additional clarifying criteria for defining national security positions.” In addition to having a role in executing aspects of various national strategies, NSPs, according to the “Action List,” should have “significant interaction with other departments, agencies, or government entities”; and “may be called upon in U.S. Government operations or crises. See “Action List for Short-Term Implementation,” revised as of 3/14/2008, p.1.

⁷³ Communications from NSPD officials, 2010.

⁷⁴ “Shared Capabilities” paper, 2010, emphasis in original.

⁷⁵ See National Security Professional Development program, “Executive Steering Committee Charter,” 2011.

the Charter itself has served as a vehicle for refining the program's emphasis. The most fundamental change has been a new focus on preparing to accomplish specific missions, rather than on fostering an ability to collaborate across the spectrum of potential national security concerns. One official called the new focal point "tangible outcomes with smaller scope."⁷⁶

In terms of its structure, NSPD 2.0 preserved the ESC, under OPM chairmanship, largely intact. The new Charter echoes the role of list of ESC participants from the original E.O. with only one change, the inclusion of the Department of Commerce. Even that change is minimal—after the original E.O. was issued, Commerce had been invited to participate in the NSPD program. The Charter requests that agencies' chief human capital officers represent them at ESC sessions. The ESC convened for the first time in this slightly modified format and under new policy direction, on July 27, 2011.

NSPD 2.0 also preserved the NSPD Integration Office. Since June 2011, the office has been led by Rear Admiral (retired) Gerald Talbot, a senior executive on detail from the National Nuclear Security Administration at the Department of Energy. The NSPD IO, still a small team, maintains its function of integrating the efforts of multiple agencies under the leadership of OPM and the ESC.

In terms of program activities, the Charter specified that, to start, NSPD would focus on a single pilot program organized around Emergency Management, "in lieu of developing an NSPD program that addresses the entire scope of national security issues." The Charter named the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) the lead agency for the pilot, and further specified that the pilot would be limited to the National Capital Region, for cost reasons, and to participation by employees—not contractors—in the GS-13 to GS-15 range.

To implement the pilot, the Charter tasked agencies to identify both positions and individuals for participation in the revised program; it tasked DHS to develop the core requirements for education, training, and rotational assignments for the pilot; and it tasked OPM to develop an appropriate human capital plan.

In completing these assignments and charting a way forward, the refined NSPD program reportedly has been able to leverage implementation of Presidential Policy Directive-8, on "National Preparedness," issued in March 2011. PPD-8 directed the development of a "national preparedness goal that identifies the core capabilities necessary for preparedness," to include threats and vulnerabilities, and measurable, prioritized objectives; and "a national preparedness system to guide activities that will enable the Nation to achieve the goal," including mechanisms for planning, organizing, equipping, training, conducting exercises, carrying out assessments, and engaging in strategic communications. PPD-8 named DHS the lead agency for coordinating with other agencies, other levels of government, and outside stakeholders in order to craft the goal and design the system.⁷⁷ Agencies participating in both the NSPD program and the implementation of PPD-8 were able to use PPD-8 working group participation lists to help identify both positions and personnel for the NSPD program. In turn, PPD-8 implementation, officials note, has provided

⁷⁶ Communications from NSPD officials, 2011.

⁷⁷ Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-8, "National Preparedness," March 30, 2011. In August 2011, DHS released a draft of the goal, for comment by all stakeholders, see "First Draft, National Preparedness Goal," August 22, 2011, available on FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/prepared/npg.pdf>.

opportunities for budding NSPs to test and further develop the skills and understanding that the NSPD program was designed to foster.⁷⁸

The reorientation of the NSPD program has been the focus of some debate, particularly among current and former officials with responsibilities for the program. The field of emergency management, it is generally agreed, had the advantage of existing collaboration mechanisms, and training and educational programs (in particular through FEMA's Emergency Management Institute), that were already quite robust. Most agree that making emergency management the focus of NSPD allows the program to draw on these existing initiatives in order to “demonstrate success”—tangible evidence of collaboration—relatively early. Some have expressed concern that the narrowing of the program's substantive focus might make it difficult to broaden that scope again in the future to include a wider array of national security-related concerns. Program officials have suggested, however, that if the revised NSPD program is perceived to succeed, it is more likely that there will be future opportunities to consider expanding NSPD to include additional communities of interest.

Administration Initiatives: Strategic Guidance

The Obama Administration has issued considerable strategic guidance, at the national and individual agency levels, reinforcing support in general for stronger interagency collaboration and in particular for the NSPD program.

National Security Strategy

The congressionally mandated May 2010 *National Security Strategy* devoted three pages to a discussion of “strengthening national capacity—a whole of government approach.” The *Strategy* stressed progress to date in “improving the integration of skills and capabilities within our military and civilian institutions, so they complement each other and operate seamlessly.” It acknowledged that “work remains to foster coordination across departments and agencies.” To that end, it called for “adapting the education and training of national security professionals to equip them to meet modern challenges.”⁷⁹

Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review

The State Department's 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), the first such review conducted, echoed the emphasis of the *National Security Strategy* on the need for more effective interagency integration—stressing the need “to create whole-of-government solutions through better engagement and coordination with other U.S. government agencies.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Communications from NSPD officials, 2011.

⁷⁹ President Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010, pp. 14-16. The current mandate for the President to deliver to Congress a comprehensive, annual “national security strategy report” derives from the *National Security Act of 1947*, P.L. 80-235, §108, as amended by the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, P.L. 99-433, §603.

⁸⁰ Department of State, *Leading Through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 2010, p. 172.

