



The Role and Importance of the National Security Advisor



by **Stephen J. Hadley**

Former National Security Adviser under President George W. Bush

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It is a pleasure to be with you today to honor the legacy of Brent Scowcroft. I want to begin by paying my respects to President George H.W. Bush and Mrs. Bush. It is great to see you looking so well and we all appreciate so much your being with us for this important program. Many of us had the honor and the privilege of serving in your administration, and we consider ourselves fortunate indeed to have served a President as noble, principled, and extraordinary as George Herbert Walker Bush.

It is impossible to talk about the role of the National Security Advisor without talking about Brent Scowcroft. It is fair to say that Henry Kissinger was the father of the “interagency system” that is still with us today. Dr. Kissinger established the network of committees at various levels within the Executive Branch that bring together representatives of the relevant departments and agencies to address national security and foreign policy issues. But General Scowcroft is the father of the modern-day National Security Advisor.

Interestingly, the National Security Act of 1947, which established the National Security Council, makes no mention of the National Security Advisor. The position began to emerge under President Kennedy, when occupied by McGeorge Bundy. Certainly the position acquired its greatest public prominence when Henry Kissinger became National Security Advisor under President Nixon, and again with Zbigniew Brzezinski in the position under President Carter.

However, the manner and method by which Brent Scowcroft performed the role

became the model or “base case” for all those who came after him. David Rothkopf, with his authoritative studies of the role of the National Security Advisor and the various individuals who have filled that position, concludes that the “Scowcroft Model” is the one that best serves the President and our nation’s national security decision-making process.

Brent not only defined the role, he was also instrumental in preserving the position in its current form when it came under attack in the “arms for hostages” crisis during the administration of President Reagan. The terrorist group Hezbollah had taken several Americans hostage and held them in Lebanon. Contrary to its established policy of not ransoming hostages, the Reagan administration sold weapons to Iran in hopes that Iran would use its influence with Hezbollah to obtain the freedom of the hostages. In violation of Congressional direction and law, the administration diverted the proceeds of the arms sales to the Contras – rebel forces resisting the Communist take-over in Nicaragua. It seemed that everything in the National Security Council system had gone wrong, that the process was completely broken.

The resulting public outcry led to calls for Congress to exert more control over the National Security Council system by, among other things, amending the National Security Act of 1947 to require Senate confirmation of the National Security Advisor and public testimony from the National Security Advisor before Congress. Such a step would have virtually destroyed the utility of the position to the

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President. The position is one of trust and confidence. If a President thought that what he or she shared with the National Security Advisor could be compelled in public testimony, the President would look elsewhere for a national security and foreign policy confidante. Indeed, it would raise a Constitutional issue of separation of powers. Without a National Security Advisor and a National Security Council staff reporting only to the President, it is difficult to see how the President could perform the duties and fulfill the responsibilities given to the President by the Constitution in the area of national security and foreign policy.

In the wake of the public outcry, President Reagan established an independent review panel chaired by former Senator John Tower that also included former Senator Edmund Muskie and Brent Scowcroft, who by then had been National Security Advisor under President Ford. Their task was to review what had gone wrong in the so-called Iran-Contra affair and make recommendations to President Reagan as to how he should reform the National Security Council system.

Brent was the driving force in using the “Tower Commission” report to defend the system as an instrument of Presidential prerogative and responsibility beyond the reach of Congress. The report vigorously defended the role of the National Security Advisor and its independence from direct Congressional oversight.

The Commission report helped win the argument, and Congress backed off. Brent personally wrote the section of the report describing the proper role of the National Security Advisor. I know because I served as Counsel to the Commission and was the initial drafter of the body of the report and its recommendations. Brent put me through more than 20 drafts of this section of the report until we

had it to his liking. Admittedly I am biased, but I think it is still the best description of the proper role of the National Security Advisor within the National Security Council system and how the National Security Advisor should perform his or her responsibilities in support of the President.

