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Organizational Paradox in the National Security Council in USA

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**Diseño de organizaciones
gubernamentales en situacion de alta
complejidad. Paradoja organizacional en
el Consejo de Seguridad Nacional, EU
Resumen.** El documento pretende contribuir
al estudio de la complejidad organizacional en
el diseño de organizaciones gubernamentales,
donde los criterios técnicos no siempre son
los únicos o los predominantes. El estudio se
basa en la creación del Consejo de Seguridad
Nacional de EUA después de la Segunda Guerra
Mundial. De la misma manera se busca que este
estudio de caso sea usado en cursos de
licenciatura y posgrado en ciencia política,
administración pública y relaciones
internacionales, para desarrollar capacidades de
análisis organizacional del sector público.
Palabras clave: organizaciones
gubernamentales, Consejo de Seguridad
Nacional.

Abstract. This paper contributes to the
analysis of the design of public organizations,
where the technical variable is usually not the
principal one. The case study is based on the
creation and design of the National Security
Council (NSC) in the USA after the Second
World War. It aims to be used in
undergraduate and graduate studies in
Political Science, Public Administration and
International Relations to develop case study
methods for organizational analysis of the
Public Sector.
Key words: governmental organizations,
National Security Council.

Introduction

*Paradox and Organization: A Basic Theoretical Framework
for the Study of the National Security Council*

For a long time, organizations have been developed through
irrational patterns in order to really accomplished their ob-
jectives. In these cases, the classical solutions of rationality
and order (Elster, 1979, 1983) could not explain what is
happening in the design of the organization.

Probably the complexity of organizational relationships
and the dilemmas of collective action will return after years
of extreme confidence about the capacity of the technical

and quantitative approach to resolve almost every social
problem. In the organizational arena this is expressed
by a wave of studies about the postmodern patterns (Clegg,
1990), the chaotic flows (Kiel, 1994; Ballandier, 1989)
and paradoxical situations (Quinn and Cameron, 1988),
among others.

The analytical framework that assumes, since the begin-
ning, the complexity, the conflict and power among human
relations, try to explain diverse alternatives to deal with par-
ticular situations where the classic rationality and schemes
of administrative order do not seem to explain what is going
on in a particular situation.

The case of paradoxical organizations is the one that we think match correctly in the situation this paper is about. It is possible to argue that the National Security Council (NSC) born as an organization needed to confront a paradoxical situation since the beginning.

We can define a paradox as a situation that involves contradictory, mutually exclusive elements which are present and operate equally at the same time (Quinn and Cameron, 1988: 2).

Talking in organizational terms, it is possible to find a systematic struggle between competing values: from decentralization and differentiation through centralization and integration; from competitive position through the maintenance of the socio-technical system. Flexibility and control, external focus and internal focus, are other possible ways of observing paradoxical situations within an organization. Allison and Szantos (1976: 17) explain:

> The tension between conflicting interests in organizational reform reflects the complexity of organizational objectives. All important organizational reform must seek to achieve not one or two aims, but an appropriate balance among a large number. There will inevitable be tension between parochial objectives and those of the system as a whole; between those of short-term advantage and others looking to the long term; between consistency and the ability to capitalize on special circumstances; between prompt action and the capacity to prolong the period in which choices are kept open; between the needs for secrecy and the desirability that policy be widely understood and broadly supported. Such tensions reflect the nature of government, not imperfection in policy or policy making. Organizational design must recognize and balance them, not try to eliminate them.

Every organization must negotiate with these competitive values. An organization should conserve a complex equilibrium between the control of the variables that could maintain the integration of the different actors and actions and, at the same time, in different degrees, should preserve an open perspective to change and take the risk for different goals and ways. Therefore, every organization should observe the context as a principal source of information that could be useful to adapt and constitute the separation between insiders and outsiders (Quinn and Cameron, 1988).

As Allison and Szantos (*op. cit.*: 21) observe:

> Organizational arrangement –the existence or absence of specific department or agencies, the distribution of powers among them, procedures for concurrence or consultation, the skill and forcefulness of key officials– determine whether and how

effectively particular considerations will be represented in policy making. A central question in organizational design, therefore, is which substantive perspectives should be introduced, with what weights, in the processes of decision and action.

