Interagency National Security Teams

Can Social Science Contribute?

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There is a consensus that many national security problems require interagency solutions.[1] However, as veteran national security legislator Ike Skelton noted, the current national security system has trouble meeting this requirement: "For many years, we've repeatedly heard from independent blue-ribbon panels and bipartisan commissions that when it comes to interagency collaboration on national security, our system is inefficient, ineffective, and often down-right broken."[2] Many of those same blue-ribbon panels and commissions have recommended interagency teams as a potential solution to interagency coordination problems.[3] Recently, for example, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Commission called for more "interagency teams with capabilities to plan for and exercise, in an integrated way, departmental and agency responsibilities in predefined mission[s]."[4] Historical descriptive accounts indicate interagency teams can indeed perform with great effectiveness, but recent research also suggests that interagency team effectiveness is not widespread, easily replicated, or well-understood. It would be easier to act upon the recommendations for more interagency teams if national security executives knew with greater certainty what factors and what conditions make these teams effective.

We believe that social science research on team effectiveness can help in this regard. We reviewed the literature on team effectiveness, particularly 12 comprehensive literature reviews published between

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1982 and 2008.[5] We concluded that the organizational literature on team effectiveness offers many insights, but its collective value is limited because the team literature is ambiguous, unstructured, and so rich that it is disorderly. Many researchers use terminology that distinguishes between groups and teams while denying there is a substantive difference; this is a fundamental contradiction that complicates categorization and thus cumulative research. In addition, researchers do not agree on the most important explanatory variables for team effectiveness, which makes it hard to build up generalized findings. Another impediment to generalized findings is that researchers do not agree on the different types of cross-functional teams so that findings from research on one type of team are more likely to be misconstrued as applicable to all team types. Finally, insights from the rich team literature are difficult to extract and apply, which is a severe limitation for those desiring to build up knowledge of how interagency teams might best be constructed and employed. In this article, we argue that imposing some definitional rigor, methodological clarity, and plausible categorization on the literature provides a solid platform for interagency team research, and that doing so can produce immediate benefits for those interested in better interagency performance.

social science research on team effectiveness offers many insights, but its collective value is limited

Groups, Teams, and Cross-functional Teams

The first problem in the literature is that many researchers do not consistently distinguish between groups, teams, and cross-functional teams, thus confusing and undermining the relevance of their findings. Many researchers use the term *teams* interchangeably with the term *groups*.[6] Even literature reviews on teams that purportedly focus on the team phenomenon often use both terms interchangeably.[7] Basic organizational textbooks capture the confusion over the substantive difference between groups and teams when they acknowledge that most researchers use group and team interchangeably, but then address groups and teams separately as different organizational types.[8] The conflicted treatment of teams as entities that can be differentiated from groups is a problem for researchers. Absent some agreed-upon defining characteristics for what distinguishes a team from other organizational groups, how can they or their effectiveness be studied systematically?

The solution we propose is to distinguish between groups, teams, and cross-functional teams by level of task interdependence, a well-accepted concept developed by James D. Thompson in the 1950s and 1960s. Thompson, in his classic 1953 case study on a "medium bomb wing of the Strategic Air Command of the United States Air Force . . . operating B–50 manned aircraft,"[9] identified three different types of task interdependence: pooled, sequential, and reciprocal. These three levels can be used to distinguish teams from groups, and cross-functional teams from teams more generally.

Pooled interdependence is the minimal level of task interdependence within an organizational group's task environment.[10] Shared leadership, shared tools, shared office space, shared tasks, shared missions, and/or shared identities are all manifestations of pooled interdependence. Many groups never exceed

this level of task interdependence but can nonetheless prove effective as long as they are not expected to perform at a higher level of task interdependence. For example, a Joint Interagency Coordination Group that shares information and offers advice, rather than actually being empowered and employed to solve complex problems, is probably aptly designated a group because its level of task interdependence is low.

Sequential interdependence is a moderate level of task interdependence within an organizational team's task environment. Activities at the sequential interdependence level require a division of labor or some level of specialization, but also standard operating procedures, calendars, schedules, and at least some degree of team leadership to coordinate the activity.[11] In the presence of sequential interdependence, group members will find a way to coordinate their activities among people and across time and thus satisfy the minimum qualification for designation as a team. Some interagency planning teams rise to this level of task interdependence as they coordinate plans by passing them from one agency or department to another until a generally agreed-upon plan is approved.