That is why it is impossible to talk about the role of the National Security Advisor without talking about Brent Scowcroft. He first served in the role under President Ford from 1975 to 1977, helped preserve the position in its current conception during his service on the Tower Commission from 1986 to 1987, wrote the definitive description of the role in the Tower Commission Report of February 26, 1987, served in the position a second time under President George H. W. Bush from 1989 to 1993, and became the role model for all of us that followed him in that position.

Serving as the National Security Advisor is the best foreign policy job in government. You get to spend more time with the President than any other member of the President’s national security team. You are the first to see the President in the morning when the President shows up for work in the Oval Office and the last person to see the President before he or she makes any major foreign policy or national security decision. You are the person most likely to know the President’s mind on these issues. You are involved in consequential matters that span the globe and affect the world. If you like policy over pomp, you will love this job. You spend a higher proportion of your time on policy substance than any other national security principal – being freed of the ceremonial duties that often serve to encumber your cabinet secretary colleagues. You run the interagency process that analyzes issues, develops options, and then presents them to the President. And then you oversee the process by which the President’s decisions are implemented by the various

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departments and agencies of the federal government.

But that all being said, the National Security Advisor is a staff job. You help the President play the leading role that the U.S. Constitution gives to the President in national security and foreign policy. It is because it is a staff role that it is exempted from Senate confirmation or public Congressional testimony. This fact puts a special burden on the National Security Advisor to be self-limiting as to power and position. The National Security Advisor must be careful not to usurp the role of the cabinet officers – especially the Secretaries of Defense and State -- to which the Senate has given its confirmation and to which the Congress has appropriated the funds and the personnel slots to conduct the national security and foreign policy business of the country under Congressional oversight. If the National Security Advisor seeks to assume these functions – even if encouraged to do so by the President – then the Congress can rightly cry “foul” and seek to renegotiate the current arrangement that makes the National Security Advisor such a unique instrument for the President. Such an outcome would put the very position at risk, as we saw during the Iran-Contra affair, and are seeing again on Capitol Hill.

There are times when a national security cabinet officer or agency head is not adequately performing their responsibilities. But the solution in such a case is not for the National Security Advisor to try to substitute for the cabinet officer or agency head – or for the National Security Council staff to try to substitute itself for the responsible agency or departmental staff and draw more responsibility and control into the White House. That is a recipe for failure – for no matter how talented, the National Security Council staff cannot possibly have the necessary expertise or bandwidth to do the job that needs to be done. The solution in such a case is for the cabinet officer or agency head either to raise their game or be replaced by the President. You cannot successfully substitute staff for line. If the line organization is not working, then the line organization needs to be fixed.

The province of the National Security Advisor and the National Security Council staff should be the following:

1. ***Staffing and supporting the President in playing the President’s constitutional role in national security and foreign policy.***

This encompasses a wide range of activities that include helping plan the President’s foreign travel, providing background memos and staffing for the President’s meetings and phone calls with world leaders, preparing the President for the meetings of the National Security Council, helping to draft national security and foreign policy speeches, helping to prepare for meetings with Congressional leaders, responding to Presidential requests for all kinds of information and analysis, and briefing the President on the issues of the moment.

2. ***Advocating and advancing Presidential initiatives within Executive Branch.***

This does not mean running operations out of the White House. It does mean overseeing the implementation and execution of Presidential initiatives by the relevant departments and agencies of the Executive Branch. If a department or agency is not doing what it should be doing to implement and execute a Presidential initiative, it means alerting the cabinet secretary or agency head in the first instance, and the President if necessary. If the National Security Advisor and the National Security Council staff are not championing Presidential initiatives within the government, no one else will.

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3. *Injecting a sense of urgency into the interagency process.*

Getting things done “in the ordinary course of business” too often means that nothing is going to get done at all. Particularly when dealing with a crisis, this is simply not good enough. The role of the National Security Advisor and the National Security Council staff is to allocate responsibilities among department and agencies with respect to a specific matter, set reasonable but urgent deadlines, and hold people accountable for meeting them.