In NSC's case, the paradox metaphor is suggestive. The NSC born with a double mission: advice the president and integrate the different branches. An organization that should integrate different organizations, not only to create formal definitions of order, but also to give precise and technically adequate advice, in a complex matter: national security. Very probably, this complexity could push this organization:

a) first to create a self-identity, very difficult when the organization is a staff built from members of different organizations

b) second to create an agreement that creates viability for the organization. If the different parts represented in the NSC do not have a feeling of be considered in the final product (the advice for the president), the life of the organization is questioned. This could push the organization to a 'perfect agreement' that probably does not have a high technical-rational study, or to a 'agreement by hegemony' where one or two of the branches are over represented in order to create stronger technical advice. Both solutions are paradoxical, the first has the danger of not be a congruent technical advice that is part of the mission; the second has the danger of not integrate the vision from different sides of the establishment that is also in the mission.

c) third, to express a very flexible structure, able to adapt itself rapidly to different alternatives. This is a paradox because the flexibility is indispensable to adapt the organizations to a changing reality stemming from different governmental branches, geopolitical situations, and policy perspectives. However this flexibility allows each president (and the situation that derives from the relationship between him and the advisers) to decide the role and transcendence of the organization, avoiding the stability of a role for creates advice and integrate parts of the establishment.

Lets analyze in more detail then the creation of the NSC in USA and discuss the paradoxical situations involved in the design of the organization, facing high levels of uncertainties in the political and bureaucratic context.

1. Overview

After the Second World War, some problems appeared evident in the administration of the USA's national security policy. The necessity for a strong cooperation between force and diplomacy was shown during the big war. Moreover,

the predominant geopolitical situation after the Japanese surrendered created the urgency to redefine the role of the new super power.

It not only was the integration between the military forces themselves, but the relationships between them and their civilian counterparts. Also, problems appeared so evident that almost everybody agreed that in such a complex situation, one man could not guide rationally all possible solutions. However, the presidency is a major institution: the president is the commander in chief of the armed forces. Assuring that he had the right information, and that he could make the 'right' (military and diplomatic) decisions, became a priority.

So, the National Security Act of 1947, tried to deal with this situation by taking action on several items. The creation of an integrated military force under the Secretary of Defense; the creation of the National Security Council as an important presidential adviser in matters of national security; the development of an integral framework for the collaboration between military agencies and civil agencies about security matters; all were principal aspirations of the Act.

This case study is about the organizational problems of designing the interagency institution called the National Security Council. The council must perform the three goals mentioned above, which pose with important challenges:

• From the side of the military, the constitutional right of the president to decide about military objectives, could be risky if the president does not possess enough information (technically speaking). Moreover, if the internal situation of the armed forces is not capable of creating sufficient cohesion, at least the necessary for give credible advice. The military institution could become only a useful 'implementing devise' that obey the policies designed by the civilians and the president, without the strength and institutional position to manage some influence.

• The relationships between the civilian part of the decision-making institutions and the military counterpart. Depending on the organizational arrangement, the civil part (basically the Department of State) could appear as the most important adviser of the president; also then, depending on the organizational structure, the Secretary of Defense (created by the 1947 Act) could appear as the most important adviser to the president. How to deal with this problem? How to create equilibrium?

• Any organizational arrangement for resolving these problems, would have to achieve one important prerequisite:

> **This case study is about the organizational problems of designing the interagency institution called the National Security Council.**

avoiding the risk of a disintegration of the minimum required consensus between the different parts of the national security establishment, assuring that the president has the 'right' (technically speaking) information. This is a very complex equilibrium to create, because any organizational arrangement of this type, could create a grave crisis inside several agencies if they feel that they are not having 'enough' attention and influence within the council. However a consensual solution could create rhetorical and insufficient advice for the president. In short: to achieve enough efficiency in the system to give the president enough (and 'correct') information, assuring at the same time the achievement of consensus avoiding the disintegration or an endemic conflict within the participant agencies within the council.

