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National Security Strategy: Assessing the Impact and Implementation that Strategic Planning has on National Security Policy

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Abstract

Every four years, the President and his administration release a National Security Strategy that outlines major security concerns of the United States and how they plan to address them. While having a clear and succinct strategy is widely agreed upon by national security officials as a necessary component of our policymaking process, there are concerns that too much energy is focused on addressing the challenges of today and not enough on those that "loom over the horizon." Through the lens of the National Security Strategy (NSS), this paper delves into the politics and procedures of national security policymaking and seeks to uncover the relationship, if any, between the goals we promote and the policies we adopt. It takes a critical look at the Bush 2002 NSS and the Obama 2010 NSS and identifies key characteristics within each. Additionally, it offers unparalleled insight on the overall effectiveness of the NSS from key individuals interviewed for this paper, including Ambassador John Negroponte and American University Professor Gordon Adams. Finally, the paper aims to investigate the relationship between the NSS and the Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). While each of the two latter documents lay out a strategic vision for implementing defense and foreign policy, the connection they have with the larger National Security Strategy has been a tenuous one, at best. This capstone concludes by stating that the NSS does not have any palpable impact on foreign and defense policy. Instead of being a prioritized list of national security policies, it serves merely as a public affairs document that highlights broad goals and offers little direction on how to best accomplish them.

Introduction and Literature Review

"Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."
-Sun Tzu

Background

Every four years, the President and his administration release a National Security Strategy that outlines major security concerns of the United States and how they plan to address them. The objective of the document is to inform Congress and the American public of the administration's strategic intentions and initiate a dialogue between the executive and legislative branches regarding the country's security priorities. Although known for being general and abstract, the NSS is a comprehensive security document that is the official declaration of an administration's defense and foreign policy objectives. To achieve this goal, much time and care is devoted to drafting it preceding its release to the world. Despite this however, a growing community of Members of Congress, senior policymakers in the executive branch, and foreign policy scholars have entered a tenacious debate impugning the overall effectiveness of the document (Dale, Serafino, Towell 1).

The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* first addressed the necessity for a national security strategy report. At that time, the primary national security threat was stemming from a hostile Soviet Union driven by an expansionist ideology. Thus, the majority of the United States' resources and planning procedures were employed to reflect this challenge. Twenty-five years later, the landscape of the international order has changed dramatically. No longer are we haunted by the spread of a communistic political ideology but rather by recent experiences and events like the rise of al-Qaeda and Islamic terrorism, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Hurricane Katrina,

which have all revealed major shortcomings in how we respond to national crises and emergencies. While the threats have evolved, the strategic decision-making process has unfortunately not adjusted to meet the demands of this new international environment. The threats and security challenges that we as a nation face today in the 21st Century cannot adequately be addressed by the outdated structures of the 20th Century.

Forming a Succinct National Security Policy

It is important to note that this thesis is not a complete analysis of national security policy, as the process is extremely complex and intricate. Rather, this paper will attempt to delve into the politics and procedures of crafting security policy as it relates to the National Security Strategy. In Morton Halperin and Priscilla Clapp's book, "Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy," there is a focus on who the participants are, how they prioritize the issues, and how their decisions are implemented. Since Halperin and Clapp both served in several presidential administrations, they provide an unparalleled viewpoint on what drives foreign and defense policy. Additionally, they offer detailed insight on why presidents are so secretive when it comes to dealing with matters of national security. In another book, "US National Security: Policymakers, Processes and Politics" by Sam Sarkesian, John Williams, and Stephen Cimbala, the policy process is explained with greater emphasis on the relationship between the President and Congress. Sarkesian, Williams, and Cimbala argue that while the President has an advantage when it comes to debating foreign and defense policy, he cannot effectuate good policy unless he has the support of the Congress behind him.

Furthermore, the paper aims to investigate the relationship between the National Security Strategy and the Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and

the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). While each of the two latter documents lay out a strategic vision for implementing defense and foreign policy, the connection they have with the larger National Security Strategy has been a tenuous one, at best. Dr. Jordan Tama, Associate Professor at American University, argues that because the NSS is produced after the QDR[1], there are interagency inconsistencies that may belie the more comprehensive and grander vision laid out in the NSS.

Budget Implications

Budgetary considerations and impacts will also be explored. A Congressional Research Service report titled, "Economics and National Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Policy" by Dick Nanto takes a critical look at a subtle yet egregious security threat: a sputtering economy. Now more than ever, policy makers realize that economic growth is inherently tied to national power and leadership in global affairs. An unsustainable debt burden and continuing federal budget deficits will have a pernicious toll on our defense and hard and soft power (Nanto 1). According to General James Jones, former National Security Advisor, a strategy cannot be effective unless it is supported by a prosperous economy that is able to provide the funds and materials necessary to carry out its goals.

Other sources, including Dr. Gordon Adams, Former White House Associate Director for National Security and International Affairs, remark on the relationship between the Strategy and the national budget. Because strategies are constrained by resources, Adams unequivocally believes that the budget drives the planning of the Strategy. On the other

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[1] While the QDR has also been released prior to the NSS, the first QDDR published in December 2010 was released after the President Obama's 2010 NSS

[2] The Bush 2006 document is not explored in this paper. Although it does differ in several ways from the 2002 Strategy, the 2002 Strategy provides a clear and comprehensive outline of what the Bush strategy would be for the administration's two terms in office.

[3] Dr. Adams labeled Clinton's process as a "staple job", in that the National Security Staff

hand, Dr. Tama, argues that because resources are limited, a strategy will force the government to prioritize its vision and allocate resources to its most important goals. Either way, it is clear that the state of our economy must begin to play a greater role in the strategic decision-making process.

These authors are all respected individuals in both academia and the public sector. They have experience working in the White House, the State Department and the US Military as well as at universities including Princeton University, Loyola University Chicago, American University and Pennsylvania State University. Their credentials reflect the quality of their contributions to the reform of the National Security Strategy. Other authors, academics, and policymakers whose thoughts are presented in this thesis include Michèle Flournoy, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and Shawn Brimley, author and research associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. In a report titled, "Strategic Planning for U.S. National Security," they discuss the policy planning process under President Dwight D. Eisenhower and how it led to efficient and proactive policy formation. They point out that strategy should be proactive and should aim to put in place the infrastructure, laws, and capabilities that will enable the U.S. to adapt and even thwart any unforeseen threats (Flournoy and Brimley 6).