4. *Coordinating those important or consequential initiatives and policies that require the concerted effort of multiple departments and agencies to achieve a Presidential objective.*

Such interagency coordination was one of the specific purposes enumerated for the National Security Council in the National Security Act of 1947. It is the principal reason for the system of interagency committees at multiple levels of government that constitute the “interagency system.” Integrating across the various departments and agencies of the Executive Branch – the “stovepipes” of the interagency system – and setting priorities are central to the mission of the National Security Advisor and the National Security Council staff. This is why the National Security Council staff needs to be small. If the goal is integration – seeing relationships across diverse problem sets - - and setting priorities – among the myriad of issues that come to the President, then it is better to have more information in fewer heads. The job of the National Security Council staff is to get the government to work as much as possible like a single enterprise in pursuit of common goals. As we used to say in my day, when the process succeeds, it is the President's success; when the process fails, it is the failure of the National

Security Advisor and the National Security Council staff.

5. *Injecting a sense of strategy into the interagency process.*

Robert Blackwill, a wonderful colleague of Condi Rice and mine during the George W. Bush administration and a former U.S. Ambassador to India, used to say that the first thing that gets lost in any interagency meeting of more than two people is any sense of “what they are trying to do?” All too often in interagency meetings, this is the question that finally gets asked 50 minutes into the meeting with only 10 minutes left. The jobs of the National Security Advisor and the National Security Council staff are to make sure that this question gets asked at the start of the meeting, and not at the end. That is where strategy starts: “What are we trying to achieve?” And the next question is: “How are we going to achieve it?”

Former Secretary of State George Shultz tells a wonderful story in his book “Issues On My Mind.” He writes that a few times a week while he was Secretary he would tell his outer office staff that he was going to go into his office, shut the door, and was not to be disturbed for the next hour or so unless his wife or the President called in that order (thereby showing that domestic relations trump foreign relations even for the Secretary of State – at least a wise Secretary of State!). Secretary Shultz said that in the solitude of his office, he would then take paper and pencil and begin to address the issue of the moment, first writing down a clear statement of where did we want to go and then how could we get there. The National Security Advisor (and the National Security Council staff) need to do the same thing. It is hard, given the press of events and the pressures of the moment, but if you do not know where you are going then almost any road will get you there. And that is not a prescription for a

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successful national security and foreign policy agenda.

6. *Explaining the President's policies to the public.*

The National Security Advisor needs to be careful here not to usurp the role of the Secretary of State as the principal foreign policy spokesperson for the administration (or the Secretary of Defense as the principal defense policy spokesperson). But the National Security Advisor is uniquely positioned to elaborate for the public the mind of the President and the President's perspective – how the President sees an issue, what the President is trying to achieve, and how the President is trying to achieve it. When playing this public role, what matters is not what the National Security Advisor thinks but what the President thinks – and the National Security Advisor needs to speak in the President's name, and not in his or her own name. Approached in this way, it is a role that the National Security Advisor's National Security Council colleagues will understand and respect.

If the foregoing six points summarize the “job description” of the National Security Advisor, then what is the “Scowcroft Model” for how the job should be carried out? It has five basic elements.

1. *Be an “Honest Broker.”*

Being an “honest broker” means running a fair and transparent process for bringing issues to the President for decision. It means maintaining a “level playing field” in which ideas and views can compete with one another on an equal basis, without “stacking the deck” in favor of one or another approach. It means in particular not using the privileged position accorded to the National Security Advisor in this process to “tilt” the process in favor of the outcome favored by the National Security Advisor. As National Security Advisor you must resist the temptation to put your “thumb on the scales” during the decision process, for this will bias what goes to the President and could potentially narrow the

President's options. In addition, being an “Honest Broker” means:

a. *Make the national security principals full participants in the policy process.*

The national security and foreign policy cabinet secretaries and agency heads are the people who run the departments and agencies of the Executive Branch that will implement and execute any policy initiative or decision taken by the President. So it is important that they not only “buy in” to the President's initiative or decision but do so with conviction and enthusiasm. The best way to achieve this result is for them to be full participants from the beginning in the process by which the initiative or decision is developed. It is the National Security Advisor's job to make sure this happens.