Reciprocal interdependence is the highest level of task interdependence and reflects a cross-functional team's task environment. According to Thompson, activities that require rapid coordination of diverse functional expertise require "mutual adjustment" among the functional specialties on an ongoing basis. All teams may experience some level of mutual adjustment between specialties, but effective cross-functional teams do so routinely and rapidly. Despite the proliferation of cross-functional teams in corporate America (sometimes called a "quiet revolution"[12]), there is not yet much research specifically focused on cross-functional teams as opposed to teams more generally.[13] There is even less research on interagency teams in the national security system, which are by definition "cross-functional," insofar as different departments and agencies represent major functional specialties (military, diplomacy, homeland security, economics, law enforcement, intelligence).

We believe that level of task interdependence is a useful way to distinguish among groups, teams, and cross-functional teams in the national security system and an important first step toward improving the knowledge base on interagency teams. Since we are interested in interagency performance, we focus on the third category: cross-functional interagency national security teams. Because we want to know more about what best explains the performance of interagency (or cross-functional) teams, we examined the literature for insights on the most important explanatory performance variables.

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Ten Core Variables

We identified 10 tentative key variables that seem to best explain team effectiveness. We emphasize the word tentative because we acknowledge these variables extracted from a rich literature base are heuristic and not well established by a cohesive body of research on interagency teams. We organize the 10 variables in 3 sets: one at the organizational level, one at the team level, and one at the subteam level. Team purpose, team empowerment, and team support have all been shown as necessary

organizational conditions for team effectiveness, and often depend upon organizational factors beyond the immediate control of the team. Team structure, team decisionmaking, team culture, and team learning are all variables directly controlled by the team. Team composition, team rewards, and team leadership are all variables at the individual level of analysis that are strongly related to team effectiveness.

Each of the 10 core variables selected has been the topic of many hundreds of studies and dozens of literature reviews and meta-analyses. By examining this body of research, we identified subsidiary team characteristics that researchers have shown affect team effectiveness and that usefully illustrate the range of variation within each of the variables. The net result is a range of performance characteristics for what we postulate are the most important 10 explanatory variables for performance. We explain the variables in table 1 by drawing upon cross-functional team research literature and using illustrative examples from research under way in the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at the National Defense University (NDU). The authors and other researchers in the institute are using these variables and their performance characteristics to better understand the performance of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), high-value targeting teams, human terrain teams (HTTs), and other interagency teams that have been created and employed by the national security system. A set of case studies has been completed and results are forthcoming. Our purpose here is simply to illustrate the value of the variables to structure future research for more generalized knowledge of interagency team performance.

teams require at least initial broad direction as to their purpose

Purpose, Empowerment, and Support

Team purpose is the broad, long-term mandate given to the team by its management, the alignment of short-term objectives with its strategic vision, and agreement on common approaches within the team. Despite widespread belief that management should not dictate team objectives, the literature on teams does suggest that teams require at least initial broad direction as to their purpose.[14] Agreement on team purpose is manifest in varying levels of detail.

Most organizations have well-understood overarching organizational-level strategies that can provide a foundation on which more precise team purposes can be built. One of the best known broad organizational strategies was John F. Kennedy's pronouncement that by the end of the 1960s, the United States would land a man on the moon and return him safely. Team purposes are typically more focused, however; for example, "Locate and return Private James Francis Ryan safely to his mother." Successful cross-functional teams are able to create an initial strategic consensus, and then build on that kernel to create a more elaborate strategic concept of how work is done in the team. One of the reasons that the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF)–South has been so effective is that it has a focused strategic consensus (interdict drugs) and over time has been able to translate that narrow purpose into a well-shared operational concept for team performance of how things are done at JIATF–South.