Additional critiques and recommendations, all of which will be discussed later in this thesis, are presented by Stephen Walt, a contributor to *Foreign Policy* and three Brookings scholars: James Steinberg, Michael O'Hanion, and Susan Rice. Respectively, these authors explore the 2010 Obama Strategy and 2002 Bush Strategy[2] and identify key themes

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as well as shortcomings within each of the documents. While Walt's criticism comes off as being sardonic and mocking, the Brookings critique is more direct and more specific in its analysis. Lieutenant Colonel Patrick C. Malackowski of the US Air Force and Catherine Dale, a Congressional Research Service author and specialist in international security, point out how the Strategy fails to effectively consider, incorporate, and communicate current threats to our national security. They conclude with their recommendations for addressing these problems.

History

The National Security Strategy was mandated by section 603 of the *Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986* (US National Security Strategy 2010). The law mandated that the Strategy address the following (*Goldwater-Nichols Act)*:

> (1) "The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.
>
> (2) "The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.
>
> (3) "The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).
>
> (4) "The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.
>
> (5) "Such other information as may be necessary to help inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States."

Essentially, it mandated that the President deliver to Congress a thorough report of his administration's strategic, long-term objectives and prescribe potential ways to support, protect and accomplish them (Malackowski 2). The legislation also required that the strategy report be submitted to Congress annually (on the same day that the President submits the budget for the following fiscal year) and no later than 150 days after taking office (Dale 3). In reality however, recent Presidents have neglected to follow this piece of the legislation (President Obama submitted only one in his first term; President George W. Bush submitted two, one in each term; President Clinton submitted seven).

Prior to the law's enactment, there was little coherence amongst the different executive departments in regards to foreign policy. Following World War II, the U.S.'s greatest security threat was an expansionist Soviet Union. Consequently, the government operated and employed resources in accordance with its primary objective of containing Soviet communism. However, this overarching theme of containment provided only a rough strategic framework and led to considerable frustration within the administration over what the national strategy actually was (Adams). The president was unable to effectively enforce a unified plan that articulated the objectives of the nation as a whole. In an attempt to increase accountability and efficiency, the Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Act, thereby mandating the president to produce an official foreign policy strategy that would promulgate his administration's interests and capabilities to the American public.

The Policy Process: The President and the Congress

Explaining the U.S. policy process is complex. Explaining the U.S. policy process as it relates to national security is exponentially harder. According to Frederick Kaiser, national security policy is complex because it is a "set of diverse subject matters that cross into many different policy lines; these in turn raise different issues and concerns, institutional interests, and costs that affect congressional roles" (qtd. in Sarkesian, Williams Cimbala 184). In contemporary America, national security policy encompasses a range of subpolicies, from the defense budget and military manpower levels to counterterrorism strategy and treaties, to covert operations (Sarkesian, Williams Cimbala 187). Hence, it is no surprise that the policy process is quite complicated. The formalities of the process; the vested interests of different actors, including those of the public; the necessity of a quick response to an unforeseen event, such as that of 9/11; not to mention the unique characteristics of security policy discussed below- all of these factors complicate the policy process in such a way that writing a Strategy to promote these policies is either incredibly esoteric or only remotely tied to the policies we as a nation later adopt. As Dr. Gordon Adams said, "The policy process has an incredibly large influence over the content of [the Strategy]" (Adams). Therefore, in order to best comprehend the intricacies of how national security policy is made, it is essential to analyze the nature of national security policy itself (Sarkesian, Williams Cimbala 173).

National security policy is unique in the way that it comes about. Often, it is proposed in response to threats from other nations or outside actors or from major global events (Halperin and Clapp 101). Events such as the assassination of the U.S. ambassador in Libya or the terrorist attacks of 9/11 required immediate attention and swift policy

responses. New technology, like the completion of the atom bomb in 1945, open up new opportunities and may force officials to make quick decisions. In fact, events like these can be so unexpected that they force officials to develop new views on an issue that simply did not exist before (Halperin and Clapp 102). As a result, these issues are pushed to the top of the agenda. Unlike economic policy or social policy, which can be debated and discussed ad nauseam until a proposal is adopted, national security policy is often *reactive* and expedited through the necessary policy channels in order to address the problem at hand.

Many of the policy issues that are later adopted are initially formulated by a small, exclusive power cluster of high-level political actors and military personnel. Due to the necessity of secrecy, information is often limited and unavailable to Congress and bureaucrats outside of the national security establishment. Even within the White House, key participants are left out, for the fear that information will be prematurely revealed to allied governments or leaked to the press. Furthermore, top officials may keep the circle small in order to exclude any possible opposing viewpoints or objections from being made. During the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfield, in the interests of security and cohesion, purposefully cut out several advisers and analysts that he believed would have raised objection or would have questioned the political consequences of the attack (Halperin and Clapp 128). In 1970, President Nixon did not fully inform his secretary of defense of the full extent of the planned bombing operations in North Vietnam. His secretary of state was not informed at all (Halperin and Clapp 129). At the end of the day, a president has the legal right to keep advisors in the dark on matters of national security. However, if the operation fails or is poorly received by the rest of the world, the blame rests completely on his shoulders.

The sensitive nature of these issues therefore puts the president in a difficult position. In an effort to maintain the appearance of normalcy, a president has to juggle between keeping the public informed and maintaining the necessary codes of secrecy. For example, during national security emergencies, as in the aftermath of 9/11, the administration was candid with the public but avoided disclosing sensitive information pertaining to military operations and intelligence strategies (Sarkesian, Williams and Cimbala 175). Sometimes, the President can avoid national security controversy by engaging in quiet diplomacy or permitting increased use of intelligence capabilities. Other times though, the desire to maintain secrecy and protect the homeland succumbs to the commitment to fairness and ethical behavior required in an open system (Sarkesian, Williams, and Cimbala 173). This is best illustrated by the contention that originally surrounded the Patriot Act, where the administration had to reconcile obtaining sensitive information while protecting the privacy rights afforded to Americans. Regardless though, the highly sensitive nature of national security policy is enough incentive for an administration to maintain secrecy for as long as possible.

