
Segment: Agency Relations

Conference attendees were invited to participate in two concurrent panels on Agency Relations. Dr. Scott Pace led the panel on Inter-Agency Cooperation, with Dr. Fenton Carey from the U.S. Department of Energy, Beth Masters from the U.S. Department of Defense and Tyrone C. Taylor of the Policy Coordination Division in the NASA Office of Policy Coordination and International Relations.

Kathryn Schmoll led the panel on Intra-Agency Cooperation with Vernon Weyers, Director of Flight Projects at Goddard Space Flight Center, George Levin, Chief of Advanced Systems in the Office of Space System Development at NASA Headquarters, and Thomas H. Cochran, Director of Space Flight Systems at Lewis Research Center.

Inter-Agency Relations

by Dr. Scott Pace
Office of Space Commerce, Department of Commerce

Some of you here today may find yourselves in inter-agency negotiations or trying to understand the negotiation process. The Office of Space Commerce is responsible for policy coordination on all space-related issues and activities in the Department of Commerce. The Department is not a "space" agency the way NASA is; rather it is like the Department of Defense in that many of its activities are dependent on space systems or they impact the space activities of others. NOAA operates weather satellites, the Bureau of Export Administration regulates the export of some space technologies, the International Trade Administration promotes trade in space goods and services, and the National Telecommunications and Information agency influences international telecommunications policy and spectrum allocations.

Space, more than other issues, tends to cut across traditional agency boundaries. One of the useful results of the Space Council has been the creation of good working relations, and sometimes personal friendships, among the agency representatives. How will space policy issues and those inter-agency relations fare now that the Council has been eliminated (again)? Non-military space issues have been nominally sent to the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), yet space issues are not just technology-related. The National Economic Council (NEC) and the National Security Council (NSC) both have equities at stake in many space issues. OSTP and the NSC may extend themselves into economic issues or there may be ad hoc blends of these White House organizations as specific space topics arise.

The demise of the National Space Council signals an interest by the new Administration in folding space into broader science and technology themes and not focusing on it as a separate, special entity as it has been since Sputnik. This reflects a number of forces

such as the end of the Cold War, the integration of space activities into many routine civil, military, and commercial activities, and the need to ensure U.S. government support of science and technology is rationally integrated with other national interests. These forces are likely to make inter-agency cooperation and competition more important than ever. Agencies may find themselves having to work out things on their own more without a White House space staffer forcing an agreement.

If inter-agency negotiations are done well and in ways that find creative solutions to conflicts, the agencies participating can look strong and competent. If negotiations are done poorly, agencies can look weak, incompetent, or at best narrow-minded. None of these perceptions is likely to be helpful in winning support from the White House, Congress, the American people, or other countries. Successful inter-agency negotiation is more than just being "tough," but requires a blend of many skills, knowing when to be confrontational (rarely), when and how to compromise, and when not to say or do anything at all. As told to me by one experienced agency representative: "Do you want to score points or do you want to win? The two are not the same." Success means having agency leaders and managers thinking clearly about goals and strategies. For the project manager trying to navigate in a world very different from Apollo, it means deciding if you want to be an agent of positive change or irrelevant.

In politics, it is often said that timing is everything. Thus one of the most subtle questions is knowing when to engage in inter-agency negotiations and when not to. In the past, there have been reviews of virtually every major space policy topic, such as the future of space transportation, the Landsat program, and procurement reform. In my own experience, space transportation and international cooperation

have been two themes that seem to come up the most often.

In the future, there will be inter-agency discussions of global environmental monitoring dealing with national security, economic, and foreign policy issues that go beyond the scientific questions. I expect there to be a greater emphasis on integrating space technology issues into the broader technology policy of this Administration and finding more opportunities for commercial applications. Aeronautics is slated for increased emphasis, and NASA's past efforts in this area are often cited as a model of what might be done with other industries, both inside and outside of the traditional aerospace community.

It should come as no surprise that the drivers for space policy today are limited government budgets, the defense draw-down conversion and the need for stronger economic growth. Space projects will find themselves facing increasingly stiff criteria not only in terms of how scientifically productive they are, but how they contribute to the technical and managerial strength of U.S. industry. In a period of budgetary stagnation or even reductions, I would urge caution in pulling work in-house. Government needs industry as a partner, not just as a contractor, and that means sharing the pain of reductions while looking for new cooperative opportunities.

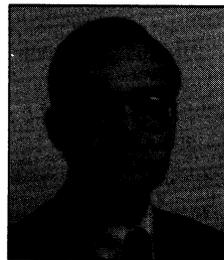
Inter-agency negotiations will play a significant role in structuring space policies and budget priorities that fit today's realities. NASA managers will therefore need to learn how to anticipate the needs and outcomes of these negotiations. This means thinking beyond traditional NASA communities in the search for allies and supporters. The very successful manager will likely be the one who has a vision of how to meet the needs of more than one agency and is able to use inter-agency agreements to reinforce the objectives of his or her program.

