

'All Elements of National Power': Re-Organizing the Interagency Structure and Process for Victory in the Long War

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<http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2006/Jul/millsJul06.html>

Excerpt:

The Elements of National Power

There are four basic elements of National Power.[6] For each one, different elements of the Executive Branch take the lead. The elements and their associated leads are:

Diplomatic: Influencing the international situation through Bi-Lateral and Multi-Lateral agreements, negotiations, and engagement with the United States Department of State as the overall lead. The Diplomatic element is conducted with foreign nations, the United Nations, and also Non-Governmental/International Organizations.

Economic: Shaping international activity through United States government spending and taxation (both discretionary and entitlement program activities)[7] (Office of Management and Budget as the overall lead), policy on money supply and interest rates (the Federal Reserve Board as lead), trade agreements, trade policy, and other negotiated trade arrangements in addition to U.S. Government policy to promote international trade activity (both U.S. Department of Commerce and Department of State) and sometimes American Trade Interests. Although boring and mundane compared to the other elements of National Power—this element especially the money supply and interest rate aspect—is critical for stability both domestically and overseas.

Informational: Although stated in the Joint Publication as one of the elements of National Power, this really does not exist anymore as a focused and active element of United States National Power. Informational is understood to mean the U.S. Government communicating its intent and views—i.e. Strategic Communication. The lack of clarity on this element of National Power is all the more reason for a new National Security Council Structure and the new structure to resurrect “Informational” as a bona fide element of National Power.

The United States Information Agency (USIA) used to exist[8] but went away in 1999. The Department of State is attempting to re-invigorate this,[9] and has brought in former Presidential Advisor Karen Hughes to lead the existing subordinate Department of State organization focused on Public Communication.

After seeing the intense rancor in the recently completed Quadrennial Defense Review 2006 process in regards to Strategic Communications and the sometimes visceral reaction by some quarters when even a hint of a coordinated U.S. Governmental Interagency

Informational Process is brought up, we have de facto surrendered the battlefield on this to the enemy in the Long War.[10] This surrender has occurred because of our (the different players in the US Government) inability to come to a common understanding of policy and execution roles. We may not realize the obviousness of our disarray on this element, but the enemy does.

Until we can coherently and rationally talk in US Government circles about the US Government telling our side of the story to the various audiences without emotional accusations of, “spinning the truth” and “Vietnam-like propaganda”, we’re non-mission capable on this element of National Power.

Military: This is the one we of course know best and obviously DoD is the lead. Often times, it is the only element of National Power that is resourced, has standing planning[11] and execution processes, and a professional career personnel staff structure to have effect on the situation.

This is not a criticism of the non-DoD U.S. Government Departments and agencies, it is an acknowledgement of reality—and a need further develop the other elements of National Power (through a more robust Interagency process) to give them resources and capabilities.[12]

Whether it be a domestic situation such as defending the Homeland (to include responding to a natural disaster), prosecuting the major fronts in the Long War, or dealing with an emerging front in the Long War (perhaps Iran and it’s nuclear capacity), the Military element of National Power is often the immediate default selection.

A more robust Interagency Staff could better plan, resource, and execute non-military elements of National Power, reserving the Military option for picking the right fight at the right place and not making it the default selection because the non-military elements are primitive in their capability compared to the Military element of National Power.

Now interestingly enough—the Joint Publication did not cite intelligence (collection or special direct action activities) as one of the elements of National Power. So for completeness, Intelligence has been grouped with the Military element of National Power. This may not be fair, but it’s the best placement when dealing with the structure stated in the Joint Publication. Perhaps the Joint Pub intent was that Intelligence fit entirely or partially under the “Informational” element of National Power, however to not fragment this crucial aspect of National Power, it has been fit entirely in meaning and scope within the Military element of National Power.

Notes:

6. Joint Publication 1: *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 14 November 2000, Page v: “The United States relies for its security on the complementary application of the basic instruments of national power: diplomatic, economic, informational, and military. Guided by national security policy and strategy, the Armed Forces of the United States shape and employ the military instrument to advance and defend national security interests and objectives.”

7. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/pdf/Economy-07.pdf> for current Executive Branch policy on the economy. Even with current spending on the “Long War”—DoD and all discretionary spending is less than 20% of the Federal Budget, see: <http://www.kowaldesign.com/budget/percentages.html>.

8. Please see the archived website as it existed upon the dissolution of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1999 at <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/>.

9. See the website for International Informational Programs, US Department of State.

10. Joe Galloway, "War on Terror Never Going Away, Top Army Chief Says," *Military.com*, June 16, 2004. Cites Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker: “This is a clash of ideas, an information war.”

11. See Clark A. Murdock, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2004), 61: “...there is no 'planning culture' outside the Department of Defense.”

12. *Ibid.* Please see many elements of Murdock's work. This cites the need for more robust non-DoD capabilities from a professional staff structure, Chairman’s Joint Staff J-5 like planning capability, and more operational abilities in the non-DoD U.S. Government environment.