The QDDR pledged that the State Department would undertake specific initiatives to that end. It called for expanded training opportunities for State Department employees, and encouraged both the application of additional resources and the exercise of “high-level commitment” in order to make sure that employees have the time and incentives to undertake training. It pledged that the State Department would work closely on training opportunities with DOD and other agencies to leverage their capabilities and expertise. It also called for increased opportunities for interagency rotational assignments both to and from other U.S. government agencies. To support such efforts, it called for tying training and rotational service to promotion decisions.⁸¹

The QDDR also specifically noted that the President had directed the National Security Staff to reinvigorate the NSPD program, starting with an interagency effort to refine a strategy for the program.⁸²

Quadrennial Defense Review

The Department of Defense’s congressionally mandated February 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report* stressed the same fundamental theme from a DOD lens: “the need to continue improving the Department of Defense’s cooperation with other U.S. departments and agencies.” To that end, it underscored that DOD would continue “to advocate for an improved interagency strategic planning process.” It stressed the need for the U.S. government as a whole to “significantly improve interagency comprehensive assessments, analysis, planning, and execution for whole-of-government operations.”

Like the QDDR, the QDR specifically mentioned the NSPD program. The QDR urged fully implementing the program by “improv[ing] cross-agency training, education, and professional experience opportunities,” which would in turn “foster a common approach to strategic and operational planning and implementation,” and “improv[e] prospects for success in future contingencies.”⁸³

Quadrennial Homeland Security Review

In February 2010, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) submitted to Congress the first *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) Report*.⁸⁴ Like its sister strategic guidance documents, the QHSR called for unity of effort. It emphasized the need for a strong national security community supported by “a professional development program that fosters a stable and diverse community of professionals with the proper balance of relevant skills, attributes,

⁸¹ QDDR p. 172-176.

⁸² QDDR p. 176. In a semantically curious way, the QDDR takes note of the NSPD reinvigoration without commenting on it qualitatively. The early Obama Administration efforts to update the NSPD *National Strategy*, to which the QDDR refers, were overtaken by the decision in 2011 to more fundamentally refocus the NSPD program.

⁸³ See Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 2010, pp. 69-71. The permanent requirement that DOD conduct a quadrennial defense review is found in Title 10, U.S. Code, §118, as introduced by the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000*, §901, P.L. 106-65, October 5, 1999, and subsequently amended.

⁸⁴ Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland*, February 2010. The QHSR requirement is contained in the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, November 25, 2002, P.L. 107-296, §707, which was added by the *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007*, August 3, 2007, P.L. 110-53, §2401. The abbreviation “QHSR” is usually—charmingly—pronounced “kisser”.

experiences, and comprehensive knowledge.” It particularly lauded the launch of the NSPD program and underscored the need for DHS to “work together with our national security partners in bringing that important idea to fruition.”

As an additional step, the QHSR called for fostering a “homeland security community of interest” within the broader NSPD framework. The community would include representatives of “State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, DHS and other Federal agencies,” with support from academic institutions. This bounding of a sub-category under the larger national security professional umbrella presaged the new direction the NSPD program would take in 2011.

Like the State Department, DHS introduced resource considerations into the discussion. While State stressed the challenges that all agencies other than DOD face in backfilling positions while personnel pursue “national security professional” opportunities, DHS specifically emphasized the hurdles to participation faced by those agencies with limited but still critical national or homeland security responsibilities. It called for adequately resourcing such agencies.⁸⁵

Congressional Initiatives

Against the backdrop of Administration initiatives and growing policy community interest, Congress has taken a number of discrete NSP-related actions.

Congressionally Mandated Studies

Congress has directed the conduct of several major studies that, in part or in whole, have focused on NSPs.

Project on National Security Reform

In the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2008*, Congress tasked the Secretary of Defense to contract with an “independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization” to conduct a study of the national security interagency system. The contract was awarded to the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), led by Jim Locher, which published its findings as the landmark study *Forging a New Shield* in 2008.⁸⁶ As part of this sweeping call for fundamental interagency reform, PNSR argued in favor of fostering a cadre of national security professionals who would serve in what Locher has frequently termed “interagency space.”⁸⁷ The proposed National Security Professional Corps would “complement department personnel with professionals able to move easily among agencies and into positions requiring interagency experience.”⁸⁸ Tellingly, since the Corps would focus on “identifying and assigning people for

⁸⁵ *QHSR*, pp. 71-73

⁸⁶ See the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008*, P.L. 110-181, Section 1049(a), and Project on National Security Reform, *Forging a New Shield*, November 2008, available at <http://www.pnsr.org>. PNSR Executive Director James Locher III, had directed the development of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation while serving as a Senate Armed Services Committee staffer in the 1980s.

⁸⁷ Conversations with Jim Locher, President and CEO of PNSR, 2008, 2009, 2010.

⁸⁸ *Forging*, p.381.

interagency work,” it would ease agencies’ “reluctance to give up personnel for interagency positions.”⁸⁹

In the *NDAA for FY2010*, Congress required the commissioning of a study to be conducted by “an appropriate independent, nonprofit organization” of “a system for career development and management of interagency national security professionals.”⁹⁰ This contract was also awarded to PNSR, which produced its findings, *The Power of People*, in November 2010.⁹¹

In this report, PNSR called for building an Integrated National Security Professional System, a revised and also more detailed version of its 2008 National Security Professional Corps concept. Much like the existing NSPD program, the proposed system would include training, educational, and rotational opportunities that would help foster program participants’ abilities to collaborate across agency boundaries. Participants would progress over time through a series of levels of proficiency. Centralized management would help provide oversight for standards, qualifications, and appointments. The program would be open to practitioners across the federal government, including the military, as well as state, tribal and local officials.

In *Power of People*, as in its previous study, *Forging a New Shield*, PNSR envisaged the national security professional initiative as part of a much broader program of interagency reform. But in a shift from its approach in *Forging*, in *Power of People*, PNSR called for a more deliberate, four-stage approach to developing the NSP community. In the early stages, NSPs would still belong primarily to their home organizations. As the initiative developed, PNSR argued, the interagency system as a whole would move toward closer, broader integration of effort. Against that backdrop, by stage four of the process, a robust cadre of NSPs would be serving primarily at the “interagency” level. At that stage:

Significant responsibilities and accountabilities for performance would transition to integrated teams and task forces, with departments and agencies in many instances becoming providers of capabilities rather than mission managers, especially where missions inherently require collaboration.⁹²

Government Accountability Office

In December 2010, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), one of Congress’s own research organizations, released a study of current professional development activities designed to improve interagency collaboration on national security matters, based on a request by a congressional client.⁹³ The study catalogued a broad array of programs, including most if not all NSPD efforts to date as well as many other initiatives that fell outside the formal scope of NSPD. The study made a valuable contribution in part because, according to many officials, most agencies had previously had only limited visibility on the full spectrum of collaboration

⁸⁹ *Forging*, p.405.

