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CIVIL AFFAIRS ISSUE PAPERS
VOLUME 11, 2024-2025

Teaming Civil Affairs: Lessons from the Field

2024 CIVIL AFFAIRS SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Teaming Civil Affairs: Lessons from the Field

Christopher Holshek

TELLING THE CIVIL AFFAIRS STORY

A Narrative Strategy for Civil Affairs

by Christopher Holshek and Dennis J. Cahill

ISSUE PAPER

**Improving Civil Affairs Teaming
with Private Sector Tools**

by David Skrzypiec and Ted Delicath

ISSUE PAPER

**Building Partner Capacity: The Value
of U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs**

by Bradford Hughes

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The Evolution of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)

by Peter Schaefer

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**Teaming to Operationalize Culture
for Campaigning**

by Jack A. Schultz and Tara R. Scardino

ISSUE PAPER

**Civil Affairs Task Force: Conflict Prevention
through Multicomponent Teaming**

by Tony Smith and Adam Frowein

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THE CIVIL AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY ROTC

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2024–25 Civil Affairs Issue Papers

Teaming Civil Affairs: Lessons from the Field

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The Civil Affairs Association

and the

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In partnership with the

U.S. Army Special Operations Command Force Modernization Center,

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Special Operations Center of Excellence,

NATO Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence,

U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute,

Joint Special Operations University,

Modern War Institute at West Point,

Irregular Warfare Initiative at West Point,

and

Joint Civil-Military Interaction

Edited by

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and

Christopher Holshek

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The Civil Affairs Association is a not-for-profit military professional and veteran association under IRS code section 501(c)19 that serves as the de facto regimental association of the Civil Affairs Corps. It seeks to further the intellectual capitalization and readiness of the extended Civil Affairs Corps and its members as well as a global civil-military network among the U.S., NATO and other regional allies, and international partners through the provision of platforms for discussion of topics related to Civil Affairs and partner force, organizational, and professional development. The opinions expressed by anyone appearing at an Association event or in any Association publication are entirely his or her own and not to be construed as the opinion of any government agency, the person's represented office, the Association, or its organizational partners, unless specifically cited or referenced in official strategy, policy, doctrine, regulatory documents, or cleared media sources or organizational publications.

For more, go to: <https://www.civilaffairsassoc.org/>. Please subscribe, consider joining, or update your contact information.



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Cover photo: Sgt. Kiana Mohammadian, a 38B Civil Affairs Specialist and jumpmaster with the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion based in Upland, California, secures her parachute prior to a jump. A former Army medic, she joined the 426th over three years ago. In 2023, she was selected to represent the Brigade at the 79th D-Day Commemoration in Normandy, France. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Dominique Cox courtesy of the 358th Civil Affairs Brigade.)

Foreword

The 2024 Civil Affairs Association held its annual Symposium on *Teaming Civil Affairs: Lessons from the Field* at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA, and online from 15-16 November 2024. The Symposium and the annual Association Board meeting held on Sunday, 17 November, which coincided with the 304th Civil Affairs Brigade’s 75th Anniversary celebration weekend, were highly productive. The fall 2025 Symposium will also be online and in person, while the spring Roundtable will continue online.

The annual Symposium and Roundtable drive an ongoing, annual topical discussion on the future of Civil Affairs. Now in their 13th year, they advance a more strategic, comprehensive, and integrative understanding of CA. The *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*, now on its 11th volume, is the Association’s capstone professional and force development deliverable to deepen and broaden formal institutional processes for CA force development along the lines of doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P). Since 2012, we have added the *Eunomia Journal* and *One CA* podcast to facilitate further dialogue.

These events and platforms help foster a culture and network of learning beyond military command structures and the CA Corps, facilitating inclusion of other civil-military organizations and interagency, interorganizational, and private sector partners (hence our term “extended Civil Affairs Corps”). The Symposium enables the extended CA Corps to come together, network, formulate recommendations to institutional and policy leaders, recognize outstanding members, enjoy camaraderie, and build *esprit de corps*.

The Association maintains a knowledge repository for the future force and professional development and gives stakeholders in our shared Civil Affairs enterprise a voice in their future. By supporting the analytical, writing, and presentational skills of young CA professionals, the Association—as the *de facto* regimental Association of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs Corps—also promotes CA intellectual capitalization and mission readiness.

Among the findings from this year’s rich discussion are that multicomponent, civil-military, and interorganizational teaming, partnering, and integration are essential in enhancing positional advantages in competition while greatly improving CA mission readiness for support to crisis response and large-scale combat operations (LSCO). While Civil Affairs is perhaps never wholly ready for the violent intensity, speed, and dynamism of LSCO, it remains invaluable to commanders and integral to the mission and its end state. As our keynote speaker, U.S. Agency for International Development Assistant Administrator Ciara Knudson pointed out, future LSCO will still be fundamentally driven by politics, people-centric, informationally intensive, and involve situations in which the U.S. military is not in charge or even the lead force. In LSCO, the demand for CA capacities and capabilities will significantly increase over the requirements during stabilization and competition.

A cornerstone conclusion was that CA professionals must become more conversant in the policies, doctrine, and guidelines that govern their operations and those of the partner organizations with which CA works. CA commanders must develop, on a unit and personal basis, a stronger relationship with their supported commands and be prepared to play the role of that commander's primary advisor in all things civil-military in the human dimension and information domain. In other words, they must know how CA supports LSCO.

We also confirmed last year's consensus on the need for a strategic narrative for CA professionals to speak with supported commands with one voice about what Civil Affairs is; what CA does; and why and how CA is important. I am proud to report that, after a year's work and in coordination with CA proponent offices, the Association is contributing with a capstone memorandum on "Telling the Civil Affairs Story – A Narrative Strategy for Civil Affairs," along with an updated strategic communication slide deck and a two-sided handout. These are on our website for adaptive use by our most important storytellers—individual CA professionals posted at those commands.

In keeping with this year's theme of "teaming Civil Affairs," the Association, at its annual meeting, took a teaming approach to reorganize the Association Board along functional rather than geographic responsibilities. Vice presidents now oversee functional committees of directors responsible for: membership and finance; publications; awards and nominations; programs and events; information technology; legacy and enlisted affairs; and communication and outreach. All directors were placed on these committees with specific roles. We are also excited to see a revised slate of new, energetic leaders in our latest year group of directors.

In this collaborative endeavor, the Association is honored to work with institutions like: the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, or ASD (SO/LIC); the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the USASOC Force Modernization Center (UFMC) and U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School / U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence (USAJFKSWCS/SOCoE); the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) and U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), or USACAPOC(A); the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI); the U.S. Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School (USMCCMOS); the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU); the NATO-accredited Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence (CCoE); and the United Nations Office of Military Affairs.

In addition, our partners include: the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA), the Reserve Organization of America (ROA); the Foreign Area Officers Association (FAOA); the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); and the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC). It is also linked with: the Modern War Institute (MWI) and Irregular Warfare Initiative (IWI) at West Point; the Joint Special Operations University; and the Joint Civil-Military Interaction Global Research and Education Network (JCMI). Additional partnering efforts are underway.

Our website continues to improve. Along with our posted references and resources, our social media outlets have also expanded, beyond Facebook and LinkedIn, to include Spotify and Sticher. Thanks to Association Vice President for Information Technology Col. Arnel David and Director Maj. John McElligott for their diligence and hard work on our online capabilities.

We are also grateful to The Patriot Fund and G.S. Woods Financial Solutions, LLC, for sponsoring the Symposium. We look forward to their continued sponsorship and to more sponsors in future.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Niagara University for helping us make this publication possible. Their partnership has been invaluable. Special thanks go to Jaclyn Rossi Drozd, University Vice President for Institutional Advancement; Suzanne Karaszewski, Associate Director of Creative Services; Army Lt. Col. James Silsby, Professor of Military Science; and Nana Bailey, Assistant at the ROTC Department for their diligence and cooperation.

Additional thanks go to: Vice President for Publications retired Brig. Gen. Glenn Goddard and Issue Paper editors retired Col. Dennis J. Cahill, Sr. and retired Col. Christopher Holshek, who also serve along with Issue Papers Committee members Maj. Robert Boudreau, Lt. Col. Byron Davidson, Dr. Whitney Grespin, retired Brig. Gen. Ferdinand Irizarry, Lt. Col. Brian Hancock, Maj. James Micciche, Col. Caroline Pogge, Zachary Schmook, retired Col. Donald “Tony” Vacha, and Joshua Weikert—as well as the authors themselves.

Special thanks go to former Association Vice President for Programs and Events (and now Director) retired Col. Christopher Holshek, Director retired Col. Monti Zimmerman, and Conference workshop facilitators Col. Jay Liddick, Col. David Kaczmarek, Mr. Ryan McCannell, and Col. Andrew “Scott” DeJesse for putting together and running an exceptionally industrious Symposium. Special thanks also go to Bucks County Community College’s Peter Chiovarou and Damon Hunnicutt for their outstanding on-site logistics and technical support.

Finally, our thanks go out to the many members and supporters of the Association who contribute quietly to our worldwide civil-military enterprise to educate, advocate, and motivate.

We look forward to seeing you at the online Civil Affairs Roundtable in April 2025 and to our next Symposium, in coordination with the 358th Civil Affairs Command, in the Los Angeles area from 13-16 November 2025. To learn more, subscribe to our newsfeeds, and join our Association, visit www.civilaffairsassoc.org. There’s no better time to become a member!

“Secure the Victory!”



Hugh Van Roosen
Major General, USA, Retired
President
The Civil Affairs Association

2024 Civil Affairs Symposium Report:
“Teaming Civil Affairs: Lessons from the Field”

Christopher Holshek

Dennis J. Cahill, Sr., (ed.)

The Civil Affairs (CA) Association hosted its annual Symposium, a hybrid on-site and online event sponsored by The Patriot Fund and G.S. Woods Financial Solutions, LLC, from 15-16 November 2024 at Bucks County Community College in Newtown, PA. The event, involving over 60 participants on-site and more than 30 more online, was in partnership with the Association of the United States Army, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Joint Special Operations University, the Modern War Institute and Irregular Warfare Initiative at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) accredited Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence (CCoE). It was also coordinated with the nearby 304th Civil Affairs Brigade’s 75th Anniversary, including a Dining Out on the evening of the 16th.

Last year’s event revealed how multicomponent and joint CA teaming suggests a way forward for improved integration of CA forces—not just in strategic competition and stabilization but also large-scale combat operations (LSCO). Emerging institutional implications for CA force development, management, and generation in doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) are substantial. This includes addressing longstanding capacity gaps for CA proponents; Army, U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), and joint commands; and the Department of Defense (DoD) to realize the full potential of CA.

What can we learn from experience in multicomponent teaming and joint, interorganizational, and multinational (JIM) CA partnering? How can deliberate campaigning of CA teaming in operations improve CA institutional integration (e.g., in training, education, and leader development) and with other information forces such as Psychological and Information Operations (PSYOP and IO)? How can CA teaming experience apply to LSCO, consolidating military and security gains into civil and political outcomes, conducting irregular warfare, and meeting ongoing stabilization, governance, civilian harm mitigation, and resilience challenges? How can multi-partner, JIM-level CA teaming help address interagency priorities such as: climate change; Women, Peace, and Security (WPS); the Global Fragility Act (GFA); and conflict prevention? What changes should occur within and beyond current capacities? How should they be prioritized and implemented?

The Symposium enabled the CA Corps and its friends and partners to gather, network, formulate recommendations to institutional and policy leaders, recognize outstanding members, enjoy camaraderie, and build *esprit de corps*. The Symposium comprised four key workshops on Friday, with recaps of the workshops, a keynote presentation, a discussion on a strategic narrative for Civil Affairs, and a presentation of this year’s *Civil Affairs Issue Papers* the following day.

Major Findings

Although the Symposium did not address all these questions, the participants, presentations, and papers identified findings and insights of great interest, with relevant DOTMLPF-P implications:

- *Teaming is an inherent military problem; CA is best positioned among forces to take a teaming approach to deal with complex civil-military problems in conflict prevention, combat operations, stabilization, and competition.* This insight came mainly from Workshop I, which also highlighted the importance of the joint, Army, and Marine CA proponents in steering and shaping CA force and professional development along DOTMLPF-P lines.
- *CA professionals must understand the role of joint and Service proponents for Civil Affairs and the rich array of policy, doctrinal, and operations references they produce.* Implicit in this insight from Workshops I-III is also a better understanding of JIM partner policy and operations guidelines. This is the fastest, least expensive, and most impactful way CA can raise its value-added to its primary customers—maneuver and operational commands.
- *Teaming alone is not a sufficiently comprehensive solution for CA to help commanders solve their human dimension and civil environment problems.* More than teaming, CA brings partnering, civil-military integration, and what 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) (95th CA Bde (SO) (A)) Commander Col. Christian Carr called “relationship-building” to gain a superior civil-military learning network, in breadth as well as depth.
- *At the interagency level, planning relationships are foundational to civil-military teaming, partnering, campaigning, and operational integration across the continuum.* This insight came from many parts of the Symposium, particularly Workshop II and the keynote presentation from U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Assistant Administrator Ciara Knudson. There was also emphasis, however, on gaining and maintaining human dimension and civil environment positional advantages to shape winning (without fighting) in deterrence as in post-conflict governance issues, if only to ensure greater success in deterrence and LSCO.
- *Civil Affairs is not sufficiently prepared for the violence, lethality, complexity, and dynamism of 21st-century LSCO.* The keynote speaker pointed out that, in both competition and LSCO, U.S. forces are not likely to be the lead force. They would be operating in support of host nation governments and forces with restrictions and caveats to operational performance that U.S. forces have not had to contend with since the Cold War. Hence the importance of close, ongoing institutional relations with allied and partner militaries and the NATO CCoE. LSCO, if anything, will demand even more collaborative capacities and skills from CA, especially under the duress of high-intensity conflict and information warfare. Among the most important questions the extended CA Corps must therefore answer is: “What is the CA value-proposition for LSCO?” For this, the just-released Association narrative strategy on CA will be helpful.

- *Teamed and partnered 38G capability is proving highly important to shaping the strategic and operational environment to provide real-time values-added for deterrence and LSCO. The multi-organizational, multinational teaming approach of 38G cultural property protection is serving as a model for the development of other 38G functional specialties. However, how can 38Gs better team with conventional and SOF CA in LSCO as well as security assistance?*

Workshop I: Teaming Civil Affairs in Stabilization—Cross-Institutional Perspectives

The Symposium started with four workshop discussions on Friday. One looked at “Teaming Civil Affairs in Stabilization—Cross-Institutional Perspectives.” The second was on “Teaming CA in Joint, Inter-organizational, and Multinational Environments in Competition.” The third looked at “Teaming and Partnering in the Changing Role of Civil Affairs in Multi-Domain Operations.” The fourth was on “Teaming Civil Affairs Functional Specialists—Recent and Emerging Operations.”

The first of these, on teaming in stabilization, was facilitated by CA officer Col. Jay Liddick, Director of the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), which also serves as the joint and Army proponent for stabilization. Discussants included: Maj. Brian Philpott, J39 Civil Affairs Branch and Proponent, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM); Lt. Col. Brian Meister, Director, Civil Affairs Branch Proponent, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS); and, Lt. Col. Mike Kline, Deputy Director, U.S. Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School (MCCMOS).

Workshop I captured much of the Symposium’s first two major findings, the first on teaming as an inherent military problem for which Civil Affairs is particularly well positioned to help commanders within civil-military, interagency, and JIM settings. Most of the discussion, however, was on informing the audience of the role and current efforts of the joint, Army, and Marine Corps CA proponents and PKSOI, as the joint stability proponent. Each panel member described the impacts of his work for the CA force at Service and national levels. Each also discussed professional development of unit and individual level capacities and capabilities by providing DOTMLPF-P resources to improve Civil Affairs operational performance.

Col. Liddick summarized PKSOI’s role as the joint and Army proponent for stabilization and peacekeeping and as the Army proponent for security force assistance. He described its efforts in promoting U.S. influence through outreach to counterpart allied and partner institutions like the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence in Vicenza, Italy; the Italian Army’s Post Conflict Operations Study Center in Turin, Italy; the NATO CCoE in the Hague, Netherlands; and the United Nations Department of Peace Operations in New York.

A key area is its work with the Joint Staff J7 Office of Irregular Warfare and DoD Irregular Warfare Center on joint doctrine for resilience. In cooperation with the UK Ministry of Defense and as-mentioned NATO and UN institutions, PKSOI is working to catch up U.S. concepts of resilience with those of its partners. PKSOI supports the Army Security Force Assistance Command on

Security Force Assistance Brigade design and doctrine updates in the July 2023 revision of Army FM 3-22, *Security Cooperation*. It also leads U.S. joint force efforts to build partner stabilization capacity through deployed mobile training teams and numerous courses sponsored at PKSOI or available online.

Additionally, PKSOI works prolifically with interagency partners, focusing on revising Army stability operations and security cooperation doctrine (FMs 3-07 and 3-22, respectively) along the lines of multidomain operations (MDO), updating the PKSOI and U.S. Institute of Peace's 2009 *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* and the corresponding Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIASC) course, and supporting the establishment of the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence (CP CoE) in the National Capital Region.

Col. Liddick and Lt. Col. Meister emphasized that the doctrinal and operational guidance foundations for Army and Marine CA professionals, recently updated by the proponents, are the most robust in a generation. FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations* (July 2021), for example, incorporates the CA role in MDO and LSCO. It defines four core competencies: civil knowledge integration (CKI), military government operations (MGO), civil network development and engagement (CNDE), and civil-military interaction (CMI). It also introduces civil reconnaissance (CR) as an Army doctrinal term, explains how CA supports maneuver commanders in LSCO, and refines the role of functional specialties in military government and Army stability operations.

They challenged CA professionals to thoroughly understand and utilize these resources. Among these are the doctrinal supplements in the form of Army Techniques Publications (ATPs) based on FM 3-57, which are specific to the CA core competencies, CA planning, and the Army's special operations CA forces. The three recently updated versions and two upcoming updates include:

Recently Updated ATPs

- ATP 3-57.30, *Civil Network Development and Engagement* (February 2023): Describes methods for analyzing and engaging civil networks, supporting operational objectives through targeted civil engagements.
- ATP 3-57.50, *Civil Knowledge Integration* (October 2024): Establishes processes to integrate civil considerations into planning, providing commanders with actionable information to enhance decision-making.
- ATP 3-57.80, *Army Special Operations Forces Civil Affairs* (November 2024): Highlights the unique capabilities of ARSOF CA in irregular warfare, denied environments, and LSCO, emphasizing their role in shaping the operational environment and setting conditions for conventional forces.

Planned ATP Updates

- ATP 3-57.40, *Military Government Operations* (FY25): Will add a framework to leverage CA functional specialty capabilities during competition, crisis, and conflict to enable transitional governance, support stability tasks, and assess governance vulnerabilities.
- ATP 3-57.70, *Civil-Military Integration* (FY25): Will focus on integrating non-military mission partners, consolidating gains, and enabling unified action to support maneuver commanders.

Lt. Col. Meister reported that, while the Army has codified a career progression plan for career management field (CMF) 38 (which includes the direct commissioning of 38G military government specialists), formal Army approval of the CA Force Design Update (FDU), which includes expansion of the standard four-person CA Team to eight personnel, is not expected until March 2025. Maj. Philpott briefed that the focus of the USSOCOM J39 is on integrating CA into joint modernization efforts, including concept development, experimentation, and doctrinal revisions of the joint publications on *Civil-Military Operations* (JP 3-57) and *Special Operations Forces* (JP 3-05). The J39 is set to develop updated guidance for the civil-military engagement program and to refine guidance, technological requirements, and education pathways for joint civil information management. He also mentioned Joint Special Operations University's contributions to the development of joint educational opportunities.

Lt. Col. Kline explained the ongoing shift in Marine operations focus, reflected in Force Design 2030, to securing and defending forward naval access in littoral areas. Under the 2024 Commandant's Planning Guidance, USMC Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) must ready themselves to be more flexible and adaptable for deterrence and joint combat operations in littoral areas, mainly in the INDOPACOM region. With respect to CA teaming, Civil Affairs Groups (CAGs) are integrated with PSYOP, IO, and other information-related capabilities under the Primary Military Occupational Specialty 1707 Influence Officers. These officers integrate operations in the information environment through the planning and execution of military information support operations (MISO), civil authorities' information support (CAIS), and civil affairs operations (CAO). At all levels, Influence Officers advise commanders and staffs on the information warfighting function. Their integration role supports the Combatant Command's Influence Campaign objectives and Fleet Marine Force (FMF) missions, enable commanders to shape the information and security environment in their areas of responsibility (AoR).

In addition to the USMC approach, UK information brigades (discussed more in Workshop III) provide another example for the U.S. Army on how to integrate information-related capabilities in ways that best help operational and tactical commanders contend with the information domain and the human dimension in all mission environments, especially LSCO.

Workshop II: Teaming CA in JIM Environments in Competition

The second workshop opened the lens of “teaming” to consider partnering and integration as a more operational and strategic extension of teaming, which is largely tactical, especially in JIM environments. Association director Mr. Ryan McCannell, who serves as the Division Chief for Policy and Plans at the USAID Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation (OCMC), facilitated this discussion. Discussants included: Lt. Col. Nicole Alexander, Civil Affairs Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Stabilization Policy (CNSP), Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD (SO/LIC)); Mr. John Mongan, Senior Stabilization Advisor, Department of State, Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations; Col. Evan Hume, Commander, 3rd Civil Affairs Group, U.S. Marine Corps; and Lt. Col. Peter Schaefer, Branch Chief, Concepts Interoperability Capabilities at the CCoE, The Hague, Netherlands.

Mr. McCannell opened by noting how commanders and agency leaders have learned that they cannot solve shared complex problems in conflict and competition without teaming and partnering with each other and integrating wherever they can. This is especially true in chronically under-resourced regions like Africa. This dynamic would be in even greater play in LSCO. Mr. Mongan, a longtime advocate for better understanding of CA in the State Department, then echoed the panel’s contention that CA could best prepare itself for effective operational civil-military integration with interagency partners like USAID and the State Department in all mission environments (including LSCO) through the ongoing maintenance of strong interagency planning relationships. This is especially important among theater-level commands and individual country teams during security assistance operations and in joint exercises. He also advised that a major role of CA in LSCO will be in what he called “irregular diplomacy” on the ground.

The two interagency representatives foreshadowed the keynote speaker’s remarks that, despite the overwhelming emphasis on governance in current CA doctrine, CA would be better served concentrating on gaining and maintaining influence-related positional advantages in competition settings for leveraging in deterrence or LSCO. They also pointed out that CA could increase its value to both civil and military authorities by helping them better understand and leverage other information-related military capabilities (e.g., PSYOP and IO) as well as well-established and highly successful initiatives, such as the Army National Guard’s State Sponsorship Programs.

Lt. Col. Alexander, formerly of the 95th CA Bde (SO) (A) and who recently took over from Lt. Col. Diana Parzik as the lone CA officer at ASD (SO/LIC), agreed. She added to a point made in Workshop I that, as members of the premier economy-of-force capability for “winning without fighting,” if CA professionals are to fulfill their role as the commander’s answer persons on all things civil-military, they must not only be thoroughly familiar with Army and joint doctrine, especially CA and CMO doctrine and ATPs, but also national security and interagency policies and authorities that mutually impact CAO, CMO, and partner operations and activities. The most advantageous place for CA to “plug-in” at theater and joint command and staff levels, other than the J-9 and J-5 Plans sections, she recounted, is at the J-3 staff—specifically, at the J-39 section.

Picking up from Lt. Col. Kline's Workshop I remarks, Lt. Col. Hume noted additional USMC influence capabilities in, for example, Marine Expeditionary Force Information Groups in support of MAGTFs and Marine Littoral Regiments. While he thought the Army could learn much from the USMC's positive experiences of the past few years in influence teaming, it should also understand its risks. Agreeing with the growing consensus in the Symposium that CA professionals must become better versed in policy, doctrine, and techniques of their art, the most important thing they can do, especially when in a staff augmentation role, is "read and understand the commander's plan—not just your part of it, but the whole plan."

Lt. Col. Schaefer explained how the NATO CIMIC approach to civil-military cooperation among civilian agency partners overlaps substantially with CA, especially the key CIMIC tasks of helping commanders understand the civil environment and the information environment. He poignantly added that, in the NATO approach, "the number one CIMIC officer is the commander himself." Lt. Col. Schaefer would later expound on his points in his Issue Paper presentation.

Workshop III: Teaming and Partnering in the Changing Role of CA in MDO

Deputy Commandant of the USAJFKSWCS and Association director Col. David J. Kaczmarek led the Symposium's convergent workshop. Joining him were: PKSOI Director Col. Jay Liddick (from Workshop I); 358th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander and Association director Col. J.P. LeCedre; and Lt. Col. N.K. Twumasi-Ankrah, U.K. Outreach Group Commander.

As backdrop, it is worth recalling that Col. Kaczmarek, as 95th CA Bde (SO) (A) Commander, led a seminal discussion at last year's event on how multicomponent CA teaming points to a way of campaigning CA that helps major supported commands better appreciate conventional reserve component (RC) CA for more than post-conflict stabilization. As a campaigning mainstay, it could help build relationships in CNDE with interorganizational partners at local, regional, and international levels to enhance positional advantages in competition, provide more depth and realism in scenario play in collective exercises, develop measures and evaluations for competition and crisis response, and process lessons for mission continuity over time. It also greatly improves CA mission readiness to support crisis response and LSCO.

Operationally, however, better multicomponent CA integration comes from more deliberate campaigning of multicomponent CAO, cross-component mission preparation, organizational training validation processes, and modernizing authorities for leveraging now highly sought RC capabilities, such as 38Gs. There was also consensus on the need for a strategic narrative so that all CA professionals can speak to supported commands with one voice about what CA is and does, explaining the capabilities and constraints of the various parts of a diverse CA force to enable the right array and mix of CA forces, especially at the geographic combatant command (GCC)/Service component command (SCC) level, in the global force management (GFM) process.

