Leading the National Security Enterprise

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Introduction

Today's complex, chaotic, and interconnected world has forced us to rethink some of our fundamental assumptions about the nature of leadership, especially when it comes to leading whole-of-government or even whole-of-nation efforts. This is especially the case in the U.S. national security enterprise (hereafter referred to as the NSE or enterprise) where a complex, diverse constellation of military and civilian agencies must wield both hard and soft power on behalf of the United States. For various reasons, that enterprise has become our nation's "first responder" when it comes to almost any challenge, from traditional military operations to a myriad of nonmilitary ones, to include disaster and pandemic relief and humanitarian assistance (the Ebola crisis comes to mind), post–conflict reconstruction, and even nation-building. Irrespective of the challenge, our nation's political leaders look to senior officers—particularly but not exclusively those in uniform—who are in, and/or who have been developed by our NSE to lead the way.

However, are they prepared for what we ask of them? As former U.S. Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Thad Allen and others (including myself) have argued, almost everything of any consequence that government does today is collaboratively co-produced by a complex collection of public and private entities, from other agencies and levels of government, to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and even other countries, and international bodies.[1] This is becoming the "new normal" for national leaders—whether they are elected, or in the case of senior career military and civilian officials, appointed or selected—and it has made their job exponentially more difficult. From the short-term dramas of pandemics, hurricanes, ecological disasters, and "lone wolf" terrorist attacks to the decades-long challenges of homeland security, energy independence, the health of our veterans and, at the extreme, great power competition and conflict—virtually everything government does requires the concerted efforts of complex networks that are comprised of multiple actors and organizations.

In this regard, there is a realization among senior government leaders, both military and civilian, that the national security challenges they face can no longer be addressed by individual agencies or commands, each narrowly

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1 Building a 21st Century Senior Executive Service: Ensuring Leadership Excellence in our Federal Government, ed. Ronald Sanders (National Academy of Public Administration, 2017). See also Tackling Wicked Government Problems: A Practical guide for Enterprise Leader, Nickerson and Sanders, ed., (Brookings Institution Press, second edition 2014).

(even myopically) focused on its own specialized authorities and responsibilities. Rather, as those challenges become even more complex and interdependent, leaders at all levels—all with potentially overlapping jurisdictions and diverse areas of expertise—are required to collaborate with one another towards some common mission outcome. Thus, NSE leaders must have the *meta*-leadership skills to reach beyond their immediate organizations and mobilize a network of interdependent actors to achieve a shared mission and in so doing, achieve outcomes that are greater than the sum of their individual parts.[2]

A New Kind of NSE

For purposes of this paper, NSE is defined in two ways. First, in concept, it represents all of the various departments and agencies, mostly though not exclusively federal, that have some responsibility for the U.S. national and homeland security missions broadly defined. This includes the "usual suspects" like the Defense Department (DOD) and the elements of the Intelligence Community (IC), but it also includes parts of the Departments of Energy, State, Justice, and Commerce, as well as more specialized agencies and departmental subcomponents like the United States Agency for International Development, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Oceanic and Administrative Administration.

Not every element of that constellation of organizations will be relevant to a particular circumstance—indeed, that is part of the leadership challenge—so the second definition is more situational. In that context, the NSE is that operational subset of those institutional entities that may be necessary to accomplish a specific national or international mission sanctioned by the United States as relevant to its national security. These situationally relevant constellations can include federal, state, and local government departments and agencies, their subordinate bureaus and divisions, and even tribal governments. But they can also encompass the private sector and not-for-profit NGOs, the United Nations, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), even organizations like the International Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and their regional counterparts and analogs.

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2 Adapted from Building a 21st Century Senior Executive Service, Sanders, ed., (National Academy of Public Administration, 2017). See also See Tackling Wicked Government Problem. See also Marcus, L., et all, "Crisis preparedness and Crisis Response: The meta-Leadership Model and Method," in D. Kamien, ed., McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012).