1.1. Case Study Hypothesis

a) The NSC was created for two different reasons, one rational, one political and organizational:

• To give the president rational and technical advice, and

• to integrate the different positions that exist between the several parts (military and civilian) of the national security establishment.

These are complex reasons to deal with: one pushes for unitary rational advice, the other for the integration and maybe resolution of the conflict between different rationalities (political, economic, military, diplomatic).[1]

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1. Here I'm following the categories of Allison (1971) about rationality. Allison says that within a single problematic public policy, it is possible to observe that the actors analyze and follow particular assumptions about what is to be rational. Allison identifies basically three types of rationality: technical, organizational and political. The first has its basis on the best way, the logic solution from an integrated individual or institution. Here there is not discussion of ends or objectives, only about alternatives. Also the alternatives are analyzed with technical parameters. The organizational rationality follows a different pattern: the procedure. In front of the uncertainty, the procedure, the bureaucratic support is the main basis explanation for the actors. The political rationality refers to the struggle between different interest in specific situations, where the mobilization of power and position is the main reason for design and evaluate. Each one of these rationalities have their own epistemological assumption about the knowledge and the situation, so their combination or integration are quite difficult. This does not mean that it is possible to find them in 'pure' way, but that the actors follows these patterns with very different perspectives about time, decision, space and evaluation of results, all depending on the basic decision framework which they prefer most.

b) The solution was to create an organizational arrangement, flexible and simultaneously technically precise. In other words, to create an organization that could unify the process of decision making inside the military establishment and between the civilian and the militaries. However, the organizational structure of the NSC has to resolve a paradox: to generate technical precise advice or an agreement between the different branches, each one defending different rationalities.

To observe this hypothesis I propose to analyze the circumstances of the birth of the NSC and the role that this council played during President Truman's administration. We will see as an example of this paradox, the creation of NSC memo 68 and some moments during the Korea War. NSC document 68 expressed the position of one of the branches of the establishment (State Department). As we will see, the NSC68 was created by agreement, more than for rational-technical advice and I intend to show the inevitability of the paradoxical situation: technical advice combined with the necessity of integration of different organizational and logic rationalities.

2. The Beginnings of the National Security Council
2.1. The Geopolitical Situation

Two years after the surrender of Germany in the Second World War, the allies had not yet been able to agree on the peace terms and resolve the basic problems arising in Eastern Europe. The problems with the USSR and China's revolution became a new and different kind of challenge. Also, we could mention the strife between the Moslems and Hindus; and the Arabs conflict against the Jewish inhabitants (Condit, 1979), as key problems that began to build the face of the new international order.

The Yalta conference and the formation of the United Nations created the expectative of the establishment of this new order. However, different events soon made clear that this new order would have serious problems in being realized. By the end of 1945 Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Albania and Yugoslavia imposed communist regimens with the help of the Soviet army. Defined as the Cold War, the ideological and practical struggle between the USA and the USSR, became the major piece of formation and formulation of international policy. In Germany, problems arose among the different zones of influence: American, Britain, French and Soviet. As expected, the Soviet zone built little by little the same scheme as other Easter Europe countries.

In China, by January of 1947, Marshall's mission to influence an armistice between Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao failed. Then, in China began the final revolutionary conflict that two years later would be the success of Mao.

By the early days of 1947, USA was preparing an ambitious plan for the economic rescue of Europe: the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

2.2. The Act: Intentions and Doubts

On July 27th 1947, President Truman affixed his signature to Public Law 253, the National Security Act of 1947. Two basic questions arose then: to give an institutional framework for the cooperation and coordination between the armed forces and to create an organizational design that could integrate the different visions and perspectives of persons and institutions that should conduct the national security policy (Lay and Johnson, 1960).

The National Security Act, passed by a Republican Congress and approved by a Democratic President, was intended

> [...] to provide a comprehensive program for the future security of the United States; to provide for the establishment of integrated policies and procedures for the departments, agencies, and functions of the Government relating to the national security [...] to provide for their [army, navy, air force] authoritative coordination and unified direction under the Secretary of Defense but not to merge them [...] (National Security Council Act, 1947).