Picking up from this, Col. Kaczmarek focused more on something much more urgent: Civil Affairs personnel and organizations are not prepared to address the requirements that will be levied on them during high-intensity MDO. “We are not ready for LSCO,” he stated. “Only a small number in our force really have experienced LSCO. We need to get ready and fast.”

With respect to mission requirements in LSCO, maneuver force commanders will face challenges that are more technically advanced, develop much faster and less predictably, and manifest in different ways and at different scales than in previous wars. The lack of available resources and increased vulnerability of logistical trains will also create a demand and opportunity for CA units and personnel to support main force commanders in sustainment and in consolidating military and security gains into desired civil and political outcomes. These activities will be centered initially on populace and resources control, management of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and mobilization and direction of the employment of civilians and infrastructure. Then they will require adept, anticipatory, and rapid transition management to other CA core competencies.

With respect to force posturing, CA personnel and organizations must prepare now to fulfill future LSCO mission requirements along the lines of CA missions and competencies. Preparation starts left of conflict and focuses as much on setting the theater for any eventual conflict as on transitional governance and stabilization. CNDE with host nations, allies, and interorganizational partners will drive the focus of such preparations. CA officers must train to integrate with planners at GCC and Theater Army levels to capture critical information gaps and develop CKI and CMI mechanisms to fill them.

In addition to not knowing enough about the policies, doctrine, and techniques essential to their craft, there are serious CA training and capacity shortfalls among CA professionals. CA has previously relied on providing staff planning and support to lower echelons. Future conflicts will demand that CA commands be better integrated with supported forces at higher echelons to support consolidation of gains in LSCO. This leads to several observations:

- 1) Current training venues—e.g., combat training centers (CTCs), warfighter exercises (WFXs), etc.—are insufficient to exercise and validate this critical LSCO capability.
- 2) CA commanders must be prepared to maneuver CA forces as part of a larger population and resource control mission. They must be the primary advisor to the supported commander on all matters CAO/CMO in a manner that equates to “terrain management” and “maneuver” in the human dimension and information domain.
- 3) CA unit staffs should be trained to conduct staff processes for CA unit commanders and not just as augmentation to a supported unit staff.
- 4) Participation in exercises is an opportunity to build teamwork and trust with supported commands and to develop CNDE expertise and networks in readiness for LSCO.

As a result, DOTMLPF-P recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Revise doctrine and training tasks to prepare and support LSCO and consolidation of gains.
- 2) Better integrate deployed RC CA units to achieve setting the theater information gaps.
- 3) Explore having diverse CA commands exchange best practices and capabilities as a rule.
- 4) Pursue training and exercise venues that support CA missions in LSCO.
- 5) Focus on training the basics at the individual, collective, and staff training levels.
- 6) Civil affairs leaders/planners must help solve maneuver commander problems.

Given these bottom lines Col. Kaczmarek laid out, other workshop members contributed their own observations. First, Lt. Col. Twumasi-Ankrah explained how “hybrid” (multicomponent and SOF-conventional) formations, such as the brigade-level U.K. Outreach Group, can not only leverage the civilian networks accessible to reserve forces but also reach back to civilian agencies and other civilian partners. Such “integrated action” capacities can seriously multiply the lethality of the force in general. Cross-component and cross-organizational training in peacetime, including but not exclusive to exercises, can also facilitate such integrated action in wartime.

With his new command’s orientation on Korea, where a major conflagration is most likely and most dangerous, Col. LeCedre added that a certain mission for CA in LSCO in such densely populated areas will involve contested non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) and civilian harm mitigation and response (CHMR) on a massive scale. In this scenario, U.S. forces will not be the lead force. This means they must be prepared to work in close support of Korean government agencies. He also noted that not all situations will call for multicomponent CA teaming; therefore, CA task organization in LSCO should be approached adaptively.

Underscoring the consensus on the floor that “we ultimately work for the commander,” and channeling Lt. Col. Hume’s earlier point on the importance of understanding the entire plan and not just parts specific to the CA mission, Col. Liddick noted that CA professionals must “focus on solving the commander’s problem as only we can,” and that they “need to dominate their annex with respect to the base plan.” As part of their command advisory role, CA commanders and team leaders need to be able to “walk the dog” on the tactical, operational, and strategic implications of maneuver force actions in civil-military mission analysis (METT-TC), and support to staff processes. For RC CA commanders in particular, this comes from personal professional development, institutional training, and participation in exercises and security assistance missions in the region. This also requires studying the references he mentioned earlier, doing personal offline AoR and cultural research, and conducting virtual CNDE with partners of interest. “Competence,” he said, “will come from thorough preparation.”

This prompted contributions from the floor. Association Vice President for Programs & Events Col. Caroline Pogge, who commanded a New EUCOM AoR CA brigade, noted how too few CA officers are sufficiently trained to work at theater-level staffs and plans groups. “We don’t just do CA operations on our own, but as part of the larger operations of the commands we support,” she said. Retired Maj. Gen. Steven Hashem, drawing from decades of CA command experience on

multiple deployments in various mission environments in numerous regions, cited the criticality of RC CA commanders to set the tone and example in building ongoing relationships with supported commanders and in demanding that their people “look, act, and be professionals.” Col. Marco Bongioanni, an author of several CA Issue Papers, reminded the group of: the importance of allocating and preparing RC CA forces to enable more locally sourced sustainment support in LSCO—as the Army moves away from a forward operating base (FOB) model of field logistics; how RC CA forces can sharpen their mission analysis skills during and between unit training assemblies; and, how they need to focus on what their customers most want from them (or explain it to them).

The group concluded that the work done during this past year on finding a strategic narrative for Civil Affairs will greatly help these efforts. “What is the CA value-proposition for LSCO?” is now among the most important questions the extended CA Corps must be able to answer.

Workshop IV: Teaming CA Functional Specialists—Recent and Emerging Operations

The best practices of CA functional specialists in teaming and partnering along civil-military, interorganizational, and multinational lines were on full display in the workshop led by Col. A. Scott DeJesse, 38G Military Government Specialist Program Director at the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne)—or USACAPOC(A)—Strategic Initiatives Group. Discussants were: Col. Hasan Harkous, Independent Works Regiment, Lebanese Armed Forces; Capt. Suzanna Joy, British Army Outreach Group, 11th Security Force Assistance Brigade; Mr. Jake Archer, Art Crime Team, Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Association director retired Maj. Corine Wegener, Director, Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative.

Col. DeJesse opened by explaining how 38Gs are evolving to be “a partner of choice” (PoC) with multifarious security assistance and cooperation touchpoints in regional areas of interest in ways that Foreign Military Sales (FMS) activities—which are more transactional and fleeting in maintaining technological advantages—cannot. The U.S., he noted, “focuses primarily on short-term capability generation (training and equipping), rather than on enduring capacity-building strategies which can self-replenish from a deeper reservoir of institutional support.”

This is largely because GCCs pursue PoC objectives primarily through security cooperation, FMS, and access, basing, and overflight (ABO). No doctrinal definition of the PoC concept exists. However, it is commonly used in commercial contexts to describe a similar scope of relationship, he added, citing an Australian consulting firm study on the concept.¹ “Partner of choice” describes an established long-term partnership in which parties have made a significant investment for their

¹ InSync.com.au, “How to Become a Partner of Choice,” Aug 2021, <https://insync.com.au/insights/how-to-become-a-partner-of-choice/> (accessed August 27, 2021), as cited in Col. DeJesse’s presentation.

mutual benefits. Such a relationship includes both rational and emotional elements and focuses more on guidance and advice than on transactional determinants (among them price).

An effective PoC relationship must allow a partner to make decisions to serve its self-interest but within clearly defined rules. China's challenge to U.S. global leadership and Russia's resurgence as a global spoiler require the U.S. to realign its foreign policy toward strengthening relations and bolstering democracy. This requires a review and an update of the notion of PoC. "You cannot start teaming for LSCO at the start of LSCO," he stressed. Hence the critical importance for CA to gain and maintain mission readiness—including strategic CR, CKI, CMI, and CNDE—during competition. This is true for all CA professionals, including 38Gs as well as NATO CIMIC and its functional specialists, with whom especially American 38Gs routinely network.

The 38G/6V Heritage and Preservation Specialists currently lead among functional specialties in building a global civil-military network. The 6Vs partner with cultural protection institutions like the Smithsonian; academic institutions such as Texas A&M, Notre Dame, etc.; interagency partners such as State, USAID, and the FBI; and private industry, associations, and interest groups. As RC CA Soldiers in other functional specialties, such as 38G/4A Industry and Production, grow networks likewise, they increasingly contribute to real-time regional campaigning and CA readiness for crisis response and LSCO, as well as to the CA value proposition.

Capt. Joy, adding to Lt. Col. Twumasi-Ankrah's earlier presentation, explained how cultural property protection (CPP) was likewise a feature area of concentration for the UK Army's Outreach Group. Retired Maj. Wegener informed the audience that 38G training at Carlisle Barracks has grown to 18 civil sector capabilities and now includes a recently established CPP command in the Armed Forces of Ukraine—the Cultural Volunteer Defense Forces of Territorial Communities within the civil-military component of the Territorial Defense Forces.

The highlight of the workshop came from Col. Harkous, operations officer of the Lebanese Independent Works Regiment, who gave a fascinating briefing on real-time challenges in civil-military responses and CPP in both the disaster of the 2020 Beirut harbor explosion and the recent combat activities of the Israeli Defense Forces in and near cultural heritage sites in Lebanon.

The Regiment has a mission for "execution of civil engineering works of all kinds, production of concrete fortifications and engineering raw materials, response to the preservation of cultural properties during emergency situations and crises, special excavations above and underground issued by the Army command." It comprises special excavation, manufacturing and recycling, CPP training and coordination sections, and mobile engineering works teams. Along with other government agencies, private donor initiatives and NGOs, and universities and youth groups indigenous to or working in Lebanon, it has worked in-country with the United Nation Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), French and Italian Army teams, U.S. Navy Construction Battalion ("Seabee"), and CA teams, including Col. De Jesse's 38G/6Vs.

In response to the Beirut explosion, the Regiment helped clear over 1,300,000 square meters of rubble from inside the harbor area under extraordinarily difficult conditions. It also cleared over 800,000 square meters of rubble outside the harbor, protecting and preserving at least eight antiquity sites among about 30 critical buildings and structures. It continues to be quite busy working to preserve, protect, remove, and safeguard dozens of world heritage cultural artifacts with the Lebanese National Museum and local museums and groups in Baalbak, Rayak, Saida, Sursok, and Tyre, which were recently affected by ongoing combat operations.

With the assistance of its partners, the Regiment has “turned these crises into an opportunity” to establish a Cultural Properties Protection and Emergency Response Center. It has training and coordination functions for building joint civil-military capacities that respond to crises and CPP challenges in and around Lebanon. The Center and the Regiment’s exploits have engendered great international interest and support from UNESCO and other international organizations. Regimental officers have also attended Army Monuments Officer Training (AMOT) in the U.S. for the past two years. Col. DeJesse and his guests, in fact, arrived earlier that day after the conclusion of the most recent seminar at PKSOI in Carlisle Barracks, PA.

Mr. Archer then explained to the audience about a recent joint/interagency undertaking by the 38G/6V team and the FBI to repatriate Japanese artifacts looted by U.S. Soldiers during World War II. His story demonstrated how U.S. Government law enforcement agencies can partner in response to CPP, international criminal network looting, theft, and forgery of works of art and cultural artifacts that often have linkages to counter-intelligence and counterterrorism.

Keynote Speaker

After an introduction by Mr. Ryan McCannell, who facilitated Workshop II, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator Ms. Ciara Knudsen, a former head of the Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation with a longtime appreciation of Civil Affairs, laid out her thoughts on “Civil-Military Teaming, Partnering, and Integration in a New Era of Competition.”

She began by explaining why civil-military cooperation and civil-military teaming, partnering, and integration in competition matter, even in LSCO. The mindset in Washington, she explained, with its post-Global War on Terror focus on overwhelming force in deterrence, LSCO, and great power competition, is, “Why do we need civil-military cooperation?” (The underlying assumption being that civil-military teaming, partnering, and integrating is less necessary in LSCO.) Those who want to focus solely on competition and future threats, she explained, “are getting pulled back into the fray because instability is not a sideshow or after-effect of competition; it is a major part of the point. And it’s only getting more complicated.”

Amid the complexity of contemporary conflict, instability, and contested power, those hard-earned lessons still very much apply. As civil and military coordination professionals, we must embrace complexity and look at how to solve or manage layered complex challenges by working as a system

of systems to avoid falling again into the trap of overreacting to a false choice between conventional great power competition and LSCO vs. irregular warfare and stabilization.

USAID and CA professionals must continue to learn lessons that prove the enduring value of mindful civil-military cooperation. “We have worked elbow-to-elbow with Civil Affairs to stabilize areas freed from violent extremists, combining our resources, access, authorities, and local information networks to rebuild infrastructure, livelihoods, and institutions. We have learned together how to balance defense, diplomatic, and development investments. And for each moment we got it right, there were others where we got it wrong.”

The former National Security Staff Director for Strategic Planning identified three core civil-military lessons as relevant in competition and LSCO as in stabilization and counterterrorism.

- First, any successful deterrence, sustainable solution to LSCO, or end state to counterterrorism is fundamentally political. “The answer to the question—how does this end or how can we prevent this from getting worse—will always be political.” Of all the forces in DoD, Civil Affairs “gets” this. “You understand that the human dimension is where the decisive action will ultimately occur. It is as true for large-scale combat operations as it was in counterinsurgency and stabilization. Civil Affairs is the critical voice on the military side to make this clear. We must be advocating in concert—from all sides.”
- The second takeaway is that “we are not in charge.” All too often, she asserted, “We hear DoD planners bypass or minimize host-country governments and the population, whether in concepts, exercises, or campaign plans because it’s hard and messy. But every single time we bypass this principle, we pay an extraordinary price.” CA is specifically trained and deployed for this. When others in DoD forget this lesson, CA and USAID must “get the voices of host-nation partners and affected communities to the table or channel their voices... I cannot think of a single scenario in the emerging geopolitical contest where we would be in a conflict that did not involve a government or people that would and should be in the lead. We must design, plan, and train for that—together.”
- Third, complexity requires understanding networks of effects. Knudsen noted how we risk the same counterproductivity—on a much larger scale in today’s global competition—in trying the same simple solutions to variable complex problems, such as ending the poppy trade or prohibiting government corruption in Central Asia. Interruption of Ukrainian wheat and fertilizer shipments to Africa, she explained, causes socioeconomic and financial crashes at the destination countries as Houthi threats to maritime traffic in the Red Sea demonstrate that global chaos theory is still alive and well. It impacts the costs of shipping, insurance, and global supply chains as well as the functions of key UN voting blocs, governments, and key population groups.

Embracing complexity requires information-sharing, coordination modeling, and scenario setting that seriously consider second and third-order effects that are critical to success in each part of that web. The way to truly deter conflict is to understand how all the players who affect the political calculus are affected. USAID does some of this analysis on the economic side as does the State Department on the diplomatic side; but DoD, with its greater capacity for network analysis, very often wants this to be someone else's problem. Civil Affairs is needed to test military planning assumptions and interdict any potential "group think" in ways that help conventional force commanders understand the indirect yet crucial impacts of an unconventional (human) ecosystem.

So, what must the civil-military community do to team, partner, and integrate for greater impact amidst all this complexity and dynamism, the previous Director of Policy and Plans for the Special Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition asked the audience.

The first step is to lean into and learn from successful teaming efforts, past and present. In the INDOPACOM region, CA teams (mentioned at last year's event) contribute to Oceana Engagement teams, which included State and USAID representatives, to offer Overseas Humanitarian Disaster Assistance and Civil Aid (OHDACA), interwoven with GFA assistance—"meeting people where they are on issues. They do not want to talk about China. They want to talk about rising sea levels, communal violence, and the future of young people." USAID is built into ODHACA and the GFA—signed by President Trump, implemented under President Biden, and likely to evolve under another Trump Administration.

The second step is to intensify the partnership between CA and USAID at various institutional and operational planning levels. USAID's affirmative vision for the role of development in great-power competition has been, through numerous administrations: improving the integrity of natural resource management and extraction, including critical minerals and fisheries; expanding digital access and protecting digital freedom; and, promoting democratic and economic resilience, so that partner nations can manage their own economic growth independently and reduce their vulnerability to coercion. USAID is building new partnerships in maritime security, global supply chains, digital security, etc., where CA and the SOF community can play critical roles.

Another step is to resuscitate interagency civil-military integration. "This is where we are at high risk of throwing the baby out with the bathwater" by overlooking cases of extraordinary civil-military collaboration across stabilization, communications, security assistance, financing, and supply chain lines in places like Syria and Afghanistan. "We planned together, deployed together, and coordinated among country teams and across combatant commands. The complexity of those missions is closer to what we face now—and Civil Affairs is the glue that brings them all together."

Most importantly, "we need you in the rooms where commanders' decisions are made. We need you as the platform for interagency cells, we need you detailed to interagency planning cells, and as liaisons with host nation command centers and with local authorities. In deterrence, we need you with us—identifying opportunities, communicating complexity, and embodying the three

principles mentioned above: politics, people, and a systems approach.” Surveyed USAID bureaus overwhelmingly want a military liaison—and the partner of choice is Civil Affairs, she reported.

However, she emphasized, we are in a race against time. “The generation that forged cooperation in shared hooches and over shared meals in DFACs is retiring. Interagency coordination is an afterthought in the [*National Defense Strategy*]. We must invest now—because those rolodexes that we used to rely on aren’t going to be there. This is where our training efforts together are so important—as is the role of the Civil Affairs Association and your reach to the next generation.”

Because resources are limited, “USAID is looking at how to take our stressed budgets and be smart on how and when we engage on planning, exercises, training, etc. We look to CA leaders to help discern where we can get the biggest bang. We are looking at how to integrate USAID better with USACAPOC(A) and Marine influence operations. But there are just not enough of us.”

“We also need Civil Affairs in the policy process in the NCR—we will help you make that case. We greatly value our military advisors to USAID, most of whom are Civil Affairs officers, and we hear the same thing from the State Department and other agencies. Your small but growing network of strategically placed Civil Affairs officers at the Pentagon is more important and influential than ever. It is incredibly valuable to USAID and DoD to keep those billets filled. Now more than ever, we need you to be ‘in the rooms where things happen,’ to quote Hamilton.”

Book Talk: *When Rambo Meets the Red Cross: Civil-Military Engagement in Fragile States*

After the brief-backs and keynote and luncheon speakers, Brown University Global Fellow Dr. Stanislava Mladenova explained the thesis of her new book, *When Rambo Meets the Red Cross: Civil-Military Engagement in Fragile States*, emphasizing earlier observations about the importance of relationship-building as more steady state than *ad hoc*. The book focuses on the universal problem that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and militaries experience in managing their difficult relationship. Along stereotypical lines, the military is mostly understood through the prism of its lethality, and NGOs are perceived as idealistic do-gooders ready to save the world. Yet, Dr. Mladenova contended, there is more that draws them together than apart.

To illustrate this paradox, she cited the cultural commonality between NGOs and militaries in their shared love of acronyms and jargon and how they are beholden to regulatory requirements and guidelines. Despite the impediments, their interaction has been evolving for the better, with philosophical boundaries fading to the delicate lines that military and development actors must thread to tackle common security and socio-economic challenges in fragile, ungoverned, and insecure spaces where both actors are most needed. Many cross-cutting themes, she explained for the benefit of the audience, are replete in irregular warfare—from the protection of civilians, humanitarian urgencies, civil or societal resilience, WPS, the threats of mis- and disinformation, dark networks, climate change related impacts on stability, and so on.

Bridgebuilders such as military Civil Affairs and CIMIC officers and UN humanitarian civil-military coordination (UNCMCoord) officers play an increasingly critical role along this central, civil-military nexus between conflict and peace. The characteristics of the most successful civil-military agents are high situational- and self-awareness, intellectual honesty, a willingness to exchange information freely, a sense that diversity should be a strength and an opportunity rather than a problem, and—most of all—adaptiveness and creativity. They see the level, quality, and productivity of interaction as their core measure of performance.

"Civil-military engagement is not a capability," Dr. Mladenova said in her closing remarks. "It is not a guideline, it is not a joint publication, it is not a process, and it is not a product. Civil-military engagement is a *modus operandi*, or, precisely, it is a manner of being. Most importantly, it is a human-to-human relationship with its own enduring qualities."

Command Presentation: Teaming CA and the 95th CA Bde (SO) (A) Command Vision

Over lunch, Colonel Christian A. Carr, commanding the last remaining active component CA unit in the Army, provided his perspectives after hearing the reports from the workshop facilitators earlier that morning. Looming large in the fate of the 95th CA Bde (SO) (A) is the recent U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) decision to directly place command and control of the five regionally-aligned battalions of the 95th under the regionally-aligned Special Forces Groups of the 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne). With the prioritization on LSCO, this reallocation would help ARSOF set conditions in the theater areas "left of bang" and make the Brigade headquarters more readily available to supported commands such as the XVIII Airborne Corps at a crisis point. "The purpose of what we do," he explained, "has clearly shifted to preparing for LSCO and supporting deterrence."

The implications of this decision, to be executed over the next year, are eliciting intense interest and discussion, mostly offline, among a plethora of stakeholders. Among the implications was that the decision opened the possibility of dissolving the 95th CA Bde (SO) (A) as a brigade-level command as it had no units to command. With the inactivation of the 83rd CA Bn as the last remaining conventional active component CA unit last May, it would effectively mean the Army would have no conventional active CA forces and no CA commands at brigade and above other than in USACAPOC(A) which, of course, is a U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) command.

For the remainder of his short presentation, Col. Carr explained that multicomponent teaming for his command remains a less comprehensive concept that is largely situational rather than the result of a program objective memorandum. A complicating factor remains the longstanding challenge of leveraging existing Title 10 mobilization authorities to include RC CA forces—particularly those 38G capabilities that are experiencing increasing demand—in security assistance missions and "setting conditions" activities in each of the theaters.

For the 95th, “teaming” remains more interagency in nature, partnering mostly at the country team level and building relationships with myriad actors than multicomponent and partners during competition. The desired effects are to build relationships that translate into positional advantages while simultaneously setting conditions for dominating in the human dimension and information domain at crisis points and in LSCO, as Col. Kaczmarek detailed in Workshop III. Likewise, Col. Carr concurred with the observation that building relationships between CA units and supported combat force commanders is more critical than staff augmentation alone; staff augmentation is insufficient in meeting “the speed of need” for integrating CKI and CIM into staff processes during a highly intense, complex, and demanding LSCO mission environment. Much of this comes from his experiences in command advisory roles during his military career in regions throughout the world, his repeated interaction with commanders in the 95th CA Bde (SO) (A), and his extensive knowledge of CA proponents at the joint and Army levels.

For Col. Carr, the major questions under this year’s theme relate to how we can improve civil-military teaming for planning support; how we can promote interorganizational learning; and how CA commands can maintain pace with—if not anticipate—the requirements of supported commanders for current, emerging, and contingency missions. Lastly, he fully endorsed collective efforts to help forge a narrative for the Civil Affairs branch.

Telling the Civil Affairs Story – A Narrative Strategy for Civil Affairs

Before the next segment, Association director retired Brig. Gen. Ferdinand Irrizary provided an *ad hoc* addition to the scheduled Symposium program. Using a slide show format, he shared pictures and observations from a training event for general staff officers at the Ukrainian National Defense University in Kyiv in which he participated in September-October 2024. He was extremely impressed with the resilience and adaptability of the Ukrainian population and the military from over three years of protracted LSCO there. His presentation compared and contrasted interestingly with the images of Lebanon, shown earlier by Col. Harkous, and images from the war in Gaza shown by national media outlets. Appropriately, it demonstrated how the level of intensity, political and population dynamics, and other determinant factors differed in each setting, underscoring the observed need for CA to be adaptive.

Then, the outgoing Association Vice President for Programs and Events retired Col. Christopher Holshek and Association director retired Col. Dennis J. Cahill presented the three deliverables they developed based on the initiative that Association President retired Maj. Gen Hugh Van Roosen launched last December on “Finding a Strategic Narrative for Civil Affairs.”

After a year’s work, the two presenters showed the capstone memorandum, “Telling the Civil Affairs Story—A Narrative Strategy for Civil Affairs,” along with the updated strategic communication slide deck and a two-sided handout. All of these help CA professionals explain: what Civil Affairs is; what CA does; and why and how CA is important. The project and its

deliverables are intended to facilitate a more common understanding of CA—more from the bottom up than the top down—and enable CA professionals to adapt and apply these deliverables to tell the Civil Affairs story as it best applies to the circumstances at hand. This way supported Service commands and JIM partners can better understand, leverage, and integrate this uniquely diverse but widely unknown strategic land force to support a complexity of U.S. and allied strategic and politico-military objectives in any campaign.

The final products will be posted on the Association website for download and use starting in 2025.

Civil Affairs Issue Paper Presentations

Closing out the Symposium, the authors of the five *Civil Affairs Issue Papers* to appear in this year's volume presented summaries of their papers and, through audience vote, competed for cash prizes of \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second, and \$250 for third.

First prize (\$1,000) went to:

“Improving Civil Affairs Teaming with Private Sector Tools”
- Capt. David Skrzypiec and Capt. Ted Delicath

Second prize was a tie (\$500 awarded to each paper):

“The Evolution of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)”
- Lt. Col. Peter Schaefer

“Civil Affairs Task Force: Conflict Prevention through Multicomponent Teaming”
- Maj. Tony Smith and Maj. Adam Frowein

Third prize was also a tie (\$250 awarded to each paper):

“Building Partner Capacity: The Value of U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs”
- Col. Bradford Hughes

“Teaming to Operationalize Culture for Campaigning”
- Col. Jack A. Schultz and Lt. Col. Tara R. Scardino.

