



# BACKGROUND

*Published by the Truman National Security Project*

## Budgeting our Security: Building and Integrating our Capabilities

Benjamin Rhodes, Research Director

30 April 2007

Protecting America requires coordinating every tool of American power. Yet our national security budgeting process distorts our ability to build and integrate capabilities across the government. We need a new approach that matches our resources to our goals, and encourages coordination instead of competition between our institutions.

### The Need for Integration

Consider these leading threats: terrorism, nuclear proliferation, failed states, trafficking in drugs and people. These challenges demand responses that cut across agencies: a tank cannot stop a terrorist with a vial of anthrax; a diplomat cannot break up a terrorist training camp; a marine is not trained to administer crucial aid programs such as job creation. To succeed, we need the world's strongest military, but we also need robust diplomacy, nimble intelligence agencies, effective foreign aid, targeted trade, and clear-headed budgeting.

Because of its view from the front lines, the military has been a leading advocate for enhancing the abilities of all these tools, so we can integrate many forces of American power to address threats. As the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) said: "Just as enemies cannot defeat the United States militarily, they cannot be defeated solely through military force... Victory can only be achieved through the patient accumulation of quiet successes and the orchestration of all elements of national and international power." Or, as General John Abizaid said recently: "Military power solves about

20 percent of your problem in the region... The rest of it needs to be diplomatic, economic, political."

### Talking Points

- ◆ As General John Abizaid said recently: "Military power solves about 20 percent of your problem in the region... The rest of it needs to be diplomatic, economic, political."
- ◆ We have been overburdening the military with non-military missions that we have never trained them to do, instead of building the tools we need. That's bad for the military's readiness to fight our country's wars and bad for our national security.
- ◆ We need a national security budget that brings all the tools of American power to bear on our problems.

### Follow the Money

The place to cultivate integration is not on the battlefield, but in the allocation of resources. Yet our national security budgeting blurs responsibilities and fosters bureaucratic rivalries, rather than creating the clear lanes and cooperation we need.

For instance—instead of building the tools we need, we have been overburdening the military with non-military missions that we have never trained them to do. Why? One reason is that the DoD is the only agency with the budget to take on these new missions because of its vast advantages in obtaining resources. All 50 states and most congressional districts have defense installations and contracting; by contrast,

State Department installations are overseas, and the largest U.S. presence is in Washington, which has no voting rights. The Pentagon has highly skilled congressional outreach and strong authorizing and appropriating committees; State's authorizing committees wield influence more through appointments and public hearings than purse strings, Homeland Security confronts scattered oversight, and Departments like Justice and Treasury, which exist to play roles within the U.S. have domestic budgeting priorities that take precedence over their national security responsibilities.

Our national security strategy cannot coordinate tools to



the tasks we need, in large part because budgeting also takes place in stovepipes that are then mirrored on the ground. The Pentagon, State, USAID, the intelligence community, Justice, and the Treasury all formulate budgets independent of one another. Congressional authorization and appropriation is similarly stove-piped. As experts Gordon Adams and Cindy Williams point out, "There is no systematic process to link agency actions, interagency cooperation or budget planning to overall national security goals." The National Security Strategy sets goals, but offers no guidance on directing resources. If a President decides that combating terrorism in Pakistan requires public diplomacy and secular education programs as much as military and intelligence aid, there is no efficient way to shift resources, or to ensure that military and non-military programs work in concert.

### Towards a More Integrated Approach

**What We Need:** The executive branch should formulate a national security budget proposal with all of the tools of national power in mind, rather than create separate budget lines within each agency stovepipe. By doing so, we would set dollars to national security goals, see the gaps in our capabilities, and be able to allocate funds to fill them. We could also reduce duplication, and lay out plans for inter-agency cooperation. If we're going to sustain police and justice training programs in Iraq and Afghanistan, then the Department of Justice needs new capabilities and the ability to work seamlessly with the military. If we want a comprehensive plan to promote stability in the Horn of Africa, then foreign aid has to be coordinated with military assistance. In short, budgeting must build new capabilities and achieve the level of integration that we want in implementation.

**Who Should Lead:** The National Security Council (NSC) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) should lead this process out of the White House. The NSC has the policy responsibility for coordination; OMB has the budgetary responsibility. They can draw together a broad inter-agency group, and provide steering and direction. To succeed against bureaucratic pressure, this must be a presidential priority. The national security budget should be presented to the Hill as a unified document. Executive agencies should speak to this budget with one voice. To allow time to measure progress, guidance should be provided every two years.

**What Congress Can Do:** Congressional committees are hard to reform, and are a difficult place to begin. But Congress can develop good habits that could make a big difference. Joint authorizing hearings between the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations

Committees, and the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees would be a good start. Appropriations subcommittees with national security responsibility should communicate more frequently and provide broader strategic guidance. Appropriators should allow greater flexibility for transferring funds between agencies so government can be more nimble in meeting new priorities.

**Where to Start:** We should begin by focusing on areas that cry out for inter-agency coordination, such as counter-terrorism, homeland security, stopping nuclear proliferation, and securing fragile countries. And in moving forward, we can learn from our own past. President Truman laid the groundwork for success in the Cold War by integrating a vast architecture of American power: the Marshall Plan, the founding of NATO, the creation of the CIA, a strong diplomatic corps, and a preeminent military. The legacy of the Cold War should not be a distorted budgeting process that leaves us unable to protect America, it should be a commitment to beat the threats of a new century by developing the tools we need today.

\* This paper benefited from the insights of Gordon Adams, Woodrow Wilson Center Fellow, former Associate Director for National Security and International Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

This Paper Can be Found at

[www.trumanproject.org](http://www.trumanproject.org)

Two Weeks After its Original Release Date.

By signing up as a member you can receive this paper on a regular basis upon its release.

Published by:

**Truman National Security Project**

1 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 333

Washington, DC 20001

Telephone: 202-216-9723

Fax: 202-682-1818

[info@trumanproject.org](mailto:info@trumanproject.org)

Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of the Truman National Security Project or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.