⁹⁰ See the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010*, §1054, P.L. 111-84, October 28, 2009.

⁹¹ See Project on National Security Reform, *The Power of People: Building and Integrated National Security Professional System for the 21st Century*, November 2010.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. x-xi.

⁹³ Government Accountability Office, *An Overview of Professional Development Activities Intended to Improve Interagency Collaboration*, November 2010, GAO-11-108.

initiatives underway.⁹⁴ GAO subsequently launched a follow-up project aimed at evaluating several of the interagency rotation programs identified in the December 2010 report.⁹⁵

NDAA for FY11

The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011* required the Department of Defense to select an “appropriate independent, nonprofit organization” with “relevant expertise in the fields of national security and human capital development, to conduct a study to assess the current state of interagency national security knowledge and skills in DOD civilian and military personnel,” and then to make recommendations for strengthening that knowledge and those skills.⁹⁶ The *NDAA* required the Secretary of Defense to submit the findings to congressional defense committees by December 1, 2011.

The *NDAA* required that the study consider, among other topics, the availability of training, education and rotational assignment opportunities; incentives and disincentives for individuals to undertake these opportunities; the integration of such educational opportunities with the joint professional military education (JPME) system; and the existing level of interagency knowledge and skills of senior civilian and military officials. While the requirement was focused only on DOD, rotational assignments, by definition, involve other agencies, so completion of the study could cast light on broader interagency NSP practices. A notable feature of the legislative requirement was the specific mandate to consider the relationship between NSP initiatives and JPME, given concerns long expressed by some military officials regarding the potential for NSP programs to “impinge” on smooth execution of JPME.⁹⁷

Draft Legislation

The past several years have witnessed several discrete, major, congressional initiatives, each designed to create a permanent requirement for the executive branch to foster a community of national security professionals.

Interagency National Security Professional Education, Administration, and Development System Act of 2010

The *Interagency National Security Professional Education, Administration, and Development System Act of 2010*, (“INSPEAD”), H.R. 6249, introduced in the House during the 111th Congress but not enacted, drew explicitly on the *Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986* and the military’s joint qualification system to create a multi-faceted system for “interagency qualification” based on education, training, and interagency exchange service.⁹⁸ The bill was sponsored by Representative Ike Skelton, and co-sponsored by Representatives Geoff Davis, Vic Snyder, and John Tierney. In

⁹⁴ Communications from DOD, State officials, 2010.

⁹⁵ Communications from GAO officials, 2011.

⁹⁶ *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011*, §1051, P.L. 111-383, January 7, 2011.

⁹⁷ Communications from Joint Staff and NSPD officials, 2008, 2009.

⁹⁸ See H.R. 6249 IH, *Interagency National Security Professional Education, Administration, and Development System Act of 2010*.

the previous Congress, the 110th, Representative Davis had introduced a related bill, H.R. 7138, *The National Security Professionals Act of 2008*.

The INSPEAD bill envisaged a system based—analogsously with the Joint Qualification System—on levels of interagency qualification, which individuals would achieve by completing specified educational, training, and rotational assignment requirements. As the bill explained,

The purpose of establishing such qualification levels shall be to ensure systematic, progressive, career-long development of national security professionals in the knowledge, skills, experience, and abilities that enable them to be highly effective participants in interagency activities related to national security matters.

In turn, in the INSPEAD system, designated “interagency national security professional” positions would be mapped to specified levels of qualification, helping to ensure that critical national security posts were filled by individuals with sufficient “interagency” backgrounds. Achieving the highest level of interagency qualification would be a prerequisite for filling a senior-level INSP billet.

To scope the program, the INSPEAD bill defined participation in the system primarily by position. It focused on those positions that deal substantively with national security matters and also require substantial interagency engagement. That focus echoed the shift of emphasis in the NSPD program early in the Obama Administration from all those engaged in national security activities toward those actively involved in interagency collaboration. The INSPEAD bill excluded participation by political appointees, but made the requirements of the system applicable to the military’s commissioned officer corps.

In terms of organization, the INSPEAD bill maintained the basic Executive Steering Committee format utilized by the NSPD program, but re-located the Integration Office from DOD sponsorship to the Executive Office of the President. Compared to the NSPD program, the INSPEAD bill advocated stronger centralized management, giving the center greater responsibilities for establishing shared standards and providing long-term career management oversight for NSPs.

Interagency Personnel Rotation Act of 2011

The *Interagency Personnel Rotation Act of 2011*, introduced simultaneously in the Senate and the House during the 112th Congress, aims broadly at the same goal shared by the INSPEAD bill and the PNSR proposals—that is, more effective and more efficient interagency collaboration. While the INSPEAD bill would have established, to that end, a robust career development system including education, training, and exchange service, the *Rotation Act* would create a more streamlined mechanism based on a program for interagency rotations. The Senate bill, S. 1268, is sponsored by Senator Lieberman, and co-sponsored by Senators Akaka and Collins. The House bill, H.R. 2314, is sponsored by Representative Geoff Davis and co-sponsored by Representative Tierney.

In terms of participation, the *Rotation Act* would cast a broad net including national and homeland security practitioners, from the GS-11 through GS-15 levels, and would leave the participation by military officers to the discretion of the Secretary of Defense. In terms of organization, the *Rotation Act* would preserve the both the de-centralized premise and the rough organizational structure of the NSPD program, creating a Committee on National Security

Personnel within the Executive Office of the President, under the chairmanship of the Director of OMB, including the National Security Advisor and the Director of OPM, and supported by a board including senior-level officials from participating agencies.