Lt. Col Schaefer, Col. Shultz, and Lt. Col. Scardino graciously donated their winnings back to the Association.

Retired Brig. Gen. Glenn A. Goddard succeeded retired Brig. Gen. Bruce Bingham as Publications Committee Chair during this past year. He and other senior CA leaders were impressed with how informative and thought-provoking the presentations were. “It is encouraging to see company-grade officers ensuring the relevance of Civil Affairs as the Department of Defense (DoD) shifts to LSCO,” fellow Issue Paper presenter Col. Bradford Hughes later noted.

All five papers, along with the final Conference Report, will appear in the 10th volume of the *Civil Affairs Issue Papers* in electronic format in February and in print in March 2025. Previous volumes and Roundtable Reports are available on the Association website at <https://www.civilaffairsassoc.org> under CA Media Enterprise/CA Issue Papers and Reports. The slide decks for all of this year's Symposium presentations are available, after member log-in, under Resource Library/Events/2024/Symposium.

Final Remarks

Association President retired Maj. Gen. Hugh Van Roosen closed out the two-day forum by thanking the CA community, its allies from around the world, and its interagency and other interorganizational partners for their robust participation and partnership in helping to grow a worldwide enterprise of civilian and military civil-military professionals. He and many others found this year's Symposium to be exceptionally productive, especially in determining CA's role in LSCO. "There was evidently a strong desire to enhance collaboration and communication as we face uncertain times," observed Association Vice President Col. Caroline Pogge after the event.

The morning after the Symposium and the 304th CA Bde Dining Out (at which the Association provided regimental Windfield Scott medallions), the Association Board of Directors held a highly productive hybrid meeting. Among the major decisions was a massive re-organization of the Association Board to reflect the contents of the recently revised Association by-laws. In that move, vice presidents that once covered geographic areas of the U.S. now oversee an updated list of committees responsible for: membership and finance publications; awards and nominations; programs and events; information technology; legacy enlisted affairs; and, communication and outreach. All directors were placed on committees and given specific roles outlined in the by-laws.

The Board also chose the date and venue for next year's Symposium—13-16 November 2025 in the Los Angeles area, organized in coordination with the 358th Civil Affairs Brigade.

The next Association event will be the online Civil Affairs Roundtable in April 2025 on a date to be announced in February 2025.

Retired Col. Christopher Holshek serves on the Publications Committee as co-editor of the Civil Affairs Issue Papers and on the Events Committee based on his long experience as Vice President for Programs & Events. A 2017 Distinguished Member of the Civil Affairs Corps and a 2021 CIMIC Centre of Excellence Award recipient, he is the author of "Travels with Harley: Journeys in Search of Personal and National Identity," the final chapter of "Warrior-Diplomats," and the Peace Operations Training Institute course on "Civil-Military Coordination in Peace Operations."

Retired Col. Dennis J. Cahill is an Association director who serves as co-editor of the Civil Affairs Issue Papers on the Publications Committee and Chair of the Legacy Committee. He is a 2014

Distinguished Member of the Civil Affairs Corps, a past Honorary Colonel of the Regiment for the Civil Affairs Corps, and the Deputy Civil Affairs Capability Manager at the USASOC Force Modernization Center at Fort Liberty, NC. He is the author of the 2003 Army/USMC Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures Manual and numerous articles on Civil Affairs in multiple publications. His most recent article, "Revisiting Civil Affairs Operations in Operation Restore Hope," was published in the Eunomia Journal on October 1, 2023.

Telling the Civil Affairs Story

A Narrative Strategy for Civil Affairs

Christopher Holshek and Dennis J. Cahill, Sr.

Part I. Introduction – Background, Purpose, Nature, and Scope.

1. Background. This paper explains a Civil Affairs Association initiative to support the Civil Affairs Corps, for which the Association, in consultation with numerous organizations and points of contact, has served as regimental association for many years.¹ At the December 2023 CA Conference at Ft. Liberty, NC, and at the online CA Roundtable in April 2024, the Association led discussion on the growing consensus for a unifying narrative on Civil Affairs. Along with related major deliverables, this paper was tested at the October 2024 Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) Annual Meeting and presented at the CA Symposium in Philadelphia, PA, in November 2024.
2. Purpose. This paper describes a narrative strategy for the CA Corps to tell its story. It is intended to facilitate development, discussion, and dissemination of a common understanding of CA—more from the bottom up than the top down. It enables the CA Corps to help supported service institutions and commands, and joint, interorganizational, and multinational (JIM) partners understand, leverage, and integrate this uniquely diverse but widely unknown strategic land force to support a complexity of U.S. and allied strategic and politico-military objectives in any given campaign.
3. Nature and Scope. This narrative strategy draws from multiple sources,² including official policy and doctrine. However, it is not an official document. Nor is it comprehensive, exhaustive, or directive. It can be used as a stand-alone source or as a reference that informs organizational or personal deliverables that tell the Civil Affairs story to a multitude of audiences. It can also stimulate and capture the development of narratives from the bottom up as well as the top down. These narratives should be universal to all CA forces in missions at all levels of engagement and integration.
4. Narratives. A narrative galvanizes a community or organization around a shared purpose. It is “an intentionally composed, compelling and inspiring [strategic] *story* that explains the enduring values shared by members of an organization, their origins as a collective, and what they want to achieve in the future—and how.”³ “We don’t tell narratives,” 2024 Roundtable keynote Dr. Ajit Maan explained, “but we do tell stories.”⁴ Rather than reciting talking points of an “elevator speech” or quoting policy and doctrine, the CA community must tell its strategic story around a unifying narrative that is adaptable to thematic context, audience, situation, and deliverer needs.
5. Structure. After this introduction (Part I) is: a narrative strategy for CA (Part II); a narrative framework for telling the CA story (Part III); and narrative development and engagement (Part IV).
6. Points of contact for this project, including the paper and deliverables, are:

a. Retired Col. Dennis J. Cahill, Director and co-Editor of *The Civil Affairs Issue Papers*, Civil Affairs Association, dennis.j.cahill@gmail.com, 1.910.824.3374.

b. Retired Col. Christopher Holshek, Colonel, USA Retired and Director and co-Editor of *The Civil Affairs Issue Papers*, Civil Affairs Association, holshek@hotmail.com, 1.845.800.6880.

Part II. A Narrative Strategy for Civil Affairs.

1. The narrative strategy for Civil Affairs involves the ends, ways, and means by which members of the wider Civil Affairs community, including the extended CA Corps, can tell the Civil Affairs story.

2. Ends. The ends of a Civil Affairs narrative strategy are in education, advocacy, and motivation.

a. *Education* of target audiences on Civil Affairs requires CA professionals to know instinctively how to communicate the capacities, capabilities, and values-added of CA forces along the lines of the narrative framework below. Regardless of service or component, they should be able to explain to any military or civilian interagency audience the comparative advantages and constraints of all CA forces. This helps enable the deployment and employment of the right array of CA forces—leveraged through the request for forces process and optimally integrated in campaign plans and operations. Success is measured in the level of CA representation at supported commands (e.g., plans groups), operational integration of CA forces, and their common identity, interaction, and camaraderie.

b. *Advocacy* goes beyond the educational process. It focuses on institutional and policy leadership levels to address identified DOTMLPF-P* gaps and ensure that CA forces are organized, trained, educated, equipped, and otherwise resourced for deployment and employment across the full range of operations. It ensures that all CA forces receive appropriate program and budgeting prioritization for force development, management, and generation. Audiences include service and joint institutional, Department of Defense (DoD), interagency, and Congressional leadership and staff, as well as the public at large through select mass and social media platforms. Success is measured in terms of CA representation and interaction at these offices, in the presence and activities of champions at these levels, and in the inclusion of CA in the military and national story.

c. *Motivation* results from success in both education and advocacy that generates enthusiasm and interest in Civil Affairs. This is measurable in: the quantity and quality of CA forces; the cultivation of active CA champions among military commands, interagency and interorganizational partners, national command authorities, legislative leadership, and the media; increased Civil Affairs Association membership; and increased participation in Association events and platforms.

3. Ways and Means. The CA narrative strategy incorporates ways and means that support education, advocacy, and motivation. These are in mutually reinforcing and concurrent phases to identify, socialize, adapt, and sustain a CA narrative and facilitate and form this process. These

* Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy.

phases include: intellectual capitalization; mainstreaming Civil Affairs; key leader engagement; storytelling; Soldiers and Marines as spokespersons; and building a global-civil-military network.

a. Intellectual Capitalization. This is largely in narrative development and discussion in CA-related collegial platforms like the annual Symposium and Roundtable, the *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*, *Eunomia Journal*, *OneCA* podcasts, and social media. The Association's Publication Advisory Board is another source for CA personnel to write academic and staff papers and articles in professional journals and open publications. It also supports CA book projects such as *Warrior-Diplomats*.⁵

b. Mainstreaming Civil Affairs. Development and discussion of the CA narrative is not exclusive to CA-specific platforms. Mainstreaming and integrating CA into larger discussions at service and joint levels helps educate those forces on CA and ensures its inclusion in larger force, doctrinal, and policy development up to and including the interagency level. It also helps advocate CA to audiences external to the CA community with critical impact on the growth, success, and viability of CA. This includes publishing articles in professional military journals, greater coverage of CA in mass and social media, and appearing with CA deliverables at events such as the AUSA Annual meeting.

c. Key Leader Engagement. Finding and developing champions of impact is an implied task for every CA professional regardless of component, mission, and level of engagement. At institutional levels, the Association must mindfully invite key military and civilian leadership as event speakers or to appear in *OneCA* podcasts to explain how CA fits their command or institutional vision.

d. Storytelling. Likewise, every CA professional at every level of command and integration should take every opportunity to tell the Civil Affairs story to educate, advocate, and motivate. This is based not only on the narrative framework below, but on historical sources, current literature, CA best practices, and personal experiences as well as policy and doctrine. In addition to this paper, the Association has developed a briefing and handout as deliverables to leverage and adapt as desired and appropriate. Stories can also appear in papers, articles, podcast appearances, and social media.

e. Soldiers and Marines as Spokespersons. Former USAJFKSWCS commanding general, Maj. Gen. Kurt Sonntag, urged the CA Corps to tell its story aggressively and widely—beyond the usual forums and including political and public audiences—to recruit members as well as supporters. “As members of the CA force, both past and present, no one is better able to tell our story not only to our leaders and decision makers but more and more to the young Soldiers currently serving as well as young men and women in your communities who have yet to make the decision to serve.”⁶

f. Building a Global Civil-Military Network. A global civil-military network helps build a capacity critical to CA force success in contemporary and emerging environments, as discussed in the 8th volume of the *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*.⁷ It widens audiences to educate, advocate, and motivate and for socializing the CA narrative. Beyond JIM levels, this includes academia, private industry, and partner civil affairs and civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) organizations.

Part III. A Narrative Framework for Telling the Civil Affairs Story.

1. The unifying (strategic) narrative for telling the Civil Affairs story is framed in response to basic questions identified at the 2023 Civil Affairs Conference and 2024 Civil Affairs Roundtable. These include: What is Civil Affairs? What do Civil Affairs forces do? Why is Civil Affairs important? and, What is the way forward for Civil Affairs?

2. What Is Civil Affairs?

a. Civil Affairs is the unique DoD multicomponent capability and joint strategic land power force that actively helps military commanders at all levels of engagement see, understand, engage, and influence the human dimension of conflict in all operational domains to “secure the victory” and achieve U.S. and allied political and military objectives—before, during, and after armed conflict.

b. DoD CA forces reside in the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. Active U.S. Army special operations forces (ARSOF) CA units are assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). These operate in deep areas and where access may be difficult. U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) conventional CA units, in turn, are largely assigned to U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM). They support maneuver units in close and rear areas and provide government/functional specialist expertise to military commands, civilian partner organizations, and host nation authorities. U.S. Marine Corps active civil-military operations (CMO) officers and reserve component tactical CA detachments support Fleet Marine and Navy task forces. Over 80% of more than 11,000 U.S. CA personnel is in the reserve component. Demand for CA often exceeds its deployable capacity.

c. CA draws its identity and characteristics from a storied history of population engagement going back to the Lewis and Clark expedition. Its main role as the premier military capability for civil-military integration, stabilization, and the consolidation of military and security gains into civilian and political outcomes is deeply rooted in military government and post-conflict stabilization in the wars with Mexico and Spain, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, and in Iraq and Afghanistan—transitioning from war to peace and from military to civilian control.

3. What Do Civil Affairs Forces Do?

a. CA forces enable mission command; increase strategic, operational, and tactical situational awareness, understanding, and influence; preserve combat power; consolidate military and security gains into civilian and political outcomes; and enable a secure and stable environment consistent with U.S. interests. They also help fulfill U.S. military command responsibilities to protect civilians under U.S. and international law, minimize civilian interference with military operations, and mitigate unintended harmful effects of military operations on civilian populations and institutions.

b. CA forces plan, coordinate, execute, and assess actions “to enhance awareness of and manage the interaction with the civil component of the operational environment; identify and

mitigate underlying causes of instability within civil society; and/or involve the application of functional specialty skills normally the responsibility of civil government.”⁸

c. According to U.S. Army Civil Affairs Operations doctrine, CA missions include:

- Conduct civil reconnaissance (CR).
- Conduct civil engagement (CE).
- Conduct civil network development (CND).
- Conduct civil knowledge integration (CKI).
- Establish civil-military operations centers (CMOCs).
- Provide support to civil administration (SCA).
- Establish and maintain transitional military authority.

d. In addition to advising commanders in these missions, CA forces coordinate with other U.S. departments and agencies, civilian agencies of other governments, international organizations and agencies, host-nation military or paramilitary elements, non-governmental and civil society organizations, key societal, economic, and political leaders, and commercial entities and actors.

e. CA supports civilian-led stability operations, including civil security, governance, essential public services, and economic and infrastructure recovery and development. It helps establish civil population control in conflict areas and, when directed, assists or conducts humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as a last resort. It may also perform civilian sector functions normally the responsibility of civil authorities or establish military government to restore those authorities.

f. At all levels of planning and execution, CA forces apply enduring principles of CA operations:⁹

- Military operations must deter or defeat asymmetric and irregular threats from the civil environment, including terrorism, sabotage, and other illicit network activities.
- Military forces must protect civilian populations from the harmful effects of conflict in accordance with the laws of land warfare and international human rights law.
- Military operations can cause direct or indirect adverse impacts on the civilian environment even if not in the vicinity of populated areas.
- Military forces must help communities affected by military operations return to normalcy, in accordance with international laws and norms.
- Civilians can be sources of civil information, capabilities, and resources of relevance or support to military operations.
- Meaningful civil-military engagement with civilian sources of information, resources, and capabilities requires military personnel with proper preparation and training.
- Employ local solutions to local problems using local resources as much as possible.
- The integration of civilian partners into military plans and operations (or, conversely, military capabilities into civilian plans and operations) requires proper preparation and training.

- CA Soldiers and Marines are the force of choice for civil-military engagement, civil-military integration, and military support to governance in stabilization across the competition continuum.

g. While critical to Army and Marine Corps tactical operations, CA forces are best leveraged and integrated at theater strategic and operational levels in multicomponent, JIM-oriented teams through geographic combatant and service component commands and interorganizational partners. CA forces are well suited to play an integral role in strategic and operational campaigning in the JIM environment in support of integrated deterrence across the full range of operations.

h. A cost-effective, non-escalatory capability with unique military access to numerous civilian contacts, CA acts as regionally and culturally aligned global scouts and enablers to “secure the victory” through positional and informational advantages in strategic competition, synchronized with diplomacy and development efforts and the Army National Guard State Partnership Program.

i. CA functional specialists, in particular, help political-military leadership identify, understand, engage, and influence the strategic and operational environment, including people-centric centers of gravity and related civil threats critical to winning in cross-continuum multi-domain operations. Army 38G Military Government Specialists can also determine the linkages between campaign objectives, threats, and cross-cutting variables like stable governance and civilian resilience, the rule of law system, a safe and secure civil environment, a sustainable economy, and social well-being.

4. Why Is Civil Affairs Important?

a. Civil Affairs provides a unique national capability to win, end, and prevent wars. The CA force is an economy-of-force capability critical to the ability of the Army, as a strategic land force, in the fulfillment of the Army’s strategic roles (below). As the joint CA proponent has phrased it: “Its value lies in its inimitable ability to provide comprehensive and actionable knowledge of governance and the drivers of instability within the civil populace, validate and integrate civil considerations into the operations process, and leverage civilian capabilities and resources to mitigate political, economic, and social challenges inherent to operations across the competition continuum.”¹⁰

b. As a maneuver force in the psycho-cultural spaces of war and peace and the gray zones between them, CA plays a key role in gaining, maintaining, and denying positional and informational advantages among human networks in what NATO calls “cognitive warfare.”

c. Civil Affairs is the premier U.S. military capability for interagency stabilization and conflict prevention—i.e., for “winning without fighting.” It is also the main force for operational civil-military integration in stabilization along JIM lines. CA contributes decisively to full-range positional and information advantages by building civil-military networks through CR, CE, and CKI.

d. With a *modus operandi* of thinking strategically while acting tactically, these “warrior-diplomats” are organized, trained, and resourced to coordinate and network with interagency,

interorganizational, international, and local contacts. As a result, CA promotes a larger and better learning organization in all four Army strategic roles (shape operational environments; counter aggression on land during crisis; prevail during large-scale ground combat operations (LSCO); and consolidate gains)¹¹ in concurrently irregular and conventional settings. This improves the agility of the joint force to “secure the victory” and win without fighting in conflict prevention and integrated deterrence across the entire competition continuum, including setting conditions in the civil environment and creating information and influence positional advantages to prevail in LSCO.

e. Along with maintaining leverageable relationships with its partners in diplomacy (U.S. State Department) and development (U.S. Agency for International Development), CA is the premier military force to strengthen alliances and attract new partners that constitute our most vital strategic advantage over great power adversaries. This includes ongoing relations with NATO CIMIC forces and other professional counterparts. In addition to helping gain and maintain access and influence where other U.S. forces or even some of its own partners cannot, CA helps commanders and statespersons gather critical insights on populations of concern that could help mold strategy and policy. Integrated deterrence, after all, finds much of its positional and informational advantages in the global civil-military network that CA helps gain and maintain through the interallied and interorganizational systems among the world’s leading democracies.

f. As of late, the increasing forward presence of CA—as global and regional scouts and enablers for intrinsically expeditionary U.S. forces—increases situational understanding and influence, provides early warning, and facilitates superior politico-military decision-making cycles through continuous civil reconnaissance, engagement, and networking activities. This helps mitigate the inherent U.S. military disadvantage of being the “visiting team” in operations overseas.

5. What Is the Way Forward for Civil Affairs?

a. Colonel Irwin Hunt’s seminal postwar analysis on Civil Affairs and military governance in 1918 evokes many issues CA faces today. There is still much unfinished business in maturing CA into a full-fledged member of the military family. The CA Corps lacks unity of command for force management. There is still no standing CA staff section at the Joint Staff or Army Headquarters, nor are there consistently staffed organic CA staff or plans capabilities at all major geographic, service, operational, or tactical commands, which are still trying to access reserve CA forces with outmoded Title 10 budget authorities designed for contingency rather than continuous operations.

b. Albeit changing, CA is often viewed mainly as a “force multiplier,” “enabler,” or combat support element rather than as a maneuver force in the human dimension and information environment. To realize its full potential, CA must be organized, managed, resourced, and integrated as seriously as combat forces—and operationalizing this requires institutionalizing it. This includes integration with other information-related and select Compo 2 forces. If CA and other information-related capabilities are not optimally structured to integrate physical and informational power in multi-domain operations and integrated deterrence, then neither is the Army, joint force, or Nation.

c. To “secure the victory” across the board, CA must be better educated and trained within and beyond standard military programs. This requires steady and robust investment in the human capital of an innovative and adaptive force well embedded in planning and operations—at national commands and institutions and geographic combatant, service, and other campaigning commands.

d. CA forces must also be persistently engaged and aligned regionally to facilitate political-military goals and objectives—globally networked with interagency, multinational, academic, and private industry institutions, forming their own socio-academic-industrial base. This includes the careful integration of commercial artificial intelligence and machine-learning.

e. This imperative also requires a universally active sense of real-time CA readiness for strategic competition that only a constant forward regional presence of all CA force types can engender, including reserve CA forces and functional specialists. Local relationships and context in the competition continuum matter deeply to winning in contemporary warfare.

f. To leverage the strength of the diversity of an extended CA Corps of Army and Marine, active and reserve, conventional and special operations, and general support and functional specialist personnel, geographic and service commands and U.S. embassy teams should continue to employ more and more task-organized, multicomponent CA teams along JIM lines to meet complex and dynamic security cooperation and other integrated deterrence requirements.

g. In the 21st century, “strategic advantage will emerge from how we engage with and understand people and access political, economic, and social networks to achieve a position of relative advantage that complements American military strength.” As such, the actor that best understands local contexts and builds a network around relationships that harness local capacities is likely to win. Across the competition continuum, the U.S. must be constantly ready to gain and maintain decisive strategic advantage because “in this connected world, even more than before, the decisive battle will occur before the first shot is fired.”¹²

Part IV. Narrative Development and Engagement.

1. At the 2024 Roundtable, Dr. Maan suggested that developing a CA narrative requires three elements: a solid understanding of ourselves (origins, principles, challenges, and goals for the future); identification of the target audience and its cultural narrative; and delivery of our story in a way that resonates with the target audience based on its cultural narrative. We also must know how the audience views CA in relationship to the audience’s mission and capabilities. Ultimately, the CA story should be told in a way that “fits into the cognitive scheme of the target audience.”¹³

2. Part III of this paper addressed the first element, providing an outline of what CA should know about itself and what it wishes to achieve as it engages key audiences. The following paragraphs address the second element, providing notional cultural narratives of three sample priority target audiences with whom CA professionals typically engage. These narratives exemplify the results of a target audience analysis conducted prior to engagement to understand how the members of that audience see themselves and how they view CA. By preparing this way, CA spokesperson(s) can successfully execute the third element, framing and delivering the CA story to resonate and

assure the audience that, when properly prioritized and resourced, CA provides the capacities and capabilities to meet operational and strategic requirements.

a. **Strategic and operational military decision-makers at the Pentagon, GCCs, and Service component commands:** Decision-makers at strategic- and operational-level commands advance U.S. civil-military priorities through integrated deterrence, campaigning, and actions that build enduring positional and informational advantages. They allocate resources and employ capabilities to defend the homeland; deter strategic attacks against the United States, its allies, and its partners; deter aggression; prevail in conflict when necessary; and build a resilient joint force and defense ecosystem to ensure our future military advantage.¹⁴ They see CA as a military capability to support joint force campaigns and operations that protect and advance U.S. national security interests across the full spectrum and in all warfighting domains. In stabilization, they see CA forces as strictly supporting civilian authorities and other U.S. government agencies that lead civilian governance activities, civil sector functions, rehabilitation efforts, and humanitarian and other forms of assistance.¹⁵ That said, the joint force often does not employ sufficient or timely CA forces in campaigning to leverage their capabilities to their fullest potential.

b. **Tactical-level joint force commanders and staffs:** As a vital component of integrated deterrence and campaigning, tactical-level joint forces employ capabilities against threats by planning and executing battles and engagements to achieve military objectives. To do this, they remain ready and relevant, conducting operations to secure positional or informational advantages across the competition continuum and exploiting tactical success to achieve operational and strategic objectives. They recognize and work with third-party entities and organizations that operate in the same or adjacent areas of operation and may also affect achievement of these objectives—particularly in the areas of civilian harm mitigation and response. These include civilian populations, host nation (HN) governments, political groups, international organizations, NGOs, and contractors.¹⁶

Tactical-level forces also recognize the role of attached CA forces in helping commanders make timely and appropriate decisions on the protection of civilians based on ground conditions. However, in higher headquarters analyses of operational and mission variables, factors such as political limitations on troop numbers, relative combat power between friendly and enemy forces, and expected tempo of combat operations often result in the deployment of insufficient CA forces in the early stages of operations. Tactical-level commanders mitigate resulting risks by tasking combat and sustainment forces to address civil considerations as secondary missions and delaying civilian-focused stabilization activities until sufficient CA forces arrive. They prefer, however, to have access to the right CA capabilities at the right time and place to relieve organic combat and sustainment forces of missions better suited for CA forces.

c. **U.S. government civilian partner departments and agencies:** U.S. civilian partners must work successfully with allies and partners in pursuit of a free, open, prosperous, and secure global order. To that end, they persistently engage counterparts in allied and partner nations and governments to promote stable environments in which to advance U.S. national interests: to protect

the security of the American people; to expand economic prosperity and opportunity; and to realize and defend the democratic values at the heart of the American way of life.¹⁷ U.S. civilian partners recognize and acknowledge the military focus on security threats and the fact that military operations are often necessary to defeat our enemies and re-establish order during and after armed conflict or other crises. However, U.S. civilian partners often observe that, once assigned to a designated area of operation, military leaders at the operational and tactical levels tend to ignore or discount their organizations' full-range plans, achievements, and capabilities in that area. Seasoned members of the civilian partner organization may recognize the civil-military integration function of CA professionals, but every mission is different and less experienced civilian partners may not know they have allies and advocates in the CA force.

3. Given how narratives evolve from the bottom up more than the top down, CA professionals must play a crucial role in refining and adapting the CA story as much as telling it. Following important engagements with key audiences, CA professionals should conduct internal after-action reviews to improve target audience analysis as well as engagement effectiveness. If they identify a lesson of value to the CA Corps at large, they should share their insights on open forums and convening events such as the CA Symposium and CA Roundtable, communication platforms such as the *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*, *Eunomia Journal*, and *OneCA* podcast, and Association and linked social media sites, as appropriate. They should consider mainstreaming their thoughts through professional military journals or other media, with which the Publication Advisory Board can assist.

