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<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> The various components of the U.S. national security enterprise each have unique regional maps that are not aligned with one another. Though these differences can pose a barrier to interagency collaboration, they also provide the U.S. government with strategic flexibility (options) in how it engages within the global security environment. A look at U.S. foreign policy engagement within the context of the India-Pakistan relationship shows that this type of flexibility is crucial in today's shifting global security paradigm.					
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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:**

**CREATING STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY THROUGH DIFFERENCES IN REGIONAL  
MAPPING**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Creating Strategic Flexibility Through Differences in Regional Mapping

**Author:** Major James E. D'Itri, Jr., United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** The divergence in how the various departments and agencies that make the United States' national security enterprise conduct regional mapping – and how these regional maps translate into organizational structure and policy execution – creates strategic flexibility for the United States government. This flexibility is expressed in providing options that allow the United States government to successfully navigate complex international relationships.

**Discussion:** Since the Cold War, the United States has increasingly sought out a whole-of-government approach to strategic issues within the global security environment. However, its large, bureaucratic organizational structure creates barriers to interagency collaboration, and thus, a fully integrated execution of foreign policy.

One of the more prominent barriers is thought to be the lack of a common regional map – or rather, the manner in which a department or agency divides the globe into distinct regions. Most notable is the fact that the DoD's Geographic Combatant Commands do not align with the DoS's Regional Bureaus. In this regard, there are numerous geographic points where the two departments' maps diverge.

Numerous calls to align regional maps used by the various departments and agencies that make the national security enterprise tend to focus on the need for streamlined, holistic policy approaches to each region. However, a close look at the trajectory of the United States' policy approach in South Asia shows that the decoupling of India and Pakistan has allowed for relative improvements in both the relationships.

**Conclusion:** While seeking alignment among regional maps would certainly reduce one barrier to interagency collaboration and simplify United States' foreign policy approaches, it would also eliminate strategic options. Maintaining flexibility through these strategic options is necessary to allow the United States to navigate a highly volatile global security environment. In an era where peer and near-peer competition is increasing, the value of having strategic options will only become more critical.

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## Introduction

A common criticism of the United States Government (USG) and its large, cumbersome organizational structure is that it has a problem with interagency collaboration.<sup>1</sup> For many vertically-aligned bureaucracies, the structure creates archaic barriers between sibling entities that make it difficult to efficiently conduct integrated operations. And in the case of the USG – and specifically, the national security enterprise – these barriers are thought to hinder the ability to implement overarching strategic policies across the diversified array of government functions. However, there are mixed opinions as to whether or not significant changes need to be made.

Entities both internal and external to the USG have long debated this issue. Modern proponents of this idea believe that this lack of interagency collaboration is the source of significant USG disfunction, and they often use the United States' murky three-decade (plus) involvement in Iraq to highlight a number of miscalculations and strategic agency misalignments that resulted mediocre-at-best results both at home and abroad.<sup>2</sup> One of the more prominent, neutral bodies of research has come from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which conducted – and continues to conduct – numerous studies that address the perception of various challenges to interagency collaboration and partnership.<sup>3</sup> As stated in GAO's 2010 study on how to enhance interagency collaboration in the realm of national security, "In light of the challenges that the [USG] continues to experience in its efforts to coordinate the actions of the agencies involved – whether it be preventing a terrorist attack or overseeing reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan – there is an ongoing policy debate on how to enhance and sustain interagency collaborative efforts."<sup>4</sup>

GAO has identified many challenges to interagency collaboration, including: independent operational objectives, the lack of information on roles and responsibilities, and the lack of

coordination mechanisms.<sup>5</sup> One of the most tangible barriers to interagency collaboration is thought to be the lack of common regional mapping, or the geographical divisions each department or agency creates to handle the global environment. The divergence of regional boundaries among critical components of the USG – particularly within the national security enterprise – is thought to cause friction and confusion, and the prospect of correcting this deficiency is thought to enhance the whole-of-government approach to national security challenges.

However, despite this idea's relative simplicity – one map for all departments and agencies – organizational structures based on differing regional boundaries continue to drive the operational perspective of components of not just the USG at large, but even within its most intricate and crucial functions, such as the national security enterprise. Within the national security enterprise, the National Security Strategy (NSS) functions as the common set of goals and objectives. Having this single document to provide a common vision of the global security environment begs the following question. Is the lack of common regional alignment at all a detriment to the whole-of-government approach, or is there a higher purpose for allowing distinct functions to treat regional boundaries differently? An assessment of a key divergence in regions – how the major players within the national security enterprise treat the India-Pakistan relationship – will show that not only is a common map *not* a necessity, but the divergence of perspectives actually creates strategic options that generate circumstances advantageous in the execution of United States foreign policy. The relationship between the India and Pakistan and the role the United States plays in this region is critical to this debate because in few other regions are the stakes as high as they are in what has become one of the more worrisome nuclear flashpoints in the world. While the animosity between India and Pakistan has experienced little

change in its 70+ years, the United States' ability to navigate both military and civil avenues of dialogue separately has proven effective in keeping hostilities below the nuclear level.

