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SESSION 3: MANAGING DIPLOMACY

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Condoleezza Rice, 2005-2007

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WILLIAM INBODEN: Okay, we'll get this next panel underway. I think many of you know by now my name is Will Inboden; I'm the executive director of the Clements Center for National Security, one of your co-hosts for today. I'm also a professor here at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. And I wanted to repeat the thanks to our event sponsors, especially the Moody Foundation, who is not just helping to sponsor this event but a whole series of these. It's a wonderful service to our country and to scholarship.

The title of our panel here is "Managing Diplomacy — Shaping a New State Department and Coordinating with a New President and White House Team." And all of us know, of course, that the president is commander-in-chief and in that role commands the armed forces, but what's often less appreciated is the President is also the diplomat-in-chief, and yet, in order to carry out his or her responsibilities as diplomat-in-chief, every President needs a very capable State Department team.

And again, as most of you will know, just as a new president will inherit a very capable military of our career military officers, a very capable intelligence community of career intelligence professionals as we just heard on the last panel, every president also inherits a very capable State Department of career Foreign Service officers and career civil servants. And yet, the President also has an opportunity to appoint political appointees to a number of the senior positions in the State Department.

And so what we're going to be doing with this panel is exploring the dynamics of, as a new president and team take office, how do they shape their State Department on matters of policy and personnel. And if one were to put together the ideal panel for this, it would be with these three gentlemen right up here. You can read their more fulsome bios in your conference packets, but let me just highlight that these three fellows really represent the entire range of experiences and backgrounds one can have within the State Department: the career Foreign Service and political appointments, service at Main State as well as service out at embassies, service within regional bureaus as well as the functional and strategy bureaus, and doing this across multiple administrations, Republican and Democratic.

So on the far end here we have Ambassador John Negroponte, who has held just about every post you can except for Secretary of State, and maybe that one will come someday, including ambassador to the United Nations, ambassador to many strategic countries, line officer in different bureaus, and of course, most recently, deputy secretary of state during the second Bush term.

Next to him is Professor Philip Zelikow from the University of Virginia, whose most recent State Department service was as counselor during the second Bush term to Secretary Condi Rice, where he really was part of her inner circle and her brain trust, and one of the two or three most influential people at the department.

And then, of course, right next to me, a guy who's known around here as Dean Jim Steinberg from his service as dean of the LBJ School. But when he wasn't doing that he was running the State Department as deputy secretary of state

under Secretary Clinton and in President Obama's first term, and had previously served as the director of policy planning, among other roles.

And then finally, as all of our certainly conference speakers know and as Director Clapper gave a plug, among other things, Jim also wrote the book on presidential transitions, and so he's got a scholar hat on, too.

We're going to have each of our panelists give some opening reflections, then I'll put some questions to them, and we'll turn it over to you. So Jim, why don't we start with you?

MR. JAMES STEINBERG: Thanks. As always, it's great to be back here. I've spent a lot of time in this room, and it's been a great venue for great conversations over the years. I want to start by just trying to link the focus of these two days, which is on transitions, to the question that we're mostly going to focus on, which is what should the role of the State Department be and how does that interact with the rest of the foreign policy and national security process, by just saying something that's fairly obvious but actually doesn't get as much attention as one might think, which is that there are a lot of different things that can and do take place in transitions, but in the book Kurt and I argue one of the most important things that does happen is decisions have to be made about how the apparatus of government is going to operate, how the interagency process is going to operate, how each of the individual agencies are going to operate, because new cabinet members will be coming in forming their teams and forming their process; and that these decisions are enormously consequential, and once taken in the early going, are hard to change. It's not that processes don't change, and they do evolve over time in the administration, but kind of what gets decided at the outset becomes the default and there's a lot of inertia.

And yet there -- over history, there's not been a huge amount of time focused on this question. As Steve Hadley said earlier, a model was put in place with its roots in Nixon and Kissinger, but certainly kind of had become established by the first President Bush, and for the last 20-plus years it's more or less just been adopted wholesale and there hasn't been a lot of discussion, debate. And frankly, although a few of us who make this our livelihood are totally preoccupied with these process issues and believe they're consequential, you can imagine for a president-elect and some of the key people around them, they've got a lot of other things they want to think about and worry about, and if you come in and say, "The first thing you have to do, Mr. President-elect or Madam President-elect, is to think about how the interagency process is going to work," you won't spend a huge amount of time in the room. Nonetheless, it is consequential and I think Steve mentioned some of the reasons why earlier this morning.

I'm going to focus on one of the great perennial questions, which is the role of the State Department and its relationship to the White House and the broader interagency process. This is one of the great perennial arguments. Any student of the history of American foreign policy and policymaking knows that forever there has been a debate about just what kind of role the secretary of state, the State Department should play, how important it should be, what the relationship is to the

president and the decision-making. And most of that debate has been a long lament about the lack of power and influence of the State Department compared to the White House. This is one of the most perennial complaints and goes back to the early days of the republic.

Part of it, of course, is based on an assumption and a conviction that the State Department should be the dominant force in the foreign policy process. As one of our greatest secretary of states, Secretary Hague, once said that he should be the vicar of foreign policy, right, and that --

MR. INBODEN: I wonder how that turned out.

MR. STEINBERG: -- and all -- and you know how it turned out. And virtually every secretary of state has believed that they have not had the role and influence that they should, with the sole exception of Henry Kissinger when he was both secretary of state and national security advisor. So he had no one to complain to as secretary of state if he felt as secretary of state that he was being upstaged by the national security advisor.

To illustrate the perennialness of this problem, we need -- only here in the LBJ Library -- to have a reminder of the great debate in the Johnson administration, which was several years into the administration, as Johnson was beginning to really have to think about the consequences of everything that happened, not just in Vietnam but more broadly in American foreign policy.

There was a study done, and the State Department made the assertion that part of the reason everything had gone badly was because the State Department had not played a prominent enough role in the decision-making and that the small group that had sort of evolved out of the Kennedy decision-making process had owned the process and not brought in the expertise from the State Department and the perspective about Southeast Asia and all these other things.

And so the President, who was looking for something to blame and ready to solve it, commissioned an interagency study and a proposal came up which became known as NSAM 341. So if you all want to run to the boxes here, you can see it in the library. And it was originally designed by Nick Katzenbach, which was the goal was to restore the centrality of the State Department to the interagency process by giving -- not only giving the secretary the official designation as the principal developed and implementer of foreign policy, but specifically to identify the assistant secretaries at the State Department as the core organizers of the interagency process and that they were really going to have responsibilities.

This was going to move back away from the White House, back to the State Department where it belonged, and that what we call the sixth floor of the State Department was going to be given the lead here. And it was duly signed by the president and propagated across the interagency: here's what the president wants -- he wants the State Department to take the lead and for the White House to play a lesser role.

