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State Security and Affairs of State

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Abstract. This article elaborates on an intractable conflict among two types of security Issues facing a foreign ministry.

The United States (US) Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has been under fire lately for security lapses within the US Department of State. In one incident, a laptop computer with classified information allegedly has come up missing--most likely misplaced or stolen. In another incident, an "official looking" man walked into an office and allegedly made off with a pile of classified documents in an unauthorized fashion. In yet another incident, an electronic receiving device was found within a piece of furniture in a conference room near the main office of the US Secretary of State. And still at Issue (among so many security Issues) are the physical security vulnerabilities of US embassies, consulates, and other State-related edifices throughout the world.

It is easy to blame the Secretary for security inattention and incompetence. In actuality, however, she is faced with an intractable conflict among two types of security Issues. One type comprises the security disciplines of physical, communications, operations, and personnel securities. This type forms the infrastructural and procedural interstices for foreign policy. The other type comprises the formulation, staffing, coordination, implementation, and evaluation of national security Issues related to foreign political entities--the substance of foreign policy.

Assuming the common context of finite financial resources, one quickly surmises that as allocations increase towards one security type, they necessarily decrease towards the other. (One might quibble and assert that allocations could increase towards both. However, such an increase would still result in decreased allocations towards other Issues affecting a nation-state or other political entity that themselves would have bearings on these entities' welfare--i.e., security.)

In fact, adversaries of a nation-state or other political entity garner a double benefit from compromising a target's infrastructural and procedural security. One benefit is the actual physical destruction, obtained information, or other immediate boon for the adversary. This boon usually includes the very bloodying of a target and the frequent generalization of this bloodying from an infrastructural and procedural victory to a defeat of the target's foreign policy and yet another victory for the adversary. Another benefit relates to the target's likely reactions to being compromised: e.g., (1) decreased money or attention towards the substance of foreign policy through increases towards infrastructural and procedural Issues; (2) heightened xenophobia or isolationism; and (3) scapegoating of highly competent foreign policy leaders who almost always have little experience, interest, and technical knowledge of infrastructural and procedural Issues.

The US Secretary of State is being blamed and is blaming those under her span of control for the reality of the world--much like a physicist might be blamed for the existence of gravity or a biologist for the existence of disease. When one notes the increasing heterogeneity of both types of security Issues in an era of globalization, however, the impulse to shoot the messenger should become somewhat less appealing. Crucial security vulnerabilities of both types can be reprioritized. Finite resources can be

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reallocated. But when all is said and done, perfect security will remain but a chimera. (See Fuller, J., & Cowan, J. (1999). Risk assessment in a multi-disciplinary forensic setting: Clinical judgement revisited. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 10, 276-289; Goddard, C. R., Saunders, B. J., Stanley, J. R., & Tucci, J. (1999). Structured risk assessment procedures: Instruments of abuse? *Child Abuse Review*, 8, 251-263; Heilbrun, K. (1997). Prediction versus management models relevant to risk assessment: The importance of legal decision-making context. *Law and Human Behavior*, 21, 347-359; Marquis, C. (May 4, 2000). Albright rebukes diplomats for security slips *The New York Times*, p. A18; Slovic, P. (1999). Trust, emotion, sex, politics, and science: Surveying the risk-assessment battlefield. *Risk Analysis*, 19, 689-701.) (Keywords: Albright, Security, US Department of State.)