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## A New Structure for National Security Policy Planning,

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### THE FUTURE OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Cambone, Stephen A. *A New Structure for National Security Policy Planning*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1998. 262pp. \$23.95

Stephen Cambone is the director of research at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University. A former senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Cambone is obviously well qualified to undertake work that focuses on a proposed reorganization of the National Security Council (NSC). Cambone approaches his work with vigor and an insider's knowledge of the workings of the U.S. government's highest national-security entity. He also extensively uses the knowledge and expertise of two colleagues, Patrick J. Garrity of the Los Alamos National Laboratory and Alistair J. K. Shepard of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. They have included valuable appendices for students of national security affairs on the major interests and issues that surround national security policy development, as well as a historical synopsis of the various national security councils used by past presidents and how the institution has evolved. Cambone has included a compendium of important presidential directives.

Cambone's principal argument is that it is time—now that the end of the Cold

War is nearly a decade in the past—to re-evaluate the National Security Act of 1947 and the institutions created by that watershed law. Moreover, Cambone asks his readers to consider what, if any, institutional changes should be implemented to ensure that the United States is properly prepared for national security policy planning in the post–Cold War era. He is attempting, by his own admission, to conduct an organization-and-process approach to the question of revising the 1947 National Security Act; he is largely successful.

Cambone boils down the present-day debate over national security policy making to two essential features. He identifies one side as the *issues* faction and the other as the *interests* faction. “Issues” advocates emphasize such things as religion, ethnicity, and human rights. These national security analysts focus on the need for countries to conform to international laws and norms. They emphasize the protection of the rights of individuals against the power of the state. They rely heavily on international agreement to settle problems. The “interest” faction, on the other hand, is less concerned with

the legal authority of the international community and more interested in the construction of a system that manages risk to the United States as a sovereign state. However, Cambone argues that the real problem is that neither “issues” nor “interests” elements within national-security policy-making circles can agree on an overarching concept for, or definition of, the nation’s security. The author’s answer is to suggest a new model for national security decision making that eschews the Cold War mentality and methodology for policy making and takes into account the new paradigms of the post–Cold War era.

Cambone reviews how past national security policy was developed. He then proposes a reorganization of the NSC into five directorates: crisis management, regional affairs, home defense affairs, finance and trade, and science and technology. A “dual-hatted” cabinet secretary would head these directorates. In this way, the president’s control over national security policy development would be strengthened.

While his suggestions for improvement are well thought out and well intentioned, his proposals may prove nearly impossible to implement. First and foremost, such a proposed reorganization would need strong political support on Capitol Hill. A new National Security Act would likely entail a tremendous amount of debate, as senators and congressmen attempt to influence the legislation. One need only recall the highly rancorous and largely unhealthy debate over service roles and missions following the passage of the 1947 law to understand what might occur if a new national security law were passed along the lines that Cambone suggests. This is not to say that the United States should not consider a new law; Cambone

simply needs to be aware that national security policy has never been, and most likely never will be, entirely devoid of politics.

Nonetheless, Cambone’s model for a new NSC is a logical one. Efficient and elegant, if implemented it would maximize the president’s power to influence the creation and accomplishment of national security policy—something that the NSC and the national security advisor are supposed to facilitate. Further, it would make maximum use of the entire executive branch of government and take the pressure off an understaffed and ill-equipped White House to oversee national security policy, development, and implementation. Yet the suggestion of a dual-hatted cabinet secretary as head of a national security “directorate” could prove disastrous. Cambone ignores Washington’s deeply entrenched organizational bureaucracies and their tendency to “socialize” appointed cabinet officials into their own particular cultures. It has long been axiomatic in the nation’s capital that the president’s worst political and bureaucratic enemies can reside in his own cabinet; in 1867 such a situation nearly drove an unpopular president (Andrew Johnson) from office. To make matters worse, most cabinet officials have rather short tenures in office. Thus the Washington bureaucracy knows full well that these political appointees will be moving on sooner or later; it waits them out. Finally, presidential cabinet officials are usually chosen not for their expertise but for political expediency. Therefore, it is very likely that the person who would serve as a “directorate” chair might be thoroughly unqualified for such a position of responsibility. Although the way that national security policy is

developed today is certainly not optimal, would Cambone's system be better?

Despite his failure to consider the second and third-order effects of enacting the system he proposes, Cambone provides the basis for a great academic discussion over future national security policy and how it is developed. It is a topic that needs to be discussed, and as the author has emphatically pointed out, the time is now. This point is hard to refute. As the world's sole remaining superpower, and as the debate and divergence over how policy gets developed becomes stronger, the United States must reflect on how to improve its national security decision making structure.

In sum, Cambone and his colleagues have provided a good point of departure for a debate on how the United States should develop and implement future national security policy. There are many things to consider, and this book will get us started.

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O'Hanlon, Michael. *Technological Change and the Future of Warfare*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000. 208pp. \$42.95

Over the past several years, the U.S. military has officially embraced the idea that rapidly evolving technologies soon will lead to a profound change in the conduct of warfare. The need to innovate in response to a prospective revolution in military affairs is the central theme of *Joint Vision 2010* and similar force-planning documents. Some studies, such as the congressionally mandated National Defense Panel, have concluded that only immediate and

radical transformation to new systems, new operational concepts, and new organizations will enable the U.S. military to retain its battlefield dominance.

Michael O'Hanlon, however, is not convinced. In his view, most calls for transformation lack any systematic or rigorous analysis of how emerging technologies might specifically change the character of combat in the coming decades. Thus the goal of this book is to provide realistic projections of technological possibilities that offer a better idea of how the U.S. military might best proceed in future research and acquisition.

O'Hanlon examines a wide range of militarily relevant technologies, in two broad categories: those primarily electronic (sensors, computers, and communications), and those primarily mechanical (vehicles, ships, aircraft, and weapons). From this survey he offers an evaluation of where evolving technologies are likely to provide new capabilities over the next two decades, and where significant force limitations are likely to remain.

In the realm of electronics, O'Hanlon expects continued advances in computers and communications but foresees no imminent breakthrough in sensors that will significantly improve one's ability to detect and track the adversary's activity. He specifically rejects the idea that the battlefield can be rendered "transparent." On the mechanical side, he sees no near-term developments that will allow maneuver and strike forces to become sufficiently light, fast, fuel efficient, or stealthy to allow profound improvements in speed of movement or lethality. Thus he concludes that proponents of transformation provide neither a compelling case for a near-term revolution in warfare nor any adequate idea of what the military should be transforming itself into.