Within the policy arena, the President is arguably the most powerful player. Over the last decade alone, presidential power has expanded greatly, justified by the need to efficiently respond to national crises and protect the homeland. The President has to do more than just formulate policy, however. He must also project confidence in his leadership, rally the nation behind him, resolve political squabbles and win support from Congress (often through traditional strategies like logrolling, intimidation, and consensus building) (Halperin and Clapp 78). The president often has the upper-hand when dealing with Congress. For starters, the country tends to look to the President, not the Congress, to

lead in times of emergency. Accordingly, members of Congress will align themselves with the president's policies so as to not seem obstructionist and consequently hurt their image back home. He also has a huge advantage by having access to all security information from executive policy making agencies, including the Departments of Defense and State, the military advisory system, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council. As a result, Congress has to rely on executive branch sources for much of its information (Sarkesian, Williams Cimbala 181).

While the president can use the bully pulpit to build support in the face of congressional opposition, the president is not a king. Congressional oversight and budget resource allocation have an impact on determining the strength of the president's hard and soft power options and the role his executive agencies can play (Nanto 2). The Congress, reflective of the will of the people, is most effective in negotiating with the president when the political will of the nation is not in line with or critical of the policies of the president (Sarkesian, Williams and Cimbala 181). In other words, when the Congress has more support from the people than the president, it can come to the table with more cards in its hand. "Public opinion thus provides the base upon which an assertive president who wishes to expand presidential power can succeed- or from which a president with low ratings can fall and lose control of his agenda" (Sarkesian, Williams, and Cimbala 186).

For example, the initial success of the 2003 Iraq invasion and War on Terror drew high levels of public and congressional support during President Bush's first term. But once reconstruction efforts began to falter and more flag-draped coffins were returned home to mourning families, Congress' opinion immediately shifted to reflect the public's bewilderment and disappointment regarding the mission in Iraq. Seeing that the Congress

is the voice of the people, national security policy cannot be effective unless it has congressional support and public acceptance. Whatever the president may think of the Congress, he cannot afford to disregard or dismiss the power it holds.

Finally, it is worth noting where the National Security Strategy plays into all this. One additional duty of the president is to provide Congress with a strategic vision for national security. He presents the goals that he believes will best serve the national interest. This vision is an extraordinary opportunity to set the framework for a lasting legacy (Halperin and Clapp 82). A president has at maximum eight years to define his vision and prescribe effective policy to meet the needs of an ever-changing world. He is aware of his responsibility to protect the people of the United States from foreign threats today and tomorrow. His job performance, thus, is heavily dependent on making himself accessible to Congress, especially the leadership, and forming close and personal relationships. The performance of President George W. Bush post-9/11 reflects this. His policies of preemptive action, reorganizing the intelligence community, and engaging in a "war on terror" expressed in his 2002 Strategy were for the most part endorsed by his allies in Congress. The relations were pivotal in the later creation of the interagency intelligence umbrella agency, the Directorate of National Intelligence, and the Department of Homeland Security. Of course, Bush did not get everything he wanted. But history will show that Bush's positive relations with Congress allowed him to accomplish much in such a short period of time.

Planning a Decision Strategy: Writing a National Security Strategy

Case Study: The 2002 Bush Strategy

The Bush 2002 National Security Strategy was entirely prepared by Condoleezza Rice and a few advisors from the National Security Council. According to Adams, it was not a consensus project and did not take into consideration input from other national security agencies. Because of this, many consider it to be the most concise and organized Strategy to date. Some have called it a "masterpiece of clarity" and an "expression of the President's brain" (Adams). Interestingly enough, this exclusive process undertaken by the Bush team, while seemingly non-controversial, was rather distinctive in comparison to those of his predecessor and successor. In fact, both President Clinton and President Obama used strikingly different processes when drafting their Strategies[3].

In general, the 2002 Bush Strategy was more provocative and more controversial than President Obama's, namely because of its rhetoric and policy goals. While it did acknowledge the importance of multilateral relations and of "igniting a new era of economic growth," it was essentially a doctrine of preemption, of unilateralism, and of American strength and hegemony (Negroponte). It required the United States to identify and thwart any terrorist threat before it reached the United States. It was a declaration of war against terror and provided the justification for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

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[3] Dr. Adams labeled Clinton's process as a "staple job", in that the National Security Staff drew policy recommendations from all national security related agencies and with a bit of editing, published what Clinton called "his" Strategy. If it weren't for Clinton's national security advisor Tony Lake to suggest having a unifying theme of international engagement and democracy and free market enlargement, the Strategy would have been a loosely connected list of security priorities.

In fact, the new shift of emphasis on "preemptive war" marked a historical turning point in U.S. national security policy. It was a purposeful step away from containment and deterrence and towards a new era of reasserting American dominance. In section V of the 2002 Strategy, Bush outlines why preemptive action is necessary to combat rogue states and terrorists. He states: "Given the goals of the rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past" (2002 National Security Strategy). It was an instinctive response to the attacks of 9/11 and was intended to send a clear message to all state sponsors of terrorism of what had happened in Afghanistan just one year before. But he didn't stop there. The Strategy extended the notion of "preemption" to include "preventative attacks"; that is, preemptive attacks even in the absence of an imminent threat (Steinberg, O'Hanion, Rice). While the application of a preventative strategy against terrorist groups was becoming less controversial, employing it against rogue states was still (and is still) frowned upon (Steinberg, O'Hanion, Rice). Was the purpose to eliminate dangerous capabilities or overthrow dangerous regimes? If it was the former, the international community could tolerate it. Perhaps this is why the Strategy decried a nuclear and chemically equipped Iraq as a looming threat to all nations and hence, justified what would soon be an invasion to topple Saddam Hussein.

In addition to terror-related attacks, the Bush security team feared a wide diffusion of mass destruction technology. The threat of a nuclear attack on American soil was so grave, that the Bush team felt it presented "a compelling case for taking anticipatory actions to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack" (2002 National Security Strategy). The president felt an obligation to protect the American people. The Strategy conveyed this as well as his belief that the

United States could not sit idly by while our enemies continued to develop destructive technologies that threatened our livelihood. As then National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said, "…we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." It was an insistence on taking all preventative measures necessary to ensure that another 9/11 never happened again.

But at the same time, the Strategy was also a call for the global spread of liberty and democracy. "…The United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world" (2002 National Security Strategy). This reference to freedom and human rights was intended to be an explicit and non-negotiable goal of the Strategy. As a major proponent of the Democratic Peace Theory, the administration believed that democratic civil societies, free trade and investment, and access to quality education were essential to transforming rogue states into nations of peace. By developing and actively bringing these ideals to all corners of the globe, the administration hoped to eliminate safe havens for terrorists and consequently render their influence obsolete.