Accordingly, heading off the India-Pakistan conflict has been a critical objective of the United States' foreign policy in the region since the two countries became independent.<sup>6</sup>

Debating whether or not the existence of different regional maps hinders the ability of the USG to conduct foreign policy is challenging to discuss because there are numerous factors at play. On one hand, there are the continued frustrations with suboptimal outcomes in the USG's efforts to rebuild places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Certainly, there are areas where better alignment among USG departments and agencies is highly desired. For these examples, one merely needs to look through the various GAO studies on either of these topics in order to read about struggles to coordinate efforts between the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (DoS), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), etc. in order to build both capability and capacity in both military and civil infrastructure. On the other hand, there are numerous examples of countries that are treated differently by the various departments and agencies within the national security enterprise. For instance, DoD places Israel and Turkey within the jurisdiction of U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), while DoS keeps them within their respective geographic regions. This is also the case with Egypt, for which DoD includes in U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), while DoS has created a more regionally aligned bureau of northern African countries. An assessment of many of these reveals how nonalignment is a major factor for success by providing the USG with options – options to continue a dialogue when one avenue of approach seems to be completely shut down.

Large organizations routinely struggle over determining goals, and furthermore, how to achieve those goals. Accordingly, large organizations tend to leverage the concept of a common

vision to bring together both mission and values into one coherent direction on which strategic plans are based. Particularly in organizations comprised of a multitude of departments, agencies, divisions, or branches – regardless of the nomenclature – the unifying nature of a common vision binds together the unique purpose of each component into one synchronized purpose – known as unity of effort. Without a common vision or central purpose, large organizations tend to suffer from the *stovepipe effect* in which cross-functional information flow and collaboration is restricted resulting in misaligned or redundant efforts – a common symptom of bureaucracies. Good sense would then suggest that large organizations – particularly bureaucracies – would seek to implement a common vision at the highest of levels in order to avoid these possible pitfalls.

Regional mapping is one of the principle ways in which USG departments and agencies express the manner in which it views the global security environment, and how the globe is apportioned – be it along political, military, or social factors – into smaller regions is reflective of how each department or agency interprets the overarching national-level strategy. The DoD has Geographical Combatant Commands, the DoS has Regional Bureaus, USAID has Geographic Bureaus, and the list goes on. All have their own unique regional divisions that have become the foundation for at least part of its organizational structure, and the existence of these mapping variances is the basis for calls to unify the maps to improve interagency coordination. The result of multiple national security paradigm shifts has created the need for both agency-specific and interagency lines of effort. However, in order to better assess whether or not the different maps impact coordination, current regional structures and mapping techniques need to be evaluated.

For the sake of providing a succinct argument to a wide-based audience, this discussion is limited to unclassified information pertaining to the two primary foreign policy actors within the national security enterprise – the DoD and the DoS. Differences exist among the regional alignments for nearly all components of the national security enterprise. However, much of what the United States considers to be foreign policy is captured between the actions of the DoD and the DoS. Thus, focusing on these two departments provides a thorough assessment.

Additionally, while it is noted that certain documents used to generate regional boundaries – such as the DoD's Unified Command Plan (UCP) – are classified, the resultant products – such as Geographic Combatant Command areas of responsibility (AOR) – are unclassified and for public consumption. Presuming the unclassified documents related to national security policy accurately reflect the national interests as defined by the President and the rest of the USG leadership, this comparison of regional alignments and the impacts on executing national security policy is minimally impacted by the lack of a classified component.

The progress of this essay begins with a brief assessment of how the global security environment has changed since World War II (WWII) and the evolution of U.S. foreign policy approaches. Following this, a summary of the current regional structures within DoD and DoS lays the foundation for a clear comparison and the identification of key differences between. The subsequent discussion on previous efforts to create a common map within the national security enterprise then leads to a more focused discussion on how these differences creates strategic flexibility within U.S. foreign policy as it applies to the India-Pakistan relationship. This essay concludes with a discussion on the value of this flexibility and how it creates strategic options that allows the U.S. to continue to navigate the complex challenges posed in South Asia between the two nuclear-armed adversaries.

## **The Changing U.S. Approach to the Global Security Environment**

In order to best understand the United States' approach to today's evolving, complex global security environment, it is important to assess the following three critical paradigm shifts that have occurred in the last several decades – post-World War II, post-Cold War, and post-9/11 – and the hybrid of lessons that have shaped the United States' national security perspective. Over the last few decades, globalization has created a network of interconnected economies – well-established and emerging alike – that allow changes driven by technological innovation, shifting demographics, and social policy to spread at an unprecedented speed. All of this has forced the United States government to rethink some of the fundamental assumptions regarding the application of national security at home and abroad. No longer can the United States address challenges with purely economic nor security-centric alliances. The increasingly integrated global community now requires that threat responses take on a whole-of-government approach that spans the range of elements of national power – diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) – though the steps to get to this point did not occur instantaneously.