In many White House operations that I have observed – particularly on the domestic policy side of the operation – there is a tendency for the White House staff to develop initiatives or issues, take them on a “tentative basis” to the President to “take his temperature” on the matter, and then – and only then -- to bring in the relevant cabinet secretaries and agency heads. This means that the initiative or decision has largely already been made by the President before their input, which makes for a less rich and productive policy development process for the President and for a less satisfying and motivating experience for the cabinet secretaries and agency heads. The better practice is to include these officials from the beginning in the development of an initiative or issue – so that it has the benefit of their wisdom and perspective – and then to include them when the initiative or issue is presented to the President.

b. *Don't insert yourself between the President and the principal cabinet secretaries and agency heads.*

Being an “Honest Broker” does not just mean presenting the views of cabinet secretaries and agency heads to the President in a fair and balanced way. These officials should be the

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President's closest advisors on national security and foreign policy matters, and the President should hear from them directly and in person. It is the job of the National Security Advisor to encourage and facilitate direct interaction between them and the President. This can occur in formal National Security Council meetings, in informal group meetings in the Oval Office or in the White House residence, in periodic one-on-one meetings between a cabinet secretary and the President (usually with the Vice President, White House Chief of Staff, and the National Security Advisor attending), and over the telephone. Don't let the President take the easy way out -- and make you as National Security Advisor the President's conduit to the President's cabinet officers. It may contribute to your sense of self-importance as National Security Advisor, but it will not contribute to strengthening the ties between the President and the President's principal national security and foreign policy advisors. And that is what you should really want -- if you are doing the job the President needs you to do as National Security Advisor.

It was a very common practice at least for President George W. Bush to conclude a National Security Council meeting on a particular issue by saying that he would sleep on the matter and let everyone know his decision in the morning. Come the next morning, the President would arrive in the Oval Office, announce his decision, and tell me to "let the team know." Especially when the issue was relevant to a particular cabinet secretary, I would urge the President to call the cabinet secretary and inform the cabinet secretary directly. This is particularly important when the issue involves the use of military force. The National Security Advisor is not in the military chain of command, which runs directly from the President to the Secretary of Defense. Instructions on military matters need to be given in that chain of command -- and the National Security Advisor should not seek -- or permit himself or herself -- to be inserted into that chain of command.

c. *Don't undermine your national security colleagues with the President or*

advance yourself with the President at their expense.

We all want to "please the teacher" -- and everyone in the White House wants to please the President. It is not a bad thing to want the President's confidence and approval. But that impulse can sometimes lead to destructive competition and "beggar thy neighbor" behavior among those who serve the President. As National Security Advisor, it is a particular temptation. You are with the President so much -- and a source of so much of the information that the President receives -- that you can almost unconsciously begin to shade your reporting to the President so that you look good at the expense of others. Don't do it. Your job is to help cabinet officers and agency heads to succeed in their jobs -- the President needs them to succeed, and so does the country. And their prospects for success are enhanced if they have the confidence and support of the President. It is your job to promote that Presidential confidence and facilitate that Presidential support.

Let me give you an example of the kind of temptation that you need to resist. So you are National Security Advisor. You get up at 4:30 AM so that you can be at your desk in the West Wing of the White House by 5:30 AM, reading the overnight intelligence and looking at the day's newspaper headlines. And there it is -- on the front page of the Washington Post, above the fold, a news leak clearly coming out of the State Department that you know is going to annoy mightily the President of the United States. At that point you have two choices:

Choice 1:

You can go in to the Oval Office at 7:05 AM, draw the President's attention to the leak, and then say: "I know Mr. President. I told the Secretary of State (in my case Condoleezza Rice) that she needs to get control of her building and stop these kinds of leaks. But don't worry, Mr. President. I'll speak to Condi and tell her this stuff has to stop." Result: You look good, the Secretary of State looks bad -- and you have

violated the “Honest Broker” maxim of the “Scowcroft Model” and badly served the President of the United States in the process.