Six months later -- you can go to the boxes and you can see there's a memo in which the national security advisor was asked, well, what's happening with the NSAM 341 implementation? And the national security advisor said, oh, those

State Department people, they never know how to implement anything; they haven't even implemented their own directive to take charge of everything. Now, of course, this was coming from the White House and not from the State Department, but as all students of this period will know, this was an abject failure -- that whether the diagnosis was right, the attempt to shift the role back to the State Department and for it to have a lead failed.

Now, there are many reasons and that's not the purpose of this conversation, but simply to highlight the fact that this has been sort of an ongoing debate about whether the State Department should play a special role as the first among equals among the agencies involved in the national security and foreign policy process, and how that would work.

And you heard from Steve this morning some of the arguments as to why the agencies generally should play a larger role and the White House should play a more circumscribed role in foreign policy, but the fundamental question is does it make sense for the State Department to play the principal role in organizing this. And the principal objections have always been that, well, our issues today are complex, cross-cutting, they involve lots of different agencies; only the White House can convene and provide the authority to make that happen because the White House represents the president, and even Steve today said you can only count on the White House staff to be the ones to promote the president's initiatives because -- so my contrary view, and I've, as you said, served in both the White House and State Department, is that, in principle, there is no reason why the State Department can't also be the president's men and women. That is to say, if we focus on appointing people to key State Department positions and not just the secretary and deputy secretary, but assistant secretaries who have the faith and trust of the president, then there's no reason to say that the president's initiatives, the organization of the interagency process couldn't reside elsewhere.

And in practice, we have had some positive examples of that, although they are isolated. So during my time in the Clinton administration, one of the big efforts was to try to think about how to do a better job of dealing and interacting with Colombia to deal with the problems of crime and drugs and political destabilization in Colombia, and a lot of work was done, a lot of work was done with Congress, and a strategy -- so-called Plan Colombia -- was developed.

But unlike everything else that had happened up to that point in the Clinton administration, the responsibility for organizing the implementation and the carrying out was not organized around an interagency working group chaired by the White House, but was rather given to Under Secretary Tom Pickering, another very distinguished career Foreign Service officer who actually, from the day -- once the plan was signed off on, Tom chaired the meetings, carried out the diplomacy, brought together all the agencies involved, which involved a lot of agencies including the military, which was completely -- was very heavily involved in the execution of Plan Colombia, the DEA, the Justice Department, the full range -- the Commerce Department -- of agencies.

And because he had the imprimatur of the president, because of his

own personal skills and stature, I think everybody felt this was actually -- as these things go in policy, you had both a plan and an execution, and that there was a tight linkage between the two, and we can judge over time, but I think the judgment of history will be on this, which was obviously carried out further in the Bush administration, this was a record of success which is now leading to peace and greater stability in Colombia.

There are other examples. The role that Ambassador Holbrooke played when he was assistant secretary for Europe in shepherding the Balkans policy. Basically, he was the point person. He -- the meetings were held in the State Department for the interagency process and it was broadly accepted. Earlier in the Clinton administration, on Russia policy, where then-Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott had the lead with Nick Burns at the White House as the senior director, but clearly supporting Strobe, who brought together economic agencies, defense agencies, and the like.

So I think there is a case to be made for saying that there is a lot of capacity out there in the State Department to play a larger role and that the process would benefit from bringing that capacity to bear. But as Steve correctly said, in order to do that, I mean, you do have to change the culture a bit at the department. Because the problem is that over time, as the power has shifted to the White House, the sense that what you want are people with a lot of initiative and leadership skills has drained out of the department. Foreign Service officers have learned to adapt -- not that they're not capable of doing it, but they've sort of -- they've developed a sense of their role which is to focus on just the diplomatic part, to participate in the interagency, but not to kind of be the organizer, convener.

And it makes a lot of sense because in the field, again, as we've heard earlier, I mean, we do have the sense that the ambassador as the kind of convener of the country team is the person who leads the process, and that could be mirrored and actually make the linkage between what happens in Washington and happens in the field.

So the bottom line of this for me is that we're not going to ever radically change the process. There are too many elements of inertia. It's hard to get people to take process that seriously. But I think at least as a concept, to begin to think about elevating that role and to seeing the advantages not just to having the agencies feel empowered, but actually to make the White House work better, that this overall approach is something that ought to be taken very seriously as the new administration takes office.

MR. INBODEN: Great. Plenty that we're going to come back to in Q&A. So, all right, Philip.

MR. PHILIP ZELIKOW: I'd like to start with just a little anecdote to illustrate the value of the State Department and the Foreign Service. This is a value to which everyone pays lip service but is scarcely understood. This is a good building for this anecdote.

The longest day in the history of the White House, I think since the founding, was probably Saturday, October 27th, 1962. This is at the end of the

second week of the Cuban missile crisis. This is that really bad day. This is the day in which the Soviets began shooting down American aircraft over Cuba; the Cubans were also firing that day. Plans for invasion were being spun up in ignorance of the tactical nuclear weapons the Soviets had deployed, et cetera, et cetera. The tension was extreme. The danger of nuclear war was significant.

All day long, there had been meetings in the White House, meetings which I later helped transcribe for a book I co-wrote called "The Kennedy Tapes." And in those meetings -- by the way, and Lyndon Johnson was in all of those meetings and spoke out quite lucidly whenever President Kennedy would leave the room.

They had been debating a lot of things, because one of the latest developments had been Khrushchev had appeared to have taken back an idea he had appeared to suggest the day before for settling the crisis, and said that now the crisis needed to be settled with some kind of deal involving longstanding American missiles in Turkey. And this kind of threw a complete monkey wrench into all of the diplomacy for how to settle the crisis, which was heading towards a military confrontation very soon. All right, just to set the scene.

They're debating about what to do about this all day long. During the day, a cable comes in from a career Foreign Service officer who was our ambassador in Ankara, in Turkey, an officer named Raymond Hare. Ray Hare sends in a cable, Ankara 687, and it dribbles in during the afternoon while they're in these meetings. Because the Turkish issue had just blown up that morning. All the people are at the White House. Late in the day, two men read this cable from Hare: Dean Rusk, the secretary of state, and Mac Bundy, the national security advisor. In the early evening, when they're really kind of at their edge, in this meeting, Rusk raises, "You know, we have this wire in from Hare." He actually -- Hare, in this cable, had said, okay, here's what Khrushchev is trying to do. You have three options: one, two, three. Here are the pros and cons of each option. By the way, a negotiated -- the Turks won't accept any part in this," which he totally understood and explained. He said, "A negotiated trade isn't going to work," for reasons he quickly explained. He says, "The only possibility here is something where you just give them a face-saving sop in which they get their stuff out but then you tell them that in due course, we'll take the missiles out of Turkey," which we intended to do anyway, and offer the Turks the coverage of Polaris missiles from our submarines in the Mediterranean instead.

