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Claremont McKenna College

U.S. Interagency Coordination on Countering Violent
Extremism Abroad

submitted to
Professor Jennifer Taw

by
Jason Gush

for Senior Thesis
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Abstract

CVE is complex. It requires combatting the narratives and ideology of many extremist groups around the globe, constructing environments with appealing alternatives to extremism, and most importantly, sensitivity to the variety of circumstances in which CVE takes place to effectively battle the root causes of extremism. Constructing a complete CVE effort thus requires a great variety of skills, coordinated to efficient implementation. Despite notional commitment, U.S. CVE abroad lacks interagency coordination. JIATF-S offers a strong model of interagency coordination, from which lessons may be applied to the formation of an interagency CVE effort. Interagency coordination would bring extensive expertise and resources to bear on CVE operations.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the White House's 2015 National Security Strategy, former President Barack Obama wrote: "In the long-term, our efforts to work with other countries to counter the ideology and root causes of violent extremism will be more important than our capacity to remove terrorists from the battlefield."¹ This effort has taken the form of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Later that year, the White House convened an international CVE summit and committed to a surge in funding for CVE efforts abroad and at home.² CVE is essential to a sustainable counterterrorism strategy – even if one group is largely wiped out, evidence demonstrates ideology survives, quickly reigniting violent extremism. A purely kinetic counterterrorism strategy threatens to eliminate terrorists, only to have two more fill their place, sustaining an unending cycle of violence. CVE works to destroy the allure of terrorist groups to its would-be recruits. It takes many forms as it is entirely context specific – it aims to strengthen vulnerable communities by addressing whatever factors make that community most vulnerable. Broadly, generally, and perhaps optimistically, CVE builds better lives for those in targeted communities through development programs – the motivation being that a thriving community will exhibit greater resilience to violent extremist recruitment. There are certainly exceptions – a CVE policy purely comprised of targeted interventions has the potential to imbed discrimination and perpetuate suspicion of minorities. But CVE more akin to sustained development, focusing on the structural reasons for radicalization, aligns quite neatly

¹ The White House, "National Security Strategy: February 2015."
https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf

² U.S. White House Office of the Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism," February 18, 2015. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism>

with the goals of local economic development, even if some development professionals are upset that recipients of CVE aid are in securitized regions, to the detriment of those where extremism has not taken hold. CVE that comprises development is no different to regular development assistance, aside from the process of targeting. CVE is only concerned with locations most exploitable by violent extremists, non-CVE development assistance has broader criteria for project selection. CVE may extend beyond development assistance to state-building. CVE programs sometimes aim to strengthen local governance institutions, like law enforcement, for the purpose of strengthening resilience to violent extremist groups. Definitions of CVE remain vague. A CVE program may take so many different forms, dependent on the specific context of each targeted community, that attempting to narrow CVE's definition would risk unduly restricting CVE's potential applications and prove no more useful than its present definition.

CVE's exceptionally broad definition leaves room for many interpretations of how it ought to be implemented, but the major U.S. foreign policy agencies concur on one thing: CVE is essential for a sustainable counterterrorism strategy. Despite notional commitment to CVE, implementation has been lackluster and uncoordinated, and "globally the threat of violent extremism is higher today than in August 2001."³ Military solutions remain the primary choice for combatting extremist violence, despite increasing evidence that "domestic governance capacities are more effective than increased military

³ Edward Powers, "The Military's Role in Countering Violent Extremism," *United States Institute of Peace*, June 7, 2017. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2017/06/militarys-role-countering-violent-extremism>

capacities in sustainably addressing community grievance.”⁴ U.S. CVE abroad features a void of interagency coordination, even though CVE programming requires a complex network of programs to achieve meaningful results. CVE amounts to securitized development assistance and state-building, yet no mechanisms are in place to facilitate such a grand undertaking.

Deep knowledge of local culture and societal structures is the primary requirement for CVE, whether domestic or international. Without understanding the factors that contribute to radicalization, CVE efforts act blindly. In 2014, the Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Science Board (DSB) formed a task force to wholly review and assess U.S. CVE abroad.⁵ The DSB CVE Task Force outlined the key ingredients for successful CVE. Important points include: granting power to those on the ground to increase efficiency and use the regional expertise possessed by USG agencies; “[match] CVE responsibilities to authorities, resources, and accesses;”⁶ develop evaluation methods and enact proportional responses to subsequent feedback. In terms of implementation, the DSB advocates for targeted economic development, institution building, developing messaging for vulnerable groups, and ensuring that CVE actions are aligned with those messages.⁷ Finally, coordination is essential. The DSB Task Force placed ‘strengthening the coordination process’ as its first recommendation in its 2014

⁴ “A U.S. Humanitarian, Development and Peacebuilding Statement on the U.S. Global Countering Violent Extremism Agenda,” July 20, 2015. <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Statement-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ Department of Defense Defense Science Board, “Task Force on Department of Defense Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism Outside of the United States,” April, 2015. <https://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2010s/DSB-CVE-FinalReport-April172015.pdf>

⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁷ Ibid., 1.

task force report.⁸ Most significantly, it noted that organizing CVE by country is less effective than organizing by region, as “our efforts will miss the crucial regional nature of the CVE phenomenon.”⁹

Alarming, CVE has been cast aside by the Trump Administration. Trump’s critique of CVE stems from the view that CVE was insufficiently targeting ideology, and that “emphasis on engaging and empowering communities is too politically correct.”¹⁰ However, CVE has not been entirely abandoned – State’s 2017 budget allocated its largest amount to CVE yet.¹¹ This paper explores interagency coordination in the context of CVE. CVE cannot flourish without effective interagency coordination, and evaluations as to its efficacy will be premature until CVE has been attempted wholeheartedly, with the resources and coordination required.

Domestic CVE - Origins and Growth

The notion of combatting terrorism with non-military options has been suggested in policy environments since 2001, and has since evolved into applications abroad and domestically.¹² The United Kingdom implemented the first official domestic CVE program in 2005 – Prevent,¹³ which aimed to combat extremist ideology, provide support to ‘at-risk communities,’ and perform capacity building.¹⁴ Soon after, the EU developed a

⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰ Andrew Glazzard and Eric Rosand, “Is It All Over for CVE?” *Lawfare*, June 11, 2017, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/it-all-over-cve>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Owen Frazer and Christian Nunlist, “The Concept of Countering Violent Extremism,” *CSS Analyses*, No. 183 (2015): 2, <http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse183-EN.pdf>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ UK Government, “2010 to 2015 government policy: counter-terrorism,” May 8, 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-counter-terrorism/2010-to-2015-government-policy-counter-terrorism#appendix-2-prevent>

counterterrorism strategy featuring a similar focus on understanding how an individual may be made vulnerable by societal conditions. Many other countries, including Canada, Australia, and the United States had followed suit by 2011.¹⁵

Prevent comprised one quarter of the UK's counterterrorism strategy, the other three being: "Prepare; Protect; and Pursue."¹⁶ *Prevent* focused on fighting all extremist ideology, both through undermining its societal origins and by building relationships with key community figures who had the perspective to report any suspicious individuals.¹⁷ These community leaders are legally required to "monitor for 'vulnerability indicators' that suggest people are 'turn[ing] towards terrorism.'"¹⁸ These indicators may be moderate changes in physical appearance or personal conduct.¹⁹

Domestic CVE in the U.S. began in 2011, largely modeled on *Prevent*.²⁰ A major difference is policing of expression in the U.S. is expressly forbidden under the first amendment, requiring removal of some aspects of *Prevent*. For example, the UK government actively combats "'extremism' of thought and belief among Muslims."²¹ CVE in the U.S. otherwise largely resembled that of the UK. The initial CVE strategy had 3 main goals: "1) enhancing federal community engagement efforts related to CVE,

¹⁵ Owen Frazer and Christian Nunlist, "The Concept of Countering Violent Extremism," *CSS Analyses*, No. 183 (2015): 2, <http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse183-EN.pdf>

¹⁶ UK Government, "2010 to 2015 government policy: counter-terrorism," May 8, 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-counter-terrorism/2010-to-2015-government-policy-counter-terrorism#appendix-2-prevent>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Simon Cottee, "The Pre-Terrorists Among Us," *The Atlantic*, October 27, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/counterterrorism-prevention-britain-isis/412603/>

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Jerome P. Bjelopera, "Countering Violent Extremism in the United States," *Congressional Research Service*, February 19, 2014, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesecc/R42553.pdf>

²¹ Faiza Patel, "Counter-Radicalization Lessons From the United Kingdom," *Brennan Center for Justice*, July 28, 2011, <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/counter-radicalization-lessons-united-kingdom>

2) developing greater government and law enforcement for preventing violent extremism, and 3) countering violent extremism propaganda.”²² U.S. CVE was also similar in its use of individual interventions, and its major flaw of discrimination – both undermining its efficacy by eroding trust with communities and failing to target non-Islamic violent extremism.