Team empowerment is having sufficient wherewithal to accomplish the team purpose.[15] Three types of team empowerment have been linked to team effectiveness: resource

Table 1. Ten Core Variables Affecting Team Effectiveness

Organizational-level Variables			
Purpose	Team founding	Strategic consensus	Strategic concept
Empowerment	Structural	Resources	Psychological
Support	External communication activities	Supportive organizational context	Team-based organizations
Team-level Variables			
Structure	Design	Mental models	Networks
Decisionmaking	Heterogeneity	Conflict	Implementation
Culture	Climate	Cohesion	Trust
Learning	Exploitation	Experimentation	Exploration
Individual-level Variables			
Composition	Diversity	Competencies	Personality
Rewards	Attractive motivations	Active incentives	Affective impetus
Leadership	Traditional	Coaching	Shared

empowerment, structural empowerment (for example, authority, power, and control), and psychological empowerment (confidence, efficacy, and potency). Many people lament the lack of directive authority on interagency teams so that they would have the power to give directions to other components of the national security system.[16] However, we find that lack of resources for interagency missions may be a more substantial impediment to team performance given the current configuration of the national security system.

Corporations are routinely able to allocate resources from corporate headquarters into cross-functional teams that are seen as strategic investments for the organization. In contrast, interagency teams in the national security system are not typically given the resources necessary to accomplish their tasks. Experienced interagency participants often note that even when such groups agree on objectives, they commonly cannot agree on which departments and agencies will provide the resources necessary to achieve those objectives. There are exceptions, such as Plan Colombia, which was successful in large part because it received needed resources. The Plan Colombia team was created by President Bill Clinton's national security advisor, Sandy Berger, in the summer of 1999 to reverse Colombia's slide into a cocaine-driven illicit drug economy. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who led the interagency team, later explained that one of the reasons behind the success

of Plan Colombia was the fact that the U.S. Congress allocated $1.6 billion to the effort.[17] Pickering believed that this significant infusion of resources eliminated much of the friction that normally bogs down interagency teams.

Team support is the set of relations that connect a team to other levels of the organization. It matters a great deal whether teams are constructed with the cooperation of the rest of the organization, with the ambivalent noninterference by the rest of the organization, or in the face of opposition from the rest of the organization. Numerous team researchers have found that organizational support is a primary determinant of the effectiveness of the team.[18] Contrary to the common prejudice that hard-working and well-intentioned lower ranking officials will work out interagency differences if left alone, most successful interagency teams benefit from substantial senior leadership support. Anecdotally, it seems extremely difficult if not impossible for an interagency team to be successful without some broader level of support from the national security system and its leaders.

interagency teams often do not receive a great deal of organizational support from the national security system

Unfortunately, interagency teams (or groups) often do not receive a great deal of organizational support from the national security system. The National Counterintelligence Executive (NCIX) experience is a common one. Created in 2001 to bring together diverse counterintelligence capabilities across the U.S. national security system, the NCIX found it difficult to get operating quickly:

> *For the administrative support system, anything that is different is a problem at least initially, because it does not fit into the known set of rules and procedures. This effect is multiplied when the objective is to wire together disparate security regimes governing computer systems, personnel practices, and physical space. . . . One of the enduring problems we encountered was in recruiting capable personnel to work in the new* [counterintelligence] *office. All national "centers" have an inherent personnel problem: you want and need the best and brightest, but there are never enough of those to go around. . . . Even if a given individual is personally disposed to take an assignment with the national office, getting their line management's okay is far from easy. ("No. You are needed here.")*[19]

Some organizations are purposefully managed to provide quick and effective support for cross-functional teams, and they thrive on such fertile ground. Other organizations provide such support on an exceptional basis, and it is much more difficult for teams to quickly start up and prove effective when they are starved for organizational support.[20]

Structure, Decisionmaking, Culture, and Learning

Team structure refers to the mechanics of teams: their design,[21] collocation,[22] and network dynamics.[23] In general, research shows that effective team structures are small, collocated, and embedded within powerful networks. Team design encompasses decisions about the tasks performed by the team, nature of subunits within the team, specific number of team members needed, and tenure of the team.

As discussed in more detail later, cross-functional teams vary significantly by type and design. A standing national-level team near the top of the organization requires a different design than a temporary action committee at the bottom of the organization. Size is a team design variable that is highly subject to the types of team tasks being performed. Here we can perhaps extrapolate from the Harvard Business School's classic guide to managing meetings, which recognized the practical size limit on productive group efforts with its 8–18–1800 rule.[24] If the purpose of an interagency team is mere "coordination" or simple communication of information across multiple departments and agencies, the group can be quite large (for example, up to 1,800 people or as many as an auditorium or listserv will hold). If the purpose is non-binding "cooperation," such as brainstorming or perhaps the accomplishment of a common and relatively simple objective, the team should be much smaller (18 people in a conference room or on a conference call). If, though, the purpose is "collaboration," or creative decisionmaking that integrates different viewpoints to solve complex problems, the cross-functional team must be small (8 people around a table or on a videoconference) because a "large number of people—by virtue of their size—have trouble interacting constructively as a group, much less agreeing on actionable specifics."[25]