But the tricky part of this, he explained, is that you have to make it clear to the -- the Soviets have to be willing to keep this secret. He kind of outlined all these options. Rusk raises this in the early evening of October 27th, attributing it to Hare, in the discussion. The meeting coalesces around Hare's suggestion. An hour later, Bobby Kennedy went to see Dobrynin, and in that meeting, Bobby Kennedy executed exactly the recommendation that Raymond Hare had cabled in from Ankara that day, which turned out to be helpful.

MR. INBODEN: We're still here.

MR. ZELIKOW: Right. Now, by the way, as probably all of you have seen or heard some or other account of the missile crisis, I'll wager that probably

almost none of you and probably none of you have ever heard of Raymond Hare or ever heard that a career Foreign Service officer had provided the policy analysis, breaking down the options, literally during the day, moving on the spot from Ankara, that was read instantly in the White House and translated into what Bobby said to Dobrynin that night. Bobby doesn't mention Raymond Hare in his memoir of this.

But as I reflect back on this episode, I will just tell you I don't think that episode could occur today. If you had a similar scenario, similar crisis, and even if someone as good as Raymond Hare like Jim Jeffrey was back in his job in Ankara, I can't really work through the scenario in which maybe someone like Jim actually writes a message of that quality, if we're lucky -- and it is Jim; he might -- but in general, I'm not sure you get the -- I just don't see that process happening the same way today.

And the reasons actually have to do with the way the system works, but they also have to do with the way the State Department has evolved, which Jim touched on.

So with that introduction, just to remind you of the vitality of the State Department and the Foreign Service, I want to make three points. First, the structures are quite deeply broken and require urgent attention. Second, Congress is key. And third, you have to think about these processes as teams of teams.

First point, the system is actually broken. Here, I want to strongly reinforce, as much as I can, what Steve Hadley told you this morning and what Steve mentioned last night, which is the actual basic structures for policymaking and policy development and implementation are not working. So what happens is we spend 95 percent of our time, like we did yesterday, discussing where we're going to drive the car. We're going to drive it to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. No, no, let's drive it to the Appalachians. We're having lots of discussions about where we're going to go. The car is actually sitting in the front yard up on bricks. And we can have lots of discussions and draw our maps about where we're going to go, but you know what? Someone's going to have to fix the car.

Jim and I were at a meeting last month where the subject of the State Department came up, and for this meeting I played a little parlor game. I actually drafted a White House press release in which the White House was duly announcing that it had decided to abolish the Department of State, and I actually drafted what the release might look like and what the rationale would be. But it's a useful little thought exercise: What if we got rid of the Department of State?

Now, you laugh, but then you think, what is it the Department of State is supposed to do? Well, it's supposed to do mainly three things. It's supposed to help tell us about what the foreigners are doing; it's supposed to interpret the foreigners back to us. Second, it's supposed to then figure out what to do with the foreigners -- that's called policy. And third, it's supposed to help run the programs that help influence the foreigners and do good things.

So on the first, interpreting the foreigners, you've just heard now hours from people explaining to you who's actually interpreting the foreigners for the president, and they were all intelligence community officials, and they were describing

how this has evolved. Like, six years after they create the CIA, they're already doing daily briefings for the president.

You'll notice none of them mention the Foreign Service. By the way, the CIA analysts who are writing this up, they're not living in these foreign countries. Okay? Now, I believe if we sat -- if I sat -- they actually occasionally do read Foreign Service cables. But I think actually if I sat down with those three gentlemen, all of whom I know, and we sat down and worked through the strengths and weaknesses of who knows what about foreigners and what do you guys add versus what the State Department people add, I actually think we could come fairly rapidly to a common understanding as to exactly who has what comparative advantages in this process, and then devise some system that leveraged that.

They have some independence, but it also helps if you understand the policy context for all the information you're providing; it really actually helps when you're developing information to know what it is you're trying to go. And then you have to weigh and balance all of this.

I'm just saying that the way the system works now and the assumptions people have in their heads, the State Department has increasingly become peripheral, which is, by the way, hugely ahistorical against the tradition of American history. This is a very recent development and it did not grow because anyone made a conscious decision to shut out the State Department in the basic interpretation of what foreigners are doing every single morning for the president and for every top cabinet official. No one made a conscious decision to organize it this way in a bureaucratic ploy, I don't think. But this is the way it's evolved.

So do we really need the State Department to interpret the foreigners anymore since we have an intelligence community on whom we spend twice as much money as we do on the Department of State?

Second, what to do with the foreigners? Well, the White House mostly does the foreign policymaking, right? So -- and we've been given a number of illustrations of this point. Yes, the State Department are useful factotums in helping to deliver the mail, but the actual composition of the messages, that's mostly being done in the White House. So the State Department is increasingly this anachronistic appendage that creates inefficiency in the process.

And third, the actual programs to help deliver the stuff that the foreigners want that seems constructive -- well, except that the programs the foreigners are most interested in mainly come from the Department of Defense, from the Central Intelligence Agency, and from the U.S. Agency for International Development, none of which are in the State Department.

So I kind of did this little proposal, and Jim and I were talking about it. Jim kind of (inaudible), well, if you don't do something about this, you're kind of leaving the State Department in the role of being the American government's concierge. In various hostels all over the world. And then you can think about maybe the General Services Administration should just run the hostel system instead of having a Department of State.

Now, this may sound a bit provocative. It's meant to be provocative.

It's meant to actually get you to think, why is it we want a Department of State? Because, if you really do want a Department of State and want -- because I actually think the situation I've just described is the logic of where we're drifting and is actually working very poorly, as Steve Hadley observed, and Hadley has no State Department parochial interest to defend.

So if you don't want a system that works -- if you want to get the car off the bricks, you actually have to rethink the role of the State Department in all three of these areas, and you have to -- and by the way, that means you actually have to do long-term changes in the culture and training in the State Department, which has become increasingly habituated to being treated like a factotum and has culturally responded accordingly in all the ways -- in all the pathological ways you would predict.

So that's point one: car's up on the bricks.

Point two is Congress. You cannot do structural reform in the United States government without the Congress, period. You cannot do it. The Congress actually, and congressional staff, though much belittled, actually tends to actually have more long-term institutional memory about our major government institutions than most people do in the executive branch. So they are an indispensable partner from a constitutional point of view. They have indispensable knowledge in many cases, which should not be belittled. But they are -- you can't do structural reform without the Congress.

People -- it's easy to make fun of the Congress and there are some very serious problems in the way the Congress now works with the executive, which Steve Hadley and others have commented on, and all that is true. You've got to try again and keep trying because otherwise it's impossible to get the car off the bricks.