And a New Kind of National Security Leader

Whatever the combination, our national leaders increasingly look to someone in or from the NSE to lead them, even when the national security implications may not seem so apparent. The challenge may be strategic and long-term, to address global issues such as migration, drought, and climate change (yes, that too has been defined as a national security issue), or regional ones such as the Syrian civil war and its attendant refugee crisis, North Korea's bellicosity, or the fragile European Union. Or it may be more operational, such as border security, counterterrorism, or emergency management during a disaster.

While the composition and purpose of the constellation may vary—indeed, it almost certainly will—there is one common denominator: the mission at hand involves multiple actors and organizations, each semi-autonomous or independent, yet bound together to achieve a common task. And it needs someone to lead them. Take the Ebola crisis of just a few years ago. When it suddenly metastasized—from something tragic but far from our shores to an issue that has all sorts of intertwined international and domestic implications ranging from disease control protocols to border security—the challenges were enormous. Yet who did the White House (and the world) look to for leadership in that regard? Civilian and military leaders drawn mostly from the NSE to coordinate the various elements of this complex enterprise.[3]

In other words, these whole-of-government and whole-of-nation challenges are extra-organizational in nature (a characteristic that has significant implications for the development of enterprise leaders), and they require a leader who can achieve unity of effort—among multiple entities, each with its own agenda, interests, culture, and politics—without the luxury of unity of command. To do so requires a whole new set of leadership competencies that, with some exception, have not been deliberately or formally developed by the NSE.

What Makes for an Effective NSE Leader?

It is clear that the effective NSE leader needs to have a deep understanding of the institutional, organizational, and (especially) the individual actors that comprise the enterprise, and that does not mean just an understanding of

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3 As well as a special military-like "czar" (Ron McCain, who demonstrated many of the qualities of a NSE leader) appointed by—and reporting directly to—to the President, with the implicit power of that office.

their missions and structures and budgets and bureaucratic processes. Although those are important, the enterprise leader must also understand their mindsets—a product of their histories and cultures, their traditions and stories, even their heroes and lore—if he or she is going to be successful. The NSE leader must also acquire the empathy to see their shared challenge from a collective, inter-subjective point of view, rather than a strictly parochial one.

Second, the NSE leader must be able to connect the dots across that enterprise; that is, to be able to see and understand the NSE as a dynamic, interconnected social system, with complex formal and informal inter-relationships and inter-dependencies, positive and negative feedback loops, etc. that exist between and among the enterprise's constituent organizations. The leader must also understand how the relevant parts of the NSE interact with those other elements of the enterprise that may act in opposition to its interest and objectives. Finally, since those organizations are populated—and more importantly, led—by people, the NSE leader must also be able to grasp the complex social networks that exist within and among those counterparts (formal and otherwise) who can influence action, build new relational networks, and most importantly, leverage them to achieve the aim of the enterprise.

Finally, the enterprise leader needs to be able to lead without formal authority, well- beyond his or her official chain of command. This quality distinguishes the NSE leader from his or her more internally-focused colleagues, for while they too must be able to exercise influence over peers and colleagues of equal stature and rank, they do so in the context of a shared chain of command that ultimately leads to the head of the component, agency or department—where the buck stops. In most cases, the NSE leader enjoys no such luxury. Thus, while in theory, all such leaders and their organizations report to the President, there is no such practical reality, and without effective enterprise leadership, interagency impasses often fester, or worse, become muddled and mired in the search for the lowest common denominator consensus.

In today's NSE, inter-dependence (or inter-reliance) is the rule, rather than the exception. Senior officials or commanders in one or more of its constituent organizations will rarely have any sort of formal, chain of command authority over the entire network of extra-organizational components that are critical to the success of the enterprise; however, those senior officials may still be held personally accountable for that success. Today this is an all-too-common contradiction to the classic axiom that

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authority must match accountability. To be successful, the NSE leader requires certain boundary-spanning, net-centric competencies and characteristics that are fundamentally different from those implicitly intra-organizational competencies necessary to lead any one of the enterprise's organizational components.