Endnotes.

¹ The Association represents and consults regularly with the 95th CA Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne), representing active Army special operations CA forces; the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), representing U.S. Army Reserve conventional CA forces and Army special functionalists; the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), representing the Army CA proponent; the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Force Modernization Center's CA Capability Manager, representing the Army CA proponent; the U.S. Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School (MCCMOS), representing the USMC CA proponent; the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) J-39, representing the joint CA proponent; and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations & Low Intensity Conflict (ASD (SO/LIC)), representing CA interagency executive authority.

² Sources for this document include:

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³ Amy Zalman, “What is a strategic narrative?” AmyZalman.com, 5 February 2022; <https://amyzalman.com/what-is-a-strategic-narrative-strategic-narrative-faqs/>

⁴ See Christopher Holshek and Dennis J. Cahill, “Roundtable Concludes Productive Year of Looking at ‘Campaigning and Civil Affairs,’” *2024 Civil Affairs Roundtable Report*, The Civil Affairs Association,

⁵ David, Arnel, Acosta, Sean, and Krohley, Nicholas. *Warrior Diplomats: Civil Affairs Forces on the Front Lines* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2023).

⁶ Maj. Gen. Kurt Sonntag, Commanding General, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center & School in Holshek, Christopher (ed.), “Executive Summary,” *Civil Affairs Issue Papers* (Vol. 4), 2017-18, The Civil Affairs Association, xix-xx.

⁷ Holshek, Christopher (ed.), *Building a Global Civil-Military Network*, Civil Affairs Issue Papers (Vol. 8), 2021-22, The Civil Affairs Association, 2022.

⁸ FM 3-57, 2-1.

⁹ These principles are not currently found in any single document. They were drawn from several of the sources of inspiration listed in Note 2 and distilled by the points of contact listed in paragraph 5.

¹⁰ Kurt N. Sisk and Dennis J. Cahill, “Civil Affairs Value Proposition,” AOFM-CA Information Paper (unpublished), 23 March 2022, 1.

¹¹ FM 3-0, 1-1.

¹² Both quotes in this paragraph are from Charles Cleveland, Benjamin Jensen, Susan Bryant and Arnel David, *Military Strategy in the 21st Century: People, Connectivity, and Competition* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2018), 4.

¹³ Dr. Ajiit Maan’s Keynote Presentation at CA Roundtable, 18 Apr2024. See also *2024 Civil Affairs Roundtable Report*.

¹⁴ *NDS*, 27 October 2022, 1.

¹⁵ DRAFT DoDD 3000.LX, *Civil Affairs*, 8 Sep 2023, paragraphs 1.3.b. and 1.3.d. (to be validated and rewritten, if necessary, once final version is published.)

¹⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, JP 3-0 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2022), xvi, I-3, I-11. and III-47.

¹⁷ *NSS*, 7.

Improving U.S. Army Civil Affairs Teaming with Private Sector Tools

David Skrzypiec and Ted Delicath

Introduction

While often admonished as a profession, management consultants like the authors (at their best) excel at summarizing and simplifying without flattening a concept so much that it loses functionality. Given our civilian careers, we often approach our reserve duty with lenses different from our peers. However, the Army is not dissimilar from consulting. Both professions order the complexity of the battlefield through processes and frameworks that create an agreed-upon source of truth (e.g., maps, operation orders, etc.) that enable organic units and those that partner with the U.S. Army to team effectively.

We know intuitively that the “map is not the territory,” but we often forget the depth of this insight.¹ We blame the map when we fail to find a land navigation point, knowing that maps, like frameworks, serve to facilitate, not solve. We use the mediums to structure plans and create informed action to improve teaming and increase mission success. However, when we mistake the map for the territory, we pretend that the framework will fix our problems rather than serve as a starting point.

This paper argues that the Army’s traditional framework starting points (elaborated at length later) are insufficient for Civil Affairs (CA) leaders to team effectively with the host of partners and within the dynamic, large-scale combat operations (LSCO) environments in which the U.S. Army tasks CA leaders. Moreover, this paper also argues that the U.S. Army often relies on systems that envision all Soldiers as a “most qualified” leader, as described by our rating system. These shortcomings fail to equip *all* CA leaders with the tools to effectively team in LSCO terrains.

Thus, we argue that CA teaming should look to new maps that challenge our institutional biases. Specifically, our thesis argues that equipping CA teams with proven private-sector frameworks will create positive disruption within our ranks, forcing greater clarity between teams and accountability across teams (inside and outside of our ranks). Because of spatial constraints, we introduce one of three common frameworks here. If the community finds our analysis valuable, we will cover the remaining two in future essays.

The three complementary private sector frameworks are: (1) strategic alignment; (2) operating rhythm; and (3) decision space. These are the core components of the *Team of Teams* operating model championed by retired General Stanley McChrystal in his time leading Joint Special Operations Command and now used by companies across the globe.² This paper introduces strategic alignment and illustrates how it operationalizes CA missions to improve teaming.

Importantly, this paper focuses on recommendations at the CA team level. While we laud higher-elevation discussions, we often find those conversations fail to move successfully from theory to

implementation. Moreover, such proposals usually require extensive strategic sequencing before being viable. Our recommendations avoid all such issues and offer these comparative advantages:

1. These tools are immediately implementable. CA leaders can leverage them for impact today, which means they require no senior approval, change to policy, etc.
2. The tools also focus on improving CA leaders below the “top block,” equipping those comparatively less effective leaders with systems that ensure our force has a consistent minimum standard when teaming with partners in LSCO environments.
3. Finally, CA team-level leaders represent a bottom-up (or collaborative) approach, challenging the Army’s traditional top-down, command-and-control strategic intent. Instead, CA leaders can leverage these tools as productive forcing functions: force senior leaders to clarify and specify strategies; force adjacent units to name interdependencies and definitions of success; and force other partners to establish expectations and accountability often lacking in our nebulous environment.

What follows offers practical utility for winning over our CA teammates, equipping them with tools that deliver value to those they team, and creating network effects that could improve LSCO teaming without any doctrinal changes.

Strategic Alignment and Improved Teaming

What is Strategic Alignment?

When we work with clients, they often interchange and abuse *strategy* and *strategic*. In fairness, we all do. The imprecise colloquial definition of strategy refers to the ends and means of what we strive for and how we will get there. The latter half of the concept—alignment—is often even more ambiguous and flattened into agreement on the strategy.³ Emphatically, alignment isn’t agreement. Thus, effective teaming should strive for alignment more than agreement.

Our definition of strategic alignment adapts the Vision, Mission, Objectives, & Tactics model.⁴ Figure 1 offers McChrystal Group’s most common version of the Strategic Alignment Framework. We will stick with these layers for this paper, but we acknowledge that our clients often adapt these categories—e.g., Objectives could be replaced by Strategic Imperatives—and we encourage CA leaders to do the same, translating terminology to their context and avoiding force-fitting foreign concepts into well-established systems.



Figure 1 – Strategic Alignment Framework

Figure 2 shows how strategy is more tangible than alignment. Whereas the former often fits on a page, the latter is about how the teams charged with executing bring it to life. Introducing each Alignment category *briefly*, we encourage CA leaders to use these as starting points and contextualize accordingly.⁵

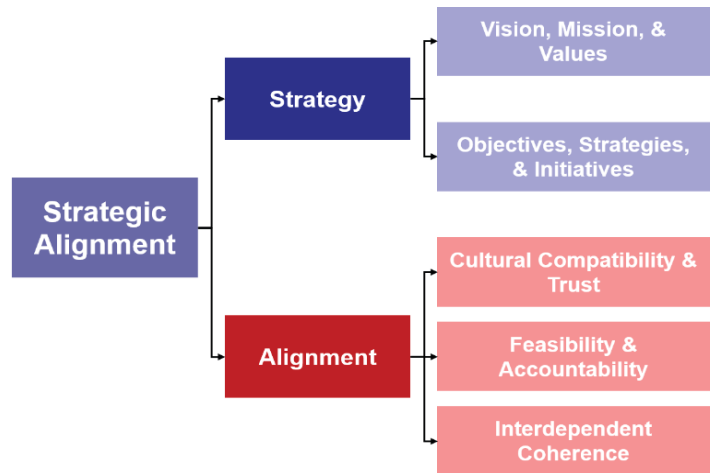


Figure 2 – Strategic Alignment Components

Introduction to Alignment Sub-Components	
Cultural Compatibility	Edgar Schein’s definition of culture identifies cultural artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions as cultural building blocks, which CA Leaders should assess within their teams and units. More broadly, CA Leaders must ask if the strategy aligns with and is disingenuous or supported by the culture. For example, some Google employees who protested Google’s Project Maven partnership with the DoD in ~2018 believed such partnerships were incompatible with the company’s cultural slogan, “Don’t be evil.”
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like culture, trust definitions abound. In our survey of the literature, we’re partial to three sub-components of trust we believe vital to teaming: (1) Competence - Do I trust the partner has the ability? (2) Benevolence - Do I trust the partner has the right intent? (3) Reliability - Do I trust the partner consistently follows through? Supposedly, Warren Buffet said that <i>Trust is a lot like air: when it’s there, nobody notices. When it’s absent, everybody notices.</i> Irrespective of authenticity, the idea’s spirit resonates: In the absence of trust, teams cannot align, as trust is the implicit currency that allows us to make the logical leaps necessary to execute in complex environments.
Feasibility & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility: We acknowledge that feasibility is a fuzzy term in the military. We prize allegories like a Message to Garcia for how it enshrines the military ethos of “just makes it happen.” However, our valorization of overcoming the seemingly insurmountable can lead to lazy leadership, where we fail to adequately train, equip, and guide our teams with the prerequisites necessary for mission success. Given the inherent nebulous environments in which CA Leaders lead, feasibility will remain relative, and it’s on CA leaders to make sober assessments of must-haves vs. nice-to-haves. When the former are met, alignment means their teams have enough to action the strategy, even if it might require some duct tape. Accountability: LTG (Retired) James Huggins explains that a plan free of specifics allows its leaders to be free from accountability. While no plan will survive first contact, that isn’t a license for anarchy. Accountability - e.g., specific goals delivered on a schedule with by-name owners - fosters alignment because it minimizes ambiguity and sets expectations.
Interdependent Coherence	Simply stated, interdependent coherence refers to how a strategy at every level either nests and complements or conflicts. Given that CA leaders often lead through influence rather than formal authority, aligning our strategic aims with organizations we don’t own is at the heart of our mission and what makes our work equally rewarding and challenging. Without delving too deeply, consider how a CA mission might complement or compete with our host nation’s motivations and even a parallel American combat operation. We will likely fail to fulfill our intent if our efforts cannot cohere. Since we don’t operate in a strategic vacuum, achieving alignment requires CA leaders to identify how their efforts collaborate toward a unified direction or compete at cross-purposes with our teamed partners.

Two Forms of Strategic Alignment Critical to Teaming

#1 Vertical Alignment: Teaming up and down the chain of command

The Idea – Vertical alignment refers to how the mission cascades from senior through junior units, creating a clear throughline of how one unit's actions influence and/or support the others. When successful, the actions of a partnered CA team would demonstrate how they support the theater's mission. Obviously, the further down in an organization you stretch, each tactical task becomes less consequential to mission success. However, the paradox is that these individual tasks, when aggregated across teams, collectively determine our success as a force. Therefore, vertical alignment seeks to nest echelons together to achieve the overall mission if each echelon achieves its objectives. Figure 3 aims to illustrate this concept.

Example of Vertical Alignment in Practice

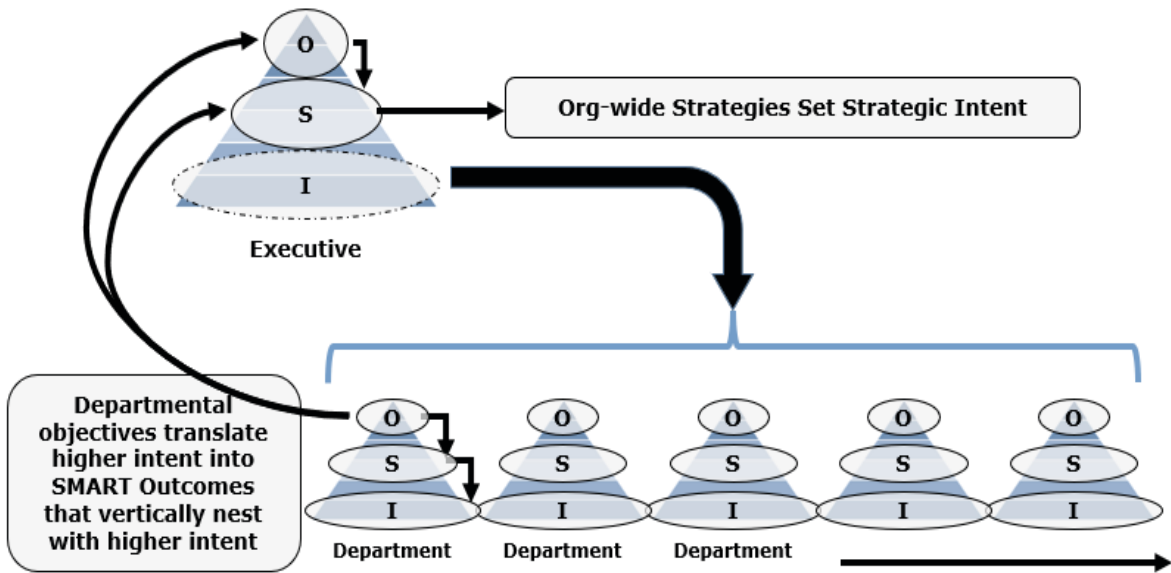


Figure 3 – Vertical Alignment Theory

Further defined later, “O”, “S”, and “I” refer to Objectives, Strategies, and Initiatives. When done well, a C-suite offers top-down guidance that its teams then refine through bottom-up feedback. By equipping CA teams with these private sector tools, we seek to force greater clarity through such bottom-up feedback and back briefs. To reiterate, many tools at a CA team’s disposal are helpful but insufficient in that they are too comfortable with generalities like “improving host nation capacity.” That’s a fine start but should be specified into something for which each echelon can evaluate impact.

The Issue – CA leaders are the front-line operational tools that embody the regional commander’s intent. Each echelon filters and translates higher intent when missions travel to the team level. That translation process works well in traditional LSCO environments. For a combat arms platoon, receiving its mission and actioning troop leading procedures (TLPs) likely creates enough clarity given that it deals in mostly static terrain, fixed adjacent units, and a clear end state. However, CA teams exist in a far more nebulous operating environment. Thus, TLPs are a solid first step but are insufficient for CA teams to create sufficient alignment with higher.

#2 Horizontal Alignment: Teaming with a peer partner

The Idea – Horizontal alignment refers to the alignment between units on the (nearly) same seniority plane and how their efforts complement each other to achieve their respective or shared missions. In business broadly, horizontal alignment happens when a sales department partners with marketing to amplify a sales strategy or when a legal team supports the risk management process of a strategic communication campaign.

The Issue - For CA leaders, horizontal alignment determines whether a deployment is successful. For example, mission success requires CA teams to effectively set expectations with their host nation partners, non-DOD assets, and adjacent military units. If our success as a force stems from the clarity we can create through teaming, our current processes and tools could go further in specifying the partnership expectations necessary to win in our complex environments. Figure 4 showcases how identifying interdependencies is the first step in creating horizontal alignment.

IT									
Function / BU	Strategy	Priority Level	Initiative	Interdependency			Funded (In Budget)?	Resourced (Human Capital)?	Integration Planning Consideration?
				A	B	C			
Chips	Strategy 4	Low	2. Aggressively implement “off the shelf” technology solutions	IT	Marketing		No	Yes	No
Innovation / R&D / COE	Strategy 4	High	2. Improve the end to end flow and accuracy of product data	IT	Supply Chain	Sales		Yes	
Sales	Strategy 4	Medium	3. Optimize the salesforce structure for integrated full bag headquarter and wall to wall retail execution – Customer channel matrix	IT				Yes	
Supply Chain	Strategy 2	High	1. Leverage technology to improve visibility to our product quality	IT					
Supply Chain	Strategy 3	Low	5. Improve Supply Chain planning tools and processes	IT	Sales				

Figure 4 – Horizontal Alignment Example

Anonymized from a client, this matrix illustrates how the IT department identifies the horizontal interdependencies its initiatives share with other departments. Once identified, the IT department established a cross-functional team to align on expectations and meet regularly. CA teams know adjacent units and interdependencies, but expectations are rarely moved from implicit to explicit. Moreover, naming how our interdependencies contribute to our planned outcomes increases alignment and prevents relationship friction that sources from ambiguity.

Applying Strategic Alignment to CA Teaming

Before discussing how to engender vertical and horizontal alignment, all CA leaders should start with Figure 5, which translates the Strategic Alignment Framework into Army-accessible concepts. Figure 5 shows that the strategic alignment concepts of vision, mission, and values map closely to the mission and commander’s intent. In our experience, we rarely discuss values, which is emblematic of why the Strategic Alignment Framework brings value to the CA leader who uses it: *The tool forces teams toward specificity, and greater specificity fosters actionable plans that enable all partners to assess accountability (i.e., Did we achieve our specific outcome or not?).*

Strategic Alignment Framework		Army Concept Translation
VISION	What does the organization aspire to create?	Vision is equivalent to Commander’s Intent ; both of which often require you to coordinate with others to achieve—e.g., “stable, prosperous region”
MISSION	How will the organization <i>significantly</i> contribute to the vision?	Mission is your tasking. It serves as our starting point that the bottom-half of the Framework operationalizes
VALUES	What values will guide & enable the vision?	Values are defined by your team and should align with the Army’s Values & your unit’s ethos
OBJECTIVES	What set of SMART, prioritized objectives will collectively create mission impact?	Objectives go beyond tasks to summarize the circumstances under which your team achieves its mission, quantifying where possible
STRATEGIES	Per objective, what strategies enable success?	Strategies are Objective-specific concepts of operations for how you will achieve each objective. Objectives likely have multiple strategies
INITIATIVES	What initiatives make these strategies possible?	Initiatives are those tasks that collectively achieve each strategy

Figure 5 – Paralleling the Strategic Alignment Framework to Army-related Concepts

Each layer of the Strategic Alignment Framework resonates with an existing Army concept. However, as we will show, the Framework’s concepts are more actionable (specific and clear) than our Army starting points. That doesn’t make the latter unnecessary, just incomplete.

Operationalizing the Framework

Research Methodology – To illustrate the value of the Strategic Alignment Framework, we generated an unclassified but realistic mock CA mission using Chat GPT, which scraped several open-source U.S. Army CA orders. The mock order focused on America’s CA presence in Cameroon, where the authors served alongside U.S. Army CA officers in 2018. In the following figures, you will see the traditional order content on the left, and on the right, we translate that content into the Strategic Alignment Framework concepts. Figure 6.1 introduces our methodological approach.

Army Concept	Cameroonian Mission	→ Framework Concept	Translated & Operationalized Example
Commander's Intent	To support the stabilization of northern Cameroon by strengthening local governance, enhancing security cooperation, and addressing humanitarian needs through targeted civil-military operations.	→ Vision	No change to Commander's Intent.
Mission	CA Team 3-5 conducts CMO in the Garoua region from 05 SEP to 31 OCT to support stabilization efforts, improve civil-military relations, and facilitate humanitarian assistance in coordination with Cameroonian authorities and international partners.	→ Mission	No change to Mission.
N/A	Values are set at the Army-wide level not incorporated into our orders. Rules of engagement and laws of war are not the same as values.	→ Values	Teams should identify these values before deployment. Where possible, CA Teams should share their team-specific values with their higher command teams to exert positive upward pressure on their units. In the absence of such conversations, values go assumed, which means they often are absent.

Figure 6.1 – Mostly No Change to the Top Half of the Strategic Alignment Framework

To reiterate, on the left is the text from the GPT-generated mock order. On the right is how the Strategic Alignment Framework translates and adds value to the original Army concepts.

Army Concept	Cameroonian Mission	→ Framework Concept	Translated & Operationalized Example
Key Tasks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct civil reconnaissance to identify critical education, healthcare, and infrastructure needs. 2. Facilitate and oversee the distribution of humanitarian aid, including educational materials, medical supplies, and infrastructure support, in partnership with Spirit of America and other NGOs. 3. Engage with local community leaders and organizations to build trust, gather intelligence, and foster cooperation. 4. Monitor and report on the socio-political environment to anticipate and mitigate potential conflicts or extremist influence. 	→ Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Current State: Establish baseline local population metrics by key categories. 2. Build a Base: Formalize an aid network with at least # local NGOs and increase direct aid distribution by ##% by handover. 3. Sustain the System: Secure \$##,### of funds and supplies that sustain implemented operations for at least # fiscal years. 4. Preempt the Threat: Map the current threat landscape by DATE and win over at least ##% of initially non-supportive key actors.

Figure 6.2 – Turning Key Tasks into Assessable Objectives

Objectives create accountability by enumerating the commitment we plan to deliver while in country. In discussions with senior CA leaders, while researching this paper, the authors often received informed pushback when advocating for greater specificity. While the authors understand the intent, these well-meaning prefaces ultimately showcase our force’s desire for generality, increasing our freedom to define success. Sustaining generalities instead of enumerated outcomes argues for our force’s limitations and prevents us from developing a capability that the private sector considers commonplace. To the latter point, many private sector organizations operate in as much if not more complex environments, eliminating our ability as a force to excuse our shortcomings in our context.

Figure 6.2 illustrates how, below values, the Strategic Alignment Framework departs from the Army methodology's more general approach. Our force knows that key tasks are the foundation of an effective planning process. However, we know from experience that key tasks are rarely specified and discussed so that CA leaders, their higher headquarters personnel, and peers can review them to assess impact, adjust accordingly if they fail to deliver, and ultimately be accountable for our commitments to our host nations.

CA leaders will need time on the ground and intelligence to translate key tasks into objectives. However, Army key tasks are too general compared to objectives to enable accountability. By accountable, we mean something like SMART or FAST methodology.⁶ While we know that many implied tasks build the base of key tasks, we have never seen key tasks redefined in operational environments that go beyond the activity description and define the outcome in an assessable way. Figure 7 below further elucidates our arguments for why key tasks are operationally insufficient tools for CA teams to team with others successfully.

Limitations of Army Key Task Approach		
Common CA Army Key Task	Common Army Assessment Approach	Comparative Advantage of Strategic Alignment Framework to Current Army Assessment Approach
Activity <i>Engage with local community leaders and organizations...</i>	Binary: Did or did you not do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: Activity enumerated into Strategies supported by Initiatives. • So What: Detailing how the CA team will perform the activity improves the team's ability to assess the efficacy of differing approaches. What remains general remains obscure; whereas specificity provides access.
Outcome <i>...to build trust, gather intelligence, and foster cooperation.</i>	Impact assessment: Often measured by number of activities performed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: To measure the success of "build trust" teams must establish baselines of current trust levels and the proxies that track trust. • So What: While imperfect, in the absence of agreed-upon metrics and measures, our force relies more on anecdote and subjectivity, which invite bias and imprecision. Most importantly, without knowing what outcomes they seek to drive, teams are less effective at aligning their activities accordingly.

Figure 7 – Limitations of Army Key Task Approach

Far from anti-Key Task, CA leaders should use them as a starting point and define them into SMART Objectives. Once defined into Objectives, CA leaders can use these measurable outcomes to facilitate vertical and horizontal conversations and feedback, which is how they will achieve both respective alignments.

A CA mission is less linear than those of our combat arms peers. Local populations are subjects we serve, not objects we overcome. As such, CA approaches require greater flexibility than the sequential intent the concept of operations offers. Moreover, a concept of operations often lumps all efforts together, whereas the Strategic Alignment Framework differentiates Objectives into lines of effort that, while complementary, are also distinct. Figure 6.3 displays how the next framework layer, "Strategies," builds on the intent of concept operations but focuses strategies toward achieving specific objectives. So, whereas a traditional order would have a single, high-level concept of operations, we argue that each objective should have a series of strategies. Within each objective, these sequential strategies would serve as that objective's concept of operations.

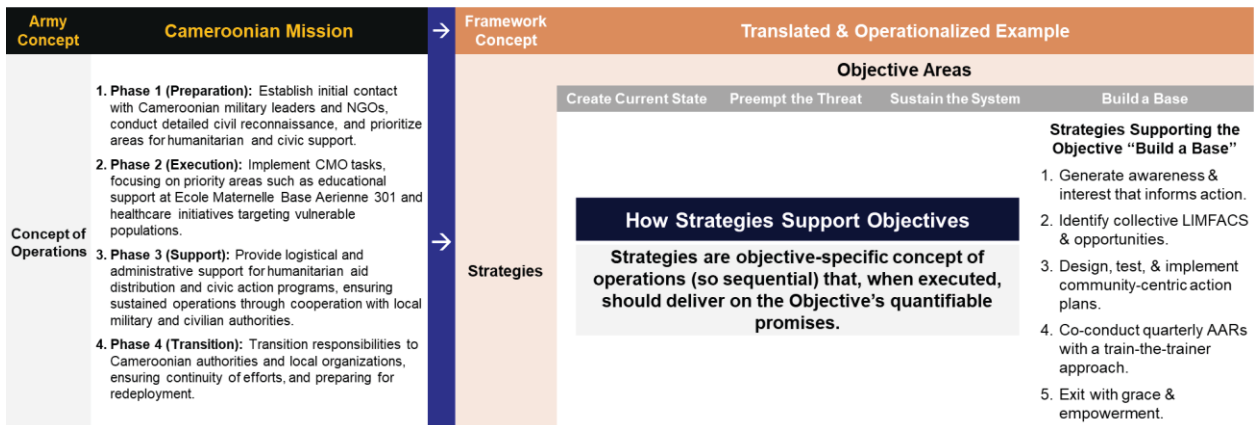


Figure 6.3 – Strategies as Objective-Specific Concept of Operations

Objectives define a measurable end-state toward which the CA team works, and strategies are the sequential efforts the team will undertake to achieve those Objectives. For those CA practitioners who have done shades of this kind of planning, these tools seek to systematize our best practices, making the implicit explicit, bringing greater structure and intentionality to our CA LSCO plans.