From the start, domestic U.S. CVE lacked proper implementation, funding, and a lead agency.²³ The threat of radicalization in the U.S. is significantly lower than in Europe,²⁴ somewhat justifying the U.S.’ slow adoption of CVE policy. Domestic CVE has grown slowly, only receiving a significant increase of attention after the 2015 White House CVE Summit. CVE began as local initiatives, and has since expanded to the federal government. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of Homeland Security are part of an interagency CVE Task Force, and contribute their relevant skills or expertise to research and implementation of domestic CVE.²⁵

Initially, the federal government largely left CVE implementation to communities, under the assumption that those within the community understood its problems better than they did. Thus, implementation was voluntary and occurred rarely,

²² Jerome P. Bjelopera, “Countering Violent Extremism in the United States,” *Congressional Research Service*, February 19, 2014, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R42553.pdf>

²³ Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, “Countering Violent Extremism in America,” *Center for Cyber & Homeland Security*, June, 2015, Executive Summary, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/CVE%20in%20America.pdf>

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Eric Rosand, “Fixing CVE in the United States requires more than just a name change,” *Brookings*, February 16, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/02/16/fixing-cve-in-the-united-states-requires-more-than-just-a-name-change/>; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “CVE: Task Force,” <https://www.dhs.gov/cve/task-force>

“with little institutional backing or recognition.”²⁶ Small groups of individuals in federal agencies did attempt to enact minor programs. DHS and NCTC coordinated with many US. Attorney’s Offices in one of the first domestic CVE programs: Community Resilience Exercise (CREX), which engaged law enforcement officers and members of Muslim communities “to address a hypothetical scenario of an individual appearing to radicalize to violence.”²⁷

A sense that terrorism, both domestic and international, was on the rise caused an increase in desire for CVE policy: according to Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, scholars of extremism, “First the April 2013 Boston Marathon bombing and later the rise of ISIS triggered a renewed focus on CVE.”²⁸ As a result, the administration launched the ‘Three City Pilot,’ aiming to implement CVE in Los Angeles, Boston, and Minneapolis-St. Paul.²⁹ The stakeholders drawn into the program were varied, including NGOs, “community leaders, and federal, state, and local government officials.”³⁰ Like *Prevent*, the Three City Pilot featured a targeted intervention program, where those close to an individual ought to be watchful for ‘vulnerability indicators,’³¹ resulting in similar criticism as was levied against *Prevent*.

The Brennan Center for Justice writes that the foundations of U.S. domestic CVE strategy were flawed. Most significantly, the path to terrorism is far more opaque and unpredictable than previously believed. There is no set of signature characteristics that

²⁶ Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, “Countering Violent Extremism in America,” *Center for Cyber & Homeland Security*, June, 2015, 6-7, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/CVE%20in%20America.pdf>

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

reliably identify those likely to radicalize, and the characteristics commonly believed to be significant act as ineffective markers.³² A belief in extremist ideology is not an indicator for potential acts of terrorism. Indeed, a 2008 study by MI5 found that “a well-established religious identity actually protects against violent radicalism,” and that many of those committing acts of terror were “religious novices.”³³ Finally, all domestic CVE is aimed at Muslims. Yet “between 2000 and 2013 the vast majority of attacks in the homeland were carried out by non-Islamist extremists.”³⁴

The UK’s CVE has likewise been criticized. As Simon Cottee of *The Atlantic* writes, similar ‘vulnerability indicators’ will be found in those undergoing a variety of conversions, even to non-violent creeds: “The danger of CVE is that it risks conflating the two and promotes an atmosphere of mistrust.”³⁵ More recently, *Prevent* has been criticized for discriminating against Muslim communities. According to Faiza Patel, a scholar at the Brennan Center for Justice, *Prevent* is “just thought police disguised as ostensible concern about vulnerable Muslim youth.”³⁶ She adds that the intrusive nature of *Prevent* isolates the communities the program aims to coopt.³⁷ Police and some

³² Faiza Patel and Meghan Koushik, “Countering Violent Extremism,” *Brennan Center for Justice*, March 16, 2017, <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/countering-violent-extremism>

³³ Alan Travis, “MI5 report challenges view on terrorism in Britain,” *The Guardian*, August 20, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism1>

³⁴ Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, “Countering Violent Extremism in America,” *Center for Cyber & Homeland Security*, June, 2015, 11, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/CVE%20in%20America.pdf>

³⁵ Simon Cottee, “The Pre-Terrorists Among Us,” *The Atlantic*, October 27, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/counterterrorism-prevention-britain-isis/412603/>

³⁶ Faiza Patel, “Counter-Radicalization Lessons From the United Kingdom,” *Brennan Center for Justice*, July 28, 2011, <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/counter-radicalization-lessons-united-kingdom>

³⁷ *Ibid.*

governing officials asserted the program's effectiveness,³⁸ but CVE has evolved beyond the micro-focus on individuals that characterized *Prevent*.³⁹

There is no apparent evidence that CVE abroad suffers from the prejudicial biases of domestic CVE in the U.S. and UK. In 2015, the White House hosted a CVE summit with domestic and international leaders, facilitating a surge of awareness and funding, and catalyzing a turning point in U.S. domestic CVE strategy. The administration committed to increased funding, establishing a leader for the domestic CVE community, conducting research with global partners on CVE techniques, and addressing societal structures that made individuals vulnerable to radicalization,⁴⁰ rather than rely on arbitrary 'vulnerability indicators,' as nascent domestic CVE did.

U.S. CVE Abroad – Relevant Actors

The scale of U.S. CVE abroad grew more quickly than domestic CVE. The primary agencies of U.S. foreign policy, DoD, Department of State (DoS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), were aware of the value of CVE even as it was just beginning to reach a domestic audience. In its war on terror, the Obama administration identified CVE abroad as essential to a successful counterterrorism strategy.⁴¹ Extremist ideology cannot be destroyed with conventional weaponry; to eradicate threatening extremist groups, the U.S. realized that it is necessary "to address

³⁸ BBC, "Reality Check: What is the Prevent strategy?" *BBC*, June 4, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/election-2017-40151991>

³⁹ Owen Frazer and Christian Nunlist, "The Concept of Countering Violent Extremism," *CSS Analyses*, No. 183 (2015): 3, <http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse183-EN.pdf>

⁴⁰ U.S. White House Office of the Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism," February 18, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism>

⁴¹ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Programs and Initiatives*, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#CVE>

the entire life cycle of radicalization to violent extremism.”⁴² In 2010, the Senate Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a hearing regarding U.S. Government Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism. Garry Reid, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, acknowledged the impossibility of kinetic operations as the single tool necessary for victory. He emphasized the significance of counterextremist efforts, adding that DoD is aware that the manner in which it conducts its CT operations directly influences counterextremism objectives.⁴³ As Chris Meserole of Brookings rightly notes, ideology is passed from one ‘defeated’ extremist organization to “successor groups... if we are to rely on counterterrorism alone, we are destined to play an endless game of global whack-a-mole.”⁴⁴

DoD’s role in CVE is unclear. It conducts stability operations, but does not officially engage in CVE, despite a clear awareness of its value. A reason for DoD’s absence is given in the Task Force Report it commissioned from the Defense Science Board. The Chairman of the DSB, Craig Fields, in his memorandum to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics, writes:

The Task Force acknowledges that DoD may not be the right organization—in terms of authority, capabilities, and / or expertise—to carry out many CVE tasks, particularly over the longer term. As DoD transitions away from large-scale deployments with combat missions, it will be more important to specify which CVE responsibilities it should lead, and which it should support.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *U.S. Government Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., 2010, 63-687, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-111shrg63687/html/CHRG-111shrg63687.htm>

⁴⁴ Chris Meserole, “CVE in the age of Trump,” *Brookings*, December 14, 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/12/14/cve-in-the-age-of-trump/>

⁴⁵ Department of Defense Defense Science Board, “Task Force on Department of Defense Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism Outside of the United States,” April, 2015, Table of Contents: 1, <https://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2010s/DSB-CVE-FinalReport-April172015.pdf>

DoD has no CVE strategy, but some of its operations coincide with goals of CVE, and would fall within CVE, including: “Security Force Assistance... Civil Affairs Operations... [and] Military Information Support Operations.”⁴⁶ DoD requires executive authorization to lead operations akin to CVE: to take the lead in Foreign Internal Defense capacity building operations, DoD needs “a deployment or execution order from the President or Secretary of Defense.”⁴⁷ DoS is the lead agency when the U.S. provides security assistance.⁴⁸ Thus, DoS is a logical choice to lead CVE operations abroad. However, as this thesis explores the issue of leadership in CVE, it finds DoS does not possess the resources or capacity for doing so. On the other hand, DoD lacks even internal coordination on CVE. The DSB Task force found that:

there is no clear, common definition of CVE and no overarching strategy for where CVE fits within that definition. This risks the implementation of CVE functions into DoD roles and missions could be piecemeal and ad hoc. The Task Force saw little evidence that, below the Secretary of Defense, there is a single responsible person or organization from which or to which direction is flowing, guiding the combatant commanders on allocating resources and focusing attention on CVE.⁴⁹

In the 2014 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR), DoD appears keen to coordinate on CVE, saying the U.S. will face the threat of violent extremism “using a combination of economic, diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, development, and military tools.”⁵⁰ DoD’s choice to list military options at the end of its list may imply awareness

⁴⁶ Department of Defense Defense Science Board, “Task Force on Department of Defense Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism Outside of the United States,” April, 2015, 13, <https://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2010s/DSB-CVE-FinalReport-April172015.pdf>

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, “Quadrennial Defense Review 2014,” March 4, 2014, VII, http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf

of CVE’s complexity and the necessity of a nuanced CVE strategy. DoD also mentions ‘rebalancing’ of their CT, allocating “greater emphasis on building partnership capacity,”⁵¹ indicating an understanding that a comprehensive, long-term CT strategy must strengthen partner-nation security institutions – one aspect of CVE.

As of 2011, both DoS and USAID began establishing CVE strategies.⁵² USAID and DoS are the primary organizations running U.S. CVE programs abroad. As such, their 2016 Joint Strategy is an ideal document to gain an understanding of what CVE programming entails. CVE’s broad mandate is to remove or alleviate the drivers of violent extremism. CVE must accurately identify factors that push or pull individuals to commit violent extremism or join groups engaging in violent extremism, and work to ameliorate those factors.