As we see, the Act defined two very different problems: the integration of the national security policy and the coordination inside the armed forces and the civilian agencies. Section 101 b. of the act explains this dichotomous achievement:

> [...] it shall [...] be the duty of the Council
> *a)* to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments and risks of the US in relation to our actual and potential military power, in the interest of the national security.
> *b)* to consider policies on matters of common interest to the departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security.

Creating an integral policy in this matter means dealing with the multiple organizations and interests involved: the military and their different branches and the civilians (diplomatic, politic and intelligence).

Ultimately, all of this coordination and cooperation between different parts of the government has one basic goal: to give advice to the president. The Act says

> The function of the Council shall be to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating the national security so as enable the military services and the other departments and agencies of the

government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving the national security [...] (National Security Act, Sec. 101).

Maintaining and respecting the constitutional rights of the president to decide about matters of national security should be one of the most important objectives of any organizational design here.

This is a paradox, a combination of mutually exclusive elements. Different branches have different positions, ideas and organizational avenues. Each one could say that the 'real' and 'correct' technical advice begins inside their own structure. However, it appears that this paradox is inevitable, and the NSC must obtain a resolution. A substantive idea of the Act was to create a flexible organization that could coordinate the different parts of the national security puzzle. Advising the president requires the participation of multiple departments and organizations.

This paradoxical organization, with a flexible design, has its specific situation and problems. The basics origins of the National Security are in the debate over the future shape of the armed forces after the Second World War and the discussion about the degree to which armed services ought to be 'integrated' together (Prados, 1991). Navy and Air Force rejected the idea to create a unified institution. The Navy secretary in 1944 supported Ferdinand Eberstadt –Forrestal's close friend and confident– to realize a study about the united military establishment that strongly recommended against the complete unification of military branches (Shoemaker, 1991). The Eberstadt report also recommended mechanism for integration, among them a National Security Resources Board and the Council of Common Defense (Mills, 1960).

A big problem for Forrestal (appointed, after the Act passed, as the Secretary of Defense) was to assure the defense role in peacetime policymaking and insure regular consultation by future presidents with their principal military advisers. "[It] Was at least as much to make the President serve the needs of the departments as to make the latter serve the former" (Committee on Government Operations, 1965: 9).

This act was expected to clear the way to unifying the armed forces and clarifying the role of the principal civilian counterpart: the Secretary of State. However, problems began immediately after passage of the Act. The defined limits and fields of each department, Army, Navy, and Air Force became a major source of problems. It appeared that the Army needed aviation and water transport, essential to its

own operation. Also the Navy needed its own aviation and terrestrial transport, and likewise with the Air Force (Condit, 1979: 166).

The controversy arose when the navy claimed the strategic role assigned to the Air Force by the Act (Condit, 1979). A specific meeting was held, and the character of this meeting was of urgency. In this meeting the agreement was that the Navy would maintain its air power but not develop a naval strategic force. The branches endorsed the agreement but the controversy continued.

2.3. The Organizational Design
2.3.1. The General Design
As an organization, the NSC is unique within the government. Its broad responsibilities, key position in the chain of command, and small size, allows the NSC to combine the knowledge about details with the influence above important affairs (Lord, 1988).

It's not surprising that the coordination between the military and the civilian government was problematic at best. One person could not join either the disparate considerations of policy and strategy or the discrete concerns of various agencies in competition and in disagreement. By this organizational design the president refereed and announced the winners in the bureaucratic disputes.

The first improvement came with the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee. This committee worked this way from 1944 until 1947 and was composed of assistant secretaries from the three departments. They often had

> I propose to analyze the circumstances of the birth of the NSC and the role that this council played during President Truman's administration.

political differences that could not be resolved before the matters went to the president. Disagreements about the assignment of responsibility for intelligence information and allocation of resources became the major worries for the system at this time. The quantity of agencies that entered the process was so large that the coordination and improvisation were the main characteristics of this kind of organization.