In the wake of World War II and the advent of United States' global military and economic dominance, President Harry S. Truman signed into law the National Security Act of 1947 which, among other things, established the National Security Council (NSC). The National Security Act of 1947 and the function of a central NSC became the foundation for the execution of American engagements throughout the globe leading into the Cold War. Represented by the policy phrase “coordinating pluralism,” the new United States national security paradigm reflected a shift toward a complex national security enterprise that sought to unify the various departments and agencies – some newly created – that provided overlapping and independent functions in the planning and execution of national policy.<sup>7</sup> The impetus of an NSC was to

provide overarching coordination within the enterprise that proved to be inadequate during the execution of the previous war.

The broad changes made by the National Security Act of 1947 remained largely unchanged until President Ronald W. Reagan signed into law the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, in the waning years of the Cold War. In addition to significantly altering the organization and operation of the DoD and its military components, this bill provided the impetus for presidential administrations to formally submit an NSS to Congress. As Don M. Snider discussed in his 1995 monograph for the U.S. Army War College entitled, *The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision*, “The stated intent of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation is broadly accepted as valid for effective political discourse on issues affecting the nation’s security – the Congress and the Executive need a common understanding of the strategic environment and the administration’s intent as a starting point for future dialogue.”<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the regular submission of an NSS became the set of unifying goals and objectives which pertain to how the various elements of national power sought to work together within the larger enterprise.

Though there has not been another piece of sweeping legislation like the two previously discussed examples, the first NSS released in the post-9/11 global security environment – 2002 NSS – also provided dramatic change to how United States’ national security policy was implemented. As Dr. James W. Derleth points out regarding the 2002 NSS in a recent article in the U.S. Army’s *Military Review*, “For the first time, international development was included as an essential component. Since then, every national security strategy has noted the importance of a “Three D” (defense, diplomacy, and development), whole-of-government approach to national security.”<sup>9</sup>

All three of these national security paradigm shifts incrementally brought us to the current focus on a multi-faceted, whole-of-government approach to today's increasingly integrated global security environment. As the late Senator John McCain stated in his final memoir, *The Restless Wave*, "Globalization is a fact, not a policy."<sup>10</sup> This is how the United States plans to best address the challenges of today and the future. Since no single element of national power is capable of comprehensively handling global security challenges, no single department or agency is capable of unilaterally meeting these challenges. Despite each individual organization operating within its own vertically organized silo, the complex nature of today's national security challenges – and the challenges of the future – demands comprehensive solutions. Effectively dealing with these challenges requires a concerted effort – the goal of which is unity of effort.

### **Current Regional Structures**

The departments and agencies that make up DIME execute strategy independently of one another – leveraging unique sets of processes and resources in order to achieve subordinate goals. Despite national security strategies appearing to serve as a unifying vision, each department and agency has established its own unique set of regional boundaries that function as the basis for both organizational structure and the operational execution of their respective missions. Though differences exist between virtually every department and agency within the national security enterprise, the divergence or difference in regional boundaries that potentially could pose the greatest level of risk exists between the two more significant players: the DoD and the DoS. However, since the NSC was created to function as an overarching force for

coordination, it is prudent to begin with the current NSC's vision of the global security environment.

### *U.S. National Security Council*

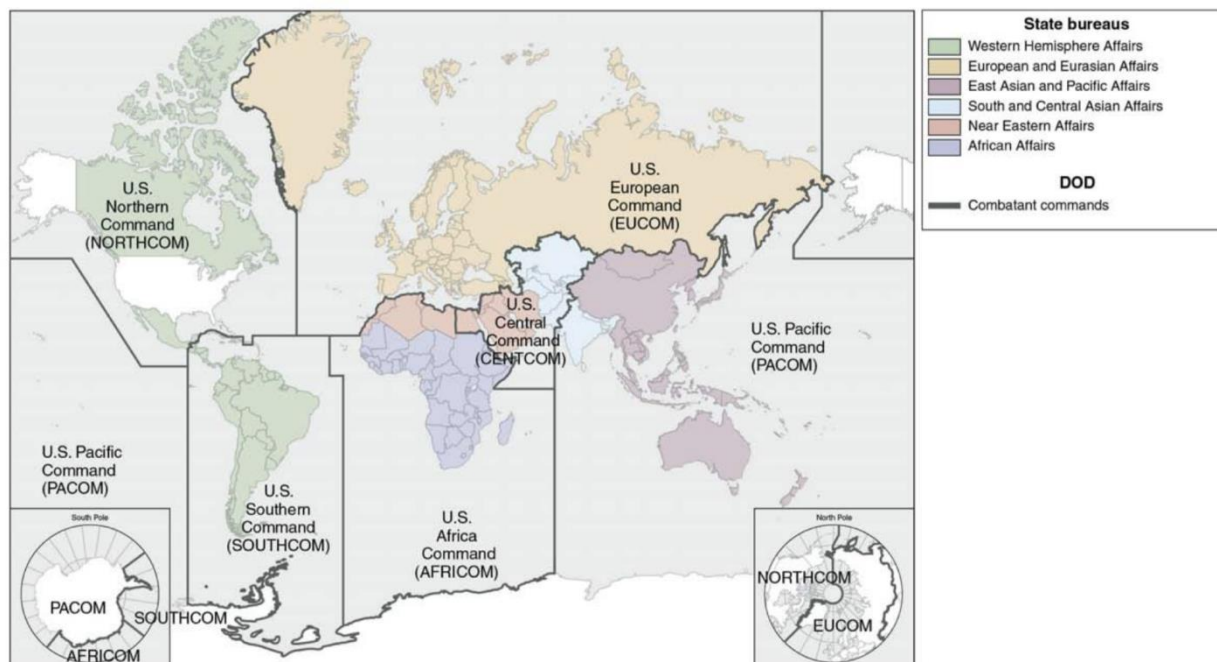
As previously discussed, the NSC is a product created by the National Security Act of 1947 after the conclusion of World War II and plays a vital role in aiding the President in developing and managing national security policy. Outside of its key membership, there is no formal requirement for any specific structure and function of the NSC, leaving much of this up to the specific interplay between the President, his principal advisers, and Cabinet members. Nevertheless, the NSC is at the center of the national security policy process.