To be sure, this unity of effort can be achieved on a transactional basis. Two or more organizations can achieve common ends simply by barter and exchange of information, resources, people, even promises (i.e. "if you do this for me, I will do this for you"). However, that transactional approach can be fragile and often results in a "whole" that is less than the sum of its parts. A NSE built on transactions may not be resilient enough for the challenges it must confront, and while some transactions are inevitable, a necessary precondition to enterprise, they are not likely to be resilient enough to weather the mission turbulence that is also inevitable. To be up to its wicked task, an enterprise must be built on a shared sense of mission, shared values and interests, shared experiences, and trust. And it takes a special kind of leader to be able to create and leverage those conditions across an enterprise.

This kind of challenge is largely immune to the hard power of chain of command authority. Instead, it requires collaborative, integrated, soft power leadership to mobilize and unify the complex network of co-producers who share any given mission space. This has significant implications for leadership development. While these competencies are now required (and expected) of senior NSE leaders, they are not specifically developed in them. This needs to change.

Developing NSE Leaders: A Brief History

While it may not use precisely these terms, certain parts of the NSE recognized the nascent need for this kind of integrated, boundary-spanning leadership, at least in the military domain. More than 30 years ago, a few visionaries realized (after some painful lessons on a small island named Grenada) that to effectively fight—and more importantly, win—modern wars, our armed forces needed to operate in a far more integrated way. In response, they made *jointness* part of our commissioned officer corps' genetic code, the result of the Goldwater–Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.[4]

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4 Goldwater–Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-433 (1986).

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And as a practical matter, that integration was codified by the more mechanical but no less effective mandate that a military officer must complete at least one joint duty assignment as a prerequisite to promotion to flag rank. That requirement forced the development of military leaders who, at least in theory, could focus on the entire domain of hard power combat arms. Many attribute the phenomenal success of the U.S. armed forces during and since Desert Shield/Desert Storm to its unifying effects. However, as farsighted as the NSE was in that regard, even it never anticipated—nor prepared its leaders for—the challenges of the Ebola plague, nation-building, or countering violent Islamic extremism.

Nevertheless, while the notion of jointness represented a great leap forward in leadership, the painful lessons that led to it had to be relearned by the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) on September 11, 2001. The tragic events that transpired are all too familiar, and they need not be recounted here; however, it is useful to consider the reasons for the apparent failure of the federal government's intelligence and law enforcement agencies to detect and prevent the attacks.

In that regard, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (also known as the 9/11 Commission) concluded that among other things, the IC lacked senior leaders who had the wherewithal to lead the entire U.S. Intelligence Community, and in so doing, know, understand, and most importantly, integrate all of the IC's collection, analytic, and kinetic capabilities to deal with the terrorist threat as it evolved. The more-or-less contemporaneous Presidential Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq (otherwise known as the WMD Commission), reached a similar conclusion concerning that particular intelligence failure: just as with 9/11, the IC lacked—and desperately needed—senior leaders who had an enterprise-wide perspective.

Those conclusions—as well as the lessons that precipitated Goldwater–Nichols—were not lost on the subsequent drafters of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), and they mandated a similar approach in the IC. Specifically, the IRTPA required that the newly created Director of National Intelligence (DNI) "seek to duplicate joint [military] officer management policies established by...the Goldwater–Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986." More specifically, it authorized the DNI to "prescribe mechanisms to facilitate the rotation of [civilian] personnel of the intelligence community through various elements of the intelligence community in the course of their careers" and to make such

interagency assignments "a condition of promotion to such positions within the intelligence community as the Director shall specify," all in an effort to mirror the military requirement established by Goldwater–Nichols.[5]

With those statutory mandates in-hand, the Office of the DNI (ODNI) established a civilian equivalent of the military's joint duty policy, requiring IC professionals to complete at least one extended interagency assignment as a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to senior executive rank—the civilian equivalent of a general officer in the military. [6] This requirement applied to each of the autonomous senior services that covered civilian leaders within the IC, including the "regular" Senior Executive Service (SES), as well as the DOD and FBI SES corp(s), and the CIA's Senior Intelligence Service.[7]

For those that completed such a civilian joint duty assignment (or JDA, as it came to be known) and became eligible to compete for such promotions, ODNI also identified and validated a set of competencies that were intended to describe the qualities of someone capable of "Leading the Intelligence Enterprise," which collectively served as the basis for rating and ranking candidates for such promotions.[8] Those requirements remain in effect to this day, and they have produced a senior leadership cadre in the IC that is close to 100 percent "joint" in nature.