Choice 2 (the one I recommend):

You can call the Secretary of State at 5:45 AM (again, in my case that was Condi Rice, and you know that Condi is already up and running on the treadmill because that is what she does), ask if she has seen the Washington Post leak (she may not have seen it yet), and ask her to take a look at the leak and call you back. She calls back, provides some background on how the leak might have happened, and then says what she is going to do about it. She then is likely to ask: “Should I tell the President or do you want to do it?” Your response should be: “You should call the President as soon as he comes into the Oval Office. He needs to hear this from you.” Then, you delay your entry into the Oval Office until 7:15 AM. The President will (hopefully) already be on the phone talking to the Secretary of State about the leak. And when, after the call, he looks up and says “it was Condi calling about the leak,” you do not say “I know, I told her to call you.” **Result:** You have encouraged direct contact between the President and the Secretary of State, you have enhanced the President’s confidence in the Secretary – and you have been true to the “Honest Broker” maxim of the “Scowcroft Model” and have well served the President of the United States.

d. Maintain the confidence of the other National Security Council principals.

Your national security colleagues will be watching to see if you are truly serving as an “Honest Broker” or whether you are trying to “game the system” in favor of your personal policy preferences. To encourage their confidence, when I was National Security Advisor I would routinely share with them what I knew about the President’s thinking on any particular matter. Indeed, the National Security Council principals will look to you as National Security Advisor to play this role given that day in and day out you are likely to be spending more

time with the President than they are. But I would try to go further and let my national security colleagues know what I was thinking about an issue before I gave any advice to the President. While I would keep confidential the precise advice I would ultimately give to the President, I would want my national security colleagues to know how I was leaning on an issue so that they could take that into account in their own advice to the President and have a chance to rebut my views to the President in the event that they disagreed with me. To maintain the confidence of your colleagues, the watchword is “no tricks, no surprises.”

2. Put the President at the center of the decisionmaking process.

This is the second key element of the Scowcroft Model. The interagency review that resulted in President George W. Bush’s January 2007 decision to change strategy and “surge” more forces into Iraq is regarded by many as a model of good national security decisionmaking. One of the reasons for this is that the review was structured to put the President at the center of the process. President Bush personally directed that the review be undertaken, he participated in it actively and personally, and the review was structured to bring to the President a full array of information, views, and perspectives from both inside and outside of the government so that he could make the most informed decision that he could make. The “surge” was going to be one of the most important decisions of President Bush’s presidency, would have a big impact on shaping his legacy, and was therefore a decision that only he could and should have made.

a. The President is the “decider.”

The job of the National Security Advisor is to serve the President and enable Presidential decisions. The National Security Advisor is not “the decider.” Indeed, contrary to the general public perception, the National Security Council itself is not a decisionmaking body. By statute, its role is only advisory, a source of information and advice to the President to help the President

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make national security and foreign policy decisions.

b. Make sure the national security organizational structure and the interagency process are meeting the President's needs and evolve over time.

Congressional control over the operation of the national security system within the Executive Branch is limited precisely to allow each President to mold the system to his or her particular leadership and management style. The system and structure are designed to be flexible. Each incoming President should establish the interagency organization and process – and the structure and procedures of the National Security Council staff – that fit the President's policy priorities and operating style. And these organizational structures, processes, and procedures should adapt over the course of the Presidency.

For example, the needs of a second term President are very different from those of the President in the first year or two in office. By the second term, a President has met all the world leaders, has been through a number of crises, and has established a wide array of policies. A second term President knows what they know, and knows what they think, about almost every issue of consequence. The national security system, processes, and organization should adapt as a consequence.

c. Bring issues and options to the President for decision – and don't try to force a false consensus.

