

STAND UP AND FIGHT! THE CREATION OF U.S. SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS, 1942-2005

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Starting a new security organization is a difficult business. Hundreds of questions come in staccato bursts; each question requires a response, and each decision can quickly take on the permanence of tradition. Tradition becomes ingrained in culture, and the new organization, intentionally or not, becomes the sum of those early decisions. In this collection of essays, historians, most of them military officers, grapple with the challenges of creating new security organizations. Our aim is to help those few men and women who start new governmental bodies charged with protecting the American people to make sound and historically informed decisions by highlighting several common themes for consideration.

After looking at the formation of 13 security organizations, we found several common themes:

- **Organizational Rivalry:** Interservice or inter-agency rivalry played a role in the creation of almost every organization we studied. Service rivalry is a natural by-product of forming a new organization. Leaders should realize that while they can manage expectations and encourage productive dialogue, they cannot stop interservice rivalry.
- **Analogy Problems.** Leaders naturally look to the past (both their own and others) for examples of how to form their new organization. Unfortunately, the natural desire for analogies can cloud leaders' judgment and reduces their understanding of the complexities of the current situation. New security organizations today often look to Special Operations Command (SOCOM) as their model. SOCOM's unusual and robust funding stream and separate personnel

system make new organizations jealous, but its unique creation story is unlikely to be repeated.

- **Simulations.** Every new organization uses simulations. Simulations done well can create leverage for more funding and better structure. Poorly conceived simulations can set the stage for an organization's death.
- **Failure.** When the United States is attacked at home or abroad, the American government and people rarely hold individuals or single agencies accountable. Instead, Congress demands overarching organizational reform, creating new agencies and lines of communication. Security organizations should think about future reform and how it could help them achieve their mission.
- **Culture.** The early days of a new organization matter. Leadership sets the tone; after the first few years, changing organizational culture is difficult.
- **Working with Allies.** Organizations whose mission is to work with foreign governments often create an inclusive and positive organizational culture. All security organizations have an implicit mission to work with other countries, but those organizations with an explicit mission tend to have a more positive, inclusive, and even effective organizational culture.
- **Fear.** If a massive attack comes, the public will react with fear, and fear causes overreaction. New organizations must have clear ethical standards to resist a climate of fear and distrust.

“The Best Defense Is a Good Offense.”

New organizations fear that facing multiple threats may result in a loss of focus and initiative and demonstrate a significant bias against any sort of defensive posture. Security organizations fundamentally bristle at relying on defensive techniques, and understand offensive capability as a key deterrent force and sound strategic decision. Even so, this expanded offensive capability does not necessarily make the country safer. Any offensive strategy must balance competing priorities and adhere to the *National Security Strategy*.

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