The State Department defines CVE as “efforts to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from radicalizing, recruiting, or inspiring individuals or groups in the United States and abroad to commit acts of violence.”⁵³ USAID comments that “precise definitions have eluded many experts,”⁵⁴ but drew a definition of violent extremism based on other agencies’ definitions, expert opinions, and USAID’s own experience: “Violent extremism refers to advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.”⁵⁵ A joint DoS-USAID CVE strategy document defines CVE as: “proactive

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² U.S. Department of State, “Discussion Paper on Countering Violent Extremism,” February 28, 2017, https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/Discussion-Paper-on-CVE-C06137065.pdf

⁵³ U.S. Department of State, “Countering Violent Extremism,” <https://www.state.gov/j/cve/>

⁵⁴ United States Agency for International Development, “The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency,” September 2011, 2, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf

⁵⁵ Ibid.

actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremism recruitment and radicalization to violence.”⁵⁶ The DSB remarked on the variety of definitions for CVE, even just within DoD.⁵⁷ The Board’s best effort at a definition consistent with such variety follows: “...violent extremism generally targeting innocent civilians vice combatants. This definition includes a full range of activities related to CVE, from countering inspiration and radicalization, to building community resilience and law-enforcement capacity, to countering extremism messaging.”⁵⁸ The Board also concludes that “kinetic operations” are outside the scope of CVE.⁵⁹ No definitions explicitly exclude any activities included in other definitions, and any exclusive additions to one definition may fall under the broader aspects of others.

In the Department of State (DoS), the Bureau of Counterterrorism is the core of CVE. Its webpage elaborates:

Countering violent extremism (CVE) is a pillar of the Administration’s strategic approach to counterterrorism, and is an increasingly critical component of a comprehensive and sustainable counterterrorism strategy that seeks to address the entire life cycle of radicalization to violent extremism.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development, “Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism,” May, 2016, 4, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FINAL%20--%20State%20and%20USAID%20Joint%20Strategy%20on%20Countering%20Violent%20Extremism%20%28May%202016%29.pdf>

⁵⁷ United States Department of Defense Defense Science Board, “Task Force on Department of Defense Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism Outside of the United States,” *Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics*, April, 2015, 1, <https://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2010s/DSB-CVE-FinalReport-April172015.pdf>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Programs and Initiatives*, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#CVE>

DoS' CVE strategy focuses primarily on strengthening the capacity of foreign government and society, penetrating all sectors of society to counter radicalization. DoS' strategy may be summed as 'redirection.' It aims to create alternate paths for those at risk of falling prey to radicalization, partially "through the criminal justice sector, such as police-community engagement, diversion programs, and juvenile justice."⁶¹ DoS partners with "a range of Department stakeholders, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other interagency partners."⁶² The Bureau of Counterterrorism fails to mention DoD, implying a lack of consolidated collaboration on CVE between the State and Defense Departments.

In 2011, USAID released *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency*. It creates a "policy framework" for enhancing CVE efforts and improving coordination with USAID's CVE partners.⁶³ The document explicitly defines violent extremism: "Violent extremism refers to advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives."⁶⁴ The policy document displays a considerable knowledge of the roots of violent extremism. USAID finds evidence based programming to be essential to CVE success, yet where USAID finds such evidence remains unclear.

Understanding of successful CVE programming has evolved since its inception in the UK. Initial CVE programs focused on individuals, and aimed to recognize re-

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Melissa Brown et al., *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice*, USAID, September, 2011, iv, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf

⁶⁴ United States Agency for International Development, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice," September, 2011, 2, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf

observable patterns indicating a likelihood to commit acts of terrorism. CVE abroad has been the subject of extensive research by think tanks and government-sponsored research networks.⁶⁵ Over time, many recognized that CVE needs to apply to broader societal and structural issues. CVE is essential to a complete counterterrorism policy because the structural factors inciting violent extremism are forgotten with traditional military solutions.⁶⁶ As former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon remarked, “Missiles may kill terrorists but I am convinced that good governance will kill terrorism.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ “RESOLVE Network; Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism,” *United States Institute for Peace*, <https://www.usip.org/programs/resolve-network-researching-solutions-violent-extremism>; Shannon N. Green and Keith Proctor, “Turning Point: A New Comprehensive Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism,” *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, November, 2016, https://csis-ilab.github.io/cve/report/Turning_Point.pdf

⁶⁶ Owen Frazer and Christian Nunlist, “The Concept of Countering Violent Extremism,” *CSS Analyses*, No. 183 (2015): 1.

⁶⁷ UN Press Release, “‘Missiles May Kill Terrorists, But I Am Convinced That Good Governance Will Kill Terrorism’, Secretary-General Says at General Assembly Thematic Debate,” *United Nations*, April 22, 2015, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sgsm16691.doc.htm>

Chapter 2: CVE Requires Coordination – The Interagency

CVE is complex. It requires combatting the narratives and ideology of many extremist groups around the globe, constructing environments with appealing alternatives to extremism, and most importantly, sensitivity to the variety of circumstances in which CVE takes place to effectively battle the root causes of extremism. Constructing a complete CVE effort thus requires a great variety of skills, coordinated to efficient implementation. Effective CVE abroad incorporates partners outside of the U.S. apparatus, meaning coordination between agencies is further complicated by the necessary inclusion of outside partners. CVE requires extensive intelligence, local cooperation, regional expertise, autonomy for actors on the ground, evaluation, messaging aligned with the actions of CVE programming, and accurate assigning of resources and authorities. Many of these are only impossible without, and all would benefit significantly from, interagency coordination. The DSB Task Force found that massive collaboration is essential for successful CVE: “Successfully countering violent extremism abroad requires a multilateral approach in which the USG needs to leverage its diverse partnerships to bring a complementary package of authorities, resources, and expertise to bear against this challenging and evolving threat.”⁶⁸ The Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) published a CVE strategy in 2016 to offer the next administration a comprehensive guide to CVE.⁶⁹ The report emphasizes the urgent need for greater resources, and an effective operation, with solid coordination, to funnel them

⁶⁸ Department of Defense Defense Science Board, “Task Force on Department of Defense Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism Outside of the United States,” April, 2015, 1, <https://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2010s/DSB-CVE-FinalReport-April172015.pdf>

⁶⁹ Shannon N. Green and Keith Proctor, “Turning Point: A New Comprehensive Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism,” *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, November, 2016, https://csis-ilab.github.io/cve/report/Turning_Point.pdf

into. It underlines the necessity of developing extensive partnerships with those outside the U.S. government and constructing more effective interagency coordination, where previous efforts were fragmented.⁷⁰ Also in 2016, DoS released a joint CVE strategy with USAID, which emphasizes the need to further understand the plethora of origins of VE, and for wholehearted cooperation between DoS and USAID.⁷¹ Such coordination is challenged by an administration hostile to CVE. Although, as mentioned earlier, State's approved funding for CVE in 2017 was its highest yet, so support for CVE in Congress clearly supersedes the fluctuations of administration cycles. Given the distinct entities that have posited CVE strategies entirely separately – the DSB on behalf of DoD, and USAID jointly with DoS – one may reasonably assume that interagency communication on the issue of CVE is lacking.

Bureaucratic Structure

Part of the problem with CVE coordination is institutional and structural. The U.S. executive bureaucracy is comprised of cabinet departments, independent executive agencies, independent regulatory agencies, and government organizations, as well as departments and commissions, many of which exist under the umbrellas of larger entities. Each of these has its own set of interests, incentives, and expertise. Secretaries of cabinet departments are political appointees and report directly to the President, while some

⁷⁰ Ibid., Executive Summary, 10, 24.

⁷¹ United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development, "Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism," May, 2016. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FINAL%20--%20State%20and%20USAID%20Joint%20Strategy%20on%20Countering%20Violent%20Extremism%20%28May%202016%29.pdf>

undersecretaries are permanent.⁷² The bureaucracy is structured such that instructions are passed to or formulated by the Secretaries, then passed down through their respective agencies. This ‘stove pipe’ structure inhibits effective coordination between agencies.⁷³ Further, overlapping mandates or unclear allocation of responsibility incites friction as each agency directly competes with others for greater budgets and operational space.⁷⁴ Each cabinet agency originated in response to the needs of the time in which it formed. For example, the Cold War resulted in DoD, NSC, and CIA, and 9/11 resulted in DHS.⁷⁵ Each agency had a primary focus in its nascent period, and given that it was formulated in response to a specific crisis or need, was largely suited to effectively function in those circumstances. Threats have evolved significantly, yet the institutional structures have failed to keep up. “The ‘outdated bureaucratic superstructure’ of the 20th century is an inadequate basis for protecting the nation from 21st century security challenges.”⁷⁶ New threats are not specially constructed to suit a particular agency’s area of expertise, and thus combatting them requires the capacities of multiple agencies in unity. The present bureaucratic structure impedes the necessary level of coordination. Although there are formal and informal constructs for interagency coordination “Agencies do not coordinate

⁷² “The Federal Bureaucracy: What is it and how is it organized?,” <http://www.uky.edu/~jafine2/bureaucracy.htm>; “The Organization of the Bureaucracy,” <http://www.ushistory.org/gov/8b.asp>

⁷³ Kenneth R. Dahl, “New Security for New Threats: The Case for Reforming the Interagency Process,” *Brookings Institute*, July, 2007, Executive Summary, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/dahl20070731.pdf>

⁷⁴ Philip J. Ryan, “The 3-D Planning Process: Does it Work?” *United States Army War College*, January 4, 2016, <http://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/936.pdf>

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Catherine Dale, Nina M. Serafino, and Pat Towell, “Organizing the U.S. Government for National Security: Overview of the Interagency Reform Debates,” *Congressional Research Service*, December 16, 2008, Summary, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34455.pdf>

sufficiently, in Washington or the field, on planning or execution of national security activities.”⁷⁷

Like many state-built structures before it, components of the interagency emerged largely as a result of war.⁷⁸ The present Departments of State and Defense have grown immensely since World War II.⁷⁹ The Department of State (DoS) grew from 1228 employees in 1900 to about 70000 in 2017.⁸⁰ The Department of Defense (DoD) evolved into its present form with the 1947 National Security Act and its amendments – establishing the Secretary of Defense’s role above individual military branches. That legislation also created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Council (NSC).⁸¹ As agencies grow so do their areas of responsibility, and with them, the complexity of facilitating interagency coordination.