Compare and Contrast: 2010 Obama Strategy

Unlike the Clinton "staple job" and the Bush "club members only" styles, the creation of the Obama 2010 National Security Strategy was written by amalgamating input from the various executive agencies (State, Defense, Homeland Security, DNI, etc.) as well as the National Security Council. The administration actively sought to engage all perspectives of its national security team in order to produce what they hoped would be a succinct and

unified Strategy. The Obama strategy's primary author was Ben Rhodes, the Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communication.

The Obama Strategy was quite revolutionary. It took into account the nature of our security threats and argued that only a robust and reinvigorated America could stand to confront these challenges. As Secretary Clinton pointed out, the document's main takeaway should be its assertion that American power is fundamentally tied to the sources of its strength domestically (Ackerman 2). It still highlighted key policy issues of the Bush documents (nonproliferation and counterterrorism), but democracy promotion was less prominent. Instead, a greater focus was on strengthening alliances, fostering international cooperation, and leading with a more multilateral approach, so that the burden of securing the international order is shared amongst many nations. (Adams). Additionally, it critically looked at what security is in the 21st Century. In a podcast interview, Rhodes argued that security begins at home and hence it must encompass a larger conception of our national strengths, including first and foremost a balanced and sustainable economy; secure energy access; a more competitive education system; and a greater investment in science and technology (Rhodes). This Strategy was the first to truly emphasize the important roles these aspects play in our national security (Jones).

In his interview, Rhodes also highlights two overarching points of the document. The first is strengthening our national capacity. The document calls for a "whole-of-government approach", where all facets of our national security apparatus are utilized and military power is not the sole resource. A broader set of capabilities would include a more effective and modernized diplomacy and development policy, a more organized and coordinated intelligence and law enforcement structure, and a strengthened civilian

expeditionary capacity in areas around the world. In order for the United States to survive in the new international era, a rebalance of resources is in order.

In fact, the new international order is another highlight. The National Security Strategy pledges, "We must pursue a rules-based international system that can advance our own interests by serving mutual interests." In an interview with Spencer Ackerman, Rhodes comments, "We're at an inflection point. We're clear-eyed about the shortcomings. We're not starry-eyed about the efficacy of the international system as it is today" (qtd. in Ackerman 1). In the Strategy, Rhodes and the Obama administration call for a new international order that "promotes peace, security, and an opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges." Today, America cannot afford to fight terror, climate change, and economic failure all by itself. The global nature of these problems requires a broader collaboration of nations. A new order where we can build new partnerships and strengthen old alliances will allow us to efficiently allocate American resources and engage the rest of the world in helping us overcome such challenges (Ackerman 2).

As for strategic goals, General James Jones, former National Security Advisor, articulates another difference in this strategy. "The plan to concentrate our military resources on the enemies of the United States, defeating al-Qaeda and its affiliates rather than a more broadly defined war against a tactic which is terrorism, is a clear prioritization of the strategy" (Jones). Nowhere in the Strategy does it speak of engaging in a "war on terror," a phrase coined by the Bush Administration and littered throughout his two Strategies. Rhodes clearly articulates that we are neither at war with the tactic of terrorism nor with the religion of Islam. Rather, he narrows his definition of our enemy to al-Qaeda

and its affiliates (Rhodes). In Section III of the document, "Advancing Our Interests," final points that are underlined include the need to withdraw from Iraq and turn control over to the Iraqi people; stop the spread of nuclear and biological weapons; increase attention to the threat of cyber warfare; and renew focus on climate change as a core national security interest (2010 National Security Strategy).

Critiques of Obama and Bush National Security Strategies

In many ways, the Obama Strategy was seen as an antidote to the unpopular policies he had inherited. He was seen as someone who could restore American prosperity and power without further exacerbating relations with critical allies. While much of what President Obama prescribed in his Strategy has been lauded, there have been those critical of his vision. Arguably, the most severe criticism is its failure to specify and prioritize its wide-ranging goals (Ackerman). While Ben Rhodes claims that within the document there is "a clear sense of the focus of the administration and how that relates to resource allocation," the document is highly idealistic and proposes laudable goals without much explanation. According to the document, the U.S. will be "unwavering in its pursuit of peace between Israel and its neighbors; will fight to deny al-Qaeda "safe havens" anywhere; will address threats to cyberspace; will achieve balanced and sustainable economic growth at home, *and* will "accelerate sustainable development via increased foreign aid." And when the U.S. is not working on those goals, she will be preventing genocide, preparing for global pandemics, reinforcing international legal norms, and maintain key alliances (Walt). Many questioned the sincerity and even the ability of the administration to solve all of these problems. There was no suggestion as to which goals were of highest priority for the nation to accomplish. While documents like these tend to project broad strategic goals, the Obama document sets too many and with little direction on how to accomplish them.

Ironically, a close reading of the 2010 document reflects a fundamental theme of the 2002 Bush doctrine. The report seeks a "rules-based international system that can advance our own interests by serving mutual interests" (2010 National Security Strategy). Another section states we will live in a "national order advanced by U.S. leadership" (2010 National Security Strategy). Despite the pledge to a more multilateral, cooperative order, the rhetoric suggests that our interests will come first, and if the "rules-based international system" doesn't accommodate these interests, we won't oblige them. Meanwhile, "adversarial states" (or those who don't follow the rules) will face a choice: "abide by international norms and achieve the political and economic benefits that come with greater integration with the international community; or refuse to accept this pathway, and bear the consequences of that decision, including greater isolation" (2010 National Security Strategy). For those who had worked in the Bush administrations, these words must have sounded unusually familiar. Boiled down, it basically reflects the same Bush mentality of "you're either with us or against us." But this time, the message is concealed in more flowery language (Walt).

In principal, the Obama Strategy indicates that Washington will continue to define the rules for this new international system and those who break these rules will face the consequences. Yet, notwithstanding such a strategy, the U.S. will continue to violate sovereignty by deploying Navy Seals into Pakistan and target drone strikes at suspected terrorists as it pleases. While we as Americans believe in our aspirations for peace and prosperity across the globe, the fact that we do not hold ourselves accountable to our proclaimed rules creates doubt about our true intentions in problematic regions like the Middle East and East Asia, where we actively seek to inject our values into civil societies.