It is a great temptation for a National Security Advisor to try to force consensus on an issue and bring that consensus to the President. This may be appropriate for less important issues – if a true consensus can be achieved. Even then, the National Security Advisor should run the issue and the consensus position by the President – for the President may disagree with the consensus, and the President, after all, is the “decider.” But especially for issues of

consequence, it is better to bring the issue and a fully fleshed out set of options to the President for decision.

When I became National Security Advisor, during my first meeting with the press reporters who covered national security issues in the White House, one of the reporters asked something along the following lines: if Condi Rice, a major public figure with strong personal ties to the President, could not knock heads and force consensus among the 600-pound gorillas of Dick Cheney, Don Rumsfeld, and Colin Powell, how was I going to do it? I responded that I was not going to try. Because, I told them, I had a 1200-pound gorilla just down the hall called the President of the United States who loved to make decisions – and once the President had made a decision, these consummate professionals and accomplished public servants who work for him would salute and fall in line. I think that is the right model for an effective national security decisionmaking process.

To facilitate that process, in the second year of the second term and with the President's agreement, I instituted the Tuesday afternoon “tortilla chips and soda” meeting in the National Security Advisor's office. The attendees were limited to the Vice President, the White House Chief of Staff (whose schedule made his attendance admittedly difficult), the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury (on many but not all occasions – which was a mistake – the Treasury Secretary should have always been there), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of National Intelligence, the Director of Central Intelligence, and my principal Deputy National Security Advisor. That was all. We served tortilla chips, warm cheese dip, and soft drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages of choice. The meeting would usually go for a couple hours and if necessary would be continued over to Thursday afternoon, same time, same place.

The purpose of these meetings was to create a relaxed atmosphere of confidence in which the most challenging – and often the

most sensitive – policy and operational issues could be discussed candidly and openly without fear of leaks to the press. Issues like what to do about Iran’s nuclear program, the Syrian nuclear reactor, and next steps in the war on terror were aired in this forum. And it worked. Strong disagreements were often expressed but without rancor and usually with great mutual respect.

At the end of the discussion of an issue, it was usually the Vice President who would say: “Steve, this was a good discussion. Now how are we going to take this issue to the President?” I would then go to the Chief of Staff (Andy Card at first, then Josh Bolten) and we would come up with the most appropriate way to bring the issue to the President. If the issue was ready for decision, then that might be a formal National Security Council meeting with all the “tortilla chips and soda” meeting participants present along with other appropriate department and agency heads. For a less formal setting, we might use the Oval Office. But if we really wanted the President to be in a listening and discussion mode – not in the “decider” mode – then we might meet in the “Yellow Oval” in the residence perhaps on a Saturday morning or afternoon – again, with others present as appropriate. But the “tortilla chips and soda” meetings were crucial in preparing the issue for the President, ensuring a full and frank discussion, and letting the President hear the full range of views directly from the President’s key national security and foreign policy advisors.

3. *Provide your policy advice to the President in confidence.*

A third key element of the Scowcroft Model is that as National Security Advisor you never talk publicly about the advice you give to the President. And you generally give that advice to the President in private. For example, I would very rarely express my views on an issue at a

formal National Security Council meeting. I thought my job during such meetings was to sit down the table from President Bush so that I could better observe the dynamic around the table. My responsibility was to make sure that the President was getting the information he needed, was hearing the views of all the various national security and foreign policy cabinet secretaries and agency heads, and understood what he was hearing. If something was not clear in the discussion, my job was to ask the “stupid question” that would bring out for the President what might not be clear or understood. After the meeting, when the President had returned to the Oval Office, or at some other more private occasion, I would offer my views – and usually in response to a “so what do you think” from the President.