Despite the lack of awareness of a formal organizational structure for the current Trump administration NSC, much can be gleaned regarding how this NSC views regional alignments from the most recent NSS. In specific, the section on "The Strategy in a Regional Context," portrays the functions of U.S. foreign policy – political, economic, military and security – into the following six regional strategies:

- Indo-Pacific
- Europe
- Middle East
- South and Central Asia
- Western Hemisphere
- Africa<sup>11</sup>

Though this breakdown does not provide a specific, country-by-country layout of the NSC's internal organization, these six regional strategies form the basis of U.S. national security strategy and the subordinate strategies formulated by relevant agencies and departments.

*U.S. Department of Defense's Geographic Combatant Commands*



**Figure 1** – A Comparison of DoD Geographical Combatant Command and DoS Regional Bureau Boundaries from GAO-11-776R, Appendix I<sup>12</sup>

The Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) structure is a product of the post-World War II security environment. In the wake of the war, the U.S. military recognized the importance of the unity of effort among its various branches, and thus made efforts toward formalizing a process that provided a relevant organizational scheme that was also dynamic enough to adapt in an ever-changing strategic environment. The result was the Unified Command Plan, which is a classified document that is updated roughly every two years and defines regional areas of responsibility (AOR) for DoD's GCCs. At present, the DoD has ten Combatant Commands, six of which are GCCs, which are reflected in Figure 1:

- U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM)
- U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)
- U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)
- U.S. European Command (EUROMCOM)
- U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)
- U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM)

Each GCC is headed by a four-star general with a civilian, ambassador-equivalent deputy that is sourced from the DoS. The existence of these six GCCs confirms that military engagement – both kinetic and non-kinetic – is a critical component in national security and foreign policy. It is “no longer a sporadic activity, confined to wartime, but now a normal activity pursued everywhere in the world.”<sup>13</sup>

### *U.S. Department of State's Regional Bureaus*

Within the executive branch, the DoS is the lead on foreign affairs, and a vital component to national security policy. However, because many agencies and departments have international programs, the DoS does not dictate U.S. foreign policy. Nevertheless, in the conduct of foreign affairs, the DoS currently divides the globe into six Regional Bureaus located within the Office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, which are also depicted in Figure 1:

- Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
- Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
- Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
- Bureau of African Affairs (AF)
- Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA)
- Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

Each Regional Bureaus is headed by an Assistant Secretary of State responsible for advising the Under Secretary and guiding the operation of the United States diplomatic missions within their regional jurisdiction.

Though the establishment, organization, and jurisdiction of DoS's Regional Bureaus is under constant reassessment, the formal process established in 2009 is known as the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). The QDDR was designed to function much like the DoD's former Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process to analyze strategic objectives and potential threats every four years. “At its core, the QDDR provides a blueprint for elevating

American *civilian power* to better advance [the United States'] national interests and to be a better partner to the [United States] military.”<sup>14</sup>

### *Comparison of the Department of Defense and Department of State Maps*

Though Figure 1 does not identify specific countries, it is quite clear that a number of countries differ between DoD's GCCs and DoS's Regional Bureaus. Of these, the following are the more prominent outliers:

- India/Pakistan – DoD places Pakistan in U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) and India in U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), while DoS places both in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA);
- Egypt – DoD also places Egypt in USCENTCOM which handles the Middle East, while DoS incorporates Egypt with the rest of North Africa in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA);
- Israel – Despite Israel's geographic location within the Middle East, DoD places Israel within U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), while DoS's Bureau of NEA handles issues related to Israel;
- Morocco/Algeria/Tunisia/Libya – The DoD places these four countries within U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), while the DoS includes them in the Bureau of NEA.

### **Previous Efforts to Create a Common Map**

The idea of unifying the regional boundaries amongst all departments and agencies of the USG – and specifically those within the national security enterprise – has come to light on

numerous occasions. The most significant effort was by then National Security Advisor retired General James L. Jones, which became congressional direction in 2010. Figure 2 depicts the language included in the House Report that accompanied H.R. 6523 during the second session of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. It references high-level conversations within the White House that suggest there was once a desire to provide a common alignment of world regions within the national security structure.