State of the Interagency

The interagency is composed of the threads connecting each agency within the U.S. government. Any actions or operations comprising multiple agencies falls under the banner of the interagency. Rather than being a single entity, the interagency is simply the method by which certain actions are taken, leaving the definition rather broad. There are few formal interagency coordination mechanisms. One of the primary issues in defining the interagency stems from its essence – as it is not an entity but a process, interagency cooperation is largely unstructured and fluid, dependent entirely on the actors involved

⁷⁷ Ibid., 9

⁷⁸ Gabriel Marcella, “Affairs of State: The Interagency and National Security,” Strategic Studies Institute, December, 2008, 5, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2009/ssi_marcella.pdf

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Julia Ioffe, “The State of Trump’s State Department,” *The Atlantic*, March 1, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/03/state-department-trump/517965/>

⁸¹ U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian, “National Security Act of 1947,” <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/national-security-act>

for its success. Further, as the number of actors in an interagency operation or decision-making process increases, the speed of consensus-reaching falls significantly.⁸²

The most prominent interagency entity, albeit one technically without power, is the National Security Council (NSC), its subcommittees (variously called Policy Coordination Committees (PCCs) or Interagency Working Groups (IWGs)) and any subordinate working groups they establish.⁸³ Although it is only an advisory body, thus lacking formal authority, the NSC brings together representatives, who possess authority in their respective agencies, from a large cross-section of government entities to direct matters of national security. The NSC is ineffective at enabling sustained interagency operations, but effectively facilitates dialogue between agencies when formulating national security policy.⁸⁴ Below the NSC are interagency committees (PCCs or IWGs) – those with senior level members may be chaired by an NSC official.⁸⁵ Interagency committees may be formed to gain a variety of perspectives on a range of issues, from the invasion of another state to minor diplomatic incidents.⁸⁶

The U.S. interagency framework is constructed to facilitate greater effectiveness of U.S. policy implementation through specialization and coordination.⁸⁷ A paper from

⁸² Ronald E. Neumann, “Demystifying the Interagency Process and Explaining the Ambassador’s Role,” *Interagency Journal* 6, No. 3 (Summer 2015): 3-4, <http://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IAJ-6-3-Summer-2015.pdf>

⁸³ Jordan Brunner, “NSPM 2—Organization of the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council: A Summary,” *Lawfare Blog*, January 28, 2017, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/nspm-2%E2%80%94organization-national-security-council-and-homeland-security-council-summary>

⁸⁴ John Deutch, Arnold Kanter, and Brent Scowcroft, “Strengthening the National Security Interagency Process,” *Belfer Center*, https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/chapter_10.pdf

⁸⁵ Alan G. Whittaker, Frederick C. Smith, and Elizabeth McKune, “The National Security Policy Process: The National Security Council and Interagency System,” National Defense University, November 2008, 17, 36-38.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Gabriel Marcella, “Affairs of State: The Interagency and National Security,” Strategic Studies Institute, December, 2008, 25, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2009/ssi_marcella.pdf

the Strategic Studies Institute declares the interagency is inextricably bound by “functional interdependence.”⁸⁸ Each agency has its own capabilities in which it is most skilled and experienced. The interagency exists to facilitate the application of the greatest depth and breadth of skills to national security objectives. “It is an iron rule of the interagency that *no national security or international affairs issue can be resolved by one agency alone.*”⁸⁹ In particular, DoD and DoS rely on mutual and complementary capabilities, and that of the intelligence community, to most effectively implement U.S. foreign policy.⁹⁰ Although the scope of this thesis is not domestic, and thus will focus largely on global interactions between DoD, DoS, USAID, and the Intelligence Community (IC), interagency coordination is essential for the effective functioning of many aspects of government, including border operations and emergency response.⁹¹

Interagency cooperation is mired in conflict, as agencies are constantly competing for funding and operational space.⁹² The informal and loose structure of the interagency means cooperation that does occur is largely voluntary and rarely consistent. Bob Ulin of the Simons Center writes that many confuse the interagency for an actual ‘entity.’ “In fact, it’s an elusive concept of voluntary associations of federal departments and agencies, each having its own culture, operating procedures, jargon and rules.”⁹³ Ulin

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Emergency Communications: Establishment of the Emergency Communications Preparedness Center and Related Interagency Coordination Challenges,” GAO-10-463R, <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10463r.pdf>; U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism, *Combating Border Violence: The Role of Interagency Coordination in Investigations*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., 2009; U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Border Security: Enhanced DHS Oversight and Assessment of Interagency Coordination Is Needed for the Northern Border,” GAO-11-97, December 2010, <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1197.pdf>

⁹² Bob Ulin, “About Interagency Cooperation,” *Simons Center*, September 2010, 2, <http://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/IAE-10-01.pdf>

⁹³ Ibid.

writes that the root of interagency issues lies in the lack of positions with authority across departments, aside from the President.⁹⁴ State’s “Chief of Mission authority is the only formal inter-department executive authority in existence below the President.”⁹⁵ However, combatant commands integrate interagency advisors to varying degrees.⁹⁶ U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has “over 30 representatives from more than 10 federal agencies... [who] are placed through the command and embedded directly with DoD staff.”⁹⁷ According to Ulin, the only other true interagency organizations are the Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATFs).⁹⁸ Kenneth Dahl, a colonel in the U.S. Army, authored a paper for Brookings in which he scathingly criticizes the state of the interagency.⁹⁹ The issues he raises are similar to those Ulin broaches – the structure of the federal government inhibits effective interagency cooperation.¹⁰⁰ The vertical nature of the federal government results in difficulty communicating between agencies.¹⁰¹ Dahl posits that successful interagency cooperation will only be possible with comprehensive reform similar to that accomplished by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act.¹⁰²

The incentive structure of the executive branch requires agencies to compete for funding and operational space, causing persistent underlying, or overt, tension regardless

⁹⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁶ “Interagency cooperation brings results for Combatant Commands,” *Simons Center for Interagency Cooperation*, May 16, 2012, <http://thesimonscenter.org/interagency-cooperation-bring-results-for-combatant-commands/>

⁹⁷ U.S. Africa Command, “Interagency Staff,” <http://www.africom.mil/about-the-command/directorates-and-staff/interagency-staff>

⁹⁸ Bob Ulin, “About Interagency Cooperation,” *Simons Center*, September 2010, 3, <http://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/IAE-10-01.pdf>

⁹⁹ Kenneth R. Dahl, “New Security for New Threats: The Case for Reforming the Interagency Process,” *Brookings Institution*, July 2007, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/dahl20070731.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰² Ibid., 3.

of the benefits of cooperation. In 2017, DoS' share of overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding (between DoD and DoS) was 24%, far higher than the 7% it had remained at since 2001.¹⁰³ Despite the increased awareness of the need for funding DoS in 2017, the Trump Administration appears intent on refocusing funding on the military. The President's 2018 budget allocates over \$1 trillion more in discretionary spending to defense programs than non-defense programs over the next four years, with the chasm growing larger over time.¹⁰⁴ Funding is a critical influence on how the U.S. conducts foreign policy. Interagency dynamics are shaped by the militarization of foreign policy as a function of congressional funding preferences, distribution of resources, and cultural gaps manifesting as differing incentives for short-term fixes over long-term programming. With such great obstacles standing in the way of effective interagency coordination – disproportionate favor for the military in terms of funding and allocation of responsibility, cultural boundaries, and bureaucratic inefficiencies – one would be surprised to find it at all. Thus, it is essential to examine interagency coordination where it operates effectively, and ascertain how it may be transposed to CVE.

¹⁰³ Lynn M. Williams and Susan B. Epstein, "Overseas Contingency Operations Funding: Background and Status," *Congressional Research Service*, February 7, 2017, 24, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R44519.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Office of Management and Budget, "Budget of the U.S. Government: Fiscal Year 2018," May 23, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/budget.pdf>

Chapter 3: Effective Interagency Coordination - Joint Interagency Task Force–South

A paper from National Defense University’s *Strategic Perspectives* expresses the widespread intragovernmental view that Joint Interagency Task Force–South (JIATF–South or JIATF-S) is the “gold standard for interagency cooperation.”¹⁰⁵ Among other things, JIATF–South’s primary mission is to “promote regional security cooperation and coordinate US country-team and partner-nation counternarcotics initiatives.”¹⁰⁶ JIATF–South is responsible for “more than 40 percent of global cocaine interdiction” and seizes more than five times as much cocaine as the rest of the U.S. government combined.¹⁰⁷ In the above paper, Evan Munsing and Christopher Lamb attribute JIATF–South’s great success to seamless interagency coordination, as does the rest of the U.S. government, given that up to 10,000 people are hosted by JIATF–South in an attempt to gain insight into the Task Force’s success.¹⁰⁸ The commander of U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) praised JIATF–South in the highest manner, citing it as the model for all ‘whole of government’ efforts.¹⁰⁹ JIATF–South’s interagency operations are no minor collaboration. JIATF–South consists of “4 branches of the military, 9 different agencies, and 11 partner nations.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, “Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success,” *Strategic Perspectives* 5, June, 2011, 1, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Robert S. Pope, “Interagency Task Forces: The Right Tools for the Job,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Summer, 2011, 118, http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-05_Issue-2/Pope.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, “Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success,” *Strategic Perspectives* 5, June, 2011, 3, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.