The organizational design that the National Security Act of 1947 proposed, offered answers to many of this concerns. At the head, the president would direct an apparatus that possessed greater coherence than the previous wartime institutions. Two agencies assist the president: the NSC and the National Security Resources Board (NSRB). Neither the

NSC nor the NSRB could interfere the president's right for direct access to the Joint Chief of Staff (the main military authority) or other agencies. So is possible to say that the logistics problems in wartime created the necessity of the NSRB, because in reality after 1947 this agency never had much importance in the scheme. About the rationalization of the north-America defense community, the new organization was the National Military Establishment (NME), headed by the Secretary of Defense. The empowerment of this official, allows the coordination of issues, problems, and activities among the diverse military agencies. This scheme also raised the importance of the Joint Chief of Staff.

At last, the Department of State, originally called the Department of Foreign Affairs, retained principal responsibility for the political component to be integrated with military factors. Within the State Department, the Policy Planning Staff (PPS) possessed functions and responsibilities analogous to those of the JCS in the military establishment.

2.3.2. The Internal Design

The NSC is composed by the president, the vice president, the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, the chairperson of the NSRB, and other top authorities when appointed by the president on an ad hoc basis (National Security Act, 1947,1949).

The internal organizational design gives to each president the capacity to decide the role for the NSC. Inside the council staff, as initially organized, were three main parts of the organization: the Office of the Executive Secretary, the Secretariat (for usual secretariat duties) and a unit called 'the Staff' which developed studies and policy recommendations for the NSC (Lay and Johnson, 1960).

Then, the organizational idea here was to create a flexible organization. Usually the first two parts are composed entirely of permanent employees. 'The Staff' should be a combination, an 'ad hocratic' organization (Mintzberg, 1983).

> If the personnel were entirely composed of permanent Council employees, there would be a tendency to reach 'ivory tower' conclusions out of step with operational developments. On the other hand, if the personnel were solely officers detailed from the participating departments, unavoidable turnover might cause a loss of continuity. The staff, therefore, is a mixture of these two types (Souers: 1949, 537).

Headed by a member of the Department of State, this Staff is the core of the administrative action of the NSC. His members formally are part of the agencies in the military and executive branches, but in practice becomes organizational members, identified with the staff. It is in the

staff were the main differences and agreements between the agencies could arise. They try to write the papers and the recommendations integrating the different visions of the different parts of the security establishment.

The NSC appears as a flexible organization that functions through the production of papers and recommendations. Its major preoccupations have been less the size, composition and budget of the security affairs and institutions, but the long and, more of the time, short term matters of national security.

Then, two basic parts internally organize the staff: the Planning Board and the Operations Coordinator Board. The planning board is an interdepartmental committee, chaired by the special assistant to the president for National Security Affairs. The departmental members have orientation to problems affecting their own agencies. A significant inquiry is presented to the Planning Board and the various interested parties work carefully to get the interests and perspectives of each part into the document. An important worry here might be the integration of ideas of the several groups and departments. When the consensus exists, then the paper is presented to the president. This paper is not a policy.

The Operation Coordinating Board is the policy development, the follow-up. Creating a system of interagency working groups, prepares plans for carrying out the intent of the NSC policies, transmits then to the departments and follows the process. It is only a carry out policy, not a maker policy. It is possible to say that this board translates into objectives the plans to achieve (Jackson, 1965).

This flexible organization structure has important problems identified by their different architects. This equilibrium that Sours tried to find is very difficult to obtain. By this organization of the Staff, is possible to see primary preoccupation about the different positions headed by the different agencies than for the integration of a unique rational approach. The Staff remained fundamentally a congregation of agency representatives more than a fully solid organization with strong leadership and a life of its own (Shoemaker, 1991). The individual Staff members, particularly the consultants, were creatures of the departments and owed primary loyalty to the secretaries they represented. NSC has not created cohesion or bureaucratic orientation beyond the horizons of each department. Also paradoxically, the persons that represent the NSC are seen as aliens by the departments they represented.