Initiatives comprise and specify strategies into discrete tasks that determine a strategy’s success. Figure 6.4 overviews an initiative’s infrastructure.

Example of how initiative infrastructure operationalizes strategies for action & accountability						
Objective	Formalize an aid network with at least # local NGOs and increase direct aid distribution by ##% by handover					
Strategy	Generate Awareness & Interest that Informs Action					
Example of Supporting Initiative Infrastructure						
Initiative	Status	DACI	NLT, NET, & Milestones	Outcome & KPIs	Interdependencies	Risks & Mitigants
Initiative #1	On Track	<p>Role Clarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: DACI is a decision-rights framework role clarity. It's a modified version of RACI. • So What: We are framework agnostic if the roles and accompanying responsibilities for each initiative are set. Importantly, all initiatives should have one owner who is responsible for their report. 	<p>Bookends & Signposts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: NLT & NET should bookend between when the initiative occurs. Milestones should signal what outcomes we expect by when if we're trending toward success. • So What: Deployments are timebound endeavors that gift us an exit date. We should better use those to structure our plans in time and space, creating expectations for all invested parties. 	<p>Defining Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: The outcome description should describe success. The KPIs are those metrics that tell us if our efforts produced results. • So What: Not all initiatives will be clearly quantifiable. However, that's also not an excuse to not strive for greater precision. Even qualitative KPIs hold us accountable and help us assess the efficacy of our investments. 	<p>Improving Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: Who are we reliant on, how, and when? Similarly, who is reliant on us? • So What: "Hurry up and wait" is a failure to sequence and coordinate properly. Specifying the network the initiative involves and how creates clearer planning, stronger partnership, and fewer surprises. 	<p>Create Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: Risks should include preemptive (what we fear) as well as real-time (what manifests). Teammates should propose a mitigation for any identified risks. • So What: We encourage all teams to Red Team their deployment before departure and throughout their time on the ground. Ideally, we should strive to be problem preventers rather than solvers.
Initiative #2	Issue, but path fwd.					
Initiative #3	Stuck					

Figure 6.4 – Initiative Infrastructure Template

Initiatives identify the buckets of work for a strategy to succeed. How many initiatives, at what level they’re defined, etc. is more an art than a science and up to the CA team to determine.

Conclusion: The “So What?” of our Recommendations

Anything below the Initiatives level is up to the CA leader to decide how to define and act. Like all tools, there is a tradeoff between documentation and the doing. The above models treat traditional Army structures and processes like MDMP and TLP as starting points, arguing that CA missions differ from those of our combat-arms peers. That difference warrants frameworks that encourage specificity and facilitate teaming conversations resembling conversations more than conflict. Moreover, if our force incorporates more frameworks and tools like those above, we increase the standardization of our teaming, relying less on personality and improving our ability to assess our impact.

If practiced, the Strategic Alignment Framework will help our force avoid the “Alignment Valley of Death” outlined in Figure 8.

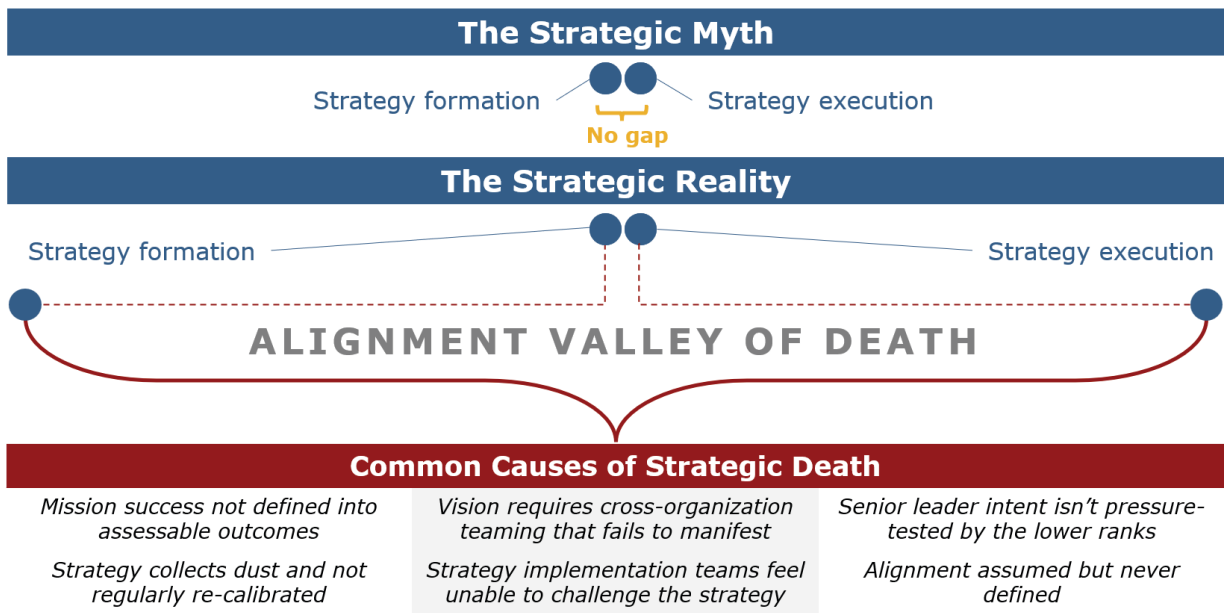


Figure 8 – Strategy Myth vs. Reality

Purposefully macabre and slightly over the top, the depiction above is derived from the Economist Intelligence Unit’s seminal 2013 study on “Why Good Strategies Fail: Lessons from the C-Suite.”* The study defined the “Implementation Gap” where 70% of organizations felt they had a clear strategic direction but only 30% believed they could execute. The primary driver of strategic failure proved to be a lack of alignment. Applicable to our force, achieving alignment improves our force’s chance of effectively teaming and delivering strategic impact.

*<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/thought-leadership/why-good-strategies-fail-report.pdf>

To overcome this “valley of death,” we recommend that CA leaders of all types utilize, adapt, and institute the following best practices:

1. *Initiate Vertical Alignment* – Operationalize the mission provided to your team into the Strategic Alignment Framework and backbrief your leadership with it. Even if they don't reciprocate with similar specificity, your CA team will have defined success, preventing ambiguity about how your team performs. Additionally, your CA team will make clear what you expect from higher to achieve your Objectives.
2. *Foster Horizontal Alignment* – With less power and top-down power dynamics, offer your partners (other military units, host nation, non-DOD agencies, etc.) these tools. At a minimum, provide those partners on whom your success relies a kickoff meeting where you showcase the interdependencies for their input and alignment. From there, use those tools in your regular check-ins, leading by example.

These are purposefully humble starting points. Grander ambitions of scale at the level of the U.S. Army require what Nobel Prize-winning economist Herbert Simon termed "satisficing" - a fusion of "satisfactory" and "sufficient."⁷ This concept acknowledges that striving for perfection often involves trade-offs impractical at scale. Rather than designing ideal systems calibrated to top performers and perfect conditions, our analysis applies equally to the Top Block and the lowest common denominator. The former will likely improve further, and more importantly, the latter may improve substantially. Raising the standard of most improves the whole far more than focusing on achieving outliers. This logic does not argue for our limitations but acknowledges the inherent logic of a scaled, satisficed system. Thus, at scale, investing in tools that enhance most of our CA teams delivers the best return on investment available to our limited time and resources aimed at improving our global teaming in LSCO environments. Ultimately, CA leaders must jump first and exhibit the behaviors they'd like to see elsewhere. By showing up with specificity that creates clarity and accountability, we lead as the kind of teammates we'd like to have. And if we do that consistently, we will set the standard for teaming globally.

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Endnotes

¹ Farnam Street. "Map and Territory: A Short Guide." *Farnam Street Blog*. Accessed January 12, 2025.

<https://fs.blog/map-and-territory/>.

² McChrystal Group. "Series: Team of Teams Overview." *Weekly Whiteboard*, October 3, 2022. Accessed January 12, 2025. <https://www.mcchrystalgroup.com/insights/weekly-whiteboard/detail/2022/10/03/series-team-of-teams-overview>.

³ Briefly, alignment is not agreement. When someone productively dissents, is heard, and then commits to the plan, that showcases a psychologically safe culture where dissent is encouraged (even if not always incorporated), and teammates can commit to a course of action with which they don't fully agree.

⁴ FourWeekMBA. "VMOST Analysis: What Is VMOST? VMOST in a Nutshell." *FourWeekMBA*. Accessed January 12, 2025. <https://fourweekmba.com/vmost-analysis/>.

⁵ Schein defined culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 5th ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2017 / Nexus Institute. *Case Study: Google Project Maven*. Accessed January 12, 2025. https://riskinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Nexus_CaseStudy_Google_ProjectMaven_Final.pdf.

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⁶ Field Grade Leader. "Goal Setting: SMART Goals and How to Use Them." *The Military Leader*. Accessed January 12, 2025. <https://fieldgradeleader.themilitaryleader.com/goal-setting/>.

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Teaming and the Evolution of Civil-Military Cooperation

Peter Schaefer

Introduction

On February 22, 2022, Russia launched a large-scale offensive against Ukraine, severely impacting Europe's sense of security and damaging the rule-based political security system. The effects on civilians and their surroundings became increasingly evident as the conflict unfolded. Civilian involvement in warfare, including targeted attacks on vital infrastructure and medical facilities, has been significant. These developments have prompted the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to shift its focus in Europe, transitioning from rapid reaction forces to ongoing defense planning along its eastern flank.

Drawing on the experiences of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) in this war, resilience has taken on new importance for states, societies, and military organizations. The comprehensive thinking and action emphasis across all operational domains and effect dimensions shapes NATO's future development. Additionally, with increased interaction and teaming between military and non-military actors across different levels and timeframes, non-military considerations and whole-of-nation approaches to security have become more crucial. As the conflict in Ukraine continues, NATO is assessing how to apply these "lessons from the field."

This paper explores synchronizing non-military and military activities to achieve effects across all operational domains. It examines how the military's teaming with non-military actors must adapt to new doctrine, training, technology, and mindset challenges. Furthermore, the paper is not limited to civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) within NATO but also aims to lay the groundwork for discussing national frameworks, such as Domestic CIMIC and civil affairs operations (CAO), as interallied teaming and partnership among CIMIC and CA have grown in importance in joint and combined operations across NATO's full spectrum.

CIMIC – an Allied Doctrinal Point of View

NATO describes CIMIC in various publications. The main document, Military Committee (MC) 411/3, outlines NATO's military policy on CIMIC and civil-military interaction (CMI).

According to MC 411/3, CIMIC is defined as "a military joint function that integrates the understanding of the civil factors of the operating environment, and that enables, facilitates, and conducts civil-military interaction to support the accomplishment of missions and military strategic objectives in peacetime, crisis, and conflict."¹ Additionally, the document describes CMI as "activities between NATO bodies and non-military actors to foster mutual understanding that enhance effectiveness and efficiency in crisis management and conflict prevention and resolution."² These two definitions form the basis for CIMIC in NATO, which consists of two core activities: civil factor integration (CFI) and CMI.

MC 411/3 also provides fundamental definitions and descriptions. It considers all participants in the civilian environment as non-military actors without differentiating between the civilian population and humanitarian or international organizations. This underscores the significance of interactions irrespective of the specific actor.

In addition, the policy defines the role of NATO CIMIC in building resilience, where resilience is seen as a critical element for deterrence and defense. Evaluating the resilience of both

military and non-military entities offers valuable information for future planning, and CIMIC plays a crucial role in assessing the level of civil preparedness. This assessment focuses on the three core functions of civil preparedness³ and is primarily conducted through an extensive network of connections.

An introductory statement to understand CIMIC as a function is contained in the NATO doctrine Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 01.

“The joint functions framework assists commanders to integrate political, military and civil actions through the operational domains.”⁴

The Joint Function framework helps commanders integrate political, military, and civil actions across operational domains. CIMIC is essential to this framework in that it coordinates military and non-military activities. It also assists in determining the roles and influence of stakeholders in different domains and identifying which non-military actors need to be influenced and how. With NATO's eight interconnected joint functions, commanders and their staffs can efficiently streamline planning processes across all domains.

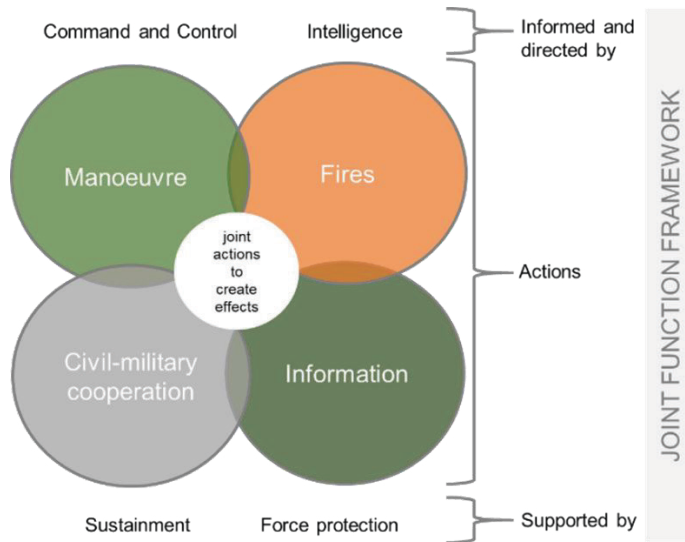


Figure 1: Joint Function Framework (AJP 01 p. 110)

The NATO CIMIC Doctrine AJP 3.19 establishes the connection between policy and CIMIC implementation. It places CIMIC within the operational context, outlines the levels of interaction with non-military actors, describes CIMIC as a joint function, defines its responsibility within the Joint Function Framework, and connects it to the resulting staff activities. The CIMIC doctrine highlights two key tenets⁵ of doctrine as most relevant. While the behavior-centric approach focuses on people's attitudes and behaviors, the comprehensive approach seeks to combine all available military and civilian capabilities in a concerted effort to achieve a desired end state. Other documents, such as the CIMIC Functional Planning Guide or the Bi-SC 086-003 CIMIC and CMI Directive, are fundamental but aimed at different levels.

The CIMIC Handbook complements the NATO doctrinal framework. Published by the NATO-accredited CIMIC Centre of Excellence (CCoE), the CIMIC Handbook is the operationalization of the doctrine at the operational and tactical levels, in contrast to the still essential AJP 3.19. Initially designed as a manual or checklist for soldiers on a mission, it has evolved over the years into a crucial document serving the CIMIC community and beyond. The

handbook comprises seven chapters and several annexes, providing vital information on CIMIC in operations, relevant actors, the CIMIC contribution to the military planning process, and a description of cross-cutting topics and resilience.⁶

The NATO CIMIC Analysis and Assessment Concept (NCAAC) represents a significant advancement in the professionalization of CIMIC capabilities. Understanding the operating environment is dependent on understanding the civil environment, also referred to as the civil factors of the operating environment. Historically, integrating civil factors was often based and dependent on individual experiences and expertise, leading to varying methods, processes, and representations. This lack of standardization hindered recognition and made other staff functions and decision-makers appear immature. The NCAAC addresses these deficiencies by defining the analysis and assessment workflow, introducing structured analytic techniques, and establishing product guidelines.

Multi-Domain Operations

NATO’s updated approach to warfare and operational planning recognizes the need for a broader definition of multi-domain operations (MDO) that includes a variety of operational domains beyond traditional military operations. The key difference between the MDO and classical joint approaches lies in thinking and recognizing the broader and more holistic approach across all domains. The term “joint” refers to “activities, operations, and organizations in which elements of at least two services participate.” Combined, or NATO Joint All-Domain Operations, are seen as “actions taken by the joint forces of two or more NATO nations, comprised of all available domains, integrated in planning and synchronized in execution, at a pace sufficient to effectively accomplish the mission.” More specifically, the MDO approach is effects-oriented and is defined as:

“The orchestration of military activities across all operational domains and environments, synchronized (sic) with non-military activities to enable the Alliance to create converging effects at the speed of relevance.”⁷

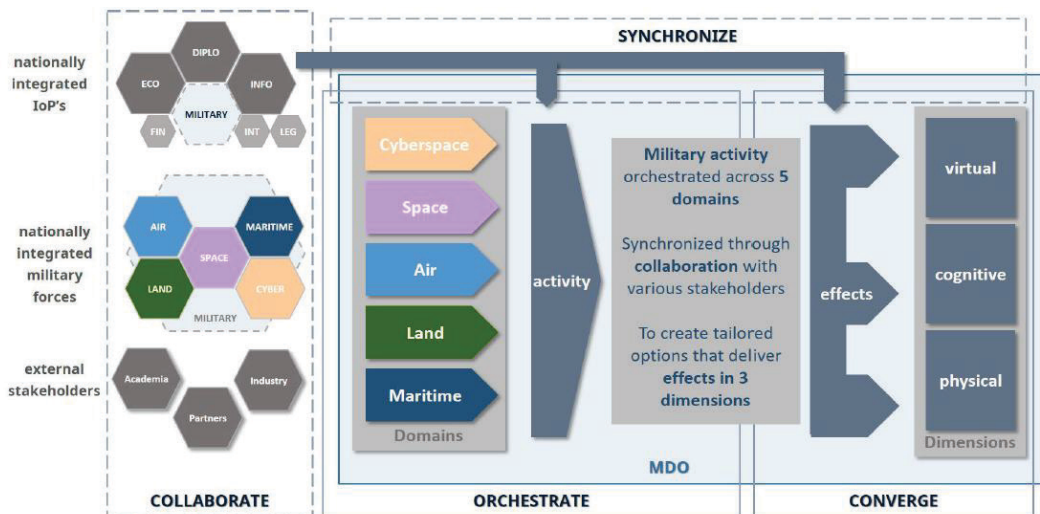


Figure 3: Orchestration and Synchronization of Military Activities (Alliance Concept for MDO p.8)

Operational domains represent specific spheres of military activity within the engagement area and provide a framework for organizing the military instrument of power. NATO recognizes five operational domains: maritime, land, air, space, and cyberspace. The space and cyberspace domains are particularly noteworthy because, historically, joint and combined military operations have rarely, if ever, been carried out exclusively within them. However, given today's adversaries' ability to influence these domains, the speed at which information spreads across all domains, and the global access to cyber capabilities, it has become essential to synchronize military activities across all domains.

As the space and cyberspace domains expand, the number of actors and stakeholders involved increases significantly. These stakeholders are not limited to the military but also include non-military international partners, private industry, research and academic institutions, and others. These non-military actors can offer capabilities that NATO may not possess but require. Consequently, NATO may become dependent on these non-military actors. Therefore, assessing the potential risks of such dependencies is crucial, considering possible conflicting demands for these limited capabilities (from both military and civil sectors), and finding ways to mitigate any limitations that might affect military operations. But what is the role of CIMIC?

CIMIC plays a pivotal role in NATO's multi-domain operations, significantly as the number of non-military actors from the cyber and space domains increases. The value of CIMIC lies in its ability to bridge the military and civil sectors by teaming with each other and using the two core activities: civil factor integration and civil-military interaction. These activities are essential for aligning military operations with the complexities of the expanded civil environment, particularly as cyberspace and space increasingly involve private industry, international partners, academic institutions, etc.

CIMIC's role in civil factor integration involves analyzing and integrating civil factors of the operating environment into military planning and operations. This can be done by research and analysis conducted jointly by CIMIC analysts and their academic networks. This is especially important in the cyber and space domains, where civil actors control much of the infrastructure and expertise. Identifying limitations and gaps within the civil environment—such as restricted access to cyber capabilities or dependency on private space assets - is crucial to mitigate risks and avoid conflicts between military and civilian needs. For example, understanding how adversaries might target civilian cyber networks can help NATO better protect military operations and safeguard civil infrastructure.

CMI focuses on facilitating teaming and partnering between military forces and civilian stakeholders. In the context of cyber and space, this interaction is vital for ensuring access to civilian capabilities that NATO lacks but needs to operate effectively. By fostering engagement, liaison, and cooperation, CIMIC can help minimize disruptions to the civil environment while optimizing the use of shared resources, ensuring the military's operational effectiveness without imposing unnecessary strain on civil actors and their environment.

NATO defines situational understanding as “the interpretation and comprehension of a particular situation in order to provide the context, insight, and foresight required for effective decision-making.”⁸ CIMIC contributes to it by providing a comprehensive analysis of civil

factors of the operating environment, not limited to but including the cyber and space domains. Situational understanding, as such, is crucial for ensuring that military planners know civilian assets, risks, and vulnerabilities in these domains, allowing for more informed decision-making and creating strategies that mitigate negative impacts on both the civil environment and military missions.

One of CIMIC's primary tasks is to identify the limitations within the civil environment and assess how these may create shortfalls for military operations. For instance, dependence on private satellite communication networks could pose risks if those assets are compromised or made unavailable during a crisis. Likewise, gaps in civilian cybersecurity infrastructure may create vulnerabilities that adversaries could exploit, negatively impacting both civil and military sectors.

However, through robust analysis, CIMIC can help identify opportunities to bridge these gaps. By leveraging knowledge from civil actors, such as cutting-edge technologies from the private sector or specialized research from academic institutions, NATO can address its military limitations. For instance, partnerships with civilian cybersecurity firms could enhance NATO's resilience to cyberattacks, while collaboration with private space companies may provide access to vital satellite capabilities.

By carefully teaming with non-military actors, CIMIC helps minimize negative effects on the civil environment and military operations. This is particularly important in domains like cyber and space, where the overlap between civil and military actors is often greater than their gaps. Through effective civil-military interaction and integration, CIMIC ensures that NATO operations do not unduly disrupt civilian life or infrastructure, thereby maintaining public support and minimizing collateral damage.

Moreover, CIMIC can positively affect the civil environment and mission success by fostering cooperation and understanding between military and civil actors. For example, joint team efforts in securing critical infrastructure in cyberspace can enhance overall societal resilience, benefiting both civilian and military interests. Similarly, effective coordination with civilian space operators can ensure that essential communication and navigation systems remain functional during military operations, contributing to operational success.

CIMIC's core activities of civil factor integration and civil-military interaction are vital in navigating the complexities of modern MDO, especially with the increasing relevance and involvement of non-military actors in the cyber and space domains. By providing situational understanding, identifying risks and opportunities, and fostering collaboration, CIMIC ensures that NATO can effectively bridge military limitations, mitigate negative impacts, and create mutually beneficial outcomes for both the civil environment and the success of military missions. This integration is essential to ensuring that NATO operations in the cyber and space domains are synchronized with civilian interests, ultimately enhancing the Alliance's overall strategic effectiveness.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability of an entity to continue to perform specified functions during and after an attack or an incident.⁹ It involves the capacity to withstand shocks—such as physical, emotional, economic, or environmental stressors - while maintaining core functions and rapidly returning to a stable or improved state. Resilience emphasizes flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to learn from difficulties to strengthen future responses, which is essential for credible deterrence and defense. Critical infrastructure plays a crucial role in enhancing societal resilience among today's populations. Resilience encompasses civil or societal emergency preparedness as well as military capabilities. There are two conceptual layers of resilience.

Military Resilience involves maintaining ready forces, capabilities, and redundancy needed to absorb shocks, provide early resistance, and continue to fight effectively. Civil resilience refers to the ability of civil society to deny competitors the ability to exploit civil vulnerabilities for strategic or operational gains that ultimately negate or overwhelm the military instrument of power. It also involves using forces and capabilities to support civil society in the event of natural or man-made disasters and protect society from the malicious activities of competitors.