**Common Alignment of World Regions in the Internal Organization of Departments and Agencies With International Responsibilities**

The committee is concerned that inconsistent regional alignments in the internal organization of departments and agencies increase the difficulty of executing interagency national security policy. In February 2009, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, General James L. Jones, announced that the Administration would implement a common regional alignment. The committee notes that no action has been taken to date. The committee supports the National Security Advisor's vision and encourages the President to commission a study to assess the need for and implications of a common alignment of world regions in the internal organization of departments and agencies with international responsibilities. The committee encourages this study to assess the problems resulting from different geographic boundaries within the various agencies, potential obstacles to implementing a common alignment, and the advantages and disadvantages of a common alignment. The study should also provide a determination by the President as to what action the administration intends to take on this matter and when, and what legislative action, if any, would be required by Congress.

**Figure 2** – House Armed Services Committee Report Language on the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act<sup>15</sup>

Though this was merely congressional report language, and is therefore is non-binding, the idea of a common alignment made its way into *The Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011* prior to being signed into law as Public Law 111-383. Figure 2 reflects the bill language that passed both chambers in an agreement on the inclusion of the following specific language formally directing the Comptroller General to conduct a very specific study on this issue:

**SEC. 1055. COMPTROLLER GENERAL STUDY ON COMMON ALIGNMENT OF WORLD REGIONS IN DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES WITH INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.**

(a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to assess the need for and implications of a common alignment of world regions in the internal organization of departments and agencies of the Federal Government with international responsibilities.

(b) **DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.**—The following departments and agencies, at a minimum, shall be included in the study:

- (1) The Department of State.
- (2) The Department of the Treasury.
- (3) The Department of Defense.
- (4) The Department of Justice.
- (5) The Department of Commerce.
- (6) The Department of Homeland Security.
- (7) The United States Agency for International Development.
- (8) The agencies comprising the intelligence community.
- (9) Such other departments, agencies, and Federal organizations with significant international responsibilities as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

(c) **COOPERATION AND ACCESS.**—The heads of the departments and agencies included in the study shall provide full cooperation with, and access to appropriate information on organizational structures to, the Comptroller General for the purposes of conducting the study.

(d) **MATTERS COVERED.**—The study required under subsection (a) shall, at a minimum, assess—

- (1) problems and inefficiencies resulting from lack of a common alignment, including impediments to interagency collaboration;
  - (2) obstacles to implementing a common alignment;
  - (3) advantages and disadvantages of a common alignment;
- and
- (4) measures taken to address challenges associated with the lack of a common alignment.

(e) **REPORT.**—The Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the study required under subsection (a) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**Figure 3** – Sec. 1055 of Public Law 111-383, *The Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011*<sup>16</sup>

As a result of both the report and bill language, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released the report, GAO-11-776R Interagency Collaboration, on July 11, 2011, which contained the following three stated objectives derived from the legislative direction:

1. Describe how federal departments and agencies are geographically organized to address their international responsibilities, whether they share a common geographic alignment, and their rationales for their alignments;
2. Examine agencies' views on the advantages and disadvantages of a common geographic alignment, and whether there are obstacles to implementing a common alignment; and

3. Assess challenges, if any, to interagency collaboration, including those related to different geographic alignments, and measures agencies have taken to overcome those challenges.<sup>17</sup>

The GAO report confirmed differing geographic alignments among all departments and agencies based on a variety of rationales. These included: agency-specific mission objectives; cultural, historical or economic connections within perceived regions; and the need to balance workloads within an agency or department.<sup>18</sup> Perceived advantages to a common geographic alignment were minimal. The only one mentioned in GAO-11-776R was the possibility of improved coordination among departments and agencies.<sup>19</sup> However, the following is a list of possible disadvantages mentioned in the report:

1. Regional relationships could suffer if the DoD Geographic Combatant Command structure was used due to the possible perception of emphasizing a military approach toward U.S. diplomacy; and
2. A possible impairment of an agency or department's flexibility to realign based on mission objectives.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the aforementioned advantage and disadvantages, GAO-11-776R includes a list of possible impediments to change, a majority of which are to be expected in any attempt to reorganize a massive bureaucracy. It is important to note that unlike many other GAO reports, and in direct opposition to congressional direction, GAO-11-776R did not include any new recommendations directly relating to the congressionally directed study. Instead, GAO chose to highlight its prior work's attempt to identify challenges and enablers to interagency collaboration, of which it did not discuss a common geographic alignment.<sup>21</sup>

In July 2014, the Atlantic Council released a report entitled, *All Elements of National Power: Moving Toward a New Interagency Balance for U.S. Global Engagement*. The premise of the study was to encourage a broader application of all elements of national power through: interagency synchronization, organizational transformation, and achieving functional and geographic efficiencies among agencies and departments.<sup>22</sup> Among its many recommendations, the Atlantic Council included in its section on organizational transformation the need for a common map that would enhance a whole-of-government approach, and “lay the foundation for effective interagency collaboration.”<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that the Chairman of the Atlantic Council Combatant Command Task Force, as well as the Chairman of the Atlantic Council’s Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, at the time of this study was retired General James L. Jones. The same General James L. Jones referenced in the House Report to H.R. 6523 as having desired a common alignment for the purpose of executing interagency national security policy.