Let me just give you an illustration of how this is possible. The most difficult and poisonous issue in the late years of the Reagan administration, bar none, was Central America. It actually caused the crisis that came closest to bringing down the Reagan administration, which was Iran-Contra in 1986 and '87, which some of the older folks here actually remember.

Man, this was a toxic issue. Now, no one noticed that Bush 41 takes office in 1989 and somehow, like, the Central America issue just disappeared. Poof. Just disappeared. Hardly anyone ever talked about it anymore. Like, whoa, what happened?

Well, it didn't disappear by accident. It disappeared because Jim Baker and his team made a conscious decision in the transition that they were going to work with the Congress to defuse this issue. They were going to take -- appoint a centrist Democrat to run Latin American affairs in the State Department, whose name is Bernie Aronson. They were going to cut a deal with the Congress on how they were going to handle Central America on a variety of issues the Congress cared about. Because, see, they just wanted to make that issue go away because they actually wanted to spend time on things like ending the Cold War, which they oddly thought was more important than what was going on in El Salvador and Honduras, and turned out to be pretty important.

That's a success story of working with Congress -- by the way, on an issue that was incredibly poisonous and toxic between the two parties -- because you tried and it worked, and it's a constellation of personalities. But I just want to -- there is a tendency in conferences like this: president, president, president. And it magnifies what is frankly, I'm sorry to say, a really damaging tendency among the American public, which is to magnify the personal role of the president until the president is some sort of anthropomorphic Disney creation that's, like, 80 feet high and stalks the Earth like a colossus, surrounded by these Lilliputians. But in fact, of course, that's not the way the government really works, in fact.

And you actually have to think about transitions not just for the president but for the agencies and for the Congress. Congress will be going through a transition, too.

Which leads me to my third point. As you think about preparing for these transitions, it's important to think about the transitions of teams. And again, here I'm pushing back a little bit against the drift towards presidential, presidential, presidential, and this almost loving focus on these great human beings whom we sanctify and who have their apotheosis on January 20th. And they're really important; I'm not taking -- I don't have to -- they don't need my help in underscoring that they're important. But there's this expression where it was fashionable a few years ago to talk about team of rivals. Forget whether they're rivals -- it's a team. And when you look at the teams, they're actually teams of teams.

So for the transition at State, it turns out my first strong experience with this was in 1988. I was then a career Foreign Service officer. I was working on something called the secretariat staff for the then-Secretary of State George Shultz, or we FSOs colloquially refer to it as the line. I was a relatively junior Foreign Service officer. I was one of two who were detailed to basically take care of the incoming State transition team led by -- that was going to be led by Jim Baker. The other young officer who did this with me, my colleague on the line, was a fellow named Nick Burns, who later became infamous, and a few people here know him.

So Nick and I -- actually, Nick's job was to go downstairs and work with the Baker people, and my job was to stay up on the seventh floor and get Nick what he needed from the building, and between us we kind of did that. The observation I want to make is not about Baker's personal qualities, which are very significant but very interesting, as Baker is probably one of the most successful and effective secretaries of state in all of American history. But if you looked at Baker's background, it's not like Baker was this fantastic geopolitical thinker, and Baker would not tell you that he was.

What Baker did is compose a team in which the combined talents brought together everything you needed. And by the way, that team was present in being from, like, the first week that his people arrived in the ground floor of the State Department. This is Baker, Zelik (ph), Ross, Tutwiler, Mullens (ph), Kimmitt. There is the whole core of the team was already assembled, with already the mix of qualities that would carry them through his entire tenure. He'd been -- so it's not about Baker; it's about Baker assembled a team. It's the same way we would think

about a sports team. This is, you can have a great second baseman, but you have to assemble a team and the quality of the team really matters.

So then we have to think about the transition process is a process of organizing and preparing teams of teams, and I think if we do that, it actually begins to change the way you think about the way the transition works. It also calls out to you, by the way, one of the dangers, which is the way the intelligence committee hyper-focuses on the single personality of the president, not at the exclusive expense of everything else, but an overwhelming predominant focus on that as their key customer, which has earned them certain bureaucratic rewards over the passage of the generations.

But it's just a really important factor to keep in mind in thinking about transition, and I'm just trying to push against, frankly, the overwhelming drifting tendency of American popular culture in thinking about these problems.

So the three points I just wanted to stress is: car is up on the bricks, folks; and second, the significance of Congress; and third, the significance of thinking about transitions in the context of teams.

MR. INBODEN: Ambassador Negroponte.

MR. JOHN NEGROPONTE: Provocative, yes, as somebody who's spent 42 years working in the State Department, but perhaps also a little bit unfair. I think, first of all, no matter what gets done to the State Department, I think it's going to play an important role in representing us abroad. We've got 300 consular and diplomatic facilities around the world. And for a lot of places in the world where the interagency or the national security advisor or the president or secretary of state don't have time to focus on the details of what's happening in that country, the State Department sort of is the policy of the United States towards that country.

Secondly, to a point you made, Phil, about those four intelligence officers -- and I, of course, was director of national intelligence and have the highest regard for all these people -- but I know from having spent hours and hours and hours talking to analysts that one of the real baselines of -- for their reporting is our diplomatic reporting from the field. It is used all the time. And I also know that when they don't have assets in particular countries and the president or the secretary or whoever else starts asking questions, what do they feed up to us? A thinly disguised version of the latest diplomatic reports.

So I think you were a bit unfair. But I do agree with you that there has been, if you will, somewhat of an erosion of the Department of State's role in the last couple of presidential rounds. I think some of it has been made self-fulfilling by this desire of the political party that wins to populate so much of the State Department with its employees. When I first joined the State Department, you didn't have political and non-career appointees going down to the third, fourth and fifth levels of that building. Today, you do.

And so I think what you're going to -- if you're not careful, political appointees are going to make the failure or the inadequacy of the career people, who we spend a lot of money to train and cultivate and recruit, sort of a self-fulfilling prophecy. I can't imagine us doing that in certain other key national security branches

of government.

So one of the things that I would recommend we think about as we go forward and contemplate a quote/unquote "new State Department" -- well, we'll have a new secretary of state and there'll be lots of changes -- but I think they've got to look at two aspects of the department's organization.

One is the proliferation of bureaus and high-level offices that has taken place over the last 20 or 25 years, so that when you go to the secretary of state's staff meeting at 8:30 in the morning these days, there's 50 or 60 people in the room, all either senatorially confirmed positions -- assistant secretary level or above -- in that room. And I think there's a real crying need for greater simplification. The fact that we had one under secretary of state when I walked into that State Department building on October 5th of 1960 and got my commission signed by President Eisenhower, and that we had very, very few assistant secretaries relative to what we have now, and what's happened has been a process of the Congress -- and it's the Congress's play to role [sic] in this -- dictating that we create bureaus that somehow mirror constituent and domestic interests of various kinds, some of which make sense, but some of which do not.