Unlike most past initiatives, the *Rotation Act* would create a framework of “interagency communities of interest” (ICIs) under the broader NSP umbrella. The committee would designate the substantive ICI categories—functional or regional—while individual agencies would determine which of their positions belong to each ICI. The bill itself specifies the first two ICIs: emergency management and post-conflict reconstruction. The use of communities as distinct subsets of a broader program echoes a QHSR recommendation and would mirror the approach of “NSPD 2.0,” which began by focusing on a single pilot, Emergency Management.

Like NSPD 2.0, the *Rotation Act* explicitly aims to limit costs. As a rule, it aims to achieve one-for-one matching between rotating personnel and host agency positions, in order to avoid gaps and obviate the requirement for personnel “floats.” The act envisages an initially very modest scope of participation including, during the first five years of the program, between 20 and 25 persons serving in rotational assignments per year.

To help bolster both individual incentives for participation, and long-term agency commitment to the process, the *Rotation Act* mandates that agencies, in selecting individuals to serve in senior-level positions in a given ICI, give “strong preference” to personnel who have completed interagency rotations in that ICI. That provision echoes, though more faintly, the INSPEAD provision that would have made the highest level of interagency qualification—including rotational service—a prerequisite for service in senior-level NSP positions.

Issues for Congress

In weighing the merits of draft legislation and outside proposals aimed at fostering an interagency community of national security professionals, Members of Congress may wish to consider the following issues.

Purpose of the Program

One of the most fundamental questions concerning any existing or proposed NSP initiative is the basic purpose of the effort. One approach is to focus on changing individual practices, to help ensure that designated professionals are better prepared to participate in specific, near-term interagency national security activities. An alternative approach is to focus on changing institutional cultures such that, over the long term, interagency collaboration becomes the natural default for all those engaged in national security matters.

The original NSPD program took a longer-term view, aiming to foster a cadre of interagency-qualified professionals able to work effectively in interagency contexts and then to bring those interagency perspectives back to their home agencies. The 2011 revised version of the NSPD program aims far more explicitly at meeting current requirements—using educational, training, and rotation opportunities to foster the ability of NSPs to more effectively execute missions “now.”

Yet most practitioners and observers would agree that there need be no hard and fast choice between fostering individual mission-oriented skills and changing institutional cultures—indeed, changing individual practices, many sociologists would argue, is the most effective way to change shared culture over time.

As an analogy, the military’s joint qualification system aims explicitly to achieve both goals. To meet immediate mission requirements, the Goldwater-Nichols process designates some joint billets as critical for mission success, and requires that those billets be filled by individuals who already have a specified level of joint qualification. At the same time, the system fosters joint-qualified senior leaders, who bring joint mindsets and approaches back to their home services, thus augmenting—though not replacing—service cultures with joint culture.

Concept of Integration

It is common for interagency reform proponents to call for closer integration among departments and agencies, but “integration” can mean a range of different things in practice. At one end of the spectrum, members of different agencies view may themselves primarily or exclusively as representatives of their home agencies, but they are familiar with the work of other agencies and able to work with counterparts in them—this may facilitate a well-coordinated application of their respective capabilities. At the other end of the spectrum, members of different agencies may view themselves primarily as part of a common, completely integrated enterprise at the systemic level, though they may still be able to reach back into their home agencies for resources and support. Among commentators, PNSR has made the most comprehensive case to date for fostering a genuinely “interagency cadre.”⁹⁹

Some argue that a systemic-level cadre might be best able to articulate and execute national-level priorities and missions. Others suggest that members of such a cadre might lose the ability to understand and represent their agencies of origin, and their exclusive work in interagency circles might leave them little time to help infuse their home agencies with interagency perspective.

As a point of comparison, the U.S. military’s emphasis on jointness, based on the 1986 *Goldwater-Nichols Act* as amended, more nearly mirrors the agency-based concept of integration.¹⁰⁰ Officers at various levels of joint qualification complete joint duty assignments, usually outside their home military service, but they serve most of their careers within their respective services. An officer’s service decides whether he or she is sent to a joint duty assignment, and whether or not he or she is promoted. The overall intent may best be described less as the creation of a cadre of joint-qualified officers who serve together and work on joint matters, and more as the fostering of an increasingly “joint-minded” total force that benefits from—and relies on—the infusion of joint perspectives using the mechanism of joint duty assignments.

⁹⁹ See both Project on National Security Reform, *Forging a New Shield*, November 2008; and Project on National Security Reform, *The Power of People: Building and Integrated National Security Professional System for the 21st Century*, November 2010.

¹⁰⁰ P.L. 99-433, the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986. Notably, P.L. 109-364, the *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, established a four-tiered system of joint qualification.

Scope of the Program

One critical issue, both in practice to date and in the broader policy debates, has been the appropriate scope of inclusion for a national security professional program—which individuals, and which categories of personnel, should be considered NSPs or have the opportunity to become NSPs?

At stake are two very different considerations, which might drive very different solutions. The substantive consideration is how best to make sure that the program includes all the right categories of personnel, at the right scale, to ensure that the program meets its strategic goals and generates desired effects. The practical consideration is how best to protect resources at both the systemic and agency levels, by strictly limiting participation to the minimum essential categories of personnel and numbers while still achieving program goals.

Substantive Focus

One key facet of the “scope” issue is the substantive focus of the program—in particular, the balance between homeland and traditional national security concerns. There is a broad consensus in the Washington policy community that the two categories are related, and this position has been echoed clearly by the Obama Administration.¹⁰¹ As many observers have noted, it is difficult to draw a clear line between them, because providing security for the homeland may require addressing challenges that arise abroad. But there is also recognition in practitioner communities that not all aspects of “national security” broadly defined are related to all others. Too broad a substantive reach—or too broad a reach with too-uniform policies and procedures—runs the risk of imposing unneeded professional development activities with an attendant waste in time and resources.