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JIATF-South was no sudden miracle, no chance stumble onto a magic formula of interagency efficacy. It evolved in stages, beginning with executive and legislative agreement that drug trafficking was a threat to U.S. national security.¹¹² The final predecessor was a troubled Joint Task Force: JTF-4, plagued by issues of differing communication procedures, approach to objectives, opaque authority structures, and lack of integration of intelligence and kinetic operations. The Joint Task Force was somewhat

¹¹¹ Ibid., 5.

¹¹² Ibid., 6-10.

successful in its mission, although this was despite its lack of interagency coordination, not because it held a semblance of it.¹¹³

JIATF–South was crafted under the Clinton administration, during a review of national strategy on drug operations.¹¹⁴ Improved collaboration was spawned by a massive slash in resources, forcing the Task Force to more precise in its actions, thereby relying heavily on human intelligence. Subsequently, intelligence became fused with kinetic operations, eliminating a major flaw of JTF–4.¹¹⁵ Organizations engaging in non-kinetic activities may draw lessons from this close cooperation insofar as the analysis supporting an organization’s efforts must be done by those with an intimate knowledge of the requirements of the operating environment and the capacity of their organization.

Christopher Lamb’s paper extracted the most important, generalizable factors that are essential to JIATF-S’s success. For interagency success, there must be a lead agency, and agencies involved must have incentives for pursuing the mission. Further, the problem being tackled must be clear, “with a meaningful and measurable outcome.”¹¹⁶ Lamb states that understanding agency partners is important – understanding partner strengths and weaknesses allows a more productive relationship. What he implies without stating is that interagency success relies on overcoming cultural boundaries separating partner agencies. Operation success also relies on developing networks beyond primary partners to interested parties that can support the operation. Finally, a successful interagency operation requires resources.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Ibid., 13-16.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 18.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 23-30.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 84.

Where individuals originate from a variety of parent agencies, incentives are difficult to reconcile. To create an environment where individual goals align with that of the Task Force, JIATF–South personnel are all evaluated by those on the Task Force, not their parent agency.¹¹⁸ Dr. John Fishel, an expert on civil-military relations, attributes JIATF–South’s success to its organizational structure – citing the power wielded by the Task Force commander over individuals from other agencies as an essential ingredient to effective functioning. He writes: “The real reason JIATF-S works is that it is structurally an organization that has unity of command. The director is a commander with the authority to hire and fire, as well as to task, organize, and direct actions.”¹¹⁹

Munsing and Lamb examine JIATF–South’s interagency success through “10 variables drawn from the organization and management literature on cross-functional teams.”¹²⁰ The variables exist along a spectrum, from ‘organizational-level’ to ‘individual-level.’ The broadest of the variables encapsulates the environment an organization exists in, meaning efficacy can rely on variables outside of an agency’s control. At the other end of the spectrum lies factors relevant to single people, yet may drastically impact the success of a mission.¹²¹ One notable quality, given the conflicting nature of agency incentives across the government, is JIATF–South’s sole leadership role in its operating area. It is the only entity authorized to “perform detection and monitoring

¹¹⁸ Robert S. Pope, “Interagency Task Forces: The Right Tools for the Job,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Summer, 2011, 119, http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-05_Issue-2/Pope.pdf

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹²⁰ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, “Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success,” *Strategic Perspectives* 5, June, 2011, 31-32, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

within its 42-million-square-mile operating area.”¹²² Although its authority does not officially extend beyond that, any entity with a similar objective to JIATF–South is compelled to cooperate to some degree, then drawn into JIATF–South’s fold due to effective leadership.¹²³ An additional note is that representatives from outside agencies in JIATF–South usually hold a high enough rank that they may speak and act on their agency’s behalf.¹²⁴ Further, partner agencies often remarked that they were willing to cooperate because JIATF–South provided “a great return on their investment,” giving credit for interdictions to their partners.¹²⁵ As the authority of Joint Task Forces is “largely voluntary,” those agencies participating do so at their own discretion, yet are willing to submit given the proven efficacy of the JIATF model.¹²⁶ JIATF–South demonstrates that a strong lead organization facilitates more effective operations by streamlining and decreasing redundancy.

JIATF–South structured teams to maximize effectiveness, directing resources towards what proved effective, in its case, “diverse intelligence collection,” while allowing internal fluidity in the face of an adapting threat.¹²⁷ Munsen and Lamb point to JIATF–South’s unique “set of detailed interagency and international standard operating procedures... a 600-page manual that is updated on almost a daily basis and translated into several languages... based on years of practice and experimentation, but also on

¹²² *Ibid.*, 39.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 39-41.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹²⁶ Robert S. Pope, “Interagency Task Forces: The Right Tools for the Job,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Summer, 2011, 120, http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-05_Issue-2/Pope.pdf

¹²⁷ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, “Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success,” *Strategic Perspectives* 5, June, 2011, 46, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>

careful negotiations that demonstrate respect for other organizational practices.”¹²⁸

Important phrases have single definitions and no swaying from the procedures is permitted.¹²⁹ In JIATF–South’s role as leader in counternarcotics in their operational space, it sets detailed guidelines for how it and its affiliates must operate, and mandates communication in a style all actors can understand. Unity of command is at the core of JIATF–S’s success. The Task Force retains tactical control of all assets provided by other agencies.

Frustrated with agencies rotating officers through JIATF–South right as they fully adjust to the situation, the Task Force requires personnel to stay for at least a year, preferably longer, and maintains a core of civilians, some of whom have worked there for over 20 years. In terms of the social dynamic of JIATF–South, “there is no substitute for physical proximity and personal interaction.”¹³⁰ Further, JIATF–South “is one of the relatively rare interagency entities that emphasizes new member training.”¹³¹ JIATF–South stresses the necessity of personnel longevity and networks of relationships in operational success.

Joint Interagency Task Forces serve as a bridge between policy and operational and tactical-level operations. James McLay, a lieutenant commander in the Coast Guard, the branch of the military most involved in JIATF–South, writes that Joint Interagency Task Forces, particularly JIATF–South, serve as a “striking exception” to the many

¹²⁸ Ibid., 46-47.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 47.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 48.

¹³¹ Ibid., 58.

operational failures that occur as a result of a chasm between the policy-making level and the operational-level, and the subsequent “lack of unity of effort.”¹³²

Applying JIATF-S Lessons to Interagency Coordination on CVE

JIATF–South serves as an effective model for interagency operations, even those pertaining to CVE. One may question the applicability of JIATF–South’s experience to CVE if the Task Force focused solely on counternarcotics. However, Rear Admiral Towney, leader of JIATF–South, explained that JIATF–South’s mission is now something far broader: “We are an interagency and international coalition, brought together by a tactical mission, working to facilitate the eventual dismantlement of large criminal enterprises aimed at undermining stability and security in the Western Hemisphere.”¹³³ JIATF-S’s success also heavily relies on an extensive network beyond merely the US interagency. Rear Admiral Tomney states: “JIATF South seeks to continually develop closer relationships with all of our partner nations... to facilitate two primary goals: 100 percent domain awareness and an unprecedented degree of information coordination.”¹³⁴ Joint Task Forces’ networks enable their capabilities, a lesson equally applicable to other interagency processes. “The USG interagency process requires the JTF HQ to be especially flexible, responsive, and cognizant of the capabilities of USG agencies, IGOs, the HN, and NGOs.”¹³⁵

¹³² James M. McLay, “Joint Interagency Task Forces; the right model to combat Transnational Organized Crime?,” U.S. Naval War College, May 18th, 2015, 2, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1001934.pdf>

¹³³ Claudia Sánchez-Bustamante, “JIATF South, an Interagency and International Coalition With A Tactical Mission,” *Diálogo*, April 5, 2017, <https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/jiatf-south-interagency-and-international-coalition-tactical-mission>

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Norman M. Wade, *JFODS5: The Joint Forces Operations & Doctrine SMARTbook*, Lightning Press excerpts, <https://www.thelightningpress.com/joint-interagency-task-force-jiatf/>

JIATF South offers insight into effective interagency coordination. It facilitates coordination between agencies and nations at the tactical and operational level, and bridges the gap between policy-making and the operational and tactical levels. JIATFs act as incubators for experience, facilitating efficient passage of relevant knowledge and skills to newcomers and between those working together. JIATF South's structure and area of operation bears some similarities with CVE programs. Given CVE programming is unique to each environment, the ways in which relevant actors must coordinate somewhat reflect that of JIATF South.

Referring back to the requirements for CVE, an effective CVE operation needs: deep knowledge of local culture and societal structures; autonomy for those on the ground to more effectively use their expertise; matching "CVE responsibilities to authorities, resources, and accesses;"¹³⁶ ensuring CVE actions are aligned with messaging campaigns; a lead agency; most importantly, CVE requires resources and coordination to effectively apply relevant skills where they're needed most in the complex mass of operations that may comprise CVE.