Interagency organizations at all levels—the National Security Council committees, JIATFs, or field operations such as PRTs—are under pressure to let more organizations send representatives to participate in the decision process. Social science research on cross-functional teams, however, shows that teams cannot be effective if they are too large. On the other hand, team structure research also suggests that the core team must network well to be successful, both internally and externally. In high-performing cross-functional teams, it is common to find that members have a detailed understanding of the role that other members play, sometimes referred to as "transactive memory systems." Practically speaking, the team members know "who knows what" and "who can do what" and "who has access to people outside the team who can solve specific problems." Shared transactive memory has been shown to increase resilience through a process known as "deference to expertise,"[26] in which problems migrate to the people most likely to have the ability to solve them, rather than centralizing at the top of the organization. This phenomenon has been observed, for example, in cardiosurgical teams and wildland firefighting teams. Effective teams also compensate for their small size by networking externally with other bodies of needed expertise.[27]

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Team decisionmaking processes are employed to make sense of and solve a variety of complex problems faced by the team. Understanding the factors that distinguish effective team decisionmaking processes from less effective ones is a high priority in organizations because marginal improvements in decision quality can result in benefits, and marginal degradations in decision quality can result in catastrophes.[28]

National security events have been studied from the vantage point of team decisionmaking processes for over 50 years.[29] The Bay of Pigs

Invasion decision is often cited as the prototypical example of a case in which the norms of the group overpowered the ideas of individuals in the group, a phenomenon labeled "groupthink."[30] Subsequent research shows that groups with high levels of cohesiveness may suffer from the inability or unwillingness of individuals to contest emergent team decisions.[31] Sometimes teams that have been together for a while lose their effectiveness because the team members converge on a common viewpoint and lose their capacity to engage in constructive team conflict. Researchers now recognize two different types of team conflict: emotional conflict ("a condition in which group members have interpersonal clashes characterized by anger, frustration, and other negative feelings") and task conflict ("a condition in which group members disagree about task issues, including goals, key decision areas, procedures, and the appropriate choice for action").[32] Research shows that emotional conflict leads to poor decisions, while task conflict can lead to better decisions.[33] The objective in team decisionmaking is to ensure a productive clash of divergent views while still forging agreement on the best way forward—something much more easily said than done.

Team culture is the combination of norms, values, and beliefs shared by team members. Effective cross-functional teams require team cultures that are cohesive,[34] foster a climate of shared values,[35] and are based on high degrees of trust. Research on cross-functional teams shows that teams with a high level of trust are more innovative,[36] learn more quickly,[37] have higher degrees of cooperation,[38] and experience less damaging conflict.[39]

The creation of a team culture with a high degree of trust is not easy to do within an interagency national security team. Interagency team members come from different parts of the national security system, each of which has a powerful culture of its own (for example, the Secret Service, Diplomatic Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Federal Bureau of Investigation). These cultures must be bridged at the team level in order to foster cohesiveness. This is a major and growing challenge for Ambassadors who must lead country teams:

> *Not only must Ambassadors coordinate major government activities such as diplomacy, commercial relations, use of force, and intelligence activities, but they also must provide interagency coordination for numerous sub-specialties within a given area. With over 30 government agencies now dispatching employees overseas, non–State Department personnel often outnumber diplomats.*[40]

With so many diverse organizational cultures represented on the Country Team, the Ambassador has a major problem establishing trust and cohesion. In fact, one study of Country Team performance found that distrust of Ambassadors is a major impediment to team performance insofar as the Ambassador is often *not* seen as the overarching national representative but rather as a representative of the Department of State who is pursuing Department of State interests. Thus, "agencies encourage their personnel on the Country Team to pursue their own objectives and lines of operation, without adequate consultation or coordination."[41]

Team learning is an ongoing process of action, reflection, and change, through which teams acquire, share, combine, and apply knowledge.[42] Effective teams not only make good decisions, but they also rapidly acquire new knowledge and embed that knowledge into the team's structure, processes, and culture.[43] In

rapidly changing global environments, teams that learn accurately and quickly have a significant competitive advantage over teams that learn poorly and slowly.[44]