And I think that it's probably not going to happen for the same reason that you or Jim were saying that the president's not going to make the first priority that he or she has the organization of the interagency system. Well, it's the same for a secretary of state. If you go to the secretary -- the new secretary of state and say, "Mr. Secretary, you really got to worry about whether you're going to reduce the number of bureaus in this building from whatever it is, 30, to 10 or 15," they're going -- the answer is going to be, "I don't have the time to think about that." And besides, Syria is burning and we've got a lot of problems to deal with.

But I do think the time has come for some kind of commission to study the organization of the State Department, and maybe that would be a satisfactory outcome. Walter Wriston in the 1950s, at the request of President Eisenhower, looked at the balance of the Foreign Service versus the Civil Service in the State Department and came up with a recommendation for a very significant reform, and what he basically recommended and which we implemented back then was to fold -- to make practically all the jobs in the State Department Foreign Service jobs.

Because what had happened prior to that was we had Civil Service at home, Foreign Service abroad; you had people who went out to post when they were 25 years old and didn't come back till they were 60. I mean, they were -- they just circulated around the world and never had any domestic experience. And so we had this so-called Wristonization program, so you had INR, the Intelligence and Research analysts, and refugee officers and all that, all of a sudden being sent abroad and totally something they hadn't really planned for in their lives.

But then with the increment, the increase in the number of bureaus in the department, particularly functional bureaus, the hiring of more civil servants started to creep back in, so that now that balance -- it's a more equal balance, but what it's done is it's made it harder for our career Foreign Service to circulate through

the entire building, to play a role in these different elements of foreign policy.

In the end -- and I've sat at both ends of this, both in the NSC and in the White House, and I worked for -- Henry Kissinger, by the way, I love hearing -- I worked for Henry. I was his director for Vietnam from 1971 to '73, when we completed the Paris peace negotiations. Steve was referring to him having created the model for the NSC system, but the fact of the matter is Henry used the NSC system to keep the whole interagency process busy writing reports so that he could run the foreign policy of the government out of his pocket. I've heard him say it: "Let's give them -- let's keep them busy working on X while we work on Y." And he cut Mr. Rogers, the secretary of state, who was Nixon's law partner, completely out of everything that was happening. It was an embarrassment.

We go to Moscow for a summit, which I did with President Nixon and Kissinger in '72, and they were always looking for artifices to have Mr. Gromyko, who was the foreign minister at the time, take Mr. Rogers away so that Kissinger and the president could meet with Mr. Brezhnev. And --

MR. ZELIKOW: And this is your defense of the State Department's -- (laughter.)

MR. NEGROPONTE: No, it's not. It's not at all. No, my point on the State Department is going to be a different one, but I was just addressing this issue of whether Kissinger is really the ideal model of how to run the interagency process. I don't think he was, although he ended up at the end of his career, very interestingly, when he was secretary of state, relying on Foreign Service officers and using them to make policy and execute it, and I think he obviously acquitted himself very well.

My basic point would be that every president is going to do this the way they want to. I mean, history is replete with examples of different presidents having completely different approaches to how you organize for foreign policy. And Roosevelt is an excellent example of somebody who sort of kept -- he had a team of rivals really, and he didn't really work in a very coordinated fashion with them, but you can't quarrel with the success that Franklin Roosevelt had. And he has his secretary of state dealing with economic affairs and not really that centrally involved in the strategy for winning World War II, but it worked. And when it comes to the planning for the World War II -- the post-World War II institutions, the Bretton Woods and the whole global order that was devised at the time, a lot of that work was done in the State Department.

So it's a mixed picture in almost any administration you look at. And I think in the end, a president is going to devise and use the kind of national security system that he or she is comfortable with. The main suggestion I would make to whoever wins the election is they've got to simplify the process. I think that on all sides, the numbers of people engaged in these activities could be reduced, and that goes for the NSC as well as the State Department and others. I think simplification. I think Steve Hadley's idea of a pause, even though it's hard to do in a world of fast-breaking events, I think we need to pause and reflect a little bit both on what we want to accomplish and how we want to organize for it.

But one form or another, I'm sure the State Department will still be there and playing a significant role. But in terms of exactly what role it plays, it's going to depend to some extent, or a large extent perhaps, on the persona and the personality of whoever happens to be secretary of state.

And the last thought I would suggest to you is that I think -- my impression of John Kerry's behavior is that he finds the interagency process so dispiriting that he just stays in an airplane all the time. And I think he's -- obviously, he has motive to do that. He has purpose. He's got serious diplomatic business to conduct. But I think he and perhaps some of his other peers in the cabinet feel a little bit the same way, and I think it's time to try and see if we can get the cabinet members a little bit more comfortable with the process that is directed by the National Security Council.

MR. INBODEN: Jim?

MR. STEINBERG: Because John raised a very important point, which is -- and we talk about this in the book, which is that, absolutely, presidents get and deserve the process that works for them. There is not a single answer, and it's very important: if you try to give them something that they can't work with, they'll just go push it aside and they'll create something else on the side they (inaudible).

But the one caveat I'd say is that part of the problem, though, is that what they pick isn't necessarily what they ideally would want, because they rarely know about the choices, right? And because, I mean, even the handful who have had some experience of it have the experience of the system that they had. And one of the things that both Martha and Terry and others are doing, and we try to do, is it's really important to let the president know that he or she has choices, that the way it is isn't the way it has to be, and then they can decide and they ought to decide, "Will this work for me?"

But I think that there's been an insufficient sort of focus on getting the president-elect, to say you have choices. Here's how it works now. Here are all the problems. Give them Philip's little brief about the car, and then say here are some different ways you could do it. And then, of course, the president should pick what works for him or her because that's the only way it's going to work. But there's rarely been that kind of conversation in the way there is, as Philip said, about what should we do in Syria, or what should we do with the Russians. That conversation everybody wants to have on the day after the election, but very few want to say how that will come out and how successful you'll be hugely depends on your strategy for getting the car going.

MR. INBODEN: So on this question of the State Department's culture and perhaps some of the malaise that has crept into the career Foreign Service, we've heard different perspectives. I previously, many years ago, worked on the policy planning staff, and one of my colleagues there was a CIA detailee who was still kind of coming up to speed on the State Department culture, and of course lots of crazy things were going on in the world at the time. This was the 2003-2004-2005 window. And often so much is being thrown at State, and when you're not quite sure what to do and you don't even know what exactly is happening, you don't have the

facts yet, the standard State Department talking point is we're monitoring the situation closely, and that's what we're going to say to the American people.

So my CIA detailee friend after a few months was kind of fed up with this and he says, "I feel like we need to print up T-shirts that say, 'The State Department: Monitoring the Situation Closely Since 1789.'" So that's pretty much (inaudible).