JIATF-S demonstrated a capacity to fulfill, or improve the conduct of, many of the requirements of CVE. JIATF-S relied on developing networks beyond primary partners; CVE relies entirely on an enactor's capacity to develop and strengthen communal networks. Cultural friction between agencies is an obstacle of interagency coordination, one that JIATF-S navigates well. To create an environment where individual goals align with that of the Task Force, JIATF-South personnel are all

¹³⁶ Department of Defense Defense Science Board, "Task Force on Department of Defense Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism Outside of the United States," April, 2015, 2, <https://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2010s/DSB-CVE-FinalReport-April172015.pdf>

evaluated by those on the Task Force, not their parent agency.¹³⁷ Further, DoD's authority as lead agency, and JIATF-S' unity of command under its commander, ensure smooth operations. JIATF-S's 600-page operational manual is updated daily and maintains a nuanced awareness of its partner's practices, while ensuring unity of effort and effective communication.¹³⁸ To ensure efficient operations, representatives from outside agencies may usually act on their agency's behalf, without needing to constantly refer back to a superior.¹³⁹ Participation in JIATF-S is voluntary – partners are drawn in by its success and resources. Any actors with similar objectives to JIATF-S thus cooperate with it to some extent, then are drawn further into JIATF-S' fold due to its efficacy. CVE would benefit from a similar effect, drawing in organizations with similar goals to combine resources and expertise. CVE requires applying the most relevant skills to operations – as CVE is still evolving, effective CVE requires the ability to adapt to incoming knowledge and constantly changing circumstances. JIATF-S structured teams to maximize effectiveness, directing resources towards what proved effective, while allowing internal fluidity in the face of an adapting threat.¹⁴⁰ Finally, a successful interagency operation, and a more effective CVE operation, requires resources.¹⁴¹

JIATF-S offers ingredients for successful CVE that are generalizable to the point of being applicable to the CVE interagency environment. The most significant additions

¹³⁷ Robert S. Pope, "Interagency Task Forces: The Right Tools for the Job," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Summer, 2011, 119, http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-05_Issue-2/Pope.pdf

¹³⁸ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, "Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success," *Strategic Perspectives* 5, June, 2011, 46-47, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

to CVE operations, if they were to follow the JIATF-S model, would be: greater resources, more effective coordination, and better information-sharing.

Chapter 4: Interagency Coordination on CVE

In their Joint Strategy, DoS and USAID clearly define CVE, the methods they foresee enhancing CVE, and the measures by which they will evaluate their progress. They appear to be the primary drivers of U.S. international CVE, meaning evaluation of CVE coordination will likely rely on their framework and perspectives. The document defines CVE, claiming it “refers to proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence.”¹⁴² The document reiterates the respective CVE strategy of each entity, considering two primary targets: the underlying reasons for an individual being vulnerable to radicalization, and the platforms used by extremist groups for recruitment. The document supports CVE being part of a grander development strategy, promoting “good governance and the rule of law.”¹⁴³ Neither agency is taking a leadership role in CVE abroad. They each conduct their own operations respectively, stating they intend to coordinate their efforts. The strategy fails to mention interagency collaboration until the last few paragraphs, in which it adds that “a working group of core State, USAID, and interagency stakeholders will oversee and coordinate implementation of this strategy.”¹⁴⁴ As far this author can find, such a working group has yet to be formed. The experience of

¹⁴² United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development, “Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism,” May, 2016, 4. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FINAL%20--%20State%20and%20USAID%20Joint%20Strategy%20on%20Countering%20Violent%20Extremism%20%28May%202016%29.pdf>

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 12.

JIATF-S accurately predicted that the lack of a strong lead agency inhibits interagency coordination – CVE suffers from a vacuum of leadership.

The 2015 *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* suggests that DoS and USAID prioritize CVE over all other aims. It places “Preventing and Mitigating Conflict and Violent Extremism” as the first priority.¹⁴⁵ The document emphasizes the need for interagency cooperation, beginning both subsections of the CVE “strategic priorities” summary by stating its intention to fulfill its CVE objectives via cooperation with relevant partners.¹⁴⁶ Either DoS and USAID have lost interest in CVE since 2016, or the agencies are strategically wording their strategies for survival under a tough administration.

State’s Joint Strategic Plan with USAID for 2018-2022 outlines its general strategy, with a few mentions of countering violent extremism.¹⁴⁷ However, if the respective agencies’ interest in CVE, or their commitment to collaboration, is to be judged by the frequency of CVE mentions in the document, then CVE appears as a low priority. Though one must consider the precarious position both agencies find themselves in under President Trump’s administration. DoS and USAID reworded their priorities in their most recent strategy to appeal the present administration – this may explain the apparent downplaying of CVE. No such issue appears to arise in the case of JIATF-S and counternarcotic operations.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Enduring Leadership in a Dynamic World,” 2015, 10, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/267396.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, “Joint Strategic Plan: FY 2018 – 2022,” February, 2018, 28, 35, 38, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277156.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Counternarcotics: Overview of U.S. Efforts in the Western Hemisphere,” October, 2017, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/687736.pdf>

In 2015, DoS invested in developing the RESOLVE Network, an organization of researchers dedicated to improving CVE.¹⁴⁹ The RESOLVE Network’s library “contains 2,395 documents from the 1990s to 2017” on topics relevant to CVE programming.¹⁵⁰ State’s commitment to CVE research places it in a suitable spot for leading CVE policy, but its leadership would be restricted to that of CVE strategy and tactics by its lack of capacity and resources – it does not have the capacity to lead an operation like JIATF-S – leaving the complex and costly job of coordinating implementation to the only agency capable of it – DoD.

According to GAO, the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) demonstrates aspects of productive interagency coordination in a CVE program. Two of the more advanced points in GAO’s interagency checklist are worth noting, as they are the first markers on GAO’s checklist that would display actual implementation of interagency coordination, not merely the spoken intention for it, and are not found in the TSCTP: 1) “leverage their resources;” 2) “establish compatible procedures to operate across agency boundaries.”¹⁵¹ Surely interagency coordination is minimal until these steps, as yet unreached by DoS and USAID, are attempted. Both of these items are integral to the success of JIATF-S, and should be pursued in the case of CVE.

GAO gives significant credit to surprisingly minor steps in interagency coordination. If GAO’s checklist is to be regarded as an establishment of effective

¹⁴⁹ “RESOLVE Network; Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism,” *United States Institute for Peace*, <https://www.usip.org/programs/resolve-network-researching-solutions-violent-extremism>

¹⁵⁰ Andrew Glazard and Eric Rosand, “Is It All Over for CVE?” *Lawfare*, June 11, 2017, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/it-all-over-cve>

¹⁵¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Combating Terrorism: U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management,” July, 2008, 19, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664337.pdf>

interagency collaboration, GAO regards creating a joint-strategy document as important a step as those actions mentioned above. GAO remarks that the presence of such a document helps agencies “overcome differences in missions, cultures, and established ways of doing business; help agencies align activities and resources; and can reinforce agency accountability.”¹⁵² While missing a joint-strategy is certainly a mistake, one that undoubtedly impedes agencies’ ability to operate together effectively, possessing one is no guarantee that agencies implement its intentions. Further, a joint-strategy may also be so broad that it fails to apply accurately to local operating environments. Perhaps the steps taken toward interagency coordination are significant for agencies without the capacity for implemented coordination. GAO even writes that coordination between agencies in TSCTP was filled with friction over a variety of operational matters.¹⁵³ By giving excessive credit for minor interagency actions, GAO fails to motivate a pursuit of effective interagency coordination in CVE.

What does Implementation Look Like Presently? – A Glance at Africa

In a 2015 press release, the White House announced its intention to engage fully with CVE efforts in East Africa, budgeting \$40 million to that end.¹⁵⁴ The same press release details all CVE initiatives in East Africa. A major CVE initiative in the region is DoS’ Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT), a long-term

¹⁵² Ibid., 20.

¹⁵³ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership,” July, 2008, 3-4, <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08860.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ U.S. White House Office of the Press Secretary, “FACT SHEET: U.S. Support for Peace, Security, and Countering Violent Extremism in Africa,” July 27, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/07/27/fact-sheet-us-support-peace-security-and-countering-violent-extremism>

capacity building initiative across 10 East African countries.¹⁵⁵ PREACT's strategy was drafted by DoS in 2009 in response to the 2011 *U.S. National Strategy for Counterterrorism*.

PREACT was designed to be the U.S. government initiative for long-term engagement and capacity building to combat evolving terrorist threats in East Africa... The PREACT program is managed by State's regional Bureau of African Affairs, but draws on the expertise of several other bureaus and U.S. agencies to implement its activities.¹⁵⁶

PREACT targets multiple sectors, including: the “military, law enforcement, and civilian actors,” attempting to expand their capacity and encourage cooperation.¹⁵⁷ PREACT's activities range from enhancing police force capacity to training teachers to identify vulnerable individuals.¹⁵⁸ For partner-nation military capacity building, DoS “generally implements activities through DOD's AFRICOM.”¹⁵⁹ DoS has also funded USAID programs targeting disenfranchised youth in Kenya and Somalia using PREACT funds.¹⁶⁰ Further, the DoS Bureau of African Affairs “[convenes] a routine working group with relevant State bureaus and U.S. agencies.” The working group is used to report on, and evaluate, PREACT activities.¹⁶¹ The interagency coordination displayed in PREACT is a great first step. However, GAO reports that, even though DoS formed a working group to direct, track and evaluate PREACT activities, “PREACT... lacks comprehensive

¹⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Programs and Initiatives*, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#PREACT>

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Combating Terrorism: State Department Can Improve Management of East Africa Program,” June, 2014, 7, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664126.pdf>

¹⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Programs and Initiatives*, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#PREACT>

¹⁵⁸ Charles Johnson Jr., “Podcast on Counterterrorism Efforts in Africa,” *United States Government Accountability Office*, June 25, 2014, <https://blog.gao.gov/2014/06/25/podcast-on-counterterrorism-efforts-in-africa/>

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Combating Terrorism: State Department Can Improve Management of East Africa Program,” June, 2014, 10, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664126.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

documentation of factors considered when selecting activities and does not routinely maintain information on the status of PRACT activities or funding.”¹⁶² Further, PRACT has mismanaged funds in a surprising manner: “GAO discovered that State mistakenly allocated PRACT funds to Mauritius, which is not a PRACT partner, and the managing bureau was unaware of \$3 million in unobligated balances in Antiterrorism Assistance that are no longer available for obligation.”¹⁶³ Such issues have not arisen in JIATF-S, suggesting more cohesive interagency coordination may be a factor in preventing their emergence.

