

Statement for the Record
of
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Executive Director
National Security Professional Development Integration Office
Before the
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce,
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Introduction

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for calling this hearing today and focusing on the vital issue of strengthening our Nation's national security workforce.

The National Security Professional Development Program was established in 2007 by Presidential Executive Order 13434 to promote and enhance the professional development of national security professionals in 17 federal agencies. The program is designed to facilitate and integrate professional development education, training, and interagency experience opportunities for individuals who have national security responsibilities. Today, I will briefly describe the National Security Development Program, the progress made since the program was launched, as well as the challenges encountered.

Imperative for Reform

Let me begin by thanking the subcommittee for highlighting this important issue—of the need for an effective national security workforce.

As this subcommittee is well aware, the challenges that confront our Nation, and the global community, are increasingly complex, intensely acute, highly dynamic, difficult to discern and predict, and potentially devastating. Scientific and technological developments, modern media and business practices, globalized access and trade, tectonic demographic changes, and the increasingly important role that non-state actors, NGOs, multi-national organizations, and other constituencies play, create an environment that is significantly different from that of the

past, and often extremely difficult for today's national security workforce to successfully negotiate.

Our Nation must be able to rely upon a national security workforce with the knowledge, training, and interagency experience to see the big picture, connect the dots, coordinate effectively, and act decisively. We need to develop professionals who can operate across agency boundaries and understand how the combined efforts of multiple organizations are necessary to leverage all of the elements of national power and influence. That is precisely why the National Security Professional Development program was established, and I am pleased to say that the effort is already underway, although there is still much more to do.

National Security Professional Development Program

In recognition of the need to cultivate and groom a workforce of national security professionals with the ability to successfully contend with modern national security threats and events, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13434 on May 17, 2007, which stated that: *(I)t is the policy of the United States to promote the education, training, and experience of current and future professionals in national security positions (security professionals) in executive departments and agencies (agencies).*" A National Strategy expanding on the direction of the Executive Order and adopting a decentralized approach to implementing the program was approved by President Bush in July 2007.

National Security Professional Development Executive Steering Committee

The 2007 executive order established a National Security Professional Development Executive Steering Committee (ESC) comprised of the Secretaries or Directors (or their designees) of fifteen designated federal departments and agencies, plus any other officers

designated by the Chairman, to provide oversight of program implementation. Two additional federal departments were later added to the ESC.

The ESC reports to both the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council. While at the outset, Executive Order 13434 charged the Director of OPM with leading the establishment of a national security professional development program, for most of 2008 and through January 20, 2009, the ESC was led by Mr. Clay Johnson, Deputy Director for Management at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the previous Administration. An interim ESC chair has been identified within the Executive Office of the President as the new Administration determines its way ahead.

As an interagency body, the ESC is responsible for coordinating cross-agency integration and implementation of the program. In order to accomplish this, a program implementation plan was developed by the ESC and approved by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism in September 2008.

Departments and agencies have developed their own respective implementation plans. It is through these implementation plans and periodic progress reports that the ESC has provided oversight and monitored progress on implementation of the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) Program.

National Security Education and Training Consortium Board of Directors

A National Security Education and Training Consortium Board of Directors advises the ESC on education and training strategies and serves as the governing body that encourages the sharing of education and training courses, information, and approaches among consortium

members, and to address any gaps that may exist. The Board establishes the criteria and procedures for admitting and integrating new and existing public and private institutions.

Chief Human Capital Officer Council

The Chief Human Capital Officer Council serves an important role in the National Security Professional Development program. As the federal government's advisory and coordination body for federal departments and agencies on cross-cutting human capital matters, the Chief Human Capital Officer Council ensures that the integration of education, training, and professional experience opportunities provided to national security professionals across the Federal Government are in compliance with existing policy and law.

National Security Professional Development Integration Office

The National Security Professional Development Integration Office was established to provide support to the ESC, coordinating the implementation and monitoring the progress of the NSPD program. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) serves as the executive agent for the office, providing funds necessary to support office operations; however, it does not oversee, manage, or set policies for the NSPD program. Other than the office support funding that the Defense Department provides, the implementation office does not have its own program budget.

National Security Professional Development Program Accomplishments

During the first year of program implementation, significant progress has been made that sets a good foundation upon which the program can continue to build. In addition to the departments and agencies developing and executing their program implementation plans, there are many other important steps that have been taken. Let me name but a few:

Identification of the National Security Professional Workforce. The ESC led an effort by the 17 departments and agencies resulting in the identification of approximately 14,000 Senior Executive Service (SES) and GS 13 through 15 level positions as national security professional positions. Approximately 1,200 of these positions are SES positions. These numbers do not include those identified by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which are classified. The criteria for identifying and designating a position as a national security professional position is set at the department and agency level, and agencies may continually refine their internal criteria and lists as needed. These employees (the nearly 14,000 National Security Professionals or “NSPs”) are our primary target audience, and the objective of the program is to ensure that they are properly educated, trained, and experienced to successfully conduct national security interagency activities and operations.