So anyway -- so more seriously, I want to come back to a theme. All three of you have had chances to work very closely with different secretaries of state and presidents. Tell us your observations on how a president and secretary of state will build a close, personal, working relationship for conducting diplomacy while the secretary is also responsible for steering and managing the State Department building in the direction that reflects the president's priorities, so having to manage up to the president and then manage down in the building.

So how is that president-secretary of state relationship built and how does it translate into the broader Foreign Service.

MR. NEGROPONTE: Well, in the case of George Herbert Walker Bush, he picked one of his best friends who'd also been a political colleague, so I think that sort of cemented that right from the beginning, and that's probably the model national security and foreign policy team in modern times. Harry Truman had Dean Acheson, whom he respected enormously.

MR. ZELIKOW: Yeah, and one of the things to note about that -- I actually then worked at the White House during that period, so I helped with the transition at the State Department and then at the very beginning of the Bush 41 administration I was detailed to work on the NSC staff for Brent Scowcroft. So I saw this from the White House side a lot.

And it did work extremely well. It didn't work well because anyone issued a national security action memorandum, right? It worked well because you had serious, important people whom the president trusted in a lot of the key jobs. There was kind of an understanding, which Brent Scowcroft also understood and Bob Gates. It was like, here are our respective comparative advantages and here are our appropriate roles. But it also worked -- and here this is an important lesson for the State Department people. They're not going to get this stuff because someone writes a bureaucratic memo saying they should get it. If they want to have policy leadership, the first requirement is to be able to offer the substance and to do the policy development work that earns policy leadership. And then they have to have an administration that recognizes that the department is basically willing to grab the reins and offer the leadership and then let it do its job, and Baker had the team that could do that.

What happens -- you see, because when this fails, the coping mechanisms that happen -- actually, what John was describing with Kissinger in Vietnam, this is a -- I would argue is a coping mechanism that actually can work relatively well for the one or two issues on which Kissinger then jumps and spends his time. There are then severe tradeoffs that then you pay on all the things that are not actually in the focus of the White House spotlight.

It's actually entirely appropriate for the White House to shine its spotlight on things that are vitally important to the president and the White House should be closely engaged in following those initiatives. And even on those, then you still can assign your roles to play. But what happens is if the White House just kind of runs it and people around the government begin to feel like they're functionaries, then they act like they are functionaries, or else they kind of find ways of checking out and finding areas of autonomy.

And this is especially true for the State Department more than for Defense and CIA, because everybody in the government reads what the State Department is doing because everybody reads their cables. Nobody in the -- hardly anyone in the government gets to read what the Defense Department or CIA is doing because hardly anybody gets to read their operational message traffic. This is small bureaucratic points that no one picks up very much. And so therefore there's an easy tendency to micromanage the State Department above all, and then the State Department falls into these unfortunate patterns.

But so the State Department then has to step up and offer to do its job, and then you have to have a common understanding basically in the way you've composed your team that kind of lets people have that leeway, and then you can have things that are really -- then the government actually begins to work like it's supposed to.

MR. STEINBERG: So the one thing I'd add is that when John was talking about Secretary Baker, and Phil about the leadership team, your description about how he brought the people together -- it's really critical to have a stronger leadership team who really can cover and provide the -- but the real trick here is it has to be done in a way that doesn't have that leadership team become a barrier to the access to the building and to all the people who are not in the leadership team.

And that has been a tension over the years because the more you have a really high-quality team, it's easy to kind of fall into the trap of just saying, well, I've got all these people here on the seventh floor; I don't really need all of these thousands of people who are running down there. I don't know their names.

MR. INBODEN: The other six floors.

MR. STEINBERG: I don't know who their -- how good they are. And so my advice to the next secretary of state, and I want to say a personal (inaudible), and I think Secretary Clinton did a great job of this, is one of the things you must do in the very beginning is get to know the people who work there. You've got to give them a chance to strut their stuff, to see who's good, who's not, and then to empower them when you find the ones who are good and really give them the opportunity to play, and not to have that marble corridor there become an impermeable barrier against the people who -- because if you want to solve the culture problem, people have to feel that if you have talent and initiative, good ideas, that they will have a chance to be heard and that you will have a chance to play a role in doing these things.

And so it's that having both of those ideas in mind and executing on both right from the beginning and sending the signal to the Foreign Service officers

and the civil servants that you can -- if you're imaginative and creative and stuff, it's going to get heard and you can make a difference, I think really leverages the capacity that would make the State Department improve its work.

MR. ZELIKOW: Will, just on the point of how the president runs this with his principals, one of the things that I think people -- because it's kind of a bureaucratic point. I was always very curious as to how Franklin Roosevelt ran World War II. Here he is, they're running the largest colossus of armed strength the United States has ever mustered in its history, also running 50 percent of the U.S. economy, doing this with a White House staff of nine people, and Roosevelt was not a passive, inactive president. One military historian actually once did a little parlor game where he catalogues 22 examples of where Roosevelt overruled his top military commanders in decisions during the war.

Now, how did Roosevelt make the system work? By the way, Eisenhower also had a functional system that was just the opposite of Roosevelt's, actually reacting to all the things they didn't like about Roosevelt's system.

But the way Roosevelt did this -- and Eisenhower had this in common, too -- is a direct, substantive relationship with the principals on all the substantive points. If I want -- if I'm getting ready to meet with a German or with a foreigner and I want to know kind of -- I want to talk -- I just -- I don't have my staff write me a briefing memo, the agency, the State Department writes me the briefing memo. I would -- or I come talk to the secretary of state. Instead of basically having agency briefers come in every morning, the representatives of the agencies literally at the cabinet level were doing the briefings for the president.

In other words, he had a personal relationship where he was getting his substance on all the key issues directly from the other cabinet principals, which, by the way, has enormous effects on them and on their agencies. And then, by the way, he's also sizing them up and he then -- he might have three or four other different channels he used to get the information he wanted. But he's not using staff intermediaries. A lesson Dick Neustadt once taught me when I taught with him over the years is he said, you know, when you build up the White House staff, you're not making the president more powerful, you're making the White House staff more powerful. It's not the same thing.

MR. INBODEN: That's right. Let's turn --

MR. NEGROPONTE: We have noticed that.

MR. INBODEN: Yeah. Let's turn to the audience for questions.

Ashland (ph), Cindy, right there. And after this, Ambassador Jeffrey.

MS. EWING: Cindy Ewing, Clements fellow. You all touched on this a little bit, but I'd like to hear more explicitly: What are the conditions that allow the State Department to function at its best, and in turn, what are the ones that have most constrained it? I can think of a host of them. Some are internal, some external, such as the relationship between the president and the secretary, maybe relationships with Congress, maybe information flows. But I'd love to know which are the things that in your experience have most allowed it to function in the way you've wanted it to and what have been the biggest problems.

MR. NEGROPONTE: Was the question what has allowed it to function?