Lastly, and on a more academic level, American political scientist, professor of security studies, and prominent expert on India, Pakistan, and South Asian security, Stephen P. Cohen, published numerous pieces on the role of the United States’ foreign policy abroad. In his 2013 book, *Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum*, Cohen makes the following statement:

The U.S. government has for decades failed to see [South Asia] as a whole, with its shared environments, shared cultural system, and its own strategic logic. Ignoring the region or parceling it out conceptually and organizationally might have been an adequate response during the Cold War, but its new importance demands a rethinking of both strategy and the way the U.S. government is organized to deal with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India...To correct this, and to take advantage of new opportunities in South Asia, the United States must revise the civilian and military framework with which it approaches the region...Equally troubling, major departments in the U.S. government differ markedly as to how they deal with India and Pakistan. These include the Departments of State and Defense, and the different military commands within Defense,

each of which maintains its own foreign, intelligence, and military strategies. This makes it difficult, for example, to factor the impact of the India-Pakistan competition into America's Afghanistan policy...Reorganization along these lines would stimulate holistic thinking about the region. It would improve U.S. deployment capacity in the Indian Ocean and South Asia, one of the world's most important geopolitical theaters.<sup>24</sup>

Cohen is addressing the particular difference in regional mapping that exists by allowing DoD to separate India and Pakistan between two Geographic Combatant Commands while DoS keeps them together in one Regional Bureau.

### **CASE STUDY: Providing Options to Navigate the India-Pakistan Relationship**

The calculations that go into United States foreign relations are very complex and interconnected. As Namrata Goswami states in a 2014 essay for the U.S. Army War College, "Relationships between states are not simply determined by the similarity of their historical experiences or their political systems, but also by common concerns, geopolitical realities, ideological moorings, power equations, social connections, and levels of cultural comfort."<sup>25</sup> In this regard, the USG must not only take into consideration the larger context that exists between itself and India or Pakistan respectively, but also the context between India, Pakistan, and the rest of region in which they exist. However, an assessment of the differences of how both the DoD and DoS treat these tensions will show how it creates options for the USG to maintain a dialogue with both India and Pakistan despite the constant geopolitical temperature fluctuation that persist between the two countries.

Tension between India and Pakistan is not a new concept. In fact, the two have engaged in six major conflicts – which includes three full-scale wars – since the two countries were formed in 1947 when they both were granted independence from Great Britain in the midst of ongoing Hindu and Muslim clashes.<sup>26</sup> Much of this conflict has been over the disputed Kashmir

region which borders both nations. Divided haphazardly along religious lines, Pakistan views the current agitation in Kashmir as “the struggle of the people for the exercise of right of self-determination.”<sup>27</sup> In this regard, Pakistan calls for the holding of a free and impartial plebiscite for the determination of the future of Kashmir.<sup>28</sup> The underpinning rationale for the perspective is that the largely Muslim population of Kashmir would likely side with Pakistan on this issue. For India, Kashmir represents an integral component of its sovereignty, and giving up would signify an inability to exist as a secular state. At the domestic level, Kashmir is also believed to be consequential for India’s democracy, federalism, and nationalism.<sup>29</sup> Not able to resolve their differences, each has since seized a portion of Kashmir and attempted to administer control over their portion ever since – divided by a defacto border known as the line of control (LOC).

In the 2006 memoir of Pakistan’s 10th President Pervez Musharraf, he refers to South Asia as the *nuclear flashpoint of the world*.<sup>30</sup> He goes on to elaborate:

[E]ver since Pakistan followed India into the nuclear club, the world holds its breath at our every confrontation. This situation is much worse than the Cold War, which was fought at a distance, mostly by proxy. When your enemy is your neighbor, when you have fought open wars repeatedly, when you are in dispute over a large piece of territory, and when your historical memory is rooted in mutual slaughter from the founding of your nation, you have not a cold war, but a deadly embrace, with guns drawn and fingers on the trigger.<sup>31</sup>

Given that both India and Pakistan achieved independence during the dawn of the Cold War, the bulk of United States foreign policy toward these two countries is marked by the previously polarized global security environment of that era. During this time, “the two states...acquired extraregional, mutually exclusive allies, became ideological rivals, and were shaped by quite different organizing principles.”<sup>32</sup> More often than not, Pakistan found itself on the United States’ side of issues during the Cold War, while India took a more non-aligned approach – even

cofounding the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which was viewed by the United States as being pro-Soviet.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the difference in Cold War alignment, an assessment of regional and global alliance memberships of both India and Pakistan reflect a greater willingness to enter into dialogue over non-military issues. Regionally, the two countries are members of The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which is the regional intergovernmental organization (IGO) and geopolitical union of nations in South Asia with the intention of promoting economic integration. Globally, both are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as the United Nations (UN). However, within the UN, the two only sit together on the Economic and Social Council, which focuses on economic, social, and environmental issues.

Early into the independence of India and Pakistan, the United States, having no sense of colonial guilt, sought bilateral relations with both countries in South Asia.<sup>34</sup> However, having drastically underestimated the depth of the rivalry between India and Pakistan, the United States found it difficult to maintain equal relationships. The distinct separation between India and Pakistan, both politically and socially, forced the United States to eventually abandon any regional approach that sought to achieve symmetry between the two South Asian countries. As the global security environment moved beyond the Cold War, the United States' policy toward India and Pakistan had begun moving toward the concept of treating the two countries separately – particularly during the timeframe immediately after India's 1998 nuclear tests.<sup>35</sup> However, it was the administration of President George W. Bush that formally developed what became known as “dehyphenation.”