Chastising "adversarial states" for deliberately breaking with international law while assuming that we ourselves are above these same laws is a dangerous game to play, and unless the United States proves that it can play by the rules, our international clout will only continue to decline (Walt).

National Budget, Economics, and National Security

Economics and Security

In an ideal world, policymakers would have unlimited resources to devote to the most pressing issues. Budgetary restrictions would never cross a policymaker's mind and all priority issues could be addressed in a productive manner. Yet, we know that this is not the case and will never be the case. In today's world, the state of the economy has recently become a major factor in the strength of our national security. A crippled economy provokes uncertainty, breeds fear, and tarnishes the reputation of the U.S. government. Additionally, our purchasing power diminishes and we are forced to make financial sacrifices.

In the Congress, the situation is no different. When putting together the annual budget, Congress is similarly constrained. During an economic crisis, available budgetary resources can become dangerously small. The flow of wealth generated by trade is interrupted. Investments in science and technology are cut. Foreign energy imports become increasingly expensive. And of course, our defense spending, which accounts for about 20% of the U.S. federal budget and comprises about 5% of U.S. GDP, is pulled back (Nanto 5). Hence, a weakened economy equates to weakened national security.

Fortunately, our lawmakers are becoming more aware of this problem and have begun to prescribe recommendations to rectify it.

In his 2010 National Security Strategy, the President outlines several economic issues that he considered as having a greater impact on U.S. national security. The first is human capital. The President connects good education with high productivity, and high productivity with economic growth. Improving education encourages more students to go to college and, consequently, allows the U.S. to restore and maintain a leadership position in higher education (Nanto 25). In fact, increasing the number of college graduates is the primary goal in the document as it pertains to education. By investing more in education, not only will American children succeed in a global economy, but it will also allow for growth in critical areas like engineering and science. Expanding education in math and science will strengthen human capital and contribute to advancements in military technology and infrastructure security (2010 NSS).

Education reform also has an international focus within the 2010 NSS. The President calls for an increase in programs supporting foreign languages and area studies at U.S. colleges and abroad at foreign universities. While the NSS does not provide specific policy recommendations beyond calling for general support of education, it acknowledges that sending more students to critical areas of the world like East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa will provide a stronger understanding of the languages spoken, the cultures celebrated, and the values these regions find most important. On the other side of the coin, the Strategy supports the assimilation of immigrants into the American culture. The document states, "Ultimately, our national security depends on striking a balance between security and openness. To advance this goal, we must pursue comprehensive immigration

reform…" (2010 NSS). Inviting immigrants, especially those with needed skills, to the United States will strengthen international ties and foster a more diverse learning environment (Nanto 34).

National Budget and Strategy: What determines what?

In another ideal world, policymakers would critically look at all security issues, they would prioritize them, and finally, they would efficiently allocate funding into the budget to address those high priority issues. The result would be a budget driven by principle and strategy. Unfortunately however, this is not how our government operates. Prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, our economy was healthy and strong. When forming policy, there was little regard for what the budget implications would be. But as our defense budget inexorably ballooned, our national debt soared to unsustainable levels and we became more aware of the relationship between our economy and our security.

Today, the budget is the main determinant of our country's policy. It reveals where the money is being spent and how much of it is being spent on certain programs. If one were interested in learning about a country's priorities, it would be fruitless to read a strategy document. Rather, the answers would be found in the budgetary numbers (Negroponte). For example, consider the pledge President Obama made to invest in science and technology in his 2010 NSS. If one were to look at the amount allocated to Science and Technology within the Department of Homeland Security, they would find $767 million. However, Science and Technology receives one of the smallest allocations of federal dollars of the entire department. The largest amount, over $9,500 million goes to Customs and Border Protection. The numbers speak for themselves.

In order for a strategy to be successful, it has to have the financial support to put the defined policies into action. Strategies are constrained by resources (Adams). As a result, policymakers must be prudent and carefully consider what we absolutely need and what we can afford to cut. Dr. Tama says it simply: "The National Security Strategy does not prioritize its goals explicitly. If it did, then it would be able to affect budgetary decisions" (Tama). If the NSS is to be taken seriously, it must set out a clear list of priorities to which the limited amount of funding we have can be channeled. Limited resources prevent us from accomplishing all of our intended goals. However, clear prioritization will help us make sure that the most important ones are successfully met.

Implementation and Impact

Implementation

At the beginning of this thesis, it was noted that the National Security Strategy is general and abstract. This was not done by accident. There are several reasons why administrations have purposefully left out specifics. Details are important to study because they have a direct impact on how decisions are made and later implemented. This is especially true in the NSS: "Presidents typically confront an issue on a very general, theoretical level without much discussion of the details of the best way to implement a decision" (Halperin and Clapp 245). A president may prefer to avoid specificity and express general policy goals because he wants to project a semblance of coherence to his administration and to the greater public. As was previously discussed, the 2010 Obama Strategy is littered with romantic goals and good intentions. Of course, preventing genocides, strengthening key alliances, and restoring economic prosperity sound like

worthwhile goals. Yet, the Strategy offers no specifics and no direction on how best to accomplish them.

The President leaves the details and true grunt-work to his subordinates and lower level bureaucrats. Robert Cutler, assistant to President Eisenhower for national security affairs, once said, "Eisenhower believed that policy decisions at the apex of Government should afford general direction, principle, and guidance, but should not be spelled out in detail. The [National Security] Council dealt with strategy, not tactics" (qtd. in Halperin and Clapp 245). Sometimes, the White House does not have the time to prepare detailed instructions on many issues. Most of the time, the President trusts his subordinates enough to effectively carry out his decisions. For whatever reason, department heads and senior agency officials must be able to competently interpret a president's priorities and convey them to the appropriate personnel for implementation.

While implementation can be tricky for those charged with carrying out presidential decisions, an administration will utilize several tactics and techniques to make sure his decisions are enforced. For matters of international or military policy, ambassadors and military commanders will often serve as liaisons between the administration and foreign governments or ongoing field operations (Halperin and Clapp 247). Like lower-level bureaucrats, these individuals have to pick apart the obscure language of a decision and, to the best of their ability, act upon it quickly (especially if it is a matter of high national security) (Halperin and Clapp 247). Other senior-level advisors may set up interagency working groups to explore implementing strategies. They might appoint a temporary "czar" to lead on issues like non-proliferation or counter-proliferation (Adams). If a president is wedded to a policy, he may create new capabilities within the White House. For example,

President Bush established the Cabinet position of Secretary of Homeland Security. President Obama was the first president to have a formally designated Coordinator for Counterterrorism (Adams). Regardless of how policy is carried out though, good implementation requires not only strong execution but also an acute understanding of the president's wishes.

