

7 Obstacles to Budgeting for 3D Security A Summary of Gordon Adam's Analysis for the Stanley Foundation

The current imbalance between military and civilian instruments of U.S. foreign policy and security spending is harmful to U.S. national interests. Investments in diplomacy and development assistance have decreased over the last few decades. The Defense Department is replacing the State Department as the primary shaper of foreign policy and U.S. security strategy. In this summary article of Gordon Adam's "The Politics of National Security Budgets," published by the Stanley Foundation, Adams gives 7 reasons why the Defense Department (DOD) budget continues to rise while the civilian foreign policy tools of diplomacy and development assistance in the State Department and USAID face tough budget battles to retain current funding levels.

"Large, well-planned, integrated budgets that have ample supporting justifications from a single institution, show major domestic economic and political impacts, and are presented by an experienced team do well in Congress. Budgets that emerge from multiple stovepipes, do not include future planning or a clear link to strategy, have limited domestic support, and are presented by a team that is not trained or focused on the domestic politics of national security do not do so well in Congress."

- 1. Institutional Divisions Create Obstacles for Development and Diplomacy Funding:** Development assistance and diplomacy initiatives are institutionally divided. As the importance of public diplomacy, AIDS relief, economic assistance and trade increased, new institutions like PEPFAR and the Millennium Challenge Corporation were created with weak institutional links to USAID or other State Department programs. The multitude of institutions that offer development assistance and diplomatic initiatives compete for scarce funds in the foreign affairs budget. DOD on the other hand, presents a single unified strategic plan and budget to Congress. Reforming the foreign affairs budget-making process and unifying strategic planning and budgeting for foreign economic and development assistance is essential to ensuring adequate investments in development and diplomacy.
- 2. DOD Has a Vast Political Constituency That Supports Defense Spending.** The Defense Department has a vast political constituency that promotes defense spending, including 700,000 civil servants, 1.4 m. active duty forces, a million National Guard and reservists, two million military retirees, 26.5 million veterans across the U.S., 2500 defense bases offices, and defense contractors and subcontractors in virtually every region of the U.S. In comparison, there are far fewer political constituencies supporting development assistance and diplomacy budgets. USAID has only 2000 staff, down from 16,000 in 1968. The State Department has only 25,000 staff around the world.
- 3. Investments in Development and Diplomacy are Harder to Sell.** Congress wants accountability and solid "outputs" for investments. Defense spending results in tangible and measurable numbers of weapons, troops, and force capabilities. Development

assistance and diplomacy are longer-term investments. Successes in eradicating disease, increasing employment or building relationships are more difficult to measure. Furthermore, development and diplomacy personnel are less likely to lobby for their programs as essential to national security.

4. **DOD Fosters Personnel Skilled in Lobbying for Defense Spending.** Congressional policymaking is complex. The military rewards personnel who have learned to navigate the policy and political processes in Washington. The State Department, on the other hand, fosters a more narrow range of skills in diplomacy and negotiation. The State Department and USAID are also less hierarchical and focus less on management and lobbying skills related to promoting development and diplomacy to Congress. Development and diplomacy personnel need a stronger emphasis on how to sell their programs to Congressional appropriators.
5. **DOD Budgets for Long-term Strategy.** The Defense Department prepares a multi-year budget for preparation, deployment, and development of troops and weapon systems. DOD prepares Congress to make long term, major investments by arguing for their essential role in national security. In contrast, the State Department and USAID prepare their budgets year by year and do not have institutionalized, long-term strategic planning processes to guide and rationalize their budgets. Development and diplomacy personnel need a stronger emphasis on linking their programs to long-term strategic planning and national security objectives.
6. **White House Privileges Defense Budgets.** Defense budgets receive greater attention and an extensive dialogue process directly with the White House as opposed to foreign affairs budgets for development assistance and diplomacy. While the State Department is working to coordinate different foreign affairs agencies, historically no organization has coordinated or advocated for the entirety of the foreign affairs budget. Foreign affairs budgets arrive “late in the game” and its programs receive far less attention and are less well understood. Development and diplomacy personnel need to develop a greater coherence and integration of their budgets before they are submitted for review.
7. **Congress Privileges Defense Budgets.** The Armed Services committees in Congress pay far more attention to the defense budget (the 050 Account) than do the Foreign Relations/International Affairs committees do to the foreign affairs budget (the 150 Account). The 150 budget is not popular with Congress because it lacks a vocal political constituency and because its programs are difficult to measure and have not been articulated in national security terms. When spending caps are implemented, the 150 Account competes with popular domestic programs and usually loses out, while the 050 account, with its vast political constituency, can adjust its programs to fit inside the cap. Congress should fence both defense and international affairs budgets as part of a national security budget and the authorizing and appropriating committees should consider development, diplomacy, and defense budgets and programs in relationship to each other.

Read the entire report by Gordon Adams at:
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