Summarizing, this ad hocratic organization must deal with three very different organizational tasks: strategic planning, catalyzing the decision-making process, and management of decision (Lord, 1988: 64). This task implies very different

kinds of activities that could easily become contradictory. The strategic planning encompasses a variety from short through long term formal or informal analysis and strategic exercises. Catalyzing decision could involve a range of intrusive interventions in agency and interagency policy deliberations. The management of decision process is to choose the forum of deliberation and the appropriate participants to assure the quality and the integration of the different parts.

> **The organization must be flexible due to the complex framework that is necessary to integrate, but also because it is only an adviser of the final decision maker: the president.**

Speaking in organizational jargon, we can say that the NSC as an ad hocratic organization has the worst effects of any flexible organization (Mintzberg, 1986). The organization must be flexible due to the complex framework that is necessary to integrate, but also because it is only an adviser of the final decision maker: the president. These two kinds of reasons force the organization from different and contradictory sides.

From one side, the complex framework pushes towards diversity in the search for obtain equal attention and expresses their power. From the other hand, the necessity of a unitary and simple advice push to constrained the activity of the structure to one of two things: very concrete and precise advice or only bring wide range of information for the decision-maker. The first alternative implies low level of satisfaction from the different parties within the establishment because a concrete advice from them (if possible at all) should mean very low quality of the product. The second allows the distinct parties of the establishment to express their opinions but reduces the effectiveness (obtain significant attention from the president).

The organizational design for an ad hocratic organization (Mintzberg, 1986), always bear the risk, or to depreciate into a classic bureaucratic organization, without capacity of produce real interagency cooperation and debate; or to fall into a volatile specialist's framework, producers of important analyses but usually nonessential at the eyes of the decision makers.

3. The NSC in Action: The NSC 68

Organizations are one thing on paper and another thing in reality. The organization created by the Act of 1947 and amendments of 1949 had to deal with the interagency rivalries and with the feelings of each president to maintain the freedom of action.

The first Executive Secretary of the NSC was Rear Admiral Sidney Souers a very close friend of President Truman. Also, the creator of the idea of NSC, James Forrestal was appointed as the first Secretary of Defense. He became the catalyst to make the NSC work. But its rivalry with the Secretary of the Department of State, Dan Achenson, was a big problem for the process of integration of the NSC.

Several problems occurred: the rivalry between State and Defense about which department should have the major responsibility for national security; the problems between the branches of the new Secretary of Defense; the feelings of the unclear role that the Joint Chief of Staff would have.

The first discussions before the problem in Korea were very unsatisfactory. President Truman presided 12 of the 57 Council meetings between 1947 and June 23 of 1950, fact that explains the initial failure of the NSC to achieve its basic mission: advise the president (Lay and Johnson, 1960). To preserve the full freedom of action was more important for Truman in the early times of NSC.

The organization had to obtain credibility and the functions as stated in the Act, are very broad. Instead of long-term, the organization at the beginning focused in the immediate concern. The strategy that Souers and after him James S. Lay created was to emphasize that the NSC Staff must represent all the important opinions from the different parts of the establishment of national security. Assure the important role of the JCS, Defense and State were the main preoccupation of all the initial papers of the NSC.

The NSC instead of been an organization to create technically reasonable advice, choose the agreement strategy. Was more important to obtain legitimacy than to generate practical and coordinated interagency advice (Prados, 1991).

Souers left the NSC but the president kept him as an adviser. Lay and Souers developed a very smart team, creating the initial credibility for the NSC.

Its major test occurred when, in the face of signing the North Atlantic Treatment Organization (NATO), the NSC staff recommended a study with the advice and assistance of all appropriate executive departments and agencies for the requirement of national security. There had been opposition from the State Department to allow officials of NSC staff drafting the document. Truman decided a joint document (Defense-State) that defined the national trends and opportunities for the future. This would become the NSC Memo 68.

Big problems happened in this intergovernmental paper between Defense and State. In reality the NSC 68 is a State paper created by Achenson and Nitze, the head of the State Department. The Secretary of Defense, Johnson (appointed after Forrestal died) had promised to reduce the military expenditures to 15 billion. The NSC 68 proposed to raise this quantity three to five times.