Agencies

In practice—and deriving in part from the desired substantive focus—one key decision for any NSP program concerns which agencies of the federal government should be included. The initial NSPD Executive Order and the 2011 revised Charter for the NSPD Executive Steering Committee each cast a wide net in terms of participation, including not only stalwarts such as DOD, State, and DHS, but also less traditional national security agencies such as Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development. On one hand, broadening the scope of participation to include additional, non-traditional national security agencies is appealing because it might offer a relatively low-cost way to incorporate entities with singular expertise, and to catalyze interagency relationships that could improve coordination, and save time and money, in future contingencies. On the other hand, the inclusion of agencies that would have only a handful of participants might create disproportionate administrative burdens for both the agencies themselves and for those responsible for program oversight. Some of the “undue burden” risk might be ameliorated, in practice, by relying on the major participants such as DOD, State, and DHS to host program activities open to all participating agencies.

¹⁰¹ In his first Presidential Study Directive, President Obama stated, “I believe that homeland security is indistinguishable from national security—conceptually and functionally they should be thought of together rather than separately.” See President Barack Obama, Presidential Study Directive—1, “Organizing for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism,” February 23, 2009.

Three Special Cases

Both practitioners and outside experts have grappled with the question of participation by three major sub-categories of professionals within agencies: the uniformed military, the Foreign Service, and the intelligence community. At the outset, all three communities reportedly opposed full, formal inclusion in the NSPD program, on the grounds that each community already had a well-established career development program, and that additional requirements would be too burdensome. The NSDP E.O. gave the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the Director of National Intelligence the responsibility to issue separate sets of guidance for each of these communities, and then “to coordinate such programs to the maximum extent practicable with the [NSPD] Steering Committee.”¹⁰² In practice, this language was widely interpreted to mean that the three communities were welcome, but not obliged, to participate in NSPD activities.

The argument for avoiding a formal mandate for these three communities to participate is the possible time conflict it might create with their respective, existing career development programs, which already include various forms of training, education, and rotational service. For the military, for example, the requirements for Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) are robust, leaving little time in a career for additional education or rotational tours. Moreover, JPME is governed in part by law, so some changes to JPME might require legislative action. On the other hand, some observers have suggested that, in theory, some of the requirements of JPME and the other communities’ career development programs might be fully compatible with those of interagency NSP programs. For example, one can imagine possible duty assignments for a military officer that might provide both “joint” and “interagency” experience.

Political Appointees

The NSPD program was designed to include career professionals, not political appointees. Over the course of NSPD program implementation to date, some practitioners and outside experts have pointed out that political appointees with similar responsibilities to coordinate national security matters in an interagency environment might also benefit from NSPD-program-like training and education, and other forms of relationship-building. In fact, many have noted, appointees who come from sectors outside government may need familiarization with interagency work much more than government career professionals do.

Most observers agree that formal inclusion of political appointees in any NSP program, including making them subject to the same rules that apply to career professionals, would be a bridge too far because it would constrain the President’s authority. Moreover, some argue, given the short average tenure of political appointees in government, it might be hard to justify any significant allocation of their limited time for training and education.

As a compromise, some have suggested making NSP program activities available to political appointees at their discretion—a flexible approach that might not, however, encourage appointees to consider those activities a priority. Others have suggested that in the selection of political

¹⁰² NSPD E.O., §5(b), (c), and (d).

appointees to fill designated national security positions, criteria similar to those that would be applied to career personnel ought to be considered.¹⁰³

Levels of Government

Practitioners and outside experts have debated the extent, if any, to which NSPD or a possible successor program should include state, local, and tribal officials, as well as federal-level employees.

The initial NSPD E.O., without requiring formal participation from non-federal levels of government in the NSPD program, did open the door to their participation in program activities. Section 2 of the E.O. noted that NSPD's "education, training and professional experience opportunities" should be "provided across organizations, levels of government, and incident management disciplines as appropriate." Section 5 noted that the Secretary of Homeland Security should develop a program to provide to federal, state, local, and tribal government officials education in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery plans and authorities, and training in crisis decision-making skills, consistent with applicable presidential guidance.¹⁰⁴ The NSPD *Strategy*, however, pointedly narrowed the focus of the program to the national level, stating at the outset that the goal was "integrated effort with common purpose across the Federal Government." It underscored the narrower scope by arguing that NSPs would "work in coordination with" many others including "state, local, territorial, and tribal governments" as well as the private sector, NGOs, and foreign governments—by implication, none of those others would themselves be considered NSPs.¹⁰⁵

The main practical argument for narrowing the scope to the federal level of government is that the inclusion of other levels of government would impose on the program significant resource demands and logistics challenges. The main substantive argument for exclusion is that the overlap among the portfolios of interest and responsibility of various levels of government is relatively limited—after all, firefighters in Des Moines, Iowa, do not need to know how to foster inclusive community councils in Paktika Province, Afghanistan. On the other hand, some observers, including PNSR, have argued that the more closely the U.S. government approaches a truly "whole of nation" approach to national security, including all levels of government and all relevant non-governmental actors, the more effective the practice of national security will be.¹⁰⁶

Mechanics: Individuals and Billets

For those considering the merits of, and possible options for, fostering a community of national security professionals, a key practical issue is how best to structure such an initiative in order to achieve the desired objectives. Different objectives—meeting short-term mission requirements or

¹⁰³ The INSPEAD bill included a Sense of Congress making this recommendation. H.R. 6249 §10203(d)(1) noted that the system did not apply to political appointments. §10203(d)(2) stated: "It is the sense of Congress that, in the selection and appointment of any individual for a position that (but for paragraph 1) would otherwise meet the criteria for an interagency national security position, due consideration should be given to such individual's interagency experience and qualifications."

¹⁰⁴ Executive Order 13434, May 17, 2007, "National Security Professional Development," §2 and 5.

¹⁰⁵ *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, July 2007, p.1-2.

¹⁰⁶ See Project on National Security Reform, *The Power of People: Building and Integrated National Security Professional System for the 21st Century*, November 2010.

fostering long-term cultural change, building a cadre of “interagency professionals” at the systemic level or fostering “interagency-savvy” professionals in individual agencies—would likely be best met by different practical mechanisms. In any case, as the military has discovered in more than 25 years of refining its implementation of the *Goldwater-Nichols Act*, crafting the detailed mechanics to meet a program’s policy goals, once defined, tends to be complicated and to require substantial human resources expertise.