Sometimes, senior participants will ignore or disregard a president's decision. They may not favor a decision and purposely avoid sharing it with other key members of the administration who would be responsible for its implementation. If the advisor makes no effort to disguise his disagreement, simple excuses like "forgetting" or " unusual circumstances" will be given instead. Another technique to avoid implementation is to simply delay action. An advisor can insist that there be a presidential briefing or even go straight to Congress, either in open testimony or in private, and thereby undermine the president by bringing the issue to its attention. Of course, the tactic is most effective when congressional approval is required before implementation. If an advisor is exceedingly wary of a directive, he may take it and "interpret" it as he sees fit. Because orders are general, an official has the flexibility to stretch the message before fully implementing it. He may even go as far as pass along a message that runs contrary to the president's directive (Halperin and Clapp 269). Either way, when a president gives an order, he is not always guaranteed that the policy he imagined will be fully implemented, especially if his advisors are not completely in line with the decision.

Impact

Not surprisingly, many of these characteristics of the general implementation process apply to the National Security Strategy as well. As stated many times, the document

is a broad vision of strategic goals for our nation's security. All of the planning is done by a few senior level advisors while the intricacies and technical details are left to the bureaucracy and executive departments for discussion and implementation. So what impact does the document have? Many would argue that it has very little. Some say it has none, especially in Congress. (Tama). Outside of the Washington bubble, the Strategy receives very little attention from the American public[4] (Tama). Even within Washington, many view it as serving solely as a public affairs document rather than a prioritized list of national security policies. After all, is there anything novel about it? At the core, it is just a crystallization of what the President has already been saying since the day he took office. And to what extent should it be considered relevant? Every year, there is a new challenge to face. As Ambassador Negroponte pointed out, the NSS is not a living document and constantly needs to be renewed to reflect the security challenges we face. Unless it lays out a statement of doctrine, as Bush's 2002 did with the doctrine of preemptive attack (Armstrong), the overall impact of documents like these is unfortunately too ephemeral to be an effective statement of strategy (Negroponte).

Quadrennial Defense Review and Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review

With that said however, it doesn't mean our national security team has no strategy documents to guide it in confronting our challenges. On the contrary, the two most critical departments for national security each has its own document that it releases independent of the National Security Strategy. The 2010 Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense

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[4] Interestingly enough however, foreign governments will pay more attention and scrutinize it more than members of our own government will. Within the document, there are often references to foreign governments (especially those that we see as competitors and/or adversaries, like China, Iran, and Pakistan) and these nations will want to get a sense of how the United States intends to interact with them (Tama).

Review and the 2010 Department of State's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review each attempts to outline the long-term vision for their respective departments.

The Quadrennial Defense Review is arguably the most detailed and descriptive capabilities document that our government releases publicly. It provides a strategic foundation for identifying future threats and challenges *and* offers clear and concrete solutions for how they plan to address them. For one thing, it, like the 2010 NSS, asserts right from the beginning that our nation is at war against Al Qaeda and its allies around the world (2010 QDR). Prevailing in this war is the number one priority objective enumerated in the document. The other three include "preventing and deterring conflict; preparing to defeat adversaries and succeeding in a wide range of contingencies; and preserving and enhancing the All-Volunteer Force" (2010 QDR). In order to attain these goals, the document also recognizes two key objectives that must first be met: the capabilities of the American Armed Forces must be rebalanced; and the Department must consider budgetary priorities when supporting the needs of the warfighters.

But it doesn't stop there. It delves into the details of these objectives. In advocating for a rebalancing of capabilities, the QDR points to specific enablers like "unmanned aircraft systems, intelligence analysis and foreign language expertise, more effective electronic attack systems, tactical communications networks for ongoing operations, and more resilient infrastructure" that will be continue to be invested in and utilized in the years ahead. As for budgetary concerns, the document proposes several areas where funding will be cut in order to allocate more resources to higher-priority programs. Such cuts will include ending production of the F-22 fighter and deferring production of new maritime prepositioning ships. Unlike the National Security Strategy, the Quadrennial

Defense Review offers clear steps for how it ultimately plans to advance its department's goals and enhance U.S. security.

The 2010 QDR also stresses several of the major themes of the 2010 National Security Strategy (although, the 2010 NSS was published several months after the release of the 2010 QDR). It recognizes the need to integrate all elements of our national power and not rely solely on our military. It speaks to Obama's commitment of engaging with other nations in a positive mutual relationship in order to advance both parties' interests. And it promotes an international system that "advances our interests by reinforcing the rights and responsibilities of all nations" (2010 QDR). While some argue that the connection between the NSS and the QDR is only tenuous at best (this will be explored more in the subsequent section), the language of the Strategy does appear to be somewhat intertwined with the key objectives of the QDR.

Whereas the QDR highlights its goals for the military sector, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review showcases the intentions of the civilian sector. Much of the QDDR focus is on economic development, conflict resolution, and civilian empowerment (2010 QDDR). Like the QDR, it too highlights broad themes of the National Security Strategy (respect for new international order, building and strengthening key alliances, reallocation of resources). However, unlike the QDR, it suggests many abstract concepts and few specifics. For example, one of the United States' goals should be, "advancing diplomacy and development and promoting security and prosperity" (2010 QDDR). In order to accomplish that, the document calls on the State Department to, "deploy the right people to the right places at the right time; ensure we have the expertise to address 21st Century challenges; and foster innovation" (2010 QDDR). While these ideas

may hold some merit, the lack of specific direction precludes the QDDR from being a comprehensive guide for executing U.S. foreign policy.

While one could argue that the QDDR is more detailed than the NSS, it is definitely not comparable to the QDR. Dr. Adams considers it to be an "after the fact" document. There is no alignment of capabilities with the national budget (Adams). In fact, there is no solid alignment with the NSS at all except for the broad, overarching themes previously mentioned. This demonstrates the limited impact of the NSS on the State Department's vision for the future. Essentially, the QDDR is not a capabilities document but a watered-down strategy document with little attention to specifics. This, combined with its very tenuous connection with the NSS, renders it little more than a State Department document-writing exercise.