MR. INBODEN: At its best.

MR. NEGROPONTE: At its best. Well, I would make one point, and I think that's been a fairly common thread through the discussion both in modern times and in past State Departments. Empowering the regional assistant secretaries to play a really strong coordinating role in the development of policy, I think that is important. I'm not saying that they make the final decision, but you want high-level, experienced regional assistant secretaries.

John F. Kennedy, when he came into office, had people like G. Mennen Williams as assistant secretary for Africa; he had Averell Harriman, who had been a cabinet secretary in the Truman administration, as assistant secretary for the East Asia-Pacific region. I think bolstering those offices in the State Department can make a very important and positive contribution.

MR. ZELIKOW: I'll say that I think actually it works at its best when there is a clear understanding of what it is we're trying to do, and then there is a real effort to do the choreography of what everybody's role is and how to do it, and then they are -- and then the State Department and the Foreign Service can be outstanding.

Let me just allude to two illustrations of this that are both stunning illustrations of State Department capability. One was the Kennedy administration in the Cuban missile crisis decided on the blockade approach on October -- over the weekend of October 20th and 21st. The president announced it to the nation on the night of Monday night, October 22nd. With literally -- from within 36 hours, the State Department had orchestrated a diplomatic plan worldwide in which we had envoys, often unofficial, in every one of the leading world capitals.

We had -- we lined it up so that, like, literally the day after the president's speech, we had unanimous support of the Organization of American States representing Latin America for the president's approach to this problem, that had been coordinated by approaches already done in capitals that was choreographed by the State Department, and then success in the United Nations as well. A stunning performance. And then you think about the choreography and design that has to make that happen and the work that gets done.

To give you another example, during the Gulf War of '90/'91, one of the least appreciated aspects of this is the diplomacy that simultaneously had a political coalition to get completely UN support, a military coalition in the field that had different players, including the presence of Arab military forces from countries like Syria and Egypt, and an economic coalition to pay for the war, including to offset the American costs, including multibillion-dollar contributions from Germany and Japan. All three of these coalitions had to be orchestrated and organized in a global effort which the State Department did, all three of them completely successful. It was the most amazing three-ring act I've ever seen performed in my professional experience. Of course, hardly noticed in any of the histories of the Gulf War or any memories of the State Department.

But what happened, to come back to your question, is you had strong policy development mapped out: here's what we're trying to do. And then you had the choreography about the roles people could play. And then so empowered and enabled, you cut the State Department loose and they dazzled people.

MR. INBODEN: Ambassador Jeffrey.

MR. JEFFREY: I have a point that was going to morph into a question. It will, but now I have two points thanks to Phil. Because I think it reinforces the underlying point I want to make. You've done a great job, but you still haven't plunged the depths of the dysfunctionality of the State Department. But I want to reassure the audience a little bit with the following.

First of all, one of the emissaries Phil talked about in the Cuban missile crisis to the most difficult person, because they had a vote in the Security Council and it was our friend-enemy Charles de Gaulle -- Kennedy wisely sent Dean Acheson. When he came in the door, he was greeted, violating protocol, by General de Gaulle, whose comment was, "Your President honors me by the quality of the man he has sent here to represent him." And the point I want to make is that a president can't do it all. You need other people who are deeply respected and are deeply competent to carry a global program like we have, and a lot of that is the State Department's ambassadors, to ambassadors.

I am a little bit more optimistic, Phil, than you were about what happened in Turkey in '62 could never happen again. For example, just John Tefft during the invasion of Georgia in 2008, in part because he's very good -- in fact, for his sins he was brought out of retirement to deal with Putin and Moscow. But also, a great advantage is he was about seven hours ahead of Washington so he could get his information and his act together before we woke up.

But the point is in a real crisis, ambassadors, because there is nobody else, often can play a role. That gets to the question. Thanks to modern technology, one way that this is all done in the last couple of administrations is to beam into the most senior meetings in Washington of the National Security Council with the president, the ambassador up on a screen chatting away on his or her views on this. You all three have been on the receiving end of this, as have I, and John and I have been on the sending end of this.

What are the pluses and minuses of this and would you recommend that the next administration follow on with that policy? Thanks.

MR. STEINBERG: I think it's a very important thing to do. I mean, I think for lots of reasons. One, because of the skill and the perspective that the ambassador has. But if -- I mean, one of the -- as I mentioned sort of very briefly, there's the challenge of the State Department in Washington, but there's also the challenge of the State Department in the field -- Phil's point about the concierge -- which is that unless the ambassador is seen as the president's representative as well as the State Department's representative in a country, he or she will not have the kind of authority and the ability to do the kinds of things that you talked about.

And so when you have that person there, and if you have the president treating it as that's my representative, that's not just the State Department person here

who is one of the -- with the Defense Department person and the Treasury person, it gives the ambassador the ability in the field to organize, coordinate, and bring all of the capacities of the government together.

So I think that empowering of the president's representative, the ambassador, makes a huge difference, and then it plays back into the Washington process as well.

MR. NEGROPONTE: Well, and we do have the president's letter to the ambassador that lays out his authorities.

MR. STEINBERG: But we have the letter, but the letter -- pff, you know, what's a letter?

MR. NEGROPONTE: No, it matters. Believe me, in country teams, it matters.

MR. ZELIKOW: So one -- just to emphasize the role of the field in all of this, and again to kind of answer my own question as to why can't you abolish the State Department -- and it was an unfair question but --

MR. NEGROPONTE: Well, as long as they keep paying my pension.

MR. ZELIKOW: Look, yesterday you heard what a huge problem we have in the world today, and by the way, so much of this problem has to do with broken-down systems of governance in a world in which increasingly the predominant problems are not traditional international rivalries so much as they are transnational issues. In other words, many issues that seem domestic except every country has them, and then you notice that there are some things that are going on in common. And this can be whether we're talking about the global economy or climate change or energy and environment or some of the biological issues Jim alluded to yesterday, and others.

So if you have broken governance, and then the United States -- like, can the United States do anything about that? And maybe the answer is maybe a little. That's going to require serious efforts of coordination in the field. And here's the problem, is that increasingly if your answer is we don't have any answer to broken governance unless it gets so bad we'll send the American military in to fix broken governance.

And I will tell you, and General Schwartz is here and others, the American military isn't eager for the role of fixing broken governance, and by the way, regards this as highly inefficient -- is if you kind of want to wait until things get so bad that you have to send American ground troops in to start running cities, this is not a smart and farsighted approach to the world's problems, and it's not good for anybody, including the American military.

So if anything, if not the American military, then who? And very quickly your answer is going to come back to the State Department and the role of the country team. And then you're going to realize how the car is up on the bricks, because you haven't built institutional capabilities, you haven't trained people to do these things, you actually haven't built the institutions that need to do what you actually want it to do, because we're not thinking about it this way -- and we must.