Interagency national security teams can be designed to efficiently replicate old knowledge, to artfully experiment with old and new knowledge, or to plunge headfirst into new knowledge domains. Historically, the U.S. national security system has been dominated by "exploitative learning," or a belief in replicating past successes. Presumably, future interagency national security teams will want to focus more on learning capacity. Effective experimental learning teams place a high value on after-action reviews, lessons-learned exercises, and agile retrospectives in order to learn how to improve their strategy, organization, and processes.[45] Effective exploratory learning teams survey their environments through sensemaking, scouting, and mental "map-making activities." Facing the unknown can be disconcerting and incline a team to ignore the unfamiliar, but good exploratory practice "moves the unknown to the known and enables action."[46]

Composition, Rewards, and Leadership

Team composition refers to the characteristics of individuals chosen for the team, presence of subcultures or factions within the team, and amount of diversity in attitudes, demographic characteristics, and functional boundaries. The large literature on team training is focused on creating properly qualified personnel for teams.[47] Team personality uses selection, socialization, and strategy processes to ensure that each member has the necessary personality characteristics, goal orientations, or other individual-level attributes to contribute.[48] In contrast, diversity covers a range of member characteristics presumed to affect performance, including demographic, attitudinal, and functional diversity.[49] Team members can be chosen both to accentuate homogeneity or heterogeneity, and also to create subunits, factions, or subcultures.

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Research on effective cross-functional teams suggests that some people are seen as "good" team members and others are seen as "bad" team members. One path to the creation of more good team members is through the creation of a new class of people trained in interagency practices. Executive Order 13434, signed by President George W. Bush on May 17, 2007, called for the creation of a cadre of national security professionals: "it is the policy of the United States to promote the education, training, and experience of current and future professionals in national security positions." A second way would be "tagging" the human capital files of people who already have had significant experiences on interagency teams.

Recent NDU research on interagency teams used in Iraq explains the powerful but fragile performance of these innovative organizational constructs. The research found that lessons learned at great cost are being lost in part because the Defense Department makes no effort to track which personnel participated in and led interagency teams well. Admirable oral history databases "provide scant insights on performance of the interagency teams," and "personnel who now have bureaucratic black

belts in interagency collaboration in the field are moving on with their careers." Currently, these experienced interagency veterans cannot be located to obtain insights, rewarded for complex and successful assignments, or identified for future interagency assignments.[50]

A third path to creating good interagency team members is through education. The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) "provides a robust training, education, and exercise program to further develop skills and knowledge needed to address identified performance gaps for the full range of potential reconstruction and stabilization efforts."[51]

a best practice for one type of cross-functional team could actually be a poor practice for another type

Team rewards are systems of attractive motivations, material reinforcements, and emotional benefits that direct team members toward the accomplishment of the mission.[52] Effective reward systems not only encourage individual members in their discrete responsibilities as team members, but also provide significant rewards for team accomplishments measured against the metrics for success.[53] Conversely, inconsistency between a team's purpose and its reward system can undermine the effectiveness of the team.

Research suggests cross-functional teams are fueled by three different types of team rewards. One type of reward can be used to convince high-performing professionals to jump out of their safe career paths within a stovepipe into a more precarious, more demanding, and less highly valued position on an interagency team. A second type of reward is used within the team to create incentives for overcoming numerous impediments to interagency teams within the current system. Finally, members of effective teams report that the most effective team rewards are emotional: affect,[54] mood,[55] and emotions.[56] Research on interagency teams at INSS also supports the contention in the literature that "psychological rewards" are by far the most motivating type of team reward. Members of high-value targeting teams in Iraq described the strong positive emotions that intelligence analysts experience when they see their work immediately translated into action. Multiple interviewees with experience at JIATF–South reported that working there was the high point of their careers. Similar sentiments were expressed by every member of the interagency Bosnia Train & Equip team who was interviewed. Under the right circumstances, participation in interagency teams can create extraordinary positive team emotions.