One of the most important practical questions concerns the selection of individuals for participation in any NSP program—a distinct question from the selection of billets. At stake in the choices at this “micro” level are two key considerations that also apply to the choice of “categories” of personnel for inclusion: ensuring that participation is broad enough to meet substantive national security requirements, while avoiding too-strenuous resource demands.

Thinking about Individuals and Billets

“Individuals” are not static—people enter and exit government employment altogether; government employees enter and exit national security-focused jobs; and government employees progress through different career stages. Further, in many proposed formats for fostering national security professionals, participating individuals would be expected to progress from “seeking qualification” to “qualified”—and in some proposals, through multiple stages. To address this dynamism, some suggest that it might be useful for an NSP program to (1) identify the broader “pool” of those entitled to seek qualification; and (2) specify the rules that govern individual progress over time through the system.

“Billets” are a potential source of confusion because they can serve two distinct purposes in a professional development program that also has real-world goals. One purpose can be to meet real-world requirements—for example, a program might specify that designated national security billets must be filled by persons with some identified interagency capabilities, in order for the U.S. government to best execute national security activities. Another purpose billets can answer is instrumental—serving in them helps an individual gain program qualification. To address this potential room for confusion, an NSP program might clearly articulate whether the function of billets is to meet real-world needs, help grow qualified NSPs, or both.

Individuals and Billets in the Joint System

The military’s joint qualification system, while not an exact model, provides a useful point of comparison for any proposed or existing NSP programs.¹⁰⁷ In the military, the scope for individual participation is broad—all officers, active and reserve, can seek joint qualification. In practice, achieving various levels of joint qualification depends not only on individual choice, but also on decisions by the appropriate approval authorities who may offer an individual the needed assignments and educational opportunities. The military’s nomenclature has undergone revision several times, and arguably it remains incomplete. The *John Warner NDAA for FY 2007* introduced a four-level qualification system, in which approval for each level requires the completion of some combination of education and joint service.¹⁰⁸ On being approved for Level

¹⁰⁷ See in general P.L. 99-433, the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, October 1, 1986, as amended.

¹⁰⁸ P.L. 109-364, the *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006. All officers, active and reserve, are approved for Level I qualification at commission.

III, an individual is considered a Joint Qualified Officer (JQO), the only level that has a specific associated term. There is no separate term for “JQOs-in-training,” since that category encompasses the entire officer corps.

In the military’s system, the designation of joint billets, published in a Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL), serves the dual purpose of meeting real-world goals and helping individuals achieve joint qualification. So-called critical billets have significant prerequisites: they “require the incumbent to be previously trained, educated and experienced in joint matters,” and incumbents must be JQOs. Filling these billets with appropriately prepared personnel directly supports the conduct of joint business. “Standard” billets, in turn, are generally used to help the incumbents further improve their ability to work in a joint environment; these billets may carry some prerequisites below the level of full joint qualification.¹⁰⁹

Individuals and Billets in the NSPD Program

Since its inception, the NSPD program has wrestled with the respective roles of individuals and billets in making the system work.

In its original incarnation, the NSPD program used the designation of national security professional billets to define the program’s scope—occupying a designated billet made the occupant a program participant. The NSPD E.O. established the NSPD program for “professionals in national security positions.”¹¹⁰ In 2010, during the aborted revision of the NSPD *Strategy* and E.O., program officials signaled their intention to narrow the substantive focus of the program from all national security matters to interagency collaboration on national security matters. The new rules would require, officials noted, that designated “interagency” NSP positions involve not only a substantive focus on national security-related issues, but also regular, practical collaboration with partners from other agencies.¹¹¹ While that thinking would have changed the program’s substantive focus, it would have left intact the premise of using designated billets to define participation in the program.

Some stakeholders reportedly found this billet-based approach attractive because, in its apparent simplicity, it might require fewer resources for personnel management, and it might require less of participants, who are “in” by virtue of the seats they occupy. Others argued, however, that the original NSPD program’s use of billets to identify individual participants made the program extremely static and self-contained: other than occupying a designated billet, the program established no accession mechanism. It did not make use of any broader “pool” of potential participants. And it included no mechanism to leverage service in its designated billets to bring greater interagency awareness to broader communities in home agencies.¹¹²

The early experience of the original NSPD program with billet designation illustrates another potential source of confusion—the use of billets for two different purposes, identifying program participants and providing interagency rotational opportunities. Echoing the military’s joint

¹⁰⁹ See Department of Defense Instruction number 1300.19, “DOD Joint Officer Management Program,” dated October 31, 2007, incorporating Change 2, February 16, 2010, signed by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

¹¹⁰ Executive Order 13434, May 17, 2007, “National Security Professional Development”.

¹¹¹ Communications from Administration officials, Fall 2010.

¹¹² Communications from NSPD officials, 2008, 2009, 2010.

system, rotational assignments in the original NSPD program were intended to take place outside an individual's home agency, or alternatively, on a dedicated interagency task force. The NSPD *Strategy* called on the program's oversight body, the Executive Steering Committee, "where appropriate," to "develop a formal mechanism ... for national security professionals to participate in rotational or temporary detail assignments."¹¹³ In turn, the NSPD Implementation Plan, based on the *Strategy* and approved in September 2008, tasked each participating agency to identify the rotational opportunities—primarily in other agencies—that would be available to its own personnel.

In theory, it made intuitive sense that the "NSP billets" in Agency X might be available as "rotational assignment billets" for personnel from Agency Y, since by definition those billets should require a national security focus in an interagency working environment. In practice, one agency's NSP billets, and the rotational billets designated in that agency by other agencies, might conceivably have had little to no overlap, since the two sets of decisions were to be reserved to different agencies, rather than to an oversight body.

The approach of the original NSPD program toward the use of billets for rotational assignments was quite different from the military's much more centralized joint system. In that system, a single, integrated list of billets is recommended by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and approved by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Practitioners with experience in the military's joint system suggest that interagency rotational systems might also require strong centralized oversight to ensure that the equities and requirements of all stakeholding agencies and individuals are met.¹¹⁴

The 2011 revision of the NSPD program drew a distinction from the outset between individuals and billets, by asking participating agencies to identify both individuals and positions for participation in its Emergency Management pilot effort. Still to be determined are the modalities for future accession into the revised NSPD program, and the ways in which billets will be used to determine participation, help provide qualification, or both.