4. *Keep a low public profile and operate generally off stage.*

This is the fourth key element of the Scowcroft Model. The bane of too many Presidential administrations has been all too public competition and conflict between and among key national security and foreign policy principals. Most often such conflict has occurred between the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, but it has also arisen between the National Security Advisor and one or the other of those two cabinet secretaries. Such public competition and conflict is not good for the President and it is not good for the country. It creates an image of disarray that undermines public confidence in the soundness and effectiveness of the administration’s national security and foreign policy. It can confuse the public in terms of who speaks for the administration on such issues.

A principal responsibility of the National Security Advisor is to run the interagency and

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decisionmaking process in a way that avoids such an outcome.

First and foremost, this means not contributing personally to internal feuds or conflicts either in appearance or in fact. It means not having too public a profile and avoiding actions that would undermine or usurp the role of the cabinet secretaries.

Secondly, it means avoiding leaks. In the first place, the National Security Advisor should never be a leaker – if he or she puts out something on background to the press (in person, by phone, by email, or by tweet), it should only be because the President has directed it -- and it should of course not involve classified information in any way.

In the third place, the National Security Advisor needs to run a disciplined National Security Council staff that does not leak – that does not seek to settle bureaucratic scores through the traditional press or social media – that always approaches its interagency colleagues by giving them the benefit of the doubt and the presumption of good faith (even when it is not always deserved).

And finally, the National Security Advisor needs to work with the other national security principals to discourage leaks from the rest of the government – whether by the national security principal directly or through their staff, or by staff members acting on their own. This effort starts with the National Security Advisor running a fair and transparent decisionmaking process in which the national security principals and their department and agencies have an opportunity to participate fully and directly with the President.

5. Accept responsibility.

This is the fifth element of the Scowcroft Model. If you become the National Security Advisor, you are going to make mistakes. The question is what you do then. The best approach: go to the President, disclose and admit your

mistake, accept the consequences, and resign if warranted by the facts or the best interests of the President. The last 40 years in Washington -- Watergate and all the “gates” and scandals that followed – have taught us all one lesson: it is rarely the mistake you make that gets you in trouble or causes lasting damage; it is the cover-up, the natural human instinct to flee the scene, to deny, to lie, and to try not to get caught. Don’t do it. Fess up. Accept responsibility. And take the consequences.

And sometimes take responsibility when the problem or fault is not your own.

It is fascinating to be part of a group assembled around the President’s desk in the Oval Office when a serious problem is brought to the attention of the President. As the bad news is being laid out for the President, you can see people gradually moving backward – moving away from the President’s desk and the problem that has just been placed on it. What the President needs at that moment, of course, is for someone to step forward and own the problem – even if not responsible for creating it – and assume responsibility for handling the matter, addressing the problem, and reporting back to the President if more needs to be done. Be one of those people. That is what the President needs.

Conclusion

So, you have just been appointed National Security Advisor. What do you do? Channel Brent Scowcroft. When confronted with a problem, try asking: “What would Brent have done?” Follow the Scowcroft Model. It is the best and only place to start. Thank your lucky stars that you have a chance to serve our country and its President in this very special role. And get a lot of sleep. You are going to need it.

Stephen J. Hadley:

Stephen Hadley is a principal of RiceHadleyGates LLC, an international strategic consulting firm founded with Condoleezza Rice, Robert Gates, and Anja Manuel. RiceHadleyGates assists senior executives of major corporations in overcoming the challenges to doing business successfully in major emerging markets like China, India, Brazil, Turkey, and Indonesia.

Mr. Hadley is also Board Chairman of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). He has co-chaired a series of senior bipartisan working groups on topics such as Arab-Israeli peace, U.S. political strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, U.S./Turkey relations, and US policy on Iraq and Egypt.

Mr. Hadley served for four years as the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from 2005 - 2009. In that capacity he was the principal White House foreign policy advisor to then President George W. Bush, directed the National Security Council staff, and ran the interagency national security policy development and execution process. From 2001 to 2005, Mr. Hadley was the Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor, serving under then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. In addition to covering the full range of national security issues, Mr. Hadley had special responsibilities in several areas including a U.S./Russia political dialogue, the Israeli disengagement from Gaza, and developing a strategic relationship with India.