This paper, the NSC 68, is the major statement of the Cold War. Instead diplomatic containment proposed by Kennan, this paper proposed military containment, definitively a much more aggressive point of view about the Soviet threat (Paige, 1968). The Defense Secretary questioned the authority under which the study had been made, accused all those present members of trying to undermine his policies. At last, Johnson signed the NSC 68 in April 1950, but the rupture between these two major branches of national security was very big (Nitze, 1989).

Only the Korea problem could prompt an alliance between these departments. Also, Truman decided to make the NSC his major forum for advice and analysis. Truman presided 67 of 71 meetings held from June 28, 1950 through January 9, 1955 (Lay and Johnson, 1960: 16). Truman used the NSC as an important forum for deliberation and study. The Department of State was the masterpiece for action inside the NSC (Paige, 1968).

Conclusion

The NSC born as a complex organization that had to deal with the natural and inevitable conflict between the different branches of the military structure, and between them and the diplomatic institutions. Also it is important to understand the unavoidable role of the president as primary decision maker.

> The NSC born as a complex organization that had to deal with the natural and inevitable conflict between the different branches of the military structure, and between them and the diplomatic institutions.

An ad hocratic organization is created with flexible propose and ambiguous structure exactly because the conditions and premises of it action would change rapidly and in unpredictable ways. Then, the natural trend of this organization (the NSC Staff) to become a fundamental source of advice both to the president and to the members of the NSC, is a main basis of contradiction and distress for the development of the national security policies.

This duality, to serve the president as well as the members of the NSC, is a functional prerequisite. Maybe this duality could be a big sign according to the orthodox rules of management, but because of the characteristics of this institution, the paradoxical duality is indispensable (Shoemaker, 1991).

Several authors agreed that historically, the NSC staff has been more worried about the agreement between the different departments and branches that intervene in the development of national security policies, than in developing and integral national security policy and a strategic perspective, beyond the interest of the groups. However, it is probable that this is an unavoidable condition of existence for this organization. An organization like this simply could not stay behind the conflict that arises from the different intervening parties inside the institutional process that creates this complex policy. Probably this was the reason for creating the NSC staff more as a catalyst than a single source of strategic propositions. This last alternative would be difficult in conditions of conflict between the military branches and the diplomatic establishment, as I have attempted to show in this document.

The flexibility of this organization was a need not only as a way to control the interagency conflict, but also as a way to maintain an important degree of freedom for the president. This seems to be a political priority for some political actors in the White House and could be another reason for the extreme flexibility of the NSC under each presidential style.

The technical reasons that often create ad hocratic organizations are the complexity and turmoil, the excessive level of conflict among several parts. However, also very often, this ad hocratic organization falls into an intermediate solution: a perfect technical structure and framework are too much rigid for a very conflictive phenomenon, so the organization often has to create ad hoc political solutions. This is not maybe the first best option (technically speaking) but keeps the possibility of action among the different parts involved and for the survival of the organization itself.

The NSC is probably a perfect example of this successful solution for a paradoxical situation, which could be the more common answer among the public organizations in the modern world that must deal with interagency struggle and complex environment. In this case, the paradox pushes the organization to create a very flexible structure, developing equilibrium between the rational-technical solution and the politic conflict, historically dependent on the presidential and advisers personalities.

In the example of the NSC 68 –that I chose explicitly to show the "agreement by hegemony" solution– we saw how, despite the grade of conflict between the branches and agencies, the interagency negotiation creates the necessity for some degree of technical solution, a paradox the organization must resolve.

It would be necessary to study this hypothesis historically, to see in different epochs and administrations how the council, depending on the situation, sometimes resolved the conflict with the agreement by hegemony and sometimes with rational-technical advice.

In any case, it is clear that organizations in the public arena cannot be assumed as rational constructions, designed just through technical and managerial tools. It is important to see them also as political organizations, needed to be designed to resolve paradoxical political instructions and the own needs of an organization that requires security and certainty in order to exist and be effective. ■ergo

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