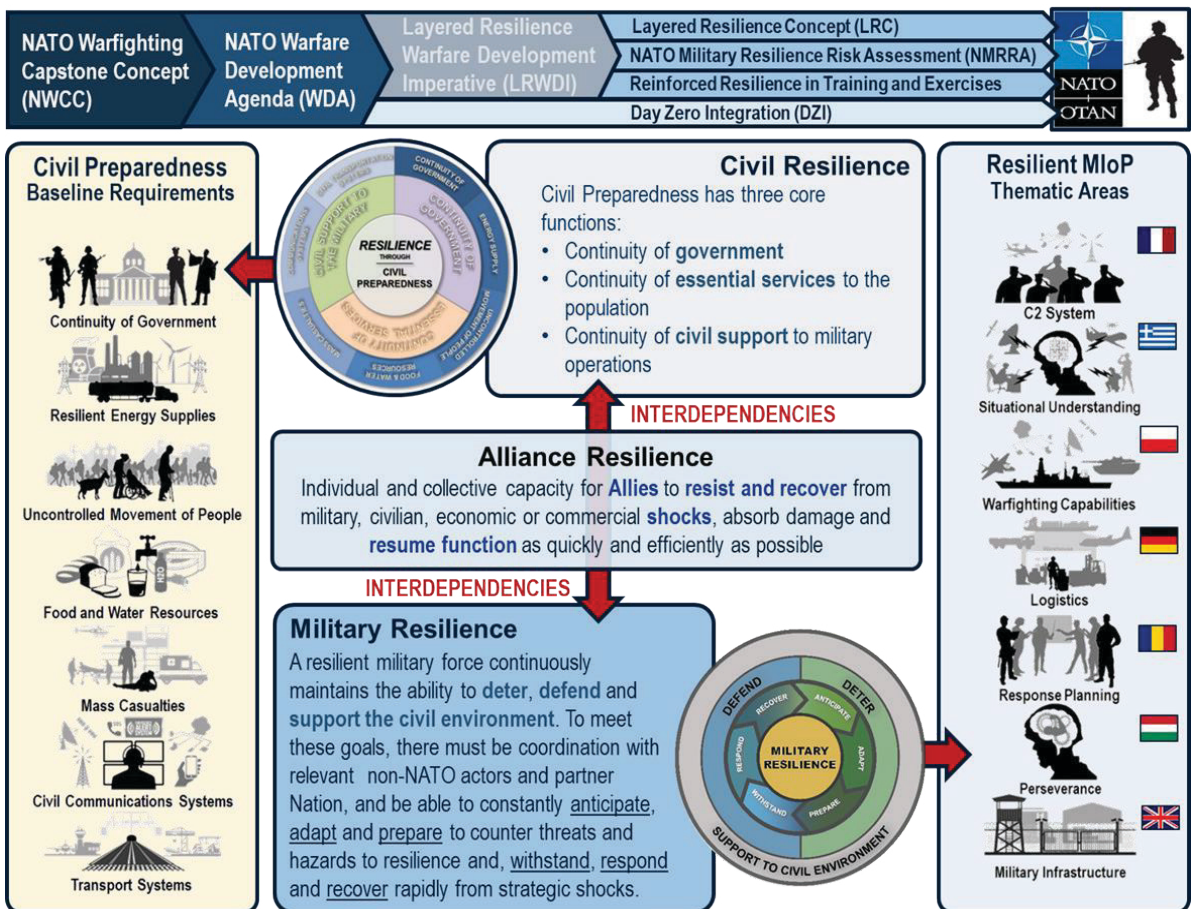


Figure 4: Resilience (NATO Joint Warfare Centre)

To assess the preparedness of NATO nations, the Alliance has established the seven baseline requirements¹⁰ that align with the three core functions of civil preparedness: continuity of government, essential services for the population, and civil support for the military. These core functions and the seven baseline requirements are interconnected. This means that a disruption in one area will impact another. For example, managing mass movements of people,

maintaining government continuity, and ensuring resilient food and water resources are interdependent, as disruptions in any one area can undermine stability and the provision of essential services. Large-scale displacement can strain resources and disrupt governance while maintaining government operations ensures coordination and access to critical services. Meanwhile, stable food and water supplies are essential for displaced populations and the smooth functioning of government and critical services. A breakdown in any one area can cascade, undermining the other two, making it crucial to address all three simultaneously for stability and resilience.

The role of CIMIC in promoting societal resilience is twofold. It ensures information about the Allies' resilience and provides advice on the impact on the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) area of responsibility. It also focuses on addressing limited impacts due to a shortfall in one or more baseline requirements. This highlights the significance of civil factor integration and constitutes additional requirements for civil-military interaction.

Domestic CIMIC

NATO nations have their own political and legislative characteristics, military, governmental, and administrative structures, and specific liaison arrangements and responsibilities. As a result, they will carry out CIMIC activities in line with national legislation and regulations. In essence, 32 nations, 32 approaches.

In reality, NATO CIMIC and domestic CIMIC responsibilities and activities will massively intersect within the NATO command and force structure. The nation's expertise in national defense plans and national civil-military liaison structures is crucial in this context. Aligning NATO CIMIC tactics, techniques, and procedures with those applicable to domestic CIMIC is essential to ensuring effective civil-military interaction through military-to-military liaison. This requires establishing a shared understanding of NATO CIMIC versus Domestic CIMIC.

Therefore, domestic CIMIC can be seen as a nation's military function that conducts CFI and CMI within its borders to support the accomplishment and synchronization of national and NATO missions and military strategic objectives in peacetime, crisis, and conflict.

Lessons from Ukraine

In Ukraine, CIMIC within the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) is primarily conducted by the ground forces with minimal Navy and Air Force participation. However, CIMIC plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness and readiness of the armed forces by facilitating interaction and teaming between military and civil entities. This can be essential in deterring and withstanding aggression and ensuring seamless integration that contributes to the success of military operations and enhances societal resilience.

The Russian Federation's hybrid warfare strategy, which targets both military and civilian populations, has highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to deter and withstand these challenges. In response, the Ukrainian General Staff integrated a J9 (CIMIC) Directorate in April 2020.¹¹ This directorate is responsible for establishing and coordinating civil-military relations and activities. At the strategic level, the J9 Directorate's main tasks include directing CIMIC activities, providing guidance for CIMIC doctrinal development, organizing measures

to decrease civilian casualties, coordinating humanitarian activities, planning the return of people to their homes, and conducting search and recovery operations for missing or deceased individuals.

At the operational level, CIMIC liaison officers are fully teamed with the administration of each oblast.¹² These officers have primarily two roles: horizontally, they communicate with other CIMIC operational levels and other administrations from which they receive tasks and requests for information; vertically, they are linked to the J9 Directorate in the General Staff of AFU, providing reports and assessments of the situation in their respective oblasts.

The CIMIC brigade elements at the tactical level are responsible for carrying out CIMIC tasks given by the strategic and operational headquarters. They play a vital role in the unit's decision-making and planning processes, providing the commander with valuable insights into the civilian environment. The ultimate goal is to improve situational understanding within the brigade's territory, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of combat units. The Ukrainian CIMIC is actively planning, organizing, and coordinating CIMIC activities, particularly facilitating coordination and teaming between the AFU and local and regional administrations. They also focus on continuously assessing the civil environment, particularly safeguarding critical infrastructure to support government operations and people's daily lives.

The Ukrainian's comprehensive whole-of-nation approach forms the basis for effectively responding to the Russian invasion. This approach entails active coordination and teaming between military and civil entities at all levels, from strategic to tactical.

There are two perspectives on the conflict in Ukraine. Most of the fighting occurs on land, which has implications for deploying CIMIC forces at the tactical and operational levels. However, a whole-of-nation approach requires the inclusion of all other domains—consider, for example, how the AFU has been able to neutralize Russian naval power in the Black Sea with hardly a navy of its own. This approach doesn't seem feasible without synchronizing military and non-military actions described in the MDO concept. It's also evident that a common understanding of the civil environment, seamless across all levels and based on integrating the civil factors of the operating environment, is necessary.

The resilience of the Ukrainian military and society shows the close connection between non-military and military actions and the importance of cooperation and interaction. Combat operations on the soil of a sovereign state in Europe cannot be viewed purely in military terms and in isolation. The development of a resilient union of state and society visible in Ukraine since 2014 sets a benchmark for NATO in managing such conflicts.

CIMIC in Ukraine is a domestic matter and responsibility against a foreign invader. The CIMIC Staff is primarily responsible for interacting and teaming with non-military actors. Defense procedures are guided by state strategy.

DOTMLPF-P Implications

Doctrine

It is essential to understand CIMIC as a Joint function on all levels. The synchronization of military and non-military activities, as outlined in the MDO concept, has historical precedence within the Joint function framework. However, documents like the MDO concept lack a clear allocation of responsibility for this synchronization, which falls under the purview of the Joint Function CIMIC. Given the importance of CIMIC in enhancing resilience and in current conflicts such as the one in Ukraine, the question of its fundamental necessity no longer arises.

With the necessary shift to deterrence and defense of the Euro-Atlantic area, NATO's capacity to connect with domestic CIMIC forces must doctrinally be further developed. It's crucial to have a standardized handover point from NATO CIMIC to domestic CIMIC, especially considering the diverse forces of different nationalities. The draft definition mentioned above lays the groundwork for this. Additionally, the fundamental principles of CFI and CMI should be incorporated into all NATO essential documents. In the end, the NATO CIMIC doctrine has to be improved from a Level 2 AJP to a Level 1 AJP to underline the position and appropriate level of CIMIC in the Joint Function Framework.

Organization and Personnel

The role of a professional CIMIC staff within NATO's Analysis and Assessment capability has become increasingly relevant and important to MDO. CIMIC staff elements are required to effectively integrate the civil factor as part of the comprehensive understanding of the operating environment in a manner that both the staff and the commander can utilize. Furthermore, this capability must span seamlessly from the strategic to the tactical level and beyond military considerations. The NATO MDO approach is primarily a concept, mindset, and attitude that must be implemented by developing plans at all levels.

To incorporate this mindset into the relevant plans, it is essential for headquarters at all levels, from strategic to tactical, to have CIMIC staff who are familiar with this mindset and can apply it throughout the planning phases and during the execution of operations. This impacts the timing of decisions, including teaming with non-military partners in processes and formulating conclusions for future operations. As non-military stakeholders can also be involved in the planning processes, CFI must commence as early as possible as a prerequisite for CMI—integrating a J9 directorate at the strategic level of the AFU underlines that.

Training and Personnel

The CIMIC staff addresses current challenges by considering multiple domains and military and non-military aspects. This approach necessitates a solid educational foundation, regular training, and proficiency in basic skills related to analysis, assessment, and civil-military interaction through teaming. It is widely recognized that the effectiveness of CIMIC advice is enhanced by persuasive content and presentation. While not a new concept, MDO can provide an opportunity to reemphasize the importance of these factors and CIMIC as a Joint Function.

The fundamental structure of CIMIC basic training must be reconsidered to achieve this. Training events and courses tailored to strategic, operational, and tactical levels should be available to CIMIC personnel, non-CIMIC personnel, and non-military actors as part of team-building efforts. Interoperability between NATO as an alliance, the member states, and various

NATO partners, as well as between military and non-military actors, must be trained and regularly practiced, now more than ever. NATO's key training facilities for CIMIC, including the CCoE and the NATO School, play a crucial role in this.

Material and Facilities

Historically, CIMIC has not been associated with high material expenditure. However, it would be an oversimplification to conclude that further material development is unnecessary. CIMIC personnel need future-oriented and functional tools, especially the NATO CIMIC Analysis and Assessment Capability, to share results efficiently within headquarters and with other partners. Time is a crucial factor, particularly in the cyberspace and space domains. Suitable technologies, including AI, should be introduced in concept development and experimentation (CD&E) to test concepts with Allies and non-military actors. A seamless working environment between unclassified and classified areas must be established to ensure prompt and uninterrupted civil-military interaction for all CIMIC staff and training facilities.

Leadership

The shift from conducting stabilization operations outside the Alliance area to focusing on deterrence and defense in Europe and its flanks represents a change in mindset and understanding of the new functions. The evolving role of cooperation and teaming between military and non-military actors is evident not only in connection with MDO and the conflict in Ukraine but also in the recognition by political and military decision-makers of the importance of social and societal resilience as a whole of nation effort. Additionally, there is a growing acknowledgment of the reliance on teaming with non-military actors in the execution of military operations and relocations resulting in a combined effort of both worlds.

While the need for civil-military interaction is acknowledged, the integration of civilian factors by specialized CIMIC personnel within the headquarters is not always fully appreciated. It is essential to persuade both military and non-military decision-makers. Simply giving presentations, holding road shows, and conducting briefings is insufficient. CIMIC personnel must demonstrate their value through results in exercises and at headquarters. Furthermore, engaging in training future decision-makers and leaders at an early stage is crucial.

Summary

CIMIC and Civil Affairs are crucial components of military operational planning and execution. According to NATO's commitment to a comprehensive approach and the experiences from the war in Ukraine, there is a need to adapt to new challenges. For CIMIC and Civil Affairs, this means defining their roles in these scenarios and aligning training, education, and deployment accordingly. Both military and non-military communities must recognize that CIMIC goes beyond just liaison. Without a solid integration of civil factors into the operational environment, efficient teaming, interaction, and synchronization cannot occur in the headquarters. It is essential to consistently apply the NATO CIMIC Analysis and Assessment Workflow methods by specialized personnel.

The role of CIMIC expertise at the operational and strategic levels has significantly increased, which should be considered in training, exercises, and operations. At the tactical level, the

ability to connect with domestic procedures and forces must be defined and trained. Joint exercises and training are key to success in this area. Teaming is insufficient without knowledge of all civil factors, actors, and stakeholders. Interaction with all non-military actors or teaming by coincidence leads to wrong directions. Teaming in CIMIC and Civil Affairs will always be the second step, while the first is understanding the operating environment.

Therefore, CIMIC is a military Joint function for combined operations—including crisis response and Article 5—involving civil factor integration and civil-military interaction in peacetime, crisis, and conflict—in all NATO core tasks.

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Endnotes

¹ NATO Military Policy on Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) MC 411/3, Ratification Draft Version D6, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, J9, 5.

² *Ibid.*

³ The three core functions of civil preparedness are continuity of government, continuity of essential services to the population, and continuity of civil support to military operations.

⁴ NATO Standard Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 01, *Allied Joint Doctrine, Edition E, Version 1*. (Brussels: NATO Standardization Office, 2022), 105, <https://www.cimic-coe.org/resources/external-publications/ajp-01-edf-v1-f.pdf>.

⁵ NATO Standard Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 3.19 for Civil-Military Cooperation, *Edition A, Version 1, Ratification Draft* Brussels: NATO Standardization Office, 2024), 3 – Comprehensive Approach and Behaviour Centric Approach.

⁶ CCoE CIMIC Handbook, <https://www.cimic-coe.org/publications/ccoe-publications/field-handbook/>.

⁷ *Alliance Concept for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)*, 1 – NATO agreed.

⁸ NATO Standard Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 01, *Allied Joint Doctrine, Edition E, Version 1*. (Brussels: NATO Standardization Office, 2022), <https://www.cimic-coe.org/resources/external-publications/ajp-01-edf-v1-f.pdf>

⁹ AJP 3.19, 5.

¹⁰ <https://www.handbook.cimic-coe.org/7.Resilience/7.3Seven%20baseline%20requirements/>

¹¹ *Case Study Ukraine* (CCoE 2024), 36, <https://www.cimic-coe.org/resources/fact-sheets/ccoe-case-study-ukraine-initial-study.pdf>.

¹² An administrative and territorial division in some republics of Ukraine.

Civil Affairs Task Force:

Conflict Prevention through Multicomponent Teaming

Tony Smith & Adam Frowein

Introduction

In today's increasingly volatile international landscape, characterized by the aggressive behaviors of competing states such as Russia and China and the destabilizing activities of non-state actors, the United States must adopt a more proactive approach to conflict prevention. Traditional deterrence methods and fragmented U.S. capacities and capabilities are insufficient for addressing the root causes of instability—from governance failures and economic disparities to social fragmentation—before they escalate into open conflict.¹ Several U.S. policy frameworks, including the Global Fragility Act, highlight the need for integrated interagency strategies that strengthen resilience, mitigate risks, and stabilize vulnerable regions.² However, recent critiques describe the approach as insufficient and disjointed. The evolving complexity of the geopolitical environment demands a comprehensive strategy to safeguard U.S. interests across multiple theaters and address a wide spectrum of security challenges that defy traditional boundaries.³

This paper argues that Civil Affairs Task Forces (CATFs), composed of Active Army, U.S. Army Reserve (USAR), and Army National Guard (ARNG) capabilities, can harness diverse expertise to advance U.S. strategic objectives through targeted, multicomponent efforts that support interagency collaboration, build civil resilience, and enable conflict prevention. First, by integrating the unique capabilities of all three components, CATFs establish an interdisciplinary approach to conflict prevention. Drawing on the professional civilian expertise of the USAR and ARNG, CATFs gain access to a wealth of capabilities that broaden their capacity to address governance, development, and infrastructure issues.⁴ Second, multicomponent CATFs serve as a conduit for interagency coordination, effectively bridging military and civilian efforts. For example, during *Operation Desert Storm*, the Kuwait Task Force (KTF), led by Civil Affairs (CA), bridged the gap between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of State (State).⁵ Third, multicomponent CATFs enhance civil resilience by leveraging continuity, relationships, and unique expertise to reduce societal vulnerabilities. For instance, the ARNG's State Partnership Program (SPP) fosters enduring relationships that help communities withstand external pressures and deter escalation into conflict.⁶ Lastly, by engaging with partners, shaping environments, and mitigating root causes of instability. Multicomponent CATFs directly support U.S. national security objectives through effective conflict prevention.

The Power of Many: Multicomponent and Multidisciplinary Expertise in CATFs

A CATF is a temporary, specialized, and adaptable unit designed to address the complex challenges of the civil domain in both conflict and peace settings.⁷ Generally, pre-conflict CATF operations are executed by active component CA units under Title 22 United States Code (USC) authority or as part of USSOCOM's civil-military engagement (CME) mission set.⁸ However, to realize the potential of CATFs, it is essential to integrate the unique and complementary strengths of active and reserve forces to support conflict prevention as the ultimate exercise in strategic economy of force and winning without fighting. This integration enables CATFs to leverage the civilian-acquired expertise of USAR and ARNG personnel in areas such as governance, economics, industry, and public health, bringing critical knowledge directly applicable to conflict prevention and stability operations. By combining these professional skill sets with other information-related capabilities like Information Operations (IO), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Public Affairs (PA), as well as engineering, medical support, and cyber operations, CATFs can evolve into a truly multidisciplinary force.⁹ This approach equips CATFs with the adequate resources required to address immediate security concerns and builds capacity for long-term stabilization efforts.

The USAR plays a critical role in this approach, contributing nearly 76% of the DoD's CA capability.¹⁰ USAR personnel bring deep expertise from advanced civilian fields, enabling CATFs to bridge the gap between military objectives and civilian needs.¹¹ Programs such as the 38G Military Government Specialist initiative recruit subject matter experts across public and private sectors, providing essential governance and development support to priority regions.¹²

The ARNG's SPP further enhances the multicomponent capacity of CATFs. The SPP establishes enduring relationships between ARNG units and partner countries, facilitating military-to-military engagements, disaster response exercises, and cultural exchanges.¹³ These long-term partnerships cultivate a deep understanding of regional dynamics, cultural nuances, and local networks.¹⁴ When ARNG units participating in the SPP are integrated into a CATF, they can provide invaluable context and established relationships, strengthening the CATF's ability to engage effectively with partner nations and local communities. By combining these partnerships with the expertise of the USAR, CATFs can deliver tailored solutions to meet immediate and strategic needs.

In essence, CATFs can strengthen significantly by integrating civilian-acquired skills with long-term partnerships established by the USAR and ARNG. By combining this with IO, PSYOP, PA, engineering, medical support, and cyber operations, CATFs can flexibly address a wide range of stability and governance challenges. Building on this foundation, it is essential to examine how the CATF can leverage these capabilities and skill sets for interagency coordination.

Interagency Coordination: The Cornerstone of Conflict Prevention

Effective interagency coordination is critical to addressing global security challenges, particularly during "competition"—a period characterized by strategic maneuvering and efforts to gain

influence without resorting to armed conflict.¹⁵ In competition, a unified approach involving diverse government and non-governmental actors is essential to countering adversarial actions and fostering stability. Such coordination must extend beyond isolated events, evolving into an ongoing, dynamic process that ensures a cohesive strategy for conflict prevention in areas of grave concern for U.S. national security.¹⁶

CATFs are uniquely positioned to facilitate this level of coordination, acting as vital conduits between military and civilian agencies.¹⁷ With their dual capability to operate across both spheres, CATFs can effectively bridge the gap between the DoD and other government entities, overcoming the "stovepiping" that often hinders interagency collaboration.¹⁸ This role is central to creating a unified effort, ensuring seamless communication and alignment of objectives across stakeholders.

Integrating active Army, USAR, and ARNG personnel within CATFs enhances interagency coordination by leveraging well-established foreign relationships and dual civilian-military roles of reserve component members. The latter describes service members who serve in a civilian capacity with federal, state, and local government agencies, non-government organizations, academia, and the private sector. Their dual roles enable them to act as critical conduits between military organizations and civilian agencies, facilitating seamless communication and collaboration. This unique capability allows CATFs to effectively navigate complex civilian environments and ensure that their efforts align with broader interagency objectives.

The establishment of the KTF during Operation Desert Shield offers a historical example of multicomponent Civil Affairs expertise and interagency coordination in action. Col. Randall Elliott, a USAR officer with the 352nd Civil Affairs Command and senior analyst in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, used his dual roles to advocate for including CA capabilities in Kuwait's recovery planning.¹⁹ His efforts, which included educating both State and Defense officials on the capabilities of CA units, fostering direct collaboration with the Kuwaiti Emergency Recovery Program (KERP), and involving 27 separate federal agencies in funding and executing post-war reconstruction operations ensured that CA expertise was central to rebuilding Kuwait's governance and infrastructure.²⁰ The KTF's success highlights how multicomponent CATFs can synchronize efforts across government agencies and align military actions with civilian objectives.

Moreover, the ARNG's SPP significantly enhances the CATF's interagency capabilities. By fostering long-term partnerships with foreign countries, the SPP builds valuable relationships and cultural understanding that country teams and geographic, service, and joint task force commands can leverage during interagency operations.²¹ ARNG units participating in the SPP bring to the CATF established interagency networks and regional insights that are instrumental in enhancing cooperation and collaboration at the operational level.²² This integration of the SPP within CATFs ensures that they can engage effectively with partner nations and coordinate seamlessly with interagency stakeholders, creating a unified front in conflict prevention efforts.

Ultimately, the multicomponent structure of CATFs, enriched by the unique contributions of the USAR and ARNG, positions them as effective coordinators and facilitators of interagency efforts. This is especially true for reserve component personnel who have been posted at interagency offices at either institutional or operations levels. While effective interagency coordination ensures a unified national approach, true success in conflict prevention also hinges on enhancing the resilience of local communities to withstand and recover from a range of disruptive challenges.

Civil Resilience: Enhancing Stability and Preventing Conflict

Civil resilience refers to a society's capacity to withstand, adapt to, and recover from a wide range of adversities, including natural disasters, socio-political unrest, disinformation campaigns, and hybrid threats.²³ Communities that can maintain essential services, reinforce governance structures, and preserve social cohesion, are far less likely to be destabilized by external pressures. As former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg noted, "Without societal resilience, military excellence is useless," highlighting the critical role of strong civilian foundations in maintaining stability and security.²⁴ This capacity is also foundational to the U.S. Special Operations Command's Resistance Operating Concept (ROC).²⁵

CA units play a pivotal part in strengthening these foundations in support of conflict prevention. Their close engagement with local stakeholders, deep understanding of social and political dynamics and nuances, and focus on capacity-building contribute to creating a more robust and adaptable civil environment. Through actions such as civil preparation of the battlefield (CPB), CA teams identify key vulnerabilities, develop a civil network engagement plan, and leverage these networks to mitigate threats to civil society.²⁶ These efforts create conditions less susceptible to exploitation, reduce the appeal of malign actors, and foster an environment where tensions are managed before they escalate.

In the event conflict prevention fails, civil resilience serves as a cornerstone for an effective civil resistance campaign.²⁷ Civil resistance—nonviolent civilian action aimed at disrupting adversarial objectives—relies on pre-existing resilience to endure and sustain its efforts. For instance, prior to the Russian invasion, Ukraine made deliberate investments in civil resilience that strengthened civil networks, enabling them to support national defense objectives and asymmetrically challenge Russian military operations.²⁸

CATFs can enhance this dynamic by leveraging the broad range of skills found within active Army, USAR, and ARNG elements. Drawing on the civilian-acquired expertise and longstanding regional connections of reserve component personnel, CATFs bring tailored solutions to address local needs. Engineering units can help repair essential infrastructure, medical specialists bolster public health initiatives, and governance experts strengthen institutional capacity. These contributions are essential to reinforcing stability in high-risk regions and creating environments less conducive to adversarial influence.

By empowering communities to navigate challenges and withstand and recover from societal shocks, multicomponent CATFs can help prevent crises from spiraling into open conflict, forming a civil component of deterrence strategy. Strong, resilient societies are inherently less vulnerable to exploitation, reducing the incentives for adversarial actors to foment instability.²⁹ However, if conflict does arise, investments in civil resilience contribute directly to an effective civil resistance campaign. In this way, building civil resilience functions as a form of proactive defense supporting U.S. national security objectives—one that relies not solely on military might, but on the collective strength, adaptability, and agency of the civil domain.

Advancing National Security Priorities through Effective Conflict Prevention

Successful conflict prevention is inherently tied to broader U.S. national security priorities, particularly in the context of strategic competition and integrated deterrence. The 2022 *National Security Strategy* (NSS) underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to national security that leverages all elements of national power—"diplomacy, development cooperation, economic statecraft, intelligence, and defense"—to achieve a stable global environment conducive to U.S. interests.³⁰ Integrated deterrence, as emphasized in the NSS and the 2022 *National Defense Strategy* (NDS), is a key component of this approach. It involves using a combination of these tools to prevent conflicts from escalating into costly military intervention.³¹ In this framework, effective conflict prevention directly supports U.S. strategic objectives by maintaining stability, reducing the need for armed force, and promoting a rules-based international order.

Addressing the root causes of instability and building resilient societies are fundamental to this strategy and are aligned with U.S. interests abroad. The U.S. aims to foster a "free, open, prosperous, and secure international order" by mitigating potentially destabilizing factors such as weak governance, economic disparities, and social grievances that often serve as precursors to conflict.³² Building resilient societies that can withstand shocks and resist malign influence is crucial for preventing conflict and creating an environment that supports sustainable development and democratic governance. This approach embodies the principles of integrated deterrence, which calls for the use of all instruments of national power to shape favorable conditions and deter potential adversaries.³³

CATFs play a pivotal role in operationalizing this strategic shift toward conflict prevention and integrated deterrence by engaging with local populations, building relationships, and addressing the underlying causes of instability. Their proactive engagement helps to shape the operational environment, deter adversaries, and build the capacity of partner nations, which reduces the likelihood of conflict escalation and the subsequent need for large-scale military interventions.³⁴ For instance, units like the 95th CA Brigade (Special Operations)(Airborne) engage in activities that directly support the NDS, such as training with allies and partners and building partner capacity.³⁵ These sustained engagements contribute to a strategic campaigning effort that aligns with U.S. national security goals by fostering stability and strengthening alliances.