However, the IC was not the only part of the Federal government to recognize this emerging leadership requirement. At about the same time, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England established a similar set of requirements for the estimated 1,300 senior civilian career executives within DOD. Because it lacked a legislative mandate comparable to the Goldwater–Nichols Act or the IC's Intelligence Reform Act, the Department chose not to establish interagency mobility (and the leadership competencies associated with it) as a mandatory prerequisite for entry into those senior executive ranks; however, DOD officials did make a mobility assignment after an individual's initial SES selection a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to

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5 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-458, 118 Stat. 3638 (2004).
6 In the interest of full disclosure, this author led that effort for the DNI. As noted, the IC has far more senior civilian positions than DOD does flag officers and career executives.
7 Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Intelligence Community Directive No. 660, Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program (2013), available at: *https://fas.org/irp/dni/icd/icd-660.pdf*.
8 Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Intelligence Community Directive No. 610, Competency Directories for the Intelligence Community Workforce (2010), available at: *https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICD/ICD_610.pdf*.

higher-than-entry-level SES rank. [9] Unfortunately, for various reasons, the strict enforcement of those requirements has been uneven, and the Department's civilian executive corps reflects that fact.

Other parts of the Federal government's NSE also saw the need for these enterprise leadership competencies during and immediately after Hurricane Katrina, when unconnected federal, state, and local relief efforts made a horrendous natural disaster even worse. However, there was a silver lining of sorts. The Homeland Security Council's after-action review of the disaster led to the issuance of Executive Order 13434, *National Security Professional Development* (NSPD)*,* by President George W. Bush, which established its namesake program.[10] Taking a page from similar efforts (and antecedents!) in DOD and the IC, the NSPD program was specifically designed to develop the very same enterprise leadership competencies across the agencies that made up the U.S. National Security establishment. In so doing, it sought to produce enterprise leaders who could successfully lead a whole-of-government/whole-of-nation response to the next Katrina.[11]

Unfortunately, that well-intentioned vision was never fully realized in the Bush Administration, and for years thereafter, the NSPD program atrophied from benign neglect. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management made a laudable but belated attempt to reinvigorate the program in July of 2016, issuing guidance that encouraged agencies to identify those senior civilian positions in the NSE that require interagency experience as a technical qualification requirement (although not necessarily a leadership one); and it urged the use of temporary and permanent career-broadening assignments, as well as existing inter-agency rotation programs like the one sponsored by the President's Management Council, to develop candidates who could meet that requirement. It also commended agencies to afford those candidates who had actually acquired such interagency leadership experience "strong preference" when making selections for those executive positions.[12] However,

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9 Goldwater–Nichols Act of 1986. See also Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. See also U.S. Department of Defense Directive No. 1400.25, Vol. 1403 (1996), DOD Civilian Personnel Management System.
10 Exec. Order No. 13434, National security professional development, May 17, 2007, available at: *https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/WCPD-2007-05-21/pdf/WCPD-2007-05-21-Pg650.pdf*.
11 Ibid.
12 National Security Professional Development (NSPD) Interagency Personnel Rotations Program Guidance [OPM letter, June 2016], available at: *https://www.chcoc.gov/content/national-security-professional-development-nspd-interagency-personnel-rotations-program-0*. In its most recent NSPD guidance, OPM recommends the PMC program and encourages agencies to give those who complete its

as is evident, this guidance was largely hortatory and its impact accordingly negligible.

Developing the "New" National Security Leader

The goal of Executive Order 13434—that is, the establishment of a professional development program for the entire NSE—remains as valid today as it was when it was first issued more than a decade ago, perhaps even more so. That Enterprise has an emergent but no less urgent need for a cadre of senior leaders, both military and civilian, who understand all of its complexities and interconnectedness, and more importantly, who have the competencies to be able to lead effectively across the entire national security mission space.