Some of you may find yourselves in inter-agency negotiations or trying to understand the negotiation process. If so, I have some personal suggestions that hopefully may make you more effective. However, I do not make any claim to having followed my own advice.

- The first rule of diplomacy is to maintain friendly, respectful relations and open lines of communica-

tion with all parties. Make courtesy calls to introduce yourself.

- The signal-to-noise ratio in policy debates is very low. Try to stick to a few, simple principles in articulating why you support a position. Try to be clear about what conditions could cause you to change your position.
- Look for leverage points in creating coalitions with other agencies, such as budget concerns or complementary missions. Establish internal and external stockholders in policy so that implementation happens; do not rely on top-down directives.
- Support studies that look ahead to future scenarios and try to map out alternative scenarios for how budgets, international relations and technology may develop. Remember the importance of fairness and credibility, especially if you are leading a negotiation. A perception of unfairness is what often leads to press leaks, Congressional inquiries, and even legal action. Above all, you must know what your principals will or cannot support and how far they will go. This means knowing the constituency for your agency and not exposing your principal (i.e., saying he or she will support some action) unless you have clearance to do so. High-level meetings are not the best places to have surprises and free-ranging arguments. Have those discussions off-line and be able to predict what other agencies will say before the big meetings happen.



Dr. Scott Pace is the Senior Technical and Policy Analyst for the space issues in the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce. He represents the Department in inter-agency working groups and advisory committees on civil, military and commercial space matters.

Intra-Agency Relations

by Thomas H. Cochran
Space Flight Systems, Lewis Research Center

In September of last year NASA took the first step in returning the U.S. to the planet Mars since 1975 when the Viking Spacecraft landed on the barren planet. A Titan III rocket launched the Mars Observer Spacecraft together with its upper stage, the Transfer Orbit Stage, called TOS, from the Kennedy Space Center. The launch culminated an intense development effort for the spacecraft as well as the TOS that took five years to complete. Numerous problems were overcome in the spacecraft instruments, the checkout of the TOS at the Cape, and the processing of the spacecraft. On top of all this, the launch was the first to occur at Launch Complex 40, a facility that was completely rebuilt in the span of just two years. Here are the major players involved, including NASA, other Government agencies, and those from private industry who worked on the project.

Within NASA:

- JPL managed the spacecraft development—Marshall managed the development of the TOS
- Lewis managed the Titan III commercial launch services and the integration of the stack on the pad
- Kennedy oversaw the ground processing and launch of the integrated vehicle
- NASA Headquarters, Code S, managed and advocated both the Spacecraft and Launch Vehicle

Other Government members of the team:

- Air Force Division managed the reconstruction of Launch Complex 40
- The Air Force at Cape Canaveral provided processing and launch facilities, safety support and weather support

Private industry participants:

- General Electric developed the spacecraft
- Martin Marietta developed the TOS and provided the Titan III launch services
- Orbital Sciences managed the TOS development at Martin Marietta
- Bechtel constructed Launch Complex 40

The question we have to ask today, “What can we do to improve our relationships even further?” The following suggestions encourage discussion:

First, Centers need to concentrate on working on those things they do best, fine tuning their already considerable skills to be the best there are. Strategies to “cover the waterfront” and to invest in marginal areas on the margin and which cause conflicts with other organizations should be stopped.

Second, explore the value of personnel exchanges between Centers for periods up to a year. A Center Professional Development Program would permit personal relationships to be developed that would in turn improve communications and break down “ignorance” barriers.

Third, sister Center managers needs to engage in “Information Exchanges” on a regular basis. Structured home and away “Love Ins” and/or videocons that concentrate on areas of common interest, as well as contention, could result in agreements that enhance each Center’s ability to accomplish its role as well as clear the air.

And finally, Centers need to develop strategic alliances with other Centers to both supplement and complement capabilities in program areas of common interest. These agreements need to be formal, reviewed on a regular basis, serve as the basis for common technical progress review, and forged by each Center’s Senior Management Council.

In conclusion, what the future holds for the NASA community can at best be described today as uncertain. The changes that have occurred in the world militarily and economically will have a profound impact on what we do and how we do it. Make no mistake, things are going to change. As a group we have the power through our varied and immense talents and the tools we have at our disposal to have a significant impact on the future of this country. However, this will only happen if we put aside our parochial interests and utilize the teams and cooperation we have demonstrated to be so powerful.