Furthermore, CATFs offer a cost-effective alternative to conventional military operations. Their understanding of local dynamics and ability to build trust with key stakeholders allow CATFs to identify and mitigate potential conflict drivers before they escalate. This capability supports the NSS's effort to maintain a sustainable military posture.³⁶ For example, a CATF operating in support of a multilateral mission can utilize information from international partners to assist in coordinating humanitarian assistance or disaster relief, thereby minimizing the need for partners to request military resources for the impacted area.³⁷

In summary, CATFs are integral to the U.S. strategy of integrated deterrence and conflict prevention. By addressing the root causes of instability, building resilient societies, and engaging in strategic campaigning, CATFs contribute to achieving U.S. national security objectives more effectively and efficiently. Their ability to operate across multiple domains and leverage diverse capabilities makes them a valuable tool in the U.S. arsenal for maintaining global stability and advancing national interests.

Challenges to CA Teaming and CATF Operations in Support of Conflict Prevention

Fragmentation across the CA Community

Implementing the CATF approach to conflict prevention faces significant challenges, primarily due to a lack of cohesive integration among different military components (COMPOs) and branches. When deployed, Active Army CA forces (COMPO 1) are typically assigned to Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs); USAR CA forces (COMPO 3) fall under Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs); and U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) CA forces operate within Fleet Marine Forces (FMFs) and Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs).³⁸ This segmentation complicates interagency and major military command efforts to effectively leverage the diverse capabilities of CA forces during strategic competition, closely resembling the coordination failures experienced during *Operation Eagle Claw*.³⁹ Fragmented coordination leads to disjointed operations and diminishes the overall impact of CA missions.

Limitations Posed by Funding and Resource Constraints

Funding and resource constraints represent another significant obstacle for CA units, especially those within the reserve component. USAR CA forces often face limitations due to "archaic and arcane mobilization authorities and by funding mechanisms" that restrict their effective utilization.⁴⁰ These restrictions mean that USAR CA forces are primarily mobilized for major combat or post-conflict operations, limiting their availability for conflict prevention and stability missions.⁴¹ Furthermore, the brief windows provided by USAR battle assemblies do not afford sufficient time for comprehensive training, open-source monitoring, or the development of collaborative links across the functional specialties.⁴² This inadequate training time impairs the

ability of USAR CA units to integrate seamlessly with Active Army CA forces and interagency partners, reducing overall operational effectiveness.

Gaps for Effective CA Teaming and CATF Operations

Current legal and funding authority constraints hinder the ability of CATFs to respond flexibly and promptly to emerging stability and conflict prevention needs. Significant gaps exist in doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) that must be addressed to unlock the full potential of multicomponent CA teaming.⁴³ Overcoming these challenges requires:

- Policy Reforms: Reevaluating and reforming existing authorities to allow more agile and comprehensive deployment of USAR CA forces in support of theater-driven CATF operations.
- Streamlined and Expanded Mobilization: Simplify congressional and DoD processes to increase participation in operations preceding major conflict and post-conflict operations, specifically conflict prevention.
- Enhanced Funding and Resources: Securing additional funding for training and equipping USAR CA units, including essential equipment and communication capabilities necessary for effective civil engagements, assessments, and project implementation.
- Clear Integration Guidelines: Establishing guidelines for the seamless integration of multicomponent CA forces into CATF operations to ensure cohesive and effective mission execution.

DOTMLPF-P Solutions to Improve CA Teaming for Conflict Prevention

Doctrine

Develop a comprehensive doctrine that integrates all CA components—Active Army, USAR, and ARNG—under a unified framework to enhance conflict prevention efforts. This doctrine should clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and the integration of CA elements across components with interagency and multinational partners in joint operations—incorporating, when appropriate, the ROC. Emphasis should be placed on a common operational picture and standardized procedures across all CA units. Specific guidelines should address forming and utilizing multicomponent CA teams in joint, interorganizational, and multinational (JIM) environments, detailing processes for assembling and deploying teams to leverage their unique governance, development, and civil infrastructure support capacities and capabilities. This framework would maximize capabilities, such as utilizing USAR 38G specialists while improving information flow among all components.

Organization

Civil Affairs Commands (CACOMs) should be aligned through the Global Force Management Implementation Guidance (GFMIG) to Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), with a COMPO 1 CA company under FORSCOM assigned to each CACOM. This structure enables special operations forces (SOF) to maintain COMPO 1 CA elements focused on SOF missions, while COMPO 1 and COMPO 3 CA units operate cohesively to prepare for large-scale combat operations (LSCO). Additionally, CATFs should be established with cross-component representation from Active Army, USAR, and ARNG units, including SOF CA. These modular and scalable CATFs would support theater-level CA campaigning and operations ranging from humanitarian assistance to stability missions, ensuring rapid integration with interagency and multinational partners. This campaigning approach allows CATFs to focus on conflict prevention while enabling the broader CA force to train more for LSCO.

Training

Enhance combat training center (CTC) exercises to include campaigning all CA capabilities from all components alongside interagency and multinational partners. Training plans should leverage CATFs during the initial phases, with COMPO 1 CA capabilities transitioning to COMPO 3 at the height of LSCO scenarios. These enhanced rotations would simulate complex environments requiring coordinated responses to conflict prevention and stabilization, emphasizing interoperability, communication, and coordination among participants.

Material

Equip all CA units with branch standardized, interoperable communication platforms to facilitate real-time information sharing and coordination among CA teams, interagency entities, and multinational partners. A unified communication system would replace current disparate platforms, improving civil knowledge integration (CKI) across all components. This capability would enhance the storage, collation, analysis, and dissemination of civil information, ensuring greater efficiency and cohesion.

Leadership

Establish CA leadership exchange programs among Active Army, USAR, and ARNG units to foster mutual understanding of each component's capabilities, operational culture, and challenges. Develop specialized leadership training programs focused on managing multicomponent CA teams in JIM environments, covering topics such as conflict resolution, interagency collaboration, and cross-cultural communication. USAR CA and ARNG commands should respond to 2024 keynote speaker U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Assistant Administrator Ciara Knudsen's call for more CA personnel to deploy as liaisons and military representatives at USAID offices to effect improved civil-military integration and strategic planning by including such missions in their program objective memoranda as a function of mission readiness. These

programs will prepare CA leaders to effectively integrate and guide diverse teams in complex operations during competition and LSCO.

Personnel

Develop a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for CA personnel across all components. This strategy should offer targeted incentives for critical skills such as civilian expertise, language proficiency, and cultural knowledge, ensuring a balanced and diverse force capable of supporting complex operations. Additionally, expand opportunities for cross-component assignments by utilizing Main Command Post-Operational Detachment (MCP-OD) positions at division and brigade levels and allowing COMPO 3 personnel to fill ARNG S9/G9 roles. This will provide CA personnel with varied operational experiences, fostering cohesion and collaboration to enhance the effectiveness of multicomponent teams.

Policy

Advocate for policy reforms to enable more agile funding and deployment of reserve component capabilities to support CATF operations. Additionally, integrate CATFs into SPPs to align with shared strategic goals. Incorporate CA teaming explicitly into national defense and conflict prevention policies to reinforce the critical role of CA capabilities in achieving U.S. national security objectives and ensuring effective integration in JIM operations.

Conclusion

The increasingly volatile global security environment necessitates a proactive and integrated approach to conflict prevention. Civil Affairs Task Forces, leveraging the multicomponent expertise of the Total Army—Active Army, USAR, and ARNG—offer a critical solution to these challenges. By uniting diverse capabilities—from the specialized knowledge of the USAR's 38G Military Government Specialists to the regional insights provided by the ARNG's SPP—CATFs are uniquely positioned to address the challenges imposed by global competitors. Their ability to facilitate effective interagency coordination enhances the United States' capacity to implement cohesive and proactive conflict prevention strategies, aligning with priorities outlined in the Global Fragility Act and other policy frameworks.

Empowering CATFs through cohesive multicomponent teaming strengthens civil resilience and advances U.S. national security objectives in an era of strategic competition and the increasing threat of LSCO. This strategic approach ensures that the United States remains capable of deterring aggression, promoting international norms, and maintaining a rules-based order essential for global peace and prosperity. Despite fragmentation challenges within the CA community and resource constraints, targeted DOTMLPF-P solutions provide a viable path forward. By embracing policy reforms, expanding mobilization authorities to pre-conflict efforts, and investing in training and resources, CATFs offer a solution to 21st-century geopolitical security challenges.

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Building Partner Capacity: The Value of U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs

Bradford Hughes

Summary

As a U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Civil Affairs (CA) unit member in Mountain View, California, I am part of a cohesive team that harnesses civilian-acquired skills to support governance, enhance resilience, and improve public diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region. Our approach, building partner capacity (BPC), emphasizes collaboration and teamwork to develop essential capabilities in specific countries.¹ Our unit leads innovative BPC strategies, working alongside small civil society organizations to address crucial challenges such as food security, climate change, and cultural heritage. Engaging at the grassroots level strengthens regional stability and reinforces U.S. interests, particularly during crisis or conflict, which aligns with our integrated deterrence strategy.

In the context of military teaming, CA forces focus on two interconnected areas: governance and government functions. Governance reflects the state's ability to serve citizens effectively through rules and processes that manage interests and resources. This underscores how authorities maintain control while working in partnership with various stakeholders. On the other hand, government functions provide the foundational framework for conducting governance. This encompasses public systems that create laws, administer justice, provide essential services, and maintain order. Expertise in government functions requires a thorough understanding of these systems, while governance expertise involves recognizing how they interrelate to meet citizens' needs.

The effectiveness of our military efforts depends on the collaboration among diverse stakeholders and the continuous enhancement of capacity building across public and private sectors, as well as national, local, formal, and informal institutions, to mitigate and manage drivers of conflict. This synergy represents a vital opportunity for CA Military Government Officers (known by the Army area of concentration (AOC) 38G), found only in the USAR, to make a significant impact through coordinated efforts.

To effectively compete with adversaries such as Russia and China, the United States must prioritize BPC. USAR CA brings essential systems-based expertise to implement BPC strategies through security cooperation, fostering local and regional stability and reinforcing the concept of integrated deterrence. Investing in these collaborative relationships enhances national security and contributes to a more stable and prosperous global landscape. Teaming within the military and with local partners is fundamental to achieving these goals successfully.

Methodology

This paper explores the central question: "How does U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs support regional stability by building partner capacity?" This is further defined by the following points:

- The necessity to focus on competition with China.
- The significance of experts in military governance and Civil Affairs.
- The value of integrated deterrence and achieving victory without conflict.

My approach is grounded in design thinking, which, in turn, is rooted in systems thinking. Design thinking is a cognitive method that creates innovative conceptual frameworks to develop and implement integrated solutions or strategies. It emphasizes strategic thinking rather than merely strategic programming, where planners recycle previous strategies instead of formulating new ones. Design thinking begins with a thorough understanding of the end user or beneficiary of the solution or strategy. This process involves empathizing with the end user and fully grasping the end user's problems, needs, and desired outcomes.²

This paper emphasizes the need to re-evaluate the Department of Defense's (DoD's) policies regarding the use of USAR CA forces in general and 38G's in particular. It highlights their overlooked capacities and capabilities to enhance military collaboration and support ongoing Army operations while fostering professional development within the force.

Background

The U.S. military operates across all domains, with a complex land environment shaped by diverse cultures, ethnicities, and political settings. Civil Affairs forces are crucial in analyzing and integrating these civil considerations into military operations. "Security Sector Assistance" encompasses U.S. strategies to engage foreign partners in shaping their security policies and building their capabilities.³ While traditional security assistance focuses on enhancing foreign defense forces, BPC bridges security cooperation and addresses threats from state weaknesses. This approach enables the U.S. to maintain a low-visibility presence in regions where traditional operations might not occur.⁴

The U.S. must enhance partner capacities to effectively compete with great-power adversaries. USAR CA cohort members have the expertise needed to implement BPC strategies, fostering local and regional stability. U.S. Army doctrine emphasizes the need for military forces to operate among civilian populations, balancing the defeat of adversaries with the shaping of civil conditions. While offensive and defensive tasks are essential, stability operations often play a more critical role in achieving overall success.⁵

The civil component of the operational environment (OE) includes populations, political institutions, infrastructure, and community resources. It exists throughout all phases of conflict and contains various capabilities and vulnerabilities that can affect mission outcomes.⁶ Civil affairs units are crucial in military teaming, as they engage with the civil component to enhance governance and stabilize environments. Their missions provide commanders the tools to identify and address threats like ineffective governance or criminal activity. By preserving combat power

and fostering situational awareness, CA supports creating a secure and stable OE aligned with U.S. interests, ultimately facilitating stability in the civil component and consolidating gains.⁷

Building Partner Capacity

BPC aligns closely with security cooperation, building strong linkages with U.S. allies and partners.⁸ Following the attacks on the U.S. on 11 September 2001, the U.S. shifted its strategy to prioritize BPC to achieve traditional and non-traditional national security goals. This approach incorporates a sponsorship strategy, emphasizing patience and collaboration for shared objectives, which can yield better long-term results at lower costs.⁹

The 2015 *National Military Strategy* highlights the need to enhance the military capabilities of partners to combat terrorism and underscores the importance of forming alliances.¹⁰ The U.S. military will continue to protect shared interests through training, exercises, and security cooperation activities, strengthening our collective ability to deter aggression.¹¹

Effective CA teaming focuses not only on minimizing civilian interference but also on meaningfully influencing populations. Recent efforts, particularly in the Compact of Free Association (CoFA) nations, have integrated women, peace, and security (WPS) principles into military operations, promoting meaningful female participation in governance and society. This collaboration enhances partner capabilities and helps forge critical bonds with allies, ultimately giving the U.S. critical influence-related positional advantages in strategic competition that can be leveraged by the entirety of the U.S., allied, and partner forces, all U.S. government agencies, and interorganizational partners across the competition continuum, including large-scale combat operations (LSCO).

Civil Affairs and CA Specialists

Civil Affairs forces focus on two key areas: governance and government functions. Governance is the state's ability to serve citizens through rules and processes. At the same time, government functions refer to the structures that carry out these processes, such as creating laws and providing essential services. In a military context, effective governance resembles a well-coordinated military team. Just as different units must work together seamlessly to achieve a mission, various stakeholders—such as citizens, community groups, and the government—must collaborate to implement policies successfully. The success of military operations often depends on effective teamwork and harmony among all participants. The 38G is crucial in facilitating that collaboration, ensuring that all parties effectively meet the population's needs.

The CA force structure includes specialized experts, called Military Government Officers (38G), who provide critical support to military commanders. With backgrounds in various civil sectors, these individuals, assist in stabilizing operations and enhancing government functions in diverse

environments.¹² Within their area of expertise, they have the necessary skills to establish, support, or reestablish capability and understand the local impact of culture on that capability.

The 38G AOC focuses on utilizing the specialized expertise of USAR officers who have established professional careers in the private or public sectors. The 38G officers focus on key government function areas, including Civil Control, Civil Security, Essential Services, Government Support, Economic Stabilization, and Infrastructure. Their civilian expertise and professional networks are essential for achieving CA objectives alongside military operations.

Guiding Principles

International terrorism, organized crime, and local conflicts have increasingly intersected in unstable regions, resulting in a rise in violence against civilians. A comprehensive approach is needed to address these challenges, involving specialized organizations to stabilize conflict areas and establish self-sustainable peace.¹³

As global instability is expected to grow, economic crises can threaten regimes, potentially hindering allies' capacities to meet defense and humanitarian needs.¹⁴ U.S. stabilization operations and military support efforts—including CA and especially 38G efforts—focus on creating safe environments, the rule of law, stable governance, and socio-economic development.¹⁵

Achieving sustainable peace requires local ownership, meaning affected nations must take charge of their recovery and development.¹⁶ This ownership involves building the capacity of both public and private institutions to manage conflict drivers. Effective military teaming plays a vital role in this process by fostering collaboration with local governments and civil society, emphasizing inclusivity and gender considerations, and transferring knowledge to strengthen local capabilities. Ultimately, military partnerships that align with host nation priorities are essential for promoting stability and peace and U.S., allied, and partner geostrategic interests and objectives.¹⁷

Integrated Deterrence

The 2022 *National Defense Strategy* states, “Our competitors, particularly China, are pursuing holistic strategies that employ varied forms of coercion, malign behavior, and aggression to achieve their objectives and weaken the foundations of a stable and open international system.” Working closely with our allies and partners, the U.S. strengthens joint capabilities through multilateral exercises, technology development, increased intelligence and information sharing, and coordinated planning to address common deterrence challenges.”¹⁸ The CA force is dedicated to building enduring positional advantages and making foundational improvements, further empowered by the unique capability within the USAR and the 38G cohort.

Winning without Fighting

The U.S., NATO, and allied forces have excelled in recent kinetic battles but struggle in the ideological and information realms. Retired Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland has emphasized the need for the U.S. to confront this challenge through a counter-threat mindset, capitalizing on authoritarian regimes' fears of their citizens. He advocates for an American unconventional warfare approach that reflects the nation's diversity and commitment to liberty.¹⁹

Within this context, the USAR CA 38G cohort plays a vital role as ambassadors for democratic values, challenging oppressive ideologies. While China may not match the U.S. in kinetic weaponry, it is successfully leveraging civil-military operations and investments to expand its influence across 138 countries, many of which risk becoming financially dependent through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative.²⁰ This underscores the importance of military teaming, as collaboration among forces is crucial to countering such ideological and strategic threats.

This multidimensional approach resembles a combined arms strategy in U.S. military doctrine, where non-military methods strengthen governance capabilities. Just as the People's Liberation Army of China leverages these strategies to gain advantage, U.S. military teams can similarly employ integrated deterrence, emphasizing the principle of "winning without fighting."

To win without fighting is best... Sun Tzu.²¹

Case Study—CA Deployments in the Marshall Islands

I recently engaged with the Women Engagement Team Oceania (WETO) in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) from 15-19 July 2024. Through listening sessions in the local community, we focused on WPS and the energy sector. The team, comprised of USAR CA practitioners and University of Wisconsin-Madison partners, conducted assessments at U.S. Army Garrison-Kwajalein Atoll and Ebeye. We explored nature-based solutions to enhance critical infrastructure and civilian resilience against environmental challenges.

Furthermore, we identified workforce development opportunities to empower the local community, linking military objectives with sustainable practices. This engagement underscored the importance of integrating gender, security, and sustainability in military operations, providing valuable insights for future regional missions.

Kwajalein Atoll, Republic of the Marshall Islands

Kwajalein Atoll, part of the RMI, has a land area of just over six square miles and is shaped like an elongated oval. It features three main islands: Ebadon, Roi-Namur, and Kwajalein, located at its western, northern, and southern points. As one of the largest coral atolls globally, Kwajalein comprises 97 islands and sits 2,100 miles from Honolulu, 2,000 miles from Australia, and 2,100 miles from Japan. Kwajalein Island is about 500 miles north of the equator.

The Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site, or Reagan Test Site, spans approximately 750,000 square miles and includes multiple launch sites within the atoll. It serves U.S. missile defense and space research needs. About 2,500 permanent residents live on Kwajalein, including Bechtel and Lockheed Martin employees, alongside around 900 Marshallese workers who commute from nearby Ebeye Island. The most populous island in the atoll, it is a cultural center for the Marshallese. Its population exceeds 15,000 on just 80 acres, making it one of the world's most densely populated small islands.

Analysis—Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Technological Factors

Political: The CoFA Nations are key to the U.S. military strategy in the Pacific as China expands its influence through loans and partnerships. Consistent engagements will strengthen democratic practices in the CoFA nations, which include the RMI, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

Economic: In January 2024, rogue waves damaged the U.S. military base at Kwajalein Atoll. A 2018 DoD report warned that rising sea levels could render the islands uninhabitable by 2035 to 2065. This suggests that military readiness in the region may be affected as local ecosystems face collapse within the next 10 to 40 years.²²

Socio-Cultural: U.S. Army CA practitioners focus on enhancing military partnerships by integrating environmental principles into planning efforts for the Marshall Islands. With the matriarchal structure of Marshallese society in mind, the team will engage female leaders to explore how the community can address climate challenges as part of military collaboration.

Technological: The Kwajalein Atoll Government (KWALGOV) initiated the Pacific Allies program in 2016 to educate American students on the security impacts of climate change. This initiative collaborates with the U.S. military, the University of Hawaii, and Tufts University to transform Kwajalein into a living sustainability laboratory, reinforcing military awareness and cooperation in addressing environmental issues.²³

Challenges

Our USAR CA team utilizes a BPC approach to foster meaningful military teaming in the Marshall Islands (Kwajalein Atoll). This strategy ensures we consider governance challenges and align our efforts with U.S. national security goals. By strengthening our partnerships, we enhance our collective capabilities and maintain a strategic edge over adversaries. To move forward, we must improve outdated systems and traditional norms that hinder capacity building within DoD.

In October 2022, we proposed an \$80K initiative to enhance military partnership capacity for the WETO event in Kwajalein, with additional funding for Micronesia and Palau. Although the proposal was approved after several legal reviews, funding did not arrive until early July 2024.

Initially authorized under 10 U.S. Code §164 for flexible spending, the funding authority was later switched to 10 U.S. Code §332, restricting funds to friendly foreign partners. This change complicated our operations, as the U.S. Embassy in Palau oversees the Marshall Islands and cannot process necessary paperwork promptly. Consequently, we cannot provide cash to local Marshallese vendors before the event.

While stakeholder issues did not derail the mission, it is concerning that upfront costs are being borne by other entities, which reflects poorly on our team and the broader CA enterprise. Our primary focus is to quickly transfer funds to KWALGOV, assisting the host nation in bolstering its local military institutions. Still, there is a noticeable lack of urgency from U.S. officials involved in the process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

I have outlined a front-line example of building partner capacity, which represents an innovative approach to great power competition. In conventional military operations, the military aims to minimize civilian interference. In contrast, building effective partner capacity focuses on influencing populations.

USAR CA forces work to enhance regional security and stability by engaging in areas that competitors often avoid. It is essential to recognize that emotions can significantly sway political decisions. By navigating foreign systems, we can build resilience and simultaneously support U.S. military interests, such as access, basing, and overflight (ABO). Crucial for establishing a U.S. military presence and influence, ABO facilitates the movement of troops and resources within allied territories. A simple phone call, built on years of trust and capacity building, can open doors to critical partnerships, exemplifying integrated deterrence.

Collaboration with organizations like the Army Applications Laboratory (AAL) and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) in Austin, Texas, is vital. AAL connects the military with industry to harness innovative solutions, while DIU focuses on enhancing warfighter capabilities through advanced technology.

By strengthening both institutional relationships and interpersonal connections through these avenues, we rejuvenate the Army's governance capabilities. This revitalization aligns with the principle of "winning without fighting," emphasizing the value of strategic diplomacy and proactive engagement. Although defense practitioners may hold diverse opinions on various security policies, there exists a unified agreement on the critical importance of prevention and innovation in fostering effective military collaboration. Ensuring that these elements are prioritized can lead to a more resilient and adaptive military force.

Colonel Bradford "Brad" Hughes is a former Master Army Aviator and UH-60 Maintenance Test Pilot with multiple combat and humanitarian relief deployments. He transferred to the Civil Affairs

branch in 2018 and was appointed a 38G Military Government Specialist with a 6F (Transportation) skill identifier. He is the Government Function Specialty Chief for the 351st Civil Affairs Command in Mountain View, CA. Additionally, Col. Hughes is a certified Gender Advisor (GENAD), and he leads efforts within the Command to mainstream gender perspectives in planning, operations, activities, and investments.

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Teaming to Operationalize Culture for Campaigning

Jack A. Schultz Jr. and Tara R. Scardino

“In Civil Affairs, success depends on getting the right information to the right people at the right time.”¹

In its 2023 *Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment* (SOIE), the Department of Defense (DoD) articulated its purpose “to improve the Department’s ability to plan, resource, and apply informational power to enable integrated deterrence, campaigning, and build enduring advantages as described in the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS).”² Achieving this, the SOIE recognized, requires “a clear understanding of the drivers that shape relevant actors’ perceptions and behaviors” and the need to “better understand individuals, groups, and populations critical and influential to partners, adversaries, and/or relevant foreign actors.”³ The SOIE codifies a need to apply “an analysis and assessment methodology of the informational, physical, and human aspects of the environment to...better [understand] the motivations that drive behavior.”⁴ As ADP 6-0, Mission Command, describes, understanding results when data is processed into information; information is analyzed to produce knowledge; and commanders apply judgment to knowledge to achieve understanding.

In decision-making, knowledge is information that has been analyzed and evaluated for operational implications. Knowledge is also the result of comprehension gained through study, experience, practice, and human interaction that provides the basis for expertise and skilled judgment. This type of knowledge resides in an individual's mind. It is the purview of individuals, not technology, and includes an appreciation for nuances, subtleties, and workarounds. The processes to collect data and process it into information are firmly established by doctrine. Our commanders are well-trained, battle-tested, and possess judgment superior to commanders in the armies of our near-peers. However, a capability gap exists where commanders require specific knowledge about the civilian environment to achieve the depth of understanding required to operate effectively in today’s increasingly complex geopolitical landscape.⁵ Civil affairs (CA) Military Government Specialists (38Gs) often possess this knowledge, but U.S. Army force structure and existing decision-making processes do not allow the effective ingestion of this knowledge by commanders.

To fill this capability gap, this paper proposes CA forces support campaigning and integrated deterrence by teaming 38Gs with other information forces, joint, interorganizational, and multi-national (JIM) partners, and multi-national corporations (MNCs). 38G is the identifier for the U.S. Army's "Military Government" specialty within the CA branch. Officers with the 38G identifier are subject matter experts in various sectors of government, business, industry, and civil society. As of the writing of this paper, there are 23 specialties in the program ranging from commerce and trade to heritage and preservation. They are organized into functional specialty cells capable of providing analysis and guidance to military leaders in complex environments around the world. The scope of their collective expertise in a military context is unmatched within our instruments

of national power. 38Gs are a mechanism to perform the analysis and assessment methodology identified as necessary in the SOIE. Teamed with other forces and enablers to “operationalize...‘culture,’”⁶ 38Gs have the potential to dramatically enhance the value proposition for CA forces. In this context, to “operationalize ...‘culture’” means to get the right information to the right people at the right time using a methodology for analysis that transforms information about the perceptions and behaviors of populations across twenty-three sectors of the civilian environment into knowledge. This operationalization of culture will dramatically increase a commander’s understanding of the operational environment (OE) and the achievable effects in the physical, human, and information dimensions that support interagency priorities across the competition continuum.