However, as important as that cadre may be to the effective operation of the NSE overall, the actual development and deployment of its individual leaders remains the internal—and largely unconnected—responsibility of its individual departments and agencies (and in the case of DOD, its individual components). For the most part, those individual agencies make the day-to-day decisions so crucial to leader development—who to develop, promote, reward, assign—and this means that the senior leaders they produce reflect their individual, agency-centric missions and cultures. The net result: senior leaders, even those in uniform, who find it increasingly difficult to deal with the sorts of whole-of-government and whole-of-nation challenges that they are asked to lead.

Moreover, those individual agency-level leadership development efforts have been uneven at best. For example, while the U.S. military sets the gold standard for uniformed leader development, particularly of the joint kind, its civilian leadership development efforts lag far behind. Yet even those efforts surpass most other civilian national security agencies, which under-invest in leadership development of even the most basic kind, especially when compared to DOD overall. And as one would expect, the situation is even worse at the enterprise level. Only the 17 elements of the IC—a relatively small fraction of the total NSE—operate under a common, interdepartmental leader development framework established by the DNI.

Thus, in my view, the NSE urgently needs to develop and execute an enterprise-wide executive-level talent management strategy that is designed

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required 6-month rotational assignment "strong preference" in SES positions that require a whole-of-government perspective.

to deliberately develop and deploy its senior military and civilian leaders across its entire potential mission space. And that strategy must include (1) some sort of multi-agency governance structure to devise it, and then to manage its day-to-day execution; (2) the identification and validation of the leadership competencies that are critical to leadership success at the enterprise level; (3) a curriculum of formal enterprise leadership education, perhaps including the NSE equivalent of the National Defense University; and lastly (4) policies and processes to require and manage mobility across the entire spectrum of the enterprise, as the most effective way to acquire and demonstrate those competencies.

Competencies as the DNA of Enterprise Leadership

These days, the science of leadership and leader development typically starts with competencies…the knowledges, skills, abilities, and attributes that taken together, make for an effective leader. In effect, those competencies represent the DNA of an organization's leadership, and to stretch the human genome analogy a bit, there are almost as many leadership competency models in the literature (and in practice) as there are combinations of chromosomes. That said, the competencies required of senior leaders in the NSE are emergent, and with some exception, they are not likely part of most traditional (that is, existing) leadership competency models, except perhaps by accident.

In that regard, we must acknowledge the inherent limitations of those traditional leadership competency models. The vast majority—especially those preached and practiced in our own NSE—implicitly assume that senior leaders enjoy authority commensurate with their accountability, clear unity of command, and the hard power of positional authority; indeed, even though those models may advocate a kinder, gentler application of that hard power, the superior-subordinate relationships that underlie it remain, albeit unspoken. Thus, when the leader speaks, gently or otherwise, his or her subordinates are expected to obey. However, while NSE leaders will regularly face challenges that are largely immune to the hard power of chain-of-command authority, the leadership competencies necessary to do so have yet to be identified for the NSE writ large.

The IC and DOD offer a good start in that regard, having done so for their respective senior civilians—and their respective parts of the larger enterprise. Their competency models suggest that among other things, NSE leaders must be able to (1) understand the institutional, organizational, and individual actors that comprise that mission space, to include their cultural mindsets

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and even their bureaucratic dialects; (2) conceptualize those actors as a single dynamic social system, with complex formal and informal interrelationships and inter-dependencies; (3) identify the patterns and networks of influence between and among those individual actors and organizations; and (4) build and leverage those networks to achieve the collective objectives of the enterprise.

But that is only a start. If the NSE is to begin to develop a cadre of senior officers, both military and civilian, capable of leading that enterprise, the first order of business should be to identify and validate (in the technical sense of the word) the competencies required to do so.[13]

Mobility to Develop and Demonstrate Enterprise Leadership Competencies

Assuming the NSE can identify and validate the competencies necessary to lead it, how does it—and its constituent organizations—go about developing leaders who can demonstrate them? Given the likely nature of these competencies, enterprise-wide mobility may be the single most effective way of doing so, but this prospect is far easier said than done.