National Security Professional Development Web Portal. A website/portal is used to inform NSPs, and others, to learn about the program, view special notices, and gain access to on-line courses and other relevant resources. Efforts are underway to further expand the capabilities of this portal to enhance its utility, including facilitating professional networking and information sharing. A web content management working group was formed and meets regularly to evaluate and continually improve website offerings and capability. The Intelligence Community’s “A Space” system provides a possible model for developing cross-organizational professional networking and information sharing systems which could be used to support NSPs.

Regulations for Senior Executive National Security Professionals. In order to establish interagency experience as a major priority for national security professional development, the

ESC worked closely with the Director of OPM to have OPM guidelines promulgated for departments and agencies to develop regulations making interagency experience a requirement for selection as a Senior Executive in a national security professional position. OPM staff provided technical assistance at two roundtable forums in order that departments and agencies could more easily draft the implementation regulations.

National Security Professional Orientation. Last year, departments and agencies conducted orientation conferences to begin familiarizing NSPs with critical aspects of the new NSPD program. All NSPs were required to take an on-line training and orientation course (“National Security Objectives, Structures, and Procedures: An Introduction”). Those SES NSPs who have National Response Framework (NRF) responsibilities were also required to take the on-line Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) NRF training course. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and our office also co-hosted a series of “Interagency Cooperation and Collaboration Lessons Learned/Best Practices” seminars for NSPs. Additionally, departments and agencies have conducted numerous “town hall” orientation training conferences to ensure that their NSPs have a good understanding of their responsibilities.

Senior Executive National Security Education Resources. Working with participating departments, agencies, and other organizations, a limited number of class seats for highly-coveted senior education courses are announced and offered to NSPs on a periodic basis. Examples include the U.S. Army Senior Executive Education course and DHS’s “DHS 101 course.” DHS has also established a three-level certification program for its NSPs, providing a template for other agencies to consider within the framework of their own national security professional development program.

Additionally, several departments and agencies have already moved ahead with initiatives that support the advancement of interagency national security professional development:

Senior Executive Interagency Management. Two examples of management policies that support interagency experience are DoD's policy for "Career Lifecycle Management of the Senior Executive Service Leaders Within the Department of Defense" (October 2007) and the Intelligence Community's "Human Capital, Joint Intelligence Community Duty Assignments, Intelligence Community Directive Number 601" (May 2006) and "Intelligence Community Policy Guidance 601.01" (June 2007).

National Security Professional Seminar Programs. The U.S. Department of State's (DOS) Foreign Service Institute sponsors the "National Security Executive Leadership Seminar" program as part of its NSPD offerings, and participants are invited from numerous federal departments and agencies. Additionally, DOS hosts roundtable sessions called "State Department's Role in National Response Framework" for NSPs from various agencies, providing opportunities for interagency professionals to hear from knowledgeable experts and leaders, as well as valuable networking across numerous disciplines and communities of interest. Other department and agency programs for senior leaders, such as DoD's "Defense Senior Leader Development Program Seminar" and the Intelligence Community's "Joint Leadership Development Program" which is under development, will also provide NSPs opportunities for broadening their understanding of national security matters.

Challenges

As with any new federal program, the first year of implementation met several challenges that are worth noting, as they may offer insight in how best to proceed in the months and years ahead. Let me also say that, as this subcommittee is well aware, interagency programs in general can pose significant implementation challenges due to the multitude of jurisdictional and organizational issues that need to be negotiated at program start and throughout a program's implementation.

Implementing a comprehensive cross-agency approach to professional development is a very challenging concept that cuts across the grain of current practices. In that sense, this program is transformational in nature; and transformational changes require effective leadership, and successful leadership requires a compelling, shared vision if significant stakeholder buy-in is to be attained.

To its credit, the previous Administration took the initiative to heed the call of experts and practitioners by initiating this important program. However, perhaps because of timing—e.g. establishing the program close to the end of the second term of an administration—efforts to build buy-in and consensus on implementation may not have been sufficient to fully extend the program's first year potential.

The Future of National Security Professional Development

Although challenging for all of the reasons stated earlier, I remain optimistic about the future of this program and our government's ability to lead the national effort to build the national workforce necessary to protect our Nation in the 21st century. Our ESC members are interested in supporting the important task of building capacity for successful interagency planning, coordination, and execution.

I understand that the current Administration is in strong agreement with the overall intent for the program and is developing a way ahead to build on past successes while charting new directions where necessary. Once the Administration determines its way ahead, I look forward to providing an additional update.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Voinovich, and Members of the Subcommittee, I thank you again for this opportunity to testify before the subcommittee. I look forward to working with you in a collaborative fashion to help build upon and improve this critical program for advancing the vital interests of our Nation.