Criticisms of the National Security Strategy

Being that the American national security bureaucracy is so large, there are bound to be inherent flaws that preclude it from being as efficient as possible. Unsurprisingly, the National Security Strategy is not immune to these. In the past decade alone, there have been several major criticisms of the NSS document itself, the process through which it is drafted, and the impact it has on foreign policy. While this section will not restate the major criticisms of both the Bush and Obama documents, it will examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire document and explore whether or not it holds any true strategic value.

Almost all of the academics and government officials interviewed for this thesis were critical of the document's purported strategic value. Dr. Gordon Adams dismissed it as

a strategic planning document and referred to it as serving a "document-writing exercise" (Adams). Fulton Armstrong, a former CIA analyst, said it was not a planning document but instead a "guidelines document for senior level advisors only" (Armstrong). Dr. Jordon Tama thought of it more as a public affairs instrument than anything else, despite the fact that it attracts little attention in Congress and within executive departments (Tama). Ambassador Negroponte rejected the notion that it was a decision document. He pointed out that those who were writing the document were not policy makers and probably had never been policymakers. There exists a gap between those who write the policy and those who carry it out and because the former have little to no experience working with the latter, the document is rendered less meaningful as a result (Negroponte).

The critiques however don't stop there. Even if the planners and the policy makers coordinated better, the document would still hold little weight. If a document is truly a strategic document, it needs to be able to take into consideration future threats and have tactics prepared to address them. Sadly, the NSS document is not a reflection of such serious and rigorous strategic planning. As a result, the potential impact it has is ephemeral. It certainly cannot be described as a living document- it is only updated every four years, whereas threats emerge and subside much more frequently (Negroponte). Unfortunately, policymakers cannot strategically focus on the needs of tomorrow when the crises that exist today still need to be considered and addressed. In their essay, Michele Flournoy and Shawn Brimley fault the National Security Council for the lack of strategic thinking and proactive planning. They say, "…the NSC staff lacks adequate capacity to conduct integrated long-range planning for the president" (Flournoy and Brimley 3). Within the NSC, there is no division between long-term planning and daily management of

the president's foreign policy affairs. Consequently, the more immediate and urgent issues take precedence.

The process we have now is far more *reactive* than it is *proactive*. In other words, documents are developed with a more present state of mind than a long-term, future-minded approach. The goals focus on issues already on the policy agenda rather than challenges that might loom "over the horizon" (Flournoy and Brimley 4). Preventing strategic failure requires more than just identifying future threats, though. It demands an ability to always be one step ahead of the enemy. Strategists have to be creative and aware of where we a most vulnerable. In the words of the 9/11 Commission: "It is therefore crucial to find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing, the exercise of imagination" (qtd. in Flournoy and Brimley 6). The NSS is useless if it does not have strategic policy alternatives to respond to new and unexpected threats.

As Ambassador Negroponte put it, "Even the best thought-out plans can evaporate upon emergence of an enemy" (Negroponte). For example, the "General Findings" section of the 9/11 Commission Report reported: "…none of the measures adopted by the U.S. government from 1998 to 2001 disturbed or even delayed the progress of the al Qaeda plot" (qtd. in Malackowski 12). This new form of terrorism presented unforeseen difficulties to security organizations that they were not prepared to face. Whereas the NSS may present a desired destination it would like to see the United States strive towards, it fails to identify future threats that may arise, thereby forfeiting the opportunity to prevent them or minimize their consequences (Flournoy and Brimley 6). If we want the goals of the NSS to be taken seriously by policymakers, there must be a clear foundation from which to start.

Some argue that these criticisms are undeserved. They argue that the QDR and the QDDR should be the primary documents enumerating the threats and allocating the resources. The ways and means should not be included in the NSS. Rather, the focus of the NSS should reflect how the administration views the contemporary security environment. While this makes sense, it doesn't help that the QDR has always been released prior to the NSS. When this happens, the tactics are not completely aligned with the strategic goals. A thread of consistency is left out and the administration's strategy appears inferior to those of its executive agencies, especially the Department of Defense. When officials in the Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, and National Intelligence realize that there is no binding relationship between their strategy and the strategy of the White House, they have more incentive to submit bloated budgets to Congress that do not take into consideration the fact that funding for programs is limited. Not only will they take advantage of the vague NSS document as justification for their programs, but will also have a set of personal goals that may or may not be in tune with the goals of the president.

But even if documents like the QDR and the QDDR did take into consideration the priorities of the NSS and were then published later, those at Defense and State would have little base on which threats and policy issues were of most importance. That is because the NSS does not prioritize its goals. Like President Obama's 2010 document, it is practically a long political speech that speaks to all national security activities and goals but does not reveal where the true priorities of the administration lie. Consequently, Congress has little guidance on where and how it should allocate resources. "Without articulated priorities against which agency budgets can be examined on an interagency basis, the government has little means to assure that the hard choices on funding national security missions are

considered within the context of a particular mission and against the full range of the president's top goals and objectives" (Flournoy and Brimley 5) Unless one were to study the federal budget and see which programs were being funded, one would not be able to discern what the administration considered to be the most egregious threats solely by looking at the Strategy.

In fact, budgetary constraints have magnified the issue of limited funding now more than ever before. Limited resources force policymakers to take a step back and critically examine which programs are necessary and which can afford a cut in spending. One major takeaway from Dr. Adams was that "strategy does not drive the budget" (Adams). Strategies are heavily constrained by scarce resources. It would be foolish for anyone to think that lawmakers perused the NSS before outlining any preliminary budget proposals. In fact, budgets are so reflective of where priorities lie, that some even consider the federal budget to be more of a strategic document than the National Security Strategy itself (Adams). As previously mentioned, one can easily pinpoint the administration's security priorities just by looking at how the funding is allocated in the budget. Yet, the budget should not be serving this purpose. The National Security Strategy was instituted for a reason. Presidential administrations do not do the document justice by evading specifics and forgoing opportunities to broadcast to the world what its true foreign policy intentions are.