The good news: mobility is something embedded in the career development paradigm (indeed, the very culture) of our armed forces, at least since the end of World War II. And as previously noted, the U.S. military's operational definition of that term was significantly broadened in 1986 by the requirement in the Goldwater–Nichols Act for one or more joint assignments as an essential part of an officer's career path. The not so good news? Those joint assignments are still largely confined to other military components in the DOD and do not begin to prepare the most senior military officers for the challenges associated with the even broader NSE.

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13 According to the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (at chapter 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, §1607), an organization must demonstrate an empirical relationship between the requirement for a particular competency and actual success on the job. Many of the leadership competencies proffered by existing models have not been validated in that technical sense of that word, in part because validation can be a difficult and time-consuming process; however, it is legally necessary if those competencies are to be used to make personnel decisions, like who gets selected or promoted to key leadership positions. Note that for the most part, the military is exempt from the Uniform Guidelines. Of course, that begs the "who is in charge question," but even without its answer, it may be possible the members of the NSE to come to some agreement on a set of essential leadership competencies.

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However, it is even more problematic on the civilian side of the enterprise. In theory, all of the various senior civilian services encompassed by that NSE (like the Senior Executive Service) assume mobility as a condition of promotion into executive ranks; however, what post–promotion mobility there is tends to be insular, that is, within the senior executive's "parent" department or agency. Thus, while Senior Foreign Service officers are globally mobile, their mobility is almost exclusively within the confines of the State Department. Similarly, while senior civilian executives within DOD's military departments have become more mobile of late, that mobility is almost exclusively within their home service.

More importantly for our purposes, unlike the military, civilian mobility requirements generally attend only after promotion to senior rank, rather than as a prerequisite thereto. In other words, it is generally not required as part of civilian leader development. There are some exceptions: for the most part, the military departments expect some degree of mobility as a precondition to a civilian's promotion to senior executive rank; however, it is not mandatory, and when it does occur, it is almost exclusively within the civilian's "home" service. Only in the IC is interagency mobility a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to senior rank, and it is specifically intended to ensure that senior promotion candidates are prepared to lead the entire IC, and not just a single agency.

Thus, it is clear that if the NSE wants senior military and civilian leaders with the competencies to lead it, it must do two things. First, for military officers, it must broaden the concept of joint duty—especially as a precursor to flag rank—to include assignments beyond the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff, to other departments and agencies, multi and international organizations like NATO and the UN, and even the private sector, via vehicles like the Secretary of Defense's Corporate Fellows Program. To be sure, many of those assignments occur today, and officers receive some joint service credit for completing them, but they are treated as "consolation prizes" for those not selected for a coveted tour of duty to a Combatant Command, the Joint Staff, or a senior service school.

For civilians, the answer is even more straightforward: Mobility should be a mandatory qualification requirement for senior rank, just like it is for civilian professionals in the IC. That is, before an NSE civilian is even considered for promotion to flag-equivalent rank. And like their military analogs, civilian mobility assignments should not be limited to their home agency. If the objective is to prepare civilians to share the burden of leading the NSE, their

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professional development must include assignments across that enterprise. This should sound familiar, as it is exactly what Executive Order 13434 had in mind when it established the now largely moribund NSPD program.

One can argue that pre–promotion (developmental) mobility need not be a necessary prerequisite for all senior national security civilians, especially at the entry executive level. After all, there will always be a need for highly specialized technical or functional civilian executives in the NSE, as well as those who are intimately familiar with a particular agency's mission. However, I would contend that even the NSE's more mundane internal challenges—administrative, technical, managerial, etc.—would benefit from leaders who have had these cross-cutting experiences.