Part I of this paper defines the value of teaming to operationalize culture. Part II proposes a methodology for operationalizing culture. Part III provides examples of past failures to effectively operationalize culture and recent successes resulting from effects achieved using mechanisms informed by the type of knowledge 38Gs can contribute to operational planning. Finally, Part IV recommends changes to doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) to facilitate teaming and enable the operationalization of culture.

Part I. Teaming

While 38Gs provide a singular collective capability, they depend on the availability of data that can only be obtained through placement and access across the competitive space, which they currently lack. To mitigate the impact of this constraint, 38Gs must team with traditional CA forces, other Warfighting Functions (WfFs), JIM partners, and the private sector to maximize their functionality and value to the Joint Force. However, before CA forces can team with JIM partners, they must team with themselves. Specifically, CA units must organize in a manner that facilitates teaming of traditional CA forces with 38Gs and other organic WfFs. Once successfully teamed with themselves, geographically aligned CA Forces must integrate with the Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs) and Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) they support to gain the access and placement required to inform the operations process.

Major J. David Thompson coined the phrase, “Campaigning the Campaign Plan” in his work of the same name. “Instead of thinking about campaigning specific to conflict prevention, large scale combat operations (LSCO), security cooperation, etc.,” he advocates “campaigning the campaign plan” by ensuring that operations, activities, and investments (OAI) further the campaign objectives and using working assessments to determine whether the OAI employed achieved the desired effects.⁷ Since the introduction of OAI in JP 5-0, Joint Planning, Combatant Commanders (CCDRs) have used the term return on investment (ROI) “to describe the assessed effectiveness of the congressionally funded operations of their commands.”⁸

Campaigning the campaign plan using working assessments serves as a means for CCDRs to establish ROI in their commands after OAI are employed, while operationalizing culture serves

as the means for ensuring OAI further the campaign objectives before they are employed. More simply, campaigning the campaign plan involves CA forces conducting battle damage assessments (BDAs) and collateral damage estimates (CDEs) outside of LSCO environments across the competition continuum and in multiple domains. This capability is singular among the elements of national power. It informs the commander's allocation of resources to the most suitable OAI at the right time, in the right place in support of campaigning and interagency priorities, like preventing conflict.

With the passage of the Global Fragility Act (GFA), the U.S. reinforced its commitment to prioritizing conflict prevention. The *United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability*, developed in compliance with this act, delineates the roles and responsibilities of various agencies. The Department of State (State) is the lead federal agency responsible for executing the strategy, while the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the primary implementing agency supporting U.S. policy objectives under the strategy. DoD plays a supporting role in conflict management and prevention. State executes the strategy through its Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, while USAID implements it via the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization.

Although DoD has not formally assigned any forces, the strategy itself identifies CA, Psychological Operations (PO), and Information Operations (IO) as military mechanisms.⁹ 38Gs teamed with IO and PO forces are well-suited as forces tapped to support this strategy. As articulated in Part II, Methodology, conflict prevention is incorporated into the cultural operationalization process. Specifically, in their analysis of the impact of proposed OAI, 38Gs evaluate the propensity of proposed OAI to incite or exacerbate conflict. Commanders incorporate the conflict analysis into their selection of an OAI and the time and location of its employment. Their collectively focused understanding of the OE makes 38Gs well-suited to identify alternative OAI that achieve the desired effects while mitigating impacts that compromise campaign objectives or undermine interagency priorities, like conflict prevention. Additionally, this role for CA forces in conflict prevention provides a basis for teaming with JIM partners for other purposes, like gaining placement and access and effectively operationalizing culture.

Meaningful support of conflict prevention requires teaming with private industry, particularly multinational corporations (MNCs) in extractives sectors like oil and gas. Two-thirds of fragile and conflict-affected countries have natural resource-dependent (RD) economies. Those that are not RD economies have large natural resource reserves, control over which drives conflict. Power disconnects that further drive conflict occur when the host communities affected by the social and environmental activities of MNCs lack the power to change their impact. Power disconnects also occur when those with the power to solve social and environmental problems escape their negative impacts.¹⁰ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are supposed to bridge the power gap by shifting decision-making power to host communities.

However, MNCs lack the placement and access required to understand the OE and inform selection of CSR initiatives. As a result, MNCs rely on national governments to direct the CSR process or work selectively with decision-makers who are not accountable to host communities. This often results in CSR initiatives creating larger power gaps that are exploited by non-state actors to the detriment of the host communities, host governments, and the MNCs.¹¹

An example of this in the context of CSR is Shell Oil in Ogoniland, Nigeria. Specifically, the converging interests of the Nigerian government and incentives of the local elites in Abuja resulted in the development of a version of CSR that focuses on regional economic growth through investment in major infrastructure projects with limited benefit to local communities. Many blame the power gap that resulted from this version of CSR to the rise of Boko Haram in the region. Locals were not the only victims of Boko Haram's exploitation of this power gap. Western oil companies paid a high price in the form of increased personnel costs, security, repudiated contracts, production stoppages, and, at times, total divestiture of their international energy projects.¹² Oil companies already partner with established development agencies such as USAID to implement development programs on the ground.

While these existing partnerships provide opportunities for government agencies to identify potential CSR initiatives, they are partnering with corporate organizations that do not understand the nature of conflict at the same level as the U.S. military. By teaming with private industry, CA forces can conduct the necessary civil reconnaissance to identify projects more in the interest of local communities that will make conflict less rather than more likely.

Part II. Methodology

Figure 1: Step 1 Narrative Analysis Methodology

Venezuela (CS+(CCxOV))	
Political Areas	Narrative with in-text citations
Date:	Date of last update
JIM Partners:	Include agency, section, name, email, and phone number of all JIM partners consulted
Background Reading:	Include links to background or additional reading
Websites:	Include relevant websites or websites to be consulted for future updates
Comments:	For comments from other sections
Notes:	For additional information between updates

Figure 2: Narrative Analysis Methodology

Step	Example	Abbreviation	Graphic Aid
1. ID/Describe: 1. PMESII-PT/ASCOPE 2. Civil Sectors	The current political organizations in Venezuela include a <u>cleptocracy</u> led by Nicolas Maduro and an <u>opposition movement</u> led by Juan Guaido living in exile in the U.S.	(CS + (CCxOV))	
2. Analyze impact of civil considerations x operational variables on each other in a single OE.	Analysis of the Impact of natural resources (Economic Area) and Exportation (Economic Structure) in Venezuela. (Resource Curse or Dutch Disease)	(CCxOV ↔ CCxOV)	OE 1 CCxOV CCxOV Impact CCxOV on each other
3. Analyze impact of civil sectors on each other in a single OE.	Analysis of the impact of natural resources on commerce and trade in Venezuela (import substitution)	(CS ↔ CS)	OE 1 CS CS Impact CS on each other
4. Analyze impact of civil considerations x operational variables in a single OE.	Impact of Nicolas Maduro (Political People) on Judiciary and the Courts	(CS ↔ CCxOV)	OE 1 CS CCxOV Impact of CCxOV on CS
5. Identify critical factors and other conditions in single OE	COG: Nicolas Maduro CR: Maduro's 2000+ GOs CC: PDVSA CV: Food Insecurity	COG, CR, CV, CC Areas influenced by allies/enemies Mission impact indicators (+, -), Changes from previous updates (≠), Conflict drivers (†) OAI Opportunities (*)	OE 1 CS CCxOV CV CR CC (COG)
6. Identify similarities/differences between OEs across GCCs.	PDVSA might also be a COG in Petrocaribe recipient OEs	CENTCOM, INDOPACOM, etc	OE 1 CS CCxOV NORTHCOM
7. OAI Risk Analysis	Determine RIS of proposed OAIs and propose alternative OAIs when Risk is unacceptable even with mitigation	L LM M MH H U	OE 1 CS CCxOV *LM *U V
8. OAI ROI Analysis	Determine ROI and propose alternative OAIs when ROI is negative	+++ ++ + 0 -	OE 1 CS CCxOV *++

Step one of the narrative analysis methodology, as shown with an example in Figure 1, is a narrative identification and description of the PMESII-PT/ASCOPE¹³ (or operational variables (OV) / civil considerations (CC)) crosswalk and the civil sectors (CS) memorialized in a format intended to be an enduring document that contains links, points of contact for JIM partners and other sources consulted to inform the analysis. Step two is a narrative explanation of the impact of each of the elements of the OE, as depicted in the cells of the PMESII-PT/ASCOPE crosswalk, on each other. Step three is a narrative analysis of the impact of the civil sectors on each other in a

single OE. Step four is a narrative analysis of the impact of the civil sectors on each of the elements of the OE depicted in the cells of the PMESII-PT/ASCOPE crosswalk. In step five, using the graphic products created for use in steps one through four, 38Gs identify critical factors, foreign influence, drivers of conflict, OAI opportunities, and changes from prior updates. 38Gs should perform steps one through five for every OE in their unit's portfolio. The analysis should be performed, maintained, and continuously updated at the country level, but can be scaled as operational requirements dictate.

Once a focused analysis (steps one through five) for each OE exists, 38Gs may conduct further analysis between and among OEs in steps six through eight by notating relevant similarities/differences between/among OEs across GCCs, using the graphic planning product to identify risk and opportunities to maximize ROI. This methodology enables 38Gs to provide commanders and the WfFs with knowledge to achieve the level of situational understanding required for effective operational planning.

By analyzing the impact of an OAI on physically or otherwise adjacent or connected OEs, 38Gs can provide a very narrowly focused analysis of the nature of a particular OAI on a civil sector, civil consideration, operational variable, or critical factor in a specific OE, multiple OEs, across a region, and beyond. This level of analysis enables the identification of links to other GCCs so commanders can leverage and layer effects and OAIs across GCCs to maximize ROI by expanding the reach of an OAI in support of campaign objectives and interagency priorities.

These eight steps describe the most granular analysis of an OE. Ideally, a fully staffed functional specialty cell would regularly update this product to enable its use, in real time, to immediately project the effects of a proposed OAI in any OE. In some OEs, the time and resources may not support immediately operationalizing culture in an OE with a complete, detailed, and focused common operating picture (COP). In this case, the process can be abbreviated by isolating the steps or selecting individual elements and aligning them along an x and y axis to visually depict the required analysis. The narrative output of this methodology, while valuable, is not in a form easily operationalized during planning, but serves as a running estimate for 38Gs.

Figure 3 below depicts a planning product that isolates the knowledge a commander needs to develop an accurate understanding and that can be used as a briefing aid during mission analysis and operational planning. Figure 4 on page 81 is a graphic aid for use during COA comparison.

Figure 3: Graphic Aid for use in Mission Analysis and COA Development

VZUELA	IP #	CT	AGF	T	FMB	TT	E ↑	ENR	LRP ↑	JLS	C	LBE	CA	EM	PWS	PH	PM	E	HP	A
PA																				
PS				PRC																
PC																				
PO																				
PP COG							SOUTHCOM													
PE													IRA							
MA																				
MS					* L ++ CR	CR														
MC												CO,US								
MO																				
MP																				
ME																				
EA																				
ES																				
EC																				
EO																				
EP																				
EE																				
SA																				
SS																				
SC																				
SO																				
SP																				
SE																				
IA																				
IS								CV1		CV2										
IC								CR1		CR2										
IO																				
IP								CC1		CC2										
IE																				
IA																				
IS																				
IC								* \$\$\$\$ ++												
IO																				
IP																				
IE																				

In Figure 3 above, the x and y axes may be sectors, critical factors, conditions, operational variables, civil considerations, or the crosswalk of operational variables and civil considerations. This framework facilitates a more thorough analysis of the OE than PMESII-PT/ASCOPE provides. While analysis of an OE may start with PMESII-PT/ASCOPE, it cannot end there.

Attaining the level of such situational understanding and knowledge to support campaign objectives, create positional and informational or influence advantages, and (in the event of LSCO) consolidate military and security gains into civil and political outcomes in complex OEs requires employment of 38Gs who understand the interplay of operational variables, civil considerations, and their areas of subject matter expertise. Obtaining this level of understanding enables the commander to operationalize different elements of culture in a manner that supports campaign objectives and prevents the ill-informed employment of OAI that could undermine them.

Figure 4: Graphic Aid for use in COA Comparison¹⁴

Operational Variables		Political	Military	Economic	Social	Information	Infrastructure	Phys ENV	Time														
Civil Considerations		Area	Structures	Capabilities	Organization	People	Events																
Civil Sectors																							
Type of Environment		Permissive			Contested			Occupied			Denied												
Critical Factors		COG	CR	CV	CC	Competitors	Competition Conflict Continuum	Objective of Competitor	Mechanism	Platform	Desired Effect	Objective	Mechanism	Platform	Effect	Cost	Risk	ROI	Links				
Individual		Group of Individuals		Organizations		Super Organizations		States		Alliances													
Cooperation		Competition below Armed Conflict		Armed Conflict																			
Advance		Maintain		Engage Selectively		Improve		Counter		Contest		Degrade		Defy		Defeat							
Diplomatic		Information		Military		Economic		Financial		Legal													
State		Defense		Development		Transportation		Intel		Media		Treasury		Commerce		Population		Justice					
				\$																			
Advance		Maintain		Engage Selectively		Improve		Counter		Contest		Degrade		Defy		Defeat							
Diplomatic		Information		Military		Economic		Financial		Legal													
State		Defense		Commerce		UN		Trans		Energy		MNCs		Media		OFAC/FINCN		ICSID		World Bank		Justice	
\$		\$\$		\$\$\$		\$\$\$\$		\$\$\$\$		\$\$\$\$		\$\$\$\$		\$\$\$\$		\$\$\$\$		Negligible		Negative		CENTCOM	
Low		Low		Low		Low		Medium		Medium		High		High		High		High		High		High	
None		None		None		None		None		None		None		None		None		None		None		None	
EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM		EUCCOM	
INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM		INDOPACOM	
AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM		AFRICOM	
NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM		NORTHCOM	
SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM		SOUTHCOM	

Part III. Past Failure and Recent Successes

American war planner and policy maker lack of understanding of Iraqi culture and politics, generally, and the Baath Party, specifically, led to Coalition Provisional Authority Order No. 1 and the policy of de-Baathification. The Baath party influenced all aspects of Iraqi society. Iraqis were required to pledge allegiance to the organization to attend college, teach school, and hold senior positions in hospitals and universities. Consequently, the policy of de-Baathification alienated nearly 100,000 people in positions vital to the continuity that was required in some sectors and the rebuilding required in others. In the power vacuum the policy created, foreign actors and extremists who were prevented from operating under the Baath Party seized the opportunity to take control of Iraqi society.¹⁵ Coalition Provisional Authority Order No. 2, which disbanded the Iraqi military, security, and intelligence infrastructure that formed a cohesive civil-military structure in Iraqi society, likewise contributed to such “unintended consequences.”

Similar failures led to similar results in the Russo-Ukrainian War. Putin’s failure to gain a focused understanding of the civil environment prior to his special military operation into Ukraine led to a protracted conflict for which he was ill-prepared. Believing the Ukrainians viewed themselves as “southern Russians who needed to be reconnected to the Fatherland,” Putin thought his army would be met with flowers.¹⁶ In reality, Ukrainians saw themselves as an independent nation and greeted Putin’s army with Molotov cocktails in a ferocious defense of their homeland.

A recent success that serves as an example of the type of OAI that could be informed and proposed by 38Gs is Ukraine’s strategic use of international investment law to hold Russia accountable for damages arising from its invasions and subsequent occupations of Crimea and Ukraine. Ukrainian investors have brought their claims under the bilateral investment treaty between Russia and Ukraine, signed in 1998. Initial arbitration awards have uniformly held Russia accountable, issuing damages worth billions of U.S. dollars (USD). These awards are accruing compound interest, which will continue to accumulate indefinitely until paid, settled, or until the end of the occupations. Russia has implicitly acknowledged that these awards are having a substantial financial impact. Perhaps even more consequential than the financial impact is the value of the unanimous unfavorable judgment of Russia’s actions. By using a peaceful dispute resolution process in response to aggressive military action, Ukraine also maintains its standing in the international community as a worthy recipient of support.¹⁷

Notional examples of success include an AFRICOM-aligned 38G with a skill identifier in Agribusiness and Food reporting on how drought contributes to conflict and what segments of a population depend most on agriculture for survival.¹⁸ A commander with this knowledge can direct OAIs towards these areas. 38Gs design the OAIs to alleviate the impacts of droughts on the most vulnerable populations. Similarly, a CENTCOM-aligned 38G with a skill identifier in Laws, Regulations, and Policies will understand the potential for increased opportunities in society for women affected by civil war and can recommend OAIs that include post-conflict legislation to solidify any advancement made by women during the conflict.¹⁹

Likewise, a SOUTHCOM-aligned 38G with a skill identifier in Environment and Natural Resources may recommend an OAI that helps educate local populations on the terms of their contracts with Chinese companies in the extractive sector and in which teaming with U.S. extractives companies could help communities draft more favorable terms. Understanding the OE enables the employment of multiple mechanisms to achieve desired effects from diverse platforms.

Part IV. Recommendations

The catastrophic policy of de-Baathification during Operation Iraqi Freedom resulted from war planners who did not understand the environment in which they were planning operations. The costs of the Iraq War have been calculated at \$8 trillion if the veterans' healthcare costs are included.²⁰ While the portion of that cost attributable to our lack of understanding cannot be determined, the ROI to effectively operationalize culture to prevent failures of this magnitude in future conflicts is immeasurable.

For this reason, a hand-selected team of CA practitioners and supporting personnel from the joint force and JIM partners should be assembled to recommend changes to the DOTMLPF-P to enable integrated deterrence. Those selected should include data analysts, force management experts, acquisition professionals, financial analysts, and military historians. The team should be given a deadline to produce a report that defines a method for quantifying the costs of failures like those made by the Iraq War planners, recommends changes to prevent future failures, calculates the costs of those changes, and calculates the ROI to implement the changes. The changes recommended below are far from complete. However, collectively, the recommendations made in this, and other information papers can serve as a starting point for those tasked to recommend more comprehensive changes.

Doctrine

Current doctrine limits the utility of 38Gs in conflict prevention as well as governance. Joint Publication 3-24 defines governance as “the state’s ability to serve the citizens through the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in a society.”²¹ As explained in this document, the utility of 38Gs is not limited to governance. Doctrine should be updated to reflect this. Additionally, Joint Doctrine needs to codify CA forces as the DoD force responsible for the interagency priority of conflict prevention as dictated by the *United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability*.

Organization

To effectively operationalize culture, CA units need to organize for that purpose. First, 38Gs and other information enablers should be geographically aligned for the entirety of their careers. This permanent geographical alignment will enable the deep focused understanding required to effectively inform OAIs in their GCC. The projected organizational structure for FY 26 has Plans, Operations, Military Governance, and Civil Knowledge Integration (CKI) in separate sections. These sections should be consolidated into an “Information” section tasked with operationalizing

culture. A liaison team, consisting of the Plans Chief, 38G Chief, the Deputy Chief, and selected 38Gs as needed, will integrate into the operations process at the geographically aligned ASCC or GCC. Each WfF within the Information section will integrate with its corresponding section at the ASCC or GCC. This organizational structure facilitates unity of effort with supported ASCCs and GCCs and is essential if CA forces supporting the conventional Army desire involvement in campaigning and integrated deterrence. Finally, CA units should have portfolios of nations within the GCC area of responsibility (AOR) to which they are aligned. The portfolios should contain overlap in contested areas and the countries in each portfolio should be logically linked.

Training

Training must enable the role of CA forces in supporting campaigning and interagency priorities. Campaigning the campaign plan should occur continuously regardless of the type of training, exercise, operations, or component. Even on a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) mission or exercise, the representatives of the Information section should be operationalizing culture to inform OAI. As seen in recent conflicts, humanitarian aid can be converted into a weapon if delivered in an uninformed manner. For this reason, even HADR missions should be undertaken in a manner that deliberately supports interagency priorities, such as conflict prevention. In addition, training should be capitalized on and used as a means for joint force, interagency, and partner nation integration. Integration should continue beyond the exercise, and the goal for those in attendance should be to form enduring relationships that will inform a COP.

Lt. Gen. Eric J. Wesley, USA, Retired, pointed out in the 2022 Civil Affairs Roundtable that “you can’t compete if you’re not there.”²² Because of this, CA brigades should create opportunities to have a constant presence in their assigned OEs. This serves the dual purpose of gaining access and language immersion. The active component should not have exclusive rights to the burdens of operational rotations. Having groups of 6-10 people on 60-day rotations with five days of preparation in-country prior to the rotation is only six more duty days per year than the 59 days of drill, annual training, and language training a reservist typically performs. By integrating the active and reserve components in CA multicomponent teaming, the active component benefits from a permanent supplemental force, and the reserve component benefits from continuity.

Materiel

To expand on retired Lt. Gen. Eric J. Wesley's observation that “you can’t compete if you’re not there,” you cannot integrate with organizations you are not aware of, deconflict actions that already occurred, synchronize efforts already in progress, or coordinate activities with ghosts. CA forces desperately need a secure platform to share information about OEs between and among JIM partners. 38Gs must merge their focused knowledge with the information obtained by those who have placement and access to it. The ability to operationalize information effectively and efficiently depends on recency and accuracy.

Leadership and Education

To effectively operationalize culture, professional military education (PME) and non-PME opportunities must be expanded for CA Officers. 38Gs with previous military experience should be required to get a master's degree in Area Studies or a foreign language proficiency corresponding to their geographic alignment. PME should equip 38Gs with a focused understanding of their designated AOR. All CA forces should receive priority selection for Joint PME and interagency partnerships or private sector internships to facilitate integration. Additionally, the Civil Affairs Association Education and Training webpage,²³ which identifies many non-PME resources for CA professional development, needs update and greater socialization among the CA community.

Personnel

Recruitment of 38Gs should be targeted toward individuals already working in the organizations for which the DoD should prioritize integration. Based on the skills desired, recruitment efforts for direct commissions should be targeted at such organizations as the International Trade Association (ITA), the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the U.S. National Contact Point (USNCP) for Responsible Business Conduct at the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, the Office of Foreign Assistance (OFA), the Peace Corps, the World Bank, United Nations agencies, and the State Department and USAID. The Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) could be helpful in this process.

Policy

Employment of OAI should receive the same deliberate application as employment of a projectile. Just as the ill-informed delivery of a projectile can compromise military objectives, so can the ill-informed delivery of an aid package. For this reason, the employment of any OAI by the Joint Force, whether unilaterally or bilaterally, with a JIM partner should receive a collateral damage estimate performed by the Joint Force that is considered by the executing and implementing agencies. While Coalition Provisional Authority Orders 1 and 2 were not devised by the military, they were enforced by the military, and its consequences were mostly endured by the military.

Conclusion

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF, emphasized the need for proactive innovation, stating: "We need to act with urgency now before we find ourselves needing to innovate in the midst of a major conflict. We need to act like we're in a crisis, before the crisis."²⁴ Receipt of an order to deploy to an unfamiliar OE is too late to develop the understanding and teaming required to achieve the desired effects in the OE. For this reason, operationalizing culture must be a continuous process that enables its real-time integration into the operations process.

As Joint Publication 3-0 outlined, “while commanders conduct activities of cooperation and adversarial competition, they are still preparing for armed conflict”²⁵ should integrated deterrence fail. The capabilities 38Gs provide, when teamed effectively, enable commanders to set the theater and conduct shaping operations, both critical to gaining positional advantage, while “establishing favorable conditions”²⁶ in multiple domains left of armed conflict. While this singular capability among the elements of national power has the potential to serve as the basis for the value proposition of CA forces in integrated deterrence, realization of this capability is wholly dependent on teaming. The idea of CA as “a force for winning without fighting,” introduced in the 2022-23 *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*, needs further exploration and integration in the CA narrative.

While 38Gs enable the level of understanding of the operational environment required to maximize the mechanisms available to achieve desired effects in support of integrated deterrence and campaigning, they are merely cogs in the wheel of situational understanding. They must team with traditional CA forces, other WfFs, JIM partners, and MNCs who collect, and manage the information they analyze to provide the commander with the knowledge required to apply judgment and achieve understanding of the OE.

The next time someone asks, “What does Civil Affairs even do?”²⁷ The answer should be, “CA forces get the right information to the right people at the right time. By transforming information about the perceptions and behaviors of populations across over twenty sectors of the civil domain into knowledge, they enable a more complete understanding of the OE and increase the number of mechanisms available for achieving effects across the competition continuum in support of integrated deterrence and campaigning.”

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Endnotes:

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- ¹² Sarah Chayes, "How to Reverse Nigeria's Oil Curse," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 2, 2015, 7.
- ¹³ PMESII-PT is an Army mnemonic device for analysis of the operational environment. The acronym stands for Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure, Physical Environment, and Time. ASCOPE is an analytical structure developed by CA officers in the 1990s for civil environment analysis. It stands for Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events.
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- ¹⁷ Eric Chang, "Lawfare in Ukraine: Weaponizing International Investment Law and the Law of Armed Conflict Against Russia's Invasion," *Strategic Perspectives* 39. (Washington, DC: National Defense University, August 9, 2022).
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- ²⁴ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. CQ Brown, Jr., Opening Statement, DoD Budget Hearing, U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, 118th Congress 2nd Session, April 9, 2024.
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