Team leadership is broadly defined as the collection of strategic actions that are taken to accomplish team objectives, ensure efficiency, and avoid catastrophes. Although it flies in the face of popular opinion that assumes good leadership is the key to success in virtually everything, over 50 years of organizational research shows that a good leader in a dysfunctional system is likely to fail, while a bad leader in a well-organized system is likely to succeed.[57] Good team leaders are successful not because they are forceful, decisive, charismatic, or inspirational, but because they build good team systems, and good team systems subsequently create the desired outcomes.[58] Teams require leaders who can secure critical resources for the team, exercise authority without suffocating the creativity of the team, and manage the team's effective performance.

Leadership within the U.S. national security system is usually defined in near-Napoleonic terms of individuals, hierarchies, and chains

of command.[59] In stark contrast to this "great man" approach, though, is Donald Philips's and James Loy's description of leadership in the U.S. Coast Guard:

> [T]*he United States Coast Guard lives and breathes leadership. It pervades every aspect of an organization where* every person is a leader. *Most studies of leadership involve a single person—one leader who has made a difference in an organization. But this is the story of . . . a service organization imbued with proper leadership thinking and behavior by the nation's founders. That leadership has endured for more than two and one-quarter centuries.*[60]

The rise of interagency teams is an indication that the U.S. national security system is starting to wean itself from a great man leadership model and move toward a distributed leadership model.

These 10 core team variables are broad, but the range of variation we extracted from the literature in the 30 subsidiary team variables is much more specific to team experience. We think this construct befits the sprawling nature of team literature, providing structure for further research without imposing too narrow a set of lenses for examining team performance. We do not presume that this set of variables is definitive. Rather, we assert it is consistent with the literature on cross-functional teams and a good starting place for organizing disciplined research on interagency national security teams.

Executive, Project, Parallel, Command, Production, and Action Teams

A third problem in trying to extract insights from research is that team researchers have not yet produced a disciplined and agreed-upon taxonomy of cross-functional teams. Since 1990, researchers have been distinguishing among different types of cross-functional teams,[61] but there is not yet agreement on a typology of these. Such an underdeveloped typology of cross-functional teams and their subcategories creates problems for educators and practitioners alike. A best practice for one type of cross-functional team could actually be a poor practice for another type.[62] For example, our research to date suggests strong traditional leadership may be appropriate for ad hoc interagency teams, but shared leadership may be far better for well-established standing teams. Two concepts that are particularly helpful for a typology of cross-functional teams are Cohen and Bailey's concept of *managerial scope* (strategic, operational, tactical) and Devine's concept of *temporal duration* (standing, temporary). Combining the concepts of managerial scope and temporal duration yield the six types of cross-functional teams presented in table 2.

Those creating interagency national security teams must consider whether the team is primarily a strategic, operational, or tactical team, with corresponding workload and design implications. Strategic teams tend to be near the corporate headquarters of the organization, tend to be under the direct control of the organization's strategic leadership team, and tend to require a long-term strategic viewpoint. Operational teams—often responsible for policy and plans—are more likely to be located away from organizational headquarters (for example, a combatant command, Haiti earthquake team, BP oil spill response team). The primary responsibility at the operational or managerial level is the translation of long-term national security strategy into short-term tactical actions and/or the resolution

Table 2. Six Types of Cross-functional Teams

	Team Duration	
Scope of Duties	Standing	Temporary
Top Management ❖ Institutional ❖ Strategic	Executive	Project
Middle Management ❖ Managerial ❖ Operational	Parallel	Command
First-line Management ❖ Technological ❖ Tactical	Production	Action

of relatively specific productivity problems. Tactical teams are often described as "the pointy end of the spear" or "where the rubber meets the road." They actually engage in activity that directly produces desired outcomes. Tactical teams also often have an organizational intelligence function, serving as sensors with high situational awareness. They could, someday, constitute the "eyes and ears" of the national security system. By definition, there are a small number of strategic teams, more operational teams, and a larger number of tactical teams. Each of the variables described above may have a different influence on team effectiveness depending on whether the team is strategic, operational, or tactical.

Those creating interagency national security teams must also determine whether the team is primarily a standing or a temporary team. Standing teams leverage effectiveness variables differently than do temporary ones. For example, as previously mentioned, traditional leadership is likely to work better for ad hoc interagency teams that jump right into unique and limited problems. A temporary group is highly dependent on a team leader to create, share, and maintain the purpose. However, shared leadership is likely to work better for standing teams that are using well-established procedures to tackle well understood problems repetitively. Another example is team culture. Team cohesion is likely to be more challenging for an ad hoc team where the members know they will soon be returning to their parent organizations. A standing team might rely primarily on a historical team climate—a shared understanding of specific norms, values, and beliefs within the team. However, a temporary team might have to compensate for the lack of a long-term unifying climate with short-term efforts to create cohesion and trust. An intriguing new field of research in this regard is studies of "swift trust" in temporary teams.