MR. INBODEN: All right, we've got time for two more questions.

We're going to take both of these together. Charlie Laderman back here, and then this gentleman right here. So Charlie, ask your question, then before our panel answers, we'll take your question, and then we'll wrap it up.

MR. LADERMAN: Thank you. Charlie Laderman, Clements Center. We heard about the importance of secrecy and diplomacy to help bring about the agreement during the Cuban missile crisis, and in an age of demands for greater openness and transparency, is there a need to remind the public of the importance of these secret back channels in diplomacy for helping to make things happen, and is there a need of what the great British diplomat Howard Nicolson said of recognizing the distinction between foreign policy and diplomacy, and that our foreign policy agreements should always be open; sometimes, and often, diplomatic negotiations have to be secret?

MR. INBODEN: And then --

QUESTION: Thank you. Sean Salome (ph), IRG student. But my question comes to you as a 13-year veteran in the Marine Corps working in special operations and intelligence. You touch on something that's near and dear to me about the military's role in diplomacy. No matter what operation I was doing, diplomacy was always on our op-ed, and it felt very frustrating because there was times that we were like, isn't this a State Department function, whether it was humanitarian aid in Okinawa or typhoon areas, or Colombia when I was working in Colombia. And we felt like the local populace was always looking to us to deal with State Department functions, and they always looked to us as being the diplomats for their area, when we were the military.

So my question to you is seeing that this is an issue, how would you fix it? How would you gentlemen address this and put the wheels, (inaudible) to say, like you said, back on the vehicle? Thank you.

MR. INBODEN: Okay, so we've got diplomacy and secrecy and transparency, and then we've got making sure the State Department does its job instead of offloading it to the military.

MR. ZELIKOW: Who wants? I'll take the second question if one of these guys will take the first.

MR. NEGROPONTE: Well, I'll go for the second one.

MR. INBODEN: Charlie, I'll make sure one of them answers your question.

MR. NEGROPONTE: No, but the -- this came up in Iraq. Since I was ambassador there, I think I owe you a comment on that. And our military did an incredible job during both the occupation and after in terms of administering various kinds of civil projects -- community development, whatever you want to call it.

I think one of the difficulties we had is that it was -- it's very hard when you don't have an armed capability of your own, like the State Department. I mean, we rely totally on the military for our security in a place like Iraq, and so did AID. And we had this very difficult situation where we were trying to administer an assistance program while an insurgency was going on.

And so, I mean, there was a lieutenant general from the Australian

armed forces who ran a small team that did nothing but wake up every morning and send people out to repair electric towers or telephone towers that had been knocked down the previous night. Well, and pipelines were being exploded, and any aid project that we had ended up having at least a 50 percent security cost to it. I mean, we were getting very little bang for our buck. And then, in addition to that, these projects were subject to destruction.

So there's a sequencing issue here, it seems to me, when you get into these conflict situations as to -- which raises the sort of basic question, which is at what point is security good enough that you can then really administer bona fide civilian programs? And I don't think we got that right in Iraq, and I think that made things even more difficult for everybody concerned.

But I do think the civil affairs capability of the military is indispensable in that time when you haven't reached the point where you can really effectively administer full-blown civilian programs.

MR. ZELIKOW: So since we're on that question, let me tackle it, too. This is a big issue, and this is actually -- this is a multiyear, long-term institutional buildup that's needed here. It can't be solved overnight any more than the Marine Corps learned how to invade beaches overnight.

What the State Department does and AID does, actually to an alarming degree, is they solve this problem -- all these problems -- all these problems with civilian contractors, which introduces whole other layers of pathology and dysfunction, instead of doing things like I've asked for: a civilian reserve corps and other things that allow you to keep a lot of experts on tap whom you don't need every day. There are a number of ideas.

MR. NEGROPONTE: Which was not true in Vietnam, right? We did it with our -- we had the in-house capability.

MR. ZELIKOW: Correct, which we then lost and gave up. So we're actually much less capable now than we were when John was in Vietnam. We didn't -- when John was in Vietnam, for instance, he worked as a provincial reporting officer.

MR. NEGROPONTE: Right.

MR. ZELIKOW: We were talking about this yesterday. So when I -- I remember -- I have a lot of memories from Iraq and Afghanistan. But I remember as clear as day sitting with then-Major General David Rodriguez in his command office in Mosul, in 2005, and we had just had some really hard fighting in Mosul. And David Rodriguez told me, "I would trade a whole maneuver battalion for one AID officer." That gives you a -- just that gives you a little bit of a sense of the institutional breakdown. Later that year, I went to Anbar province and spent some time in Fallujah. When I and my one staffer, my one civilian staffer who was with me, arrived in Fallujah, we tripled the State Department presence in Anbar province. I spent some time with the one FSO in Anbar province, who has written a memoir recently of his experiences there. The one FSO and the 30,000 Marines. And we spent some time in the province and I talked to a lot of the Marines. This is an outrage, actually.

And so when you hear perhaps the provocative way I've tried to put

some of these points, I'm trying to express them vividly because I'm trying to stress the significance of the institutional breakdown and I'm trying to use vivid colors because I don't think this breakdown is sufficiently understood except when we get in trouble. We're just -- there are a lot of things that can be done, actually, and we have capable people to do it. But solving this problem with stopgaps and civilian contractors who themselves, actually, are not always adequately trained or prepared -- these are not solutions.

So you're not going to persuade Congress, by the way, to give you the funding or the resources or the effort unless you really sit with them and work with them and then begin to develop a common plan as to how you want to change the U.S. government and socialize them to a point of view as to what kind of U.S. government they want to try to build. And I haven't given up on that. I don't think that that's impossible. And frankly, the military could be strong allies of the State Department in this effort. And Hillary Clinton and Bob Gates, by the way, set a pretty good example for that kind of cooperative behavior when they were in office together.

MR. STEINBERG: So just briefly on the secrecy question, I mean, there's clearly a place for secret diplomacy, but the problem is -- that I'm very focused on -- is that because of the proliferation of leaks, the difficulty of controlling information and obviously the -- some of the fallout from some of the leaks that have happened, the impulse is in order to have secrecy to these things, you have to involve virtually nobody in the process. And so you don't get a situation like in the Cuban missile crisis, where everybody is around the room and debates the policy, and then you execute it secretly. What you end up is having secret initiatives which only two or three people know about and you don't get the benefit of all the expertise and perspectives that are around the government. And more and more this is happening, and it's -- I mean, it's a natural reaction to a reality: you have a big meeting and it's in the newspaper the next day.

But it's very damaging to the quality of the exercise if you can't have full discussions and a full debate around the issue even for an issue that you have to execute in secret.

MR. INBODEN: All right. Okay. Well, please join me in thanking this panel. (Applause.)

(Whereupon, the panel discussion was concluded.)

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