From 1993 to 2001, Mr. Hadley was both a partner in the Washington D.C. law firm of Shea and Gardner (now part of Goodwin Proctor) and a principal in The Scowcroft Group (a strategic consulting firm headed by former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft). In his law practice, Mr. Hadley was administrative partner of the firm. He represented a range of corporate clients in transactional and international matters - including export controls, foreign investment in U.S. national security companies, and the

national security responsibilities of U.S. information technology companies. In his consulting practice, Mr. Hadley represented U.S. corporate clients investing and doing business overseas.

From 1989 to 1993, Mr. Hadley served as the assistant secretary of defense for international security policy under then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. Mr. Hadley represented the Defense Department on arms control and defense matters, including negotiations with the Soviet Union and then Russia, security issues involving NATO and Western Europe, and export and technology control matters. Prior to this position, Mr. Hadley alternated between government service and law practice with Shea & Gardner. He was counsel to the Tower Commission in 1987, as it investigated U.S. arms sales to Iran, and served on the National Security Council staff under President Ford from 1974 to 1977.

During his professional career, Mr. Hadley has served on a number of corporate and advisory boards. He is currently the Chair of RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy Advisory Board, chair of the Human Freedom Advisory Council of the George W. Bush Institute, a member of Yale University's Kissinger Papers Advisory Board, a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Atlantic Council, a member of the Board of Managers of the John Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory, and a member of the State Department's Foreign Affairs Policy Board. Other positions have included past service as a member of the Department of Defense Policy Board, member of the National Security Advisory Panel to the Director of Central Intelligence, and co-chair with former Secretary of Defense William Perry of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel.

Mr. Hadley graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Cornell University in 1969. In 1972, he received his J.D. degree from Yale Law School, where he was Note and Comment Editor of the Yale Law Journal. From 1972 to 1975 he served as an officer in the U.S. Navy.

The Bush School of Government and Public Service

Ambassador Ryan Crocker, Dean and Executive Professor

Founded in 1997, the Bush School of Government and Public Service has become one of the leading public and international affairs graduate schools in the nation. One of ten schools and colleges at Texas A&M University, a tier-one research university, the School offers master's level education for students aspiring to careers in public service.

The School is ranked in the top 12 percent of graduate public affairs schools in the nation, according to rankings published in U.S. News & World Report. The School now ranks thirty-third among both public and private public affairs graduate programs and twenty-first among public universities.

The School's philosophy is based on the belief of its founder, George H.W. Bush, that public service is a noble calling—a belief that continues to shape all aspects of the curriculum, research, and student experience. In addition to the Master of Public Service and Administration degree and the Master of International Affairs degree, the School has an expanding online and extended education program that includes Certificates in Advanced International Affairs, Homeland Security, and Nonprofit Management.

Located in College Station, Texas, the School's programs are housed in the Robert H. and Judy Ley Allen Building, which is part of the George Bush Presidential Library Center on the West Campus of Texas A&M. This location affords students access to the archival holdings of the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, invitation to numerous events hosted by the George Bush Foundation at the Annenberg Presidential Conference Center, and inclusion in the many activities of the Texas A&M community.

The Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs

Andrew S. Natsios, Director and Executive Professor

The Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) is a research institute housed in the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. The Institute is named in honor of Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret.), whose long and distinguished career in public service included serving as National Security Advisor for Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush. The Institute's core mission is to foster and disseminate policy-oriented research on international affairs by supporting faculty and student research, hosting international speakers and major scholarly conferences, and providing grants to outside researchers to use the holdings of the Bush Library.

"We live in an era of tremendous global change. Policy makers will confront unfamiliar challenges, new opportunities, and difficult choices in the years ahead. I look forward to the Scowcroft Institute supporting policy-relevant research that will contribute to our understanding of these changes, illuminating their implications for our national interest, and fostering lively exchanges about how the United States can help shape a world that best serves our interests and reflects our values."

— Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret.)