Social Science Can Contribute

Our small organizational performance team in INSS is now conducting case studies of different types of interagency teams using the variables and typology explained in this article. The results to

date have been most encouraging and are being published under separate cover. We also believe, however, that the insights extracted from organizational literature on teams can be used more directly as well.

For example, understanding best practices for PRTs is a goal for several national security entities. The U.S. Institute of Peace publishes interviews with PRT members on its Web site, and National Defense University's Center for Complex Operations is systematically examining lessons learned on PRTs.[63] Using the variables identified here to develop exit interviews for PRT members could prove most valuable for better understanding performance.

The research findings presented here also could be put to immediate use by those working to improve the performance of human terrain teams. One of the most visible national security experiments in recent years has been the deployment of perhaps as many as 120 HTTs in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2007 and 2010. In addition to much social commentary and popular press, including a forthcoming book on the teams by journalist Vanessa M. Gezari, there are at least three forthcoming studies of the Human Terrain System (one by the Center for Naval Analyses, one by the U.S. Army, and one by RAND). HTTs are—by design—cross-functional teams comprised (usually) of an ex-military team leader, a senior social scientist with a doctorate in his or her 50s or 60s, a junior social scientist with a master's degree in his or her 30s or 40s, an Active-duty research manager, and a social network expert or "human terrain analyst." Using the variables and insights from literature reviewed here could assist those trying to analyze and improve HTT performance.

Informing interagency education would be yet another contribution this research might make. Draft legislation on "Interagency National Security Professional Education, Administration, and Development" released by former Representative Ike Skelton (D–MO) and Representative Geoff Davis (R–KY) on September 30, 2010, calls for significant improvements in the capacity of the U.S. national security system to produce people who are likely to be good members of interagency national security teams. With the historical record suggesting that interagency teams are capable of stellar but irregular performance, and with so many national security panels and commissions recommending interagency teams, it makes sense to study their performance in a disciplined manner and share those results through educational programs for participants on interagency teams. Such an interagency team curriculum could be offered at the National Defense University, perhaps through the College of International Security Affairs.

Social science has a great deal to contribute to interagency national security teams. The austerity climate that is almost certain to confront the U.S. national security system in the future will give even more impetus to the intelligent use of social science to increase effectiveness, decrease costs, and improve national security organizational performance. In fact, as Harvard professor Steven Kelman notes, it is odd that more effort is not made to exploit social science disciplines for national security benefit:

> *The U.S. Department of Defense is the largest organization in the U.S. government: Its budget ($410 billion in 2006) is noticeably larger than sales of ExxonMobil ($339.9 billion) and of Wal-Mart ($315.7 billion), the world's two largest corporations by sales. . . . The Department of Defense has about 3.3 million employees*

> *(2.6 million uniformed and 700,000 civilian), compared to 84,000 for ExxonMobil and 1.8 million for Wal-Mart. . . . Improving government performance is a topic worthy of significant research attention, yet dramatically insufficient scholarly firepower is directed at it.*[64]

We agree with Kelman that too little firepower is directed at extracting insights from social science. However, as this article should make clear, translating work from academia into national security practice is not as simple as moving wheelbarrows of knowledge from one place to another. The team literature does not yet effectively distinguish among groups, teams, and cross-functional teams, and has not yet converged on a well-structured list of variables and team types. Thus it is difficult to extract maximum value from the rich literature base. Imposing some theoretical order on the literature would make it easier to find and apply insights, and in fact is a necessary prerequisite for cumulative knowledge in this field. Leonardo da Vinci was right when he asserted, "He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast." Smoother sailing ahead for our interagency teams is only likely if we can provide them better means of direction constructed from disciplined social science research. PRISM

Notes

[1] Christopher J. Lamb, "Three Pillars of Reform," in *Global Strategic Assessment 2009: America's Security Role in a Changing World*, ed. Patrick M. Cronin (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2009).

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