Another State-led CVE program is the Security Governance Initiative (SGI), which aims to address the security challenges of partner nations, with a deep understanding of the major issues in each environment through cooperation with civil society.¹⁶⁴ SGI places emphasis on the thorough coordination of all actors involved in the capacity building process: SGI “promotes both U.S. and partner whole-of-government coordination to comprehensively address complex security issues.”¹⁶⁵ Other regional CVE programs include USAID’s Yes Youth Can! in Kenya, which promotes youth economic empowerment and leadership,¹⁶⁶ and USAID’s Transition Initiative for Stabilization (TIS) and Strategic Response Activity (SRA), which aim to enhance relationships between “civilian government officials, community leaders and civil

¹⁶² Ibid., Executive Summary.

¹⁶³ Ibid., Executive Summary.

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Security Governance Initiative: 2016 Review,” 2016, 2, <https://ne.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2017/05/SGI-2016-Review.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Security Governance Initiative: 2016 Review,” 2016, 2, <https://ne.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2017/05/SGI-2016-Review.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ United States Agency for International Development, “Yes Youth Can Central Fact Sheet,” September, 2014, <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1860/yes-youth-can-central>

society.”¹⁶⁷ The White House CVE press release sums CVE activity in the region to include: enhancing cooperation between security sectors, civilian governments, and communities; “strengthening the capacity and networks of civil society;” increasing opportunities for communities to “positively intervene and disrupt the cycle of radicalization to violence.”¹⁶⁸

SIGI’s 2015 review declares that DoS setup an interagency office for coordinating efforts pertaining to SIGI.¹⁶⁹ In the 2016 review, little mention is made of interagency collaboration, and certainly not to the scale posited in the previous year. The 2016 review notes that interagency workshops took place with Ghana to “improve interagency collaboration and enhance the coordination of international maritime security efforts.”¹⁷⁰ Yes Youth Can!, TIS, and SRA documents do not mention interagency collaboration, although Yes Youth Can! is implemented by Mercy Corps in conjunction with local government partners.¹⁷¹ The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago conducted an extensive review of Yes Youth Can!, using focus groups and collecting information from 10,000 impacted youth.¹⁷² NORC found that Yes Youth Can! “led to improvements in youth self-esteem, improved relations between youth and their

¹⁶⁷ U.S. White House Office of the Press Secretary, “FACT SHEET: U.S. Support for Peace, Security, and Countering Violent Extremism in Africa,” July 27, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/07/27/fact-sheet-us-support-peace-security-and-countering-violent-extremism>

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Security Governance Initiative: 2015 review,” 2015, 3, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/254115.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Security Governance Initiative: 2016 Review,” 2016, 5, <https://ne.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2017/05/SIGI-2016-Review.pdf>

¹⁷¹ U.S. Agency for International Development, “Yes Youth Can Central Fact Sheet,” October 21, 2014, <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1860/yes-youth-can-central>

¹⁷² “Impact Evaluation of USAID ‘Yes Youth Can!’ – Kenya Project,” *NORC at the University of Chicago*, <http://www.norc.org/Research/Projects/Pages/impact-evaluation-of-usaid-yes-youth-can-kenya-project.aspx>

communities and some increased political engagement.”¹⁷³ Yes Youth Can! didn’t entirely alleviate some youths’ feeling of alienation from politics, but the program built and maintained trust with the targeted community, facilitating further projects addressing any remaining vulnerabilities. USAID’s CVE fact sheet for Kenya and Somalia, the only fact sheet available for USAID CVE in Africa, makes no mention of interagency collaboration.¹⁷⁴ In USAID’s 2016-2021 East Africa Regional Development Cooperation Strategy, interagency collaboration arises significantly only once.¹⁷⁵ State’s overview of its activities in Africa concerning terrorism mention capacity building of foreign partners, but the only instance of interagency collaboration in East Africa is that of partner governments.¹⁷⁶ DoS states that Kenya’s civil society organizations play a role in CVE “often with assistance from the United States and other international partners.”¹⁷⁷

Interagency Coordination, DoD, and CVE

Resources are essential for the success of an interagency operation, as Christopher Lamb asserted, and DoD, as the largest agency by orders of magnitude involved in interagency operations, is capable of commanding the greatest resources. “JIATF-South’s requests for funds and its operating budget flow through DOD, and specifically through USSOUTHCOM... The department provides consistent budgetary support, funding the

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ U.S. Agency for International Development, “Countering Violent Extremism: Kenya, Somalia, and East Africa,” https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/CVE_Fact_Sheet_June_2017.pdf

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Agency for International Development, “East Africa Regional Development Cooperation Strategy,” <https://www.usaid.gov/east-africa-regional/rdcs>

¹⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Terrorism: Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa,” 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272229.htm>

¹⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Terrorism: Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa: Kenya,” 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272229.htm#KENYA>

headquarters, its operations and some assets, equipment, and training.”¹⁷⁸ The Office of the Secretary of Defense also advocates for the Task Force’s funding.¹⁷⁹ This is not to say that JIATF-S is wholly funded by DoD: “other organizations contribute planes and ships to operations that JIATF-South plans and runs.”¹⁸⁰ But DoD is the primary guarantor of Task Force funding.

Under the present administration, both DoS and USAID are facing assaults on their budgets.¹⁸¹ Even without the pressure of the Trump Administration, neither USAID nor DoS can presently afford an expansion of CVE programming to the scale of JIATF-S. Thus, neither DoS nor USAID are capable of running a coordinated interagency operation of the same quality as DoD. The primary limiting factor is resources – DoD underwrites the majority of JIATF-S’s costs, and neither DoS nor USAID has anything close to DoD’s resources. At best, USAID and DoS have a fraction of DoD’s experience running field operations. DoD’s wealth of experience with its JIATFs and assorted other interagency operations places it far above DoS and USAID in terms of knowledge needed for running an interagency operation.

DoD is the primary source of resources for JIATF-S. DoD has incredible levels of experience in field operations and more interagency coordination experience in security-related scenarios than any other USG actor. JIATF-S demonstrates DoD’s capacity to direct an extensive assortment of actors in a complex, fluid operation. According to the

¹⁷⁸ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, “Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success,” *Strategic Perspectives* 5, June, 2011, 36, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁸¹ Dan De Luce and Robbie Gramer, “State Department, USAID Face Drastic Budget Cut,” *Foreign Policy*, February 12, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/12/state-department-usaid-face-drastic-budget-cut-congress-military-generals-admirals-warn-against-slashing-diplomacy-budget/>

requirements of CVE and interagency coordination, it is logical to posit that DoD would be the most effective lead agency for CVE operations.

NGOs have made clear their objections to DoD involvement in CVE. Why would DoS and USAID also hesitate to implore DoD involvement? The broader context of the battle for operational space somewhat explains their lack of effort to draw DoD into CVE. The militarization of foreign policy is a pervasive issue in the USG. DoD's encroachment on State's areas of operation threatens the nature of diplomacy, and some would say its efficacy. The militarization of foreign policy is the shift toward operational and tactical control of foreign policy by the military.¹⁸² The U.S. military lacks the specific diplomatic expertise that members of the State Department have acquired over many years of diplomacy. The military "conducts diplomacy differently, towards different ends, usually simultaneously with civilian foreign policy endeavors, but not always coordinated with them."¹⁸³ The varied skillsets of DoD and DoS enable a broad range of actions, diplomatic and otherwise; it would be a mistake to impede on either agency's ability to function within its operational space. Yet some believe that is occurring: DoD is pushing out DoS. According to Franz-Stefan Gady, the perception by foreign nations that the U.S. military is now conducting U.S. diplomacy alters foreign perception of U.S. diplomacy to its detriment. As he writes in *The Diplomat*: "The militarization of U.S. foreign policy makes it more likely that other countries will perceive the United States as dangerous and hostile, and this is not in the U.S. national

¹⁸² Daniel W. Drezner, "Diplomacy is dangerous business – a fact Washington needs to remember," *Foreign Policy*, November 19, 2012, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/11/19/diplomacy-is-dangerous-business-a-fact-washington-needs-to-remember/>

¹⁸³ Jennifer Taw, Thesis Discussion.

interest.”¹⁸⁴ He points to discussions of cybersecurity with China as an example, citing Chinese reluctance being largely due to the perception that the U.S. military “dominates the discussion on cybersecurity within the U.S. government.”¹⁸⁵ Brookings supports Drezner’s point, writing “the U.S. State Department... [doesn’t have] any significant power over... deliberations on cybersecurity, nor any depth of expertise on the topic itself.”¹⁸⁶ Thus, State’s lack of resources rears itself as a critical issue. The perception is damaging, yet so is the reality. According to Franz-Stefan, the problems arising from the militarization of U.S. foreign policy are two-fold: the U.S. military encroaching on the conduct of diplomacy needlessly restricts the use of U.S. diplomatic expertise, and the perception that the U.S. military dominates foreign policy discussion results in reluctance to engage on pressing issues.¹⁸⁷