Toward a Senior Leader Talent Management Strategy

It should be apparent by now that the 21st century national security environment demands senior NSE leaders who are able to see the big picture, take a whole-of-government point of view, employ certain enterprise leadership competencies to overcome agency-centric stovepipes, and have the resilience to achieve interagency, intergovernmental, and/or international unity of effort regardless of the challenge. And thoughtfully planned, increasingly responsible developmental mobility assignments, starting well before an individual becomes a senior officer or official, may be the most effective way to develop those competencies.[14]

All mobility assignments, developmental and otherwise, must be managed at the enterprise-level as part of an integrated talent management strategy, but today, no such corporate mechanism exists to do so. The problem is that as a practical matter, no one official actually leads the NSE, so developing and executing such a senior leader development strategy itself becomes an exercise in collaborative soft power, perhaps led by the President's National Security Advisor or a specially designated subset of the National Security Council's Principals Committee.

The spotty history of Executive Order 13434 is instructive in this regard. President Bush initially vested responsibility for implementing his Order with the Office of Personnel Management, but after several months of relative inaction—and the personal intervention of the Deputy Director for Management within the Office of Management and Budget—that

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responsibility was transferred to OMB. Thereafter, that same Deputy Director took it upon himself to bring a sense of urgency to the initiative (after all, who knew when the next Katrina would hit?) and significant progress was made during the last two years of the Bush Administration. As the Obama Administration took office, those involved in the program were optimistic that this momentum could be sustained, but despite some early hopeful signs— President Obama's newly-appointed National Security Advisor was among a group of current and former national security thought leaders who had endorsed the concept as part of a report on modernizing the Goldwater– Nichols Act—that optimism turned out to be short-lived, and implementation has remained stagnant for much of the past eight years.

So, when it comes to the development and execution of a senior officer talent management strategy for the NSE, "who will be in charge?" remains the most vexing question. However, when it comes to the strategy itself, successful examples exist. For example, DOD comes close, with senior military assignments (including joint ones) centrally managed by the individual services and the Joint Staff under broad Department-wide policy guidelines. As noted, DOD has also established similar policy guidelines for the development and deployment of its civilian executives, as well as a governing body—the Defense Executive Advisory Board (DEAB)—to manage them. Established by a DOD Directive and nominally chaired by the Deputy Secretary, the DEAB conducts regular executive talent reviews, recommending decisions about selection, development, and deployment across the agency; however, DOD tends to focus more on its top career civilians (tiers two and three of its three-tiered structure) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the "fourth estate" of defense agencies, leaving the military services to manage their own civilian executive cadres under the aegis of the Department's overarching policy directive. [15]

The IC takes a similar federated approach, with each of the six cabinet departments and two executive agencies (ODNI and CIA) retaining "ownership" over their respective senior civilian executives—together, they total more than all of DOD—and managing them accordingly. Moreover, the larger intelligence subcomponents of those departments—like the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the FBI—also have separate approaches to talent

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15 U.S. Department of Defense Directive No. 1400.25, Vol. 1403 (1996), DOD Civilian Personnel Management System.

management.[16] Thus, while the coordination of senior executive development and deployment does occur in this federated system, it is far less formal than DOD's military and civilian mechanisms.[17]

Most importantly, DOD and the IC have demonstrated that senior civilian leader development (to include developmental mobility assignments) can be managed across cabinet departments, military services, and executive agencies *without* asking the heads of those individual departments and agencies to give up legal "ownership" of their senior leaders. The IC's version of this federated model—in which its component departments voluntarily subscribe to common, multi-departmental leader development framework— offers a way ahead in that regard.[18] But to say that even this federated approach threatens all sorts of bureaucratic rice bowls (each agency tends to view its senior officers and executives for its "internal use only") is an understatement, and the resistance to such a notion will be considerable. Yet it must be overcome if the nation wants senior military and civilian leaders who are able to effectively lead the NSE.

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16 Federated Human Resource Management in the Federal Government: The Intelligence Community Model (Thompson, IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2010), available at: *http://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/federated-human-resource-management-federal-government-intelligence-community-model*.
17 It is interesting to note that DOD's civilian intelligence executives are not included in the DEAB's talent review.
18 Ibid.