Integration Function

Any interagency national security professional program, whether limited or quite ambitious in scope, includes multiple agencies by definition, and therefore requires some mechanism to coordinate their efforts. At issue is how centralized—or de-centralized—this integration function ought to be.

The original NSPD program was quite de-centralized. The NSPD Executive Order gave the Executive Steering Committee a weak mandate: "to coordinate, to the maximum extent practicable," the NSPD "programs and guidance issued by the heads of agencies, in order to ensure an integrated approach to such programs."¹¹⁵ The original ESC and its supporting Integration Office did not enjoy formal tasking authority, and they did not control any resources. Instead, they served primarily to coordinate agency programs, activities, and promotion policies.

¹¹³ *National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals*, July 2007, p.9, available at http://www.nspd.gov/NSPD_Resources/Documents/National_Strategy_for_Professional_Development.

¹¹⁴ Communications from Joint Staff officials, 2010.

¹¹⁵ Executive Order 13434, May 17, 2007, "National Security Professional Development," available at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070517-6.html>.

According to some officials, in practice, the original ESC rarely enjoyed a veto over agency initiatives that appeared out of synch with NSPD intent.¹¹⁶ In the absence of dedicated funding for the program's central oversight apparatus, DOD established and funded the NSPD Integration Office to coordinate agency efforts to implement ESC guidance. But one challenge was that since DOD had no formal "lead agency" role, practitioners in some other agencies interpreted DOD's support for the NSPD IO as a thinly veiled attempt to steer the overall program.¹¹⁷

The 2011 revitalized NSPD program also appears to be based on a de-centralized premise. The updated ESC Charter confirms the ESC's weak mandate to "coordinate ... to the maximum extent possible."¹¹⁸

For the sake of comparison, DOD's joint officer management program features much stronger oversight from the systemic level. The Secretary of Defense, with the advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is tasked to establish different levels of joint qualification, including education and joint experience criteria,¹¹⁹ to determine the number of officers who are joint qualified,¹²⁰ and to establish career guidelines for officers to achieve joint qualification and for officers who have been so designated, including guidelines for selection, education, training, and types of duty assignments.¹²¹ Furthermore, the requirement of joint duty service and joint qualification as prerequisites for promotion to general or flag officer are stipulated by law, not left to the discretion of service rules or regulations.¹²²

On one hand, a strongly centralized system might have advantages in terms of forcing the system to work, and ensuring that all relevant policies and resource expenditures support the overall intent of the effort. On the other hand, a more de-centralized approach might have the advantage of better preserving "wiggle room" for agencies with very different missions, roles in national security, and established career paths. Some observers have pointed out that, in any case, effective integration is typically a product of leadership as well as formal authorities.

Incentive Structure

Creating a program and giving it a name does not necessarily ensure that it will function according to plan, let alone that it will achieve its stated objectives. Many observers suggest that in order for a complex, multi-agency program or system to be effective, it needs an incentive structure—for both agencies and individuals—that makes active participation more advantageous than benign neglect.

For Agencies

Agency incentives are likely to be shaped significantly by the resources available to implement the initiative. In theory, in a program designed to foster interagency communities, resources might

¹¹⁶ Communications from NSPD officials, 2008, 2009.

¹¹⁷ Conversations with State Department, Intelligence Community, National Security Staff officials, 2008 and 2010.

¹¹⁸ See National Security Professional Development program, "Executive Steering Committee Charter," 2011.

¹¹⁹ Title 10, U.S. Code, §661(b)(1)(A).

¹²⁰ Title 10, U.S. Code, §661(b)(1)(B).

¹²¹ Title 10, U.S. Code §661(e).

¹²² Title 10 U.S. Code, §619a(a), and see above.

be required to support new or expanded education and training programs, including faculty and staff, facilities, curriculum-development, and/or tuition at non-government institutions. Resources might also be required to support a centralized secretariat that coordinates and integrates program efforts. The single greatest cost might be funding required to create and maintain a personnel “float” in civilian agencies, to backfill positions while personnel participate in education programs, training, or rotational tours in other agencies.¹²³ While the military builds sufficient numbers into its personnel systems to provide such backfills, to support the pursuit of joint qualification, most non-DOD agencies do not have that luxury, so participation often means a zero-sum contest with “day job” requirements.

In the original NSPD program, in the absence of dedicated funding to support agency participation, agencies were asked to take resources “out of hide”—that is, to reallocate resources to NSPD from other programs. Many practitioners agreed that this construct created a strong incentive for agencies to limit the extent of their participation, including designating relatively low numbers of national security positions, and creatively reframing existing training, education and exchange opportunities as compliant with NSPD intent, rather than crafting new, more optimal programs. Both the reinvigorated NSPD 2.0, and the related bill introduced in the 112th Congress, the *Interagency Personnel Rotation Act of 2011*, clearly aim to strictly limit program costs.¹²⁴

Clear advantages of relatively more robust resourcing might include ensuring the available of personnel “floats” to facilitate participation in program activities, and easing agency concerns about internal zero-sum competitions for resources and staff time. The clear disadvantage of greater resourcing, in a sharply constrained fiscal environment, is the set of likely opportunity costs in the form of other activities that would go unfunded. Various observers and practitioners have proposed several ways in which the costs of an interagency community-building initiative might be minimized, for example:

- Structuring educational opportunities in limited, recurrent blocks of time that allow participants to continue to do their day jobs—for example, several days per month, on the model of the State Department’s National Security Executive Leadership Seminar—rather than as year-long, full-time residential programs
- Carefully engineering interagency rotational opportunities such that program participants simultaneously complete the program’s requirement for rotational service and fully meet the needs of the position they temporarily occupy.
- Leveraging the many existing training opportunities currently provided by State, DOD, and DHS, by making them available to NSP participants from other agencies.