In terms of CVE, DoD is not moving to take leadership from DoS and USAID. However, DoD’s dominance of foreign policy now extends to development assistance, and this has consequences.¹⁸⁸ For example, as DoD increased its role in the dispensation of military aid to Afghanistan, most funding was shifted to the areas with greatest conflict, rather than more stable regions where the assistance would have greater effect

¹⁸⁴ Franz-Stefan Gady, “Perceptions and the Creeping Militarization of US Foreign Policy,” *The Diplomat*, January 9, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/perceptions-and-the-creeping-militarization-of-us-foreign-policy/>

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Kenneth Lieberthal and Peter W. Singer, “Cybersecurity and U.S.-China Relations,” *Brookings Institute*, February, 2012, 22, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0223_cybersecurity_china_us_lieberthal_singer_pdf_english.pdf

¹⁸⁷ Franz-Stefan Gady, “Perceptions and the Creeping Militarization of US Foreign Policy,” *The Diplomat*, January 9, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/perceptions-and-the-creeping-militarization-of-us-foreign-policy/>

¹⁸⁸ “The Pentagon as a Development Agency?” *Center for Global Development*, February 11, 2008, <https://www.cgdev.org/article/pentagon-development-agency-qa-stewart-patrick>

for the recipients.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, attacks on aid workers due to their perceived complicity with military operations have taken place from Afghanistan to Darfur.¹⁹⁰

Many in the development community believe CVE cannot be led by the military, and further, that any connection to the military undermines effective CVE. After President Obama's 2015 CVE Summit, a coalition of 40 U.S. NGOs published a statement expressing their concern that securitized responses are unsuitable for CVE, and detrimental for all development assistance.¹⁹¹ Their concerns about securitization may be split into two distinct concerns: 1) "Subordinating development assistance under a CVE approach risks undermining the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance;" 2) Military responses to threats where non-kinetic responses are more suitable only serve to exacerbate the underlying issue.¹⁹² The NGOs are concerned that the prioritization of CVE over development assistance will securitize the entire field of development. Further, the NGOs argue that a public and prominent connection between development assistance and military operations damages the efficacy of foreign aid by undermining the trust of local partners.¹⁹³ However, DoD leading CVE would be the simplest path to the capacity and interagency coordination needed for more effective programs, and enable a simpler transition to a model similar to JIATF-S. However, these improvements are threatened by the impact of further militarization of development assistance – if DoD takes the lead,

¹⁸⁹ William Easterly, "Foreign Aid Goes Military!" *Brookings*, November 6, 2008, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/foreign-aid-goes-military/>

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ "A U.S. Humanitarian, Development and Peacebuilding Statement on the U.S. Global Countering Violent Extremism Agenda," July 20, 2015, <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Statement-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

CVE projects may lose access to vulnerable communities, or the ability to gain those communities' trust.

Intelligence Community

The intelligence community would be a valuable addition to an interagency CVE operation. They play a key role in the success of JIATF-S. CVE requires deep knowledge of local politics and societal structures, but also the ability to identify which communities are most vulnerable to the radicalization efforts of violent extremists. In his book *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service*, Henry A. Crumpton, former director of the CIA, writes: "By September 2001, CTC [the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, where Crumpton worked at the time] had more than a hundred human sources operating in Afghanistan in every province and tribe. This included penetrations of the Taliban and the support networks for AQ... We had other technical collection systems in place. We knew Afghanistan, friend and foe. With the scope and integration of technical and human sources, we would be ready."¹⁹⁴ Forming teams of interagency analysts drastically improved the efficacy of counterterrorism Special Operations Forces (SOF) operations.¹⁹⁵ Cohabitation of SOF operators and intelligence analysts significantly streamlined operations and eliminated the risk of stale intelligence jeopardizing mission success.¹⁹⁶ The benefit of internal intelligence gathering is shown in JIATF-S, whose intelligence gathering capacity, and its fusion with operations, is

¹⁹⁴ Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York: Penguin Group, 2013), 160.

¹⁹⁵ Christopher Lamb, "Global SOF and Interagency Collaboration," *Journal of Strategic Security* 7, No. 2 (Summer 2014): 8-9, <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1371&context=jss>

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

credited for much of its success.¹⁹⁷ In the pursuit of effective CVE operations, DoS and USAID are lacking the intelligence gathering capacity of the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC), or at the very least timely delivery of relevant intelligence.

As beneficial as the inclusion of the IC in CVE may be, the knowledge it brings is drastically reduced in value if CVE operations do not have the resources to act on it. Simply throwing members of the IC into CVE, without constructing effective mechanisms for their involvement and providing the resources to act on its information, would be a tragic misuse of their skills and hobble their ability to perform, given how necessary extensive resources are for effective analysis of terrorist groups.¹⁹⁸ In an excerpt of *Reflections on 10 Years of Counterterrorism Analysis* hosted on the CIA's website, Jeffrey Bulita and Eric Heller, senior officers in the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA),¹⁹⁹ write that for effective interagency integration, "continuous engagement" is necessary. "This function, however, places heavy costs on organizations. One of them is the personnel grind; a second is the demand for continuity. Professionals in CT organizations are in a constant state of deployment, recovery, and preparation for redeployment."²⁰⁰ Continuing, Bulita and Heller, in reference to operations resembling CVE, write:

¹⁹⁷ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, "Joint Interagency Task Force—South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success," *Strategic Perspectives* 5, June, 2011, 23-30, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>

¹⁹⁸ Jeffrey A. Bulita and Eric N. Heller, "Reflections on 10 Years of Counterterrorism Analysis," *Studies in Intelligence* 55, No. 3 (Extracts, September 2011): 8-9, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol.-55-no.-3/pdfs/Bulita-Heller-CTBestPractices-Eversion-7-Oct-2011.pdf>

¹⁹⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Library: Studies in Intelligence: Vol. 55 No. 3," <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol.-55-no.-3/index.html>

²⁰⁰ Jeffrey A. Bulita and Eric N. Heller, "Reflections on 10 Years of Counterterrorism Analysis," *Studies in Intelligence* 55, No. 3 (Extracts, September 2011): 8-9, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol.-55-no.-3/pdfs/Bulita-Heller-CTBestPractices-Eversion-7-Oct-2011.pdf>

These kinds of operations are far more difficult to support and conduct than traditional CT operations because of the scope and the range of analytic skills and organizational entities required to carry them out...analysts and operators will have to build even more diffuse communities of interest and sources of information than are normally considered for lethal operations against terrorists.²⁰¹

If CVE operations adopted an interagency model similar to that of JIATF-S, with a well-resourced lead agency experienced in interagency field operations, the IC would fit seamlessly into CVE operations, just as it does in JIATF-S. The inclusion of the IC in an interagency CVE effort would grant deep insight to the activities, direction, and plans of violent extremist groups, facilitating a more coherent, targeted CVE program.

The Future of U.S. CVE Abroad

As nebulous a concept as CVE is, its goal is clear: combat violent extremist narratives, recruitment, and operational space, and disrupt the cycle of violence that perpetuates violent extremism. CVE operations do not take novel form – they are identical to those seen in state building and development assistance, merely securitized, only targeting communities vulnerable to predatory violent extremists. CVE has grand, ambitious goals, and is acknowledged as an essential pillar of a complete U.S. counterterrorism strategy. Yet implementation of operations working towards these goals has been lackluster. There are a couple prominent issues facing U.S. CVE abroad, in no particular order: 1) an identity crisis, and 2) a lack of coordination.

If DoD were to lead a JIATF for CVE, comparable to JIATF-S, the issues listed would be largely resolved. Interagency coordination on CVE cannot emulate the success

intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol.-55-no.-3/pdfs/Built-a-Heller-CTBestPractices-Eversion-7-Oct-2011.pdf

²⁰¹ Ibid., 11-12.

of JIATF-S without the presence of DoD. Granted, direct military involvement in presently non-militarized CVE programs may erode the trust of local partners. But CVE programming need not be conducted any more by DoD than it is currently. DoD could lead a JIATF oriented toward counterterrorism that also facilitates significantly more funding and expertise being applied to CVE. This solution presupposes a desire to commit to CVE of a grander scale, with all the associated costs that accompany it.

U.S. CVE abroad conducted by DoS and USAID fails to acknowledge that it is securitized state-building and development. As a function of its role in counterterrorism and the nature of targeting communities based purely on their vulnerability to violent extremism, CVE is securitized development in a foreign nation. Association with the military may undermine trust with local partners, but failing to acknowledge that CVE is securitized development with inherently security-related ends is to deny an obvious truth and impede CVE's evolution. This identity crisis is obscuring the fact that CVE is a shift of resources towards defense regardless of DoD's level of involvement. Given USAID and State's already limited budget in comparison to DoD, a shift in their programming away from providing assistance to those most in need, and toward only those vulnerable to violent extremist recruitment, is a funneling of funds towards DoD, whose CT goals benefit more from CVE than non-securitized development assistance. Recognizing this is important – DoS and USAID may raise the question of increased funding if they are sharing the burden of DoD-oriented missions.

If CVE is to truly accomplish its ambitious goals, those engaging in it would benefit greatly from increased coordination, and consequently, greater resources. In its current form, CVE programs have, at best, limited interagency coordination. To truly

attack the radicalization efforts of violent extremist organizations, CVE must be a coordinated effort, informed by as many expert voices the USG can muster. Notably, the inclusion of the IC would elevate information gathering. JIATF-S provides a deep look at effective interagency coordination. Transposing lessons learned at JIATF-S to CVE programming would facilitate better interagency coordination, and subsequently, CVE operations of a higher quality and efficacy.

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