Dehyphenation was a set of policy objectives that “treated India and Pakistan separately, each for its own virtues and assets...Dehyphenation enable[d] America to work with India without having to burden its diplomats and soldiers with the Pakistan tie, and it facilitated seemingly close cooperation with Pakistan on terror-related issues.”<sup>36</sup> The RAND Corporation, having been a proponent of dehyphenation leading into the Bush administration, identified the following three distinct features of such a policy in a primer to the then President-elect:

First, U.S. calculations [would] systematically decouple India and Pakistan; that is, U.S. relations with each state would be governed by an objective assessment of the intrinsic value of each country to U.S. interests rather than by fears about how U.S. relations with one would affect relations with the other. Second, the United States would recognize that India is on its way to becoming a major Asian power of some consequence and, therefore, that it warrants a level of engagement far greater than the previous norm and also an appreciation of its potential for both collaboration and resistance across a much larger canvas than simply South Asia. Third, the United States would recognize that Pakistan is a country in serious crisis that must be assisted to achieve a “soft landing” that dampens the currently disturbing social and economic trends by, among other things, reaching out to Pakistani society rather than [simply] the Pakistani state.<sup>37</sup>

The Bush administration would go on to lift most sanctions against Pakistan while also working toward improving relations with India.<sup>38</sup> Without the burden of the United States being viewed as an unwelcome mediator, the United States was able to engage in bilateral conversations on mutual problems where permissible and the avoidance of conflict on issues unpalatable by either India, Pakistan, or both.

The policy of dehyphenation continued through the administration of President William J. Clinton with minimal, if any, change to its approach of differentiated policies toward the region. Additionally, while President Barrack H. Obama discussed – as a candidate – his desire to leverage the United States’ role as singular, global leader to actively seek reconciliation between India and Pakistan, he quickly realized the difficulties associated with the deeply ingrained identity conflict that existed between the two South Asia rivals.<sup>39</sup> Thus, like the two

administrations before it, the Obama administration avoided *rehyphenation* – or rather creating an overarching, regional policy for South Asia that sought to deal with India and Pakistan in unison. The continuation of dehyphenation ultimately paved the way for good relations with India and Pakistan simultaneously, while also advancing a diverse array of goals within the region.<sup>40</sup>

Cohen's earlier criticism regarding the need for a more holistic approach seemingly presumed that the policy of dehyphenation had lost its value due to continued prevalence of the United States as a single, global power with the ability to force the resolution of deeply-rooted identity issues. However, as depicted in the current NSS, the global security environment is once again shaped by a return to great power competition.<sup>41</sup> Though not the same as the Cold War, the absence of unitary global leadership will once again provide global actors with options for alignment. And much like the global security environment of the Cold War, the psychology of competing superpowers will inevitably contribute to polarizing and militarizing of regions such as South Asia in order to “realize their respective political, security, and strategic interests and objectives.”<sup>42</sup> Shifting U.S. policy from *dehyphenation* to *rehyphenation* – or putting India and Pakistan under one India-Pakistan policy – would increase the prospect of the U.S. once again meddling in this historical identity conflict. While the U.S. maintains a long-standing history of diplomatic relations with Pakistan, it has come quite far – since the Cold War – with regard to its relationship with India. The possibility of a policy reversal would risk past and future gains in a region that continues to increase in geopolitical importance.

## Conclusion

An increasingly integrated global environment requires that the USG develop comprehensive solutions to the challenges of today and future. These comprehensive solutions revolve around a whole-of-government approach to national security issues that effectively integrates all elements of national power – DIME – in a formalized process. However, not all interactions on the global stage require all of these modes, and an entirely unified approach may inadvertently hinder progress due to the possible perception of ulterior motives. On the surface, creating a common map of regional alignments for all departments and agencies within the national security enterprise seems like a good sense approach to solving challenges to interagency collaboration. Bureaucracies are fraught with vertically-aligned, stove-piped organizational structures that require a unifying vision to ensure unity of effort. However, the various shifts in the national security paradigm over the past half-century have created what is now the complexity that is the United States national security enterprise. Functioning under the overarching guidance of the NSC and its NSS, the enterprise has become a responsive, outcome-focused, tight connection between both the civilian and military dimensions of foreign policy. As seen in the provided example of United States involvement in India-Pakistan relations, the lack of regional alignment provides the United States with national security *options*. These options represent flexibility in how the individual departments and agencies respond to highly volatile relationships within the global security environment and effectively determine a secure and stable way forward. In a high-stakes game involving nuclear deterrence, viable options are more important than the mere perception of properly aligned organizational functions.