Regardless of the resources made available, agencies are likely to assign a higher priority to an initiative if it appears that the effort enjoys strong support from senior leadership, first of all from the President. Such support might be indicated in publicly delivered remarks, or in the

¹²³ Many observers have suggested that without such a float, the ability of civilian agencies to participate in an interagency cadre program would be quite limited. See for example Commission on Smart Power, Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, Co-Chairs, “A Smarter, More Secure America,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007, p.66.

¹²⁴ Communications from NSPD officials, 2011, and see S. 1268, *Interagency Personnel Rotation Act of 2011*, as introduced in the Senate.

course of private consultations, or in other fora. Some practitioners note that the absence of any such attention, too, is likely to be noted by agencies, and suggest that this was the fate of the original NSPD program after the President signed the initial Executive Order.

For Individuals

Individuals might be motivated to participate in an interagency community development program by any number of different incentives, such as:

- enhanced promotion potential;
- improved prospects for choice assignments;
- a reasonable degree of confidence that the program rules, on which they may base some career decisions, will not change too dramatically over time; or
- direct guidance from leadership to participate, regardless of specific perceived benefits.

Based in part on the readily available analogue of the military's joint qualification system, interagency community advocates have focused on the linkage between the completion of program requirements and opportunities for senior-level service. In the joint system, military services maintain jurisdiction for individual promotion decisions, but legislation ensures that there are jointness prerequisites for individual promotion to flag officer. In addition, also based on congressional mandate, the Secretary of Defense, with advice from CJCS, plays an oversight role, helping ensure that overall promotion rates support the goal of jointness.¹²⁵ In a public address in 2004, then-Vice Chairman General Pace suggested that the officer corps did get the message: "Congress said, 'If you want to get promoted, you've got to be joint.' I was a Lieutenant Colonel in 1986. I said, 'I want to get promoted! What is joint, and how do I get some?'"¹²⁶

In contrast, in the original NSPD program, departments and agencies retained full jurisdiction over individual promotion decisions, with neither legislation nor a systemic-level mechanism to help ensure that "interagency qualification" would be given due consideration in the agencies' promotion decision-making processes.

At the same time, NSPD officials have indicated that individual interest in participation in interagency-related activities—such as longer-term education, short-term training courses, one-day seminars—has remained consistently strong over the past several years, despite fluctuations in the perceived "operational tempo" of the NSPD program itself.¹²⁷ Some observers suggest that the key empirical events of the last 10 years—Hurricane Katrina, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—which led to the policy conclusion that more effective interagency integration was

¹²⁵ Title 10 U.S. Code, §619a(a). The NDAA for FY2007, which significantly revised the joint qualification system including changing the nomenclature from "joint specialty" to "joint qualification," also took care to protect those officers who had achieved a joint designation under the old system—those who already had the joint specialty, or had been selected for it, would simply be considered joint qualified. See the *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007*, October 17, 2006, P.L. 109-364, §516(g).

¹²⁶ General Peter Pace, USMC, Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Extemporaneous Remarks as delivered to the Marine Corps Association/ Naval Institute's Forum 2004," September 7, 2004, available at http://www.jcs.mil/vice_chairman/speeches/MCANavalInstituteFORUM2004.html.

¹²⁷ Communications from NSPD officials, 2009, 2010, 2011, and participant observation at educational courses sponsored by DOD and State, 2009, 2010, 2011.

be necessary, have also directly spurred many individual practitioners to seek the interagency tools they believe they need in order to perform more effectively.

Recruiting Flexibility

Some observers have argued that a program designed to foster national security professionals might benefit from an array of flexible recruitment tools. The NSPD *National Strategy* tasked departments and agencies to “reform employment practices to encourage the hiring of personnel with a variety of experiences from within and outside the Federal Government,” but the original NSPD program apparently took little action on that front.¹²⁸

One proposed approach would be further developing programs at the college-level, including providing support for national security studies programs, and creating opportunities for student internships in national security fields.¹²⁹ Other tools might include allowing greater flexibility for mid-career recruitment of specialists from outside the U.S. government, and facilitating transfers in and out of government jobs including providing incentives for valuable experience gained.

The opportunity to bring NSPs into government at all career stages, it is argued, might improve effectiveness by introducing needed expertise, and might also improve efficiency by taking advantage of education, training, and experience achieved outside government (and not at government expense). Potential drawbacks of utilizing flexible recruiting tools could include higher costs required to manage a more complex human capital system; and potential reduced incentives for agencies to make NSP opportunities available to their “permanent” personnel—and to pay for those opportunities—if they can, instead, hire personnel who already have equivalent qualifications.

Congressional Oversight

Whether or not legislation is enacted, Congress has the option of exercising oversight over both existing and possible future initiatives aimed at fostering a community of interagency national security professionals in the executive branch. Some observers have wondered how Congress might best exercise such oversight, given that, by definition, such programs involve multiple agencies with multiple corresponding committees of jurisdiction on the Hill.

One option might be oversight of program implementation in individual agencies by their respective committees of jurisdiction. This approach might help ensure such agencies’ individual compliance, but it would not provide an assessment of a program’s overall impact or of the consistency of its application.

Another option might be oversight by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the House Committee on Government Oversight and Reform. These committees have oversight responsibility for executive branch organization and the federal civil service, although they neither authorize nor appropriate.

¹²⁸ *National Strategy*, p. 9.

¹²⁹ See for example Jeffrey D. McCausland, “Developing Strategic Leaders for the 21st Century,” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2008.

In the broader debates concerning national security reform for the interagency, some participants have suggested yet another option—the creation of House and Senate Select Committees on National Security, which would have oversight responsibility for holistic issues and initiatives that cross agency boundaries.¹³⁰ One expected challenge might be institutional resistance to any diminution of the prerogatives of existing committees. In addition, determining the appropriate boundaries for “national security” might prove as challenging on the Hill as it has proven to be within the executive branch and in broader policy community debates.

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¹³⁰ See CRS Report RL34455, *Organizing the U.S. Government for National Security: Overview of the Interagency Reform Debates*, by Catherine Dale, Nina M. Serafino, and Pat Towell.