Finally, a tenuous relationship between the budget and the NSS also makes it more difficult to assess the progress of the various security agencies (Tama). As discussed earlier, there are a myriad of reasons why implementation of the National Security Strategy is so difficult. One of these relates to oversight. When there is neither a direct chain of

implementation nor any personnel monitoring of the status of presidential decisions, it becomes increasingly difficult and time-consuming to track how well agencies are implementing their goals (Tama). This detachment of White House senior policy makers from lower-level executive bureaucrats creates disunity, prevents consistency, and renders the ideas and goals of the president virtually obsolete.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This thesis took a critical look at how our government formulates foreign and defense policy goals and how those goals are later translated into a National Security Strategy. It examined the overall effectiveness of the document's impact on those responsible for designing policy and on those responsible for carrying out the policy prescriptions. By looking at both the Bush 2002 Strategy and the Obama 2010 Strategy, we were able to identify key distinctions between the two as well as identify shortcomings pertinent to each. After all of this study, there are three conclusions that we can draw regarding the overall nature of the NSS.

The first is a reiteration of the major criticisms described in the previous section. That is, *our government is severely deficient in the way that it goes about planning our nation's strategic vision for the future.* Our policymakers and security officials are much too entrenched in the crises and threats that emerge today; there is little consideration for the greater threats that "loom over the horizon." One of the reasons that we were caught off-guard on September 11th and unprepared for what later ensued was because of our failure to imagine the unthinkable and have a strategy in place to address challenges that would lie

ahead. Today, we have to wonder if we have really learned from that lesson or if we are in a position where history is going to repeat itself. While Congress attempted to resolve this issue by codifying the National Security Strategy as a presidential responsibility, the results have proven to be rather disappointing.

This leads to our second conclusion. *Today, the National Security Strategy serves no policy purpose, but instead, is a public affairs document that promulgates a broad and unprioritized set of policy goals.* Unfortunately, the NSS is neither a strategy document nor a planning document. It proposes a plethora of goals but provides little direction on how to best accomplish these goals. Additionally, the fact that it is published months after the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review reflects the fact that it has minimal impact on the Department itself. Policymakers on Capitol Hill have a hard time discerning the priorities in the NSS and thus produce a budget that has at best a loose connection to the policies prescribed. While foreign governments may benefit from reading what the administration has in store for them, there is not much for our own legislature and executive agencies to take away. At face value, the NSS may seem to reflect good intentions and promote sound policies. But at its core, the document is just a crystallization of what the president has always been doing since the day he took office.

Finally, *in order to have a strong national security structure, one must have a healthy economy*. Economics and national security have become inseparable today. No longer can we exorbitantly and carelessly spend money without taking into consideration whether we a. can afford it, and b. absolutely need it. A weak economy means a tighter budget and unless we consciously evaluate where our national security priorities lie, our country cannot expect to be as safe and as secure as possible. The more budget cuts we have to

make, the more our security is chipped away, leaving us more vulnerable and more susceptible to a violent attack. With that said, having a more robust economy will provide greater flexibility in our use of resources and ensure that adequate funding is provided to all sectors of our national security system.

Recommendations

In order to make the National Security Strategy a more valuable and relevant document, there need to be reforms to the structures and procedures within the White House. First and foremost, there needs to be greater debate and discussion amongst all key members of the national security team. Members should meet with the president and present their case for why a particular policy issue should be a top security priority. This competitive process would proactively seek out future threats and later articulate them in a prioritized National Security Strategy.

This process is, surprisingly however, not novel. During the Eisenhower administration, the president required officials from all political persuasions to meet at the White House and analytically examine all options available to the United States. Known as "Project Solarium," this was a clear and rare example of how serious strategic planning was executed (Flournoy and Brimley 7). Team members would split up into groups, brainstorm different threats, and then report back to the president. If participants failed to come to an agreement, the president would send them away and tell them not to return until they had a unified policy. Under this process, the president insured that every institution had a stake in the outcome of the process, that they knew what the final product would be and they were prepared to look into the tactics and capabilities that would be necessary if one of the imagined threats ever came to fruition. This team, which was designed to be independent

of the team that managed the day-to-day crises and operations, was the first and arguably the only long-term, strategic planning team to have ever existed within the national security apparatus (Flournoy and Brimley 9).

This style of planning needs to be reinstated. Under the direction of a senior National Security Council advisor, there should be a national security interagency review team that identifies U.S. security objectives and priorities to be reported in the NSS. This senior advisor would have experience in strategic planning and would be able to train his team members in managing future security challenges and identifying capability shortfalls that need to be addressed. He would report directly to the president as well as to the president's strategic communications team responsible for drafting the NSS. This way, there would be no miscommunication between those formulating the policy and those disseminating it to the rest of the nation.

As under the Eisenhower administration, this team would focus solely on long-term issues. The day-to-day operations would be left to another department. The Strategy would be as explicit as possible and, like the QDR, would suggest capabilities and budgets necessary to implement the strategy. Additionally, there would be constant assessment of the Strategy. An interagency process that regularly evaluated all threats and tactics would report the findings to senior level officials who from there, would either suggest a change in policy or continue along the current path. However, since any document written today is by definition an ephemeral document, it would not be surprising if constant revision and guidance led to policy tweaking. Finally, in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, the committee would oversee resource allocation and ensure that agencies received appropriate budget funding. This funding would reflect current budget constraints

as well as the security priorities of that agency. All in all, this process would concentrate all of the decision-making into one centralized point. It would foster greater unity between the president and his cabinet and ensure that what is presented in the National Security Strategy would be acted upon by the respective executive agencies.

These recommendations would have additional benefits. For one, they would require a frank and open discussion about our national security threats and those which posed the greatest danger. Agency officials would be forced to compromise and concede on pet issues for the sake of reaching a deal and presenting a final product to the president. As a result, there would be prioritization of objectives. Additionally, both Defense and State would produce their QDR and QDDR after the publication of the NSS, resulting in a synchronization of timelines and a clearer relationship between documents (Dale 14). In other words, agency-based documents would "derive guidance from, and chronologically follow, recent national security strategy" (Dale 14) and would include tactics to support this strategy. Ultimately, there would be less disunity and more collaboration.

The United States is at a critical point in its history. Today, we face a new and challenging array of threats unlike any ever seen before. At the same time however, there is an opportunity before us to improve how we approach and manage these said problems. In order to ensure that we are operating at the highest levels possible, we need to reform our national security planning system so that it reflects a better organized and more strategic thinking process. We cannot be stuck in this perpetual cycle of tackling issues as they arise without any preparation for what might happen down the road. The United States needs a National Security Strategy that not only provides a desired destination but also a roadmap for how to arrive and what to do if and when a road bump hits us by surprise. National-

security policymaking can be effective and preventative. However, unless it is truly strategic in nature, the country will never be fully prepared for what "looms over the horizon."

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