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http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/11/04/experts_call_for_further_national_security_reform

Report: Obama's national security team 'incredibly weak'

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Despite an expansion of the National Security Council staff, coordination of national security policy is still dysfunctional and there is a lack of strategic guidance from President Obama, according to a group of leading outside experts and former officials.

"Reform must take place," said James Locher, President & CEO of the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), "If you did not like what happened in the last 7 or 8 years... you're not going to like what's coming in the future."

"Momentum for reform is building, but it is largely rhetoric and good intentions," reads PNSR's new report. The congressionally funded group was begun as the result of a cooperative agreement between the Defense Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. "Strategic management of the national security system remains absent and is desperately needed to make it integrated, cohesive, and agile," the report continues.

Calling reform of the national security infrastructure "the number one national security issue," Locher said that America's ability to operate in international arenas the world over is "crippled" by the dysfunction within the system.

He called the White House's national security staff "incredibly weak," preventing integration and coordination that the National Security Council should be doing.

"There's almost no strategic guidance from the president or the executive office of the president," Locher said, adding, "We have almost no knowledge management in the national security system."

There's also no effective means for delegating the president's authority, he added.

Locher spoke at an event rolling out the latest PNSR report at the New American Foundation, hosted by its foreign policy chief and editor of The Washington Note **Steve Clemons**.

Clemons noted that according to the Goldwater-Nichols act, President Obama was required to submit a national security strategy by June 18, 150 days into his presidency, but he failed to do so.

The "Guiding Coalition" that oversaw the PNSR report included heavyweights such as former Lockheed Martin CEO **Norman Augustine**, former Amb. **Robert Blackwill**, retired Gen. **Wesley Clark**, retired Adm. **Ed Giambastiani**, former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich**, former Director of National Intelligence **Mike McConnell**, plus Washington players **Brent Scowcroft**, **Thomas Pickering**, and **Joseph Nye**.

Last November's version of the PNSR report included input from now Obama officials **Jim Jones**, **James Steinberg**, **Michele Flournoy**, and **Dennis Blair**. It declared that "the national security of the United States of America is fundamentally at risk."

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