### **Key Terminology and Definitions**

- Intelligence Community (IC) – The multi-part intelligence system of the United States tasked to provide timely, relevant information to policy-makers, decision-makers, and warfighters.
- National Security Enterprise – The series of core functions of government and nongovernment functions that comprise the expertise leveraged to establish and execute national security policy. The primary actors are comprised of, but not limited to, the National Security Council (NSC), the DoD, the DoS, the Intelligence Community (IC), the United States Congress, and nonfederal actors such as think tanks.
- National Security Strategy – The official document released by the White House that expresses the “development and application of ideas for employing means and orchestrating the instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) to achieve viable ends that protect or advance national interests.”<sup>43</sup>
- Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) – The DoS defines the QDDR as an unclassified executive branch document that acts as a blueprint for how the organization seeks to advance American interests throughout the globe.<sup>44</sup> The overarching assessment includes global trends, threats, and priorities.
- Regional Mapping – Regional mapping refers to the manner in which a USG department or agency divides the world into distinct segments or regions. These regions are typically expressed in both the department or agency’s organizations structure, as well as its policy development and execution. Examples of regional mapping are the DoD’s Geographic Combatant Commands, the DoS’s Regional Bureaus, and USAID’s Geographic Bureaus.

- Unified Command Plan (UCP) – The DoD defines the UCP as a classified executive branch document that provides basic guidance for all unified combatant commanders on mission sets, regional responsibilities, and force structure and general boundaries of the respective geographical areas of responsibility (AOR). This document is approved by the President, and updated at a minimum every two years.<sup>45</sup>

## Endnotes:

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Displaced Iraqis: Integrated International Strategy Needed to Reintegrate Iraq’s Internally Displaced and Returning Refugees*. (Washington, District of Columbia: Government Accountability Office, 2010), <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11124.pdf>; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Afghanistan Development: U.S. Efforts to Support Afghan Water Sector Increasing, but Improvements Needed in Planning and Coordination*. (Washington, District of Columbia: Government Accountability Office, 2010), <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11138.pdf>; Government Accountability Office, *National Security: An Overview of Professional Development Activities Intended to Improve Interagency Collaboration*, (Washington, District of Columbia: Government Accountability Office, 2010), <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11108.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Interagency Collaboration: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight of National Security Strategies, Organizations, Workforce, and Information Sharing* (Washington, District of Columbia, 2009), 11-12, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/210/203867.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Howard B. Schaffer and Teresita C. Schaffer, *How Pakistan Negotiates with the United States: Riding the Roller Coaster*. (Washington, District of Columbia: United States Institute of Peace, 2011), 143.

<sup>7</sup> Richard K. Betts, “Don’t Retire the National Security Act,” *The American Interest*, Vol. 12, Iss. 4 (March/April 2017): 6.

<sup>8</sup> Don M. Snider, “The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision, Second Edition,” (monograph, U.S. Army War College, 1995), 5.

<sup>9</sup> James W. Derleth, “Fostering a Whole-of-Government Approach to National Security from the Bottom Up: Interagency Training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center,” *Military Review*, February 28, 2018, 1-2, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/Army-Press-Online-Journal/documents/Derleth-v2.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> John McCain and Mark Salter. *The Restless Wave: Good Times, Just Causes, Great Fights and Other Appreciations*. (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 302.

<sup>11</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, District of Columbia, 2017), 45-53, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Implications of a Common Alignment of World Regions Among Select Federal Agencies*. (Washington, District of Columbia: Government Accountability Office, 2011), 27, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/100/97628.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Marks. “Rethinking the Geographic Combatant Commands,” *InterAgency Journal*, Volume 1, Number 1. (Fall 2010): 19, <http://thesimoncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/IAJ-1-1pg19-23.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review,” (Washington, District of Columbia: U.S. Department of State, September 31, 2015), 1.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. House Committee on Armed Services, *Report of the Committee on Armed Services on H.R. 5136 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011*, 111<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress, 2010, 339.

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- <sup>17</sup> Government Accountability Office 2011, 13.
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- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.
- <sup>22</sup> Atlantic Council Combatant Command Task Force, *All Elements of National Power: Moving Toward a New Interagency Balance for U.S. Global Engagement*. Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security. (Washington, District of Columbia: Atlantic Council, July 2014), Executive Summary, [https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/All\\_Elements\\_of\\_National\\_Power.pdf](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/All_Elements_of_National_Power.pdf).
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- <sup>26</sup> Cohen, 1.
- <sup>27</sup> Pakistan Mission to United Nations, "Kashmir – The History," accessed May 1, 2019, <http://www.pakun.org/kashmir/history.php>.
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- <sup>29</sup> Sumit Ganguly and Kanti Bajpai, "India and the Crisis in Kashmir," *Asian Survey* Vol. 34, No. 5 (May 1994): 404, <https://www.-jstor-org.lomc.idm.oclc.org/stable/2645054>.
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- <sup>33</sup> Shirin R. Tahir-Kheli, *India, Pakistan, and the United States: Breaking with the Past*. (New York, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1997), 31.
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- <sup>36</sup> Cohen, 182.
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- <sup>38</sup> Cohen, 182.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.
- <sup>40</sup> Tellis, 36.
- <sup>41</sup> The White House, 27.
- <sup>42</sup> B.M. Jain, *India in the New South Asia*. (New York, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010), 108.
- <sup>43</sup> The National War College, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, (Washington, District of Columbia: National Defense University Press, 2018), 1.
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