

US Army Civil Affairs- The Army's Bridge To Stability

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Introduction- In the American classic "A Bell for Adano", John Hersey wrote "America is on its way to Europe. You can be as isolationist as you want to be, but that is a fact. . . . Until there is a seeming stability in Europe, our armies and our after-armies will have to stay in Europe...Neither the eloquence of Churchill nor the humaneness of Roosevelt, no Charter, no four freedoms, no dreamer's diagram . . . no treaty-none of these things can guarantee anything. Only men can guarantee, only the behavior of men under pressure, only our [soldiers]".¹ Published in 1944, A Bell for Adano is a fictionalized story based on the real-life struggles of then Major Frank E. Toscani (subsequently Colonel Toscani), a US Army Civil Affairs (CA) Officer in occupied Sicily during World War II. It won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize. Sixty-five years later, Hersey's words remain true, not only for military peacekeeping operations but for counter-insurgency wars like Afghanistan, Iraq and wherever we fight wars where we must win support of a nation's people rather than just take and hold real estate. In counter-insurgency (COIN), we not only "clear and hold", we also "build". Combat operations are destructive. CA operations are constructive.

Civil Affairs is one of the most complex and sensitive operations in which the US Army can engage, involving the interface between our soldiers and the civilians in the area of operations. It is also one of the most misunderstood Army missions and-to some who see it as "unwarriorlike"-the most criticized. History, however, shows that successful Army CA operations during and after more conventional military stability and reconstruction operations are key to moving from battlefield success to final victory.² The new *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* incorporates all the activities of CA since its first days as Military Government in World War II. In wartime, CA prevents civilian interference with military operations and conducts humanitarian assistance. It mobilizes foreign civilian resources for combat support. In counterinsurgency (COIN), postwar and peace operations, CA provides specialized assistance directly to foreign governments to establish services and stabilize functions **throughout all levels of government up to the highest ministerial level**. Civil Affairs soldiers bridge the dangerous gap between the end of war and the establishment of a stable foreign government capable of providing essential services. If we are to win the peace as decisively as we win

the war, CA must be a player in the planning and execution of Army operations from beginning to end.

The roots of US Army Civil Affairs can be traced back to civil-military operations in the American Revolution in 1775, when Montreal and other parts of Canada were under Continental Army control. Finally recognized during World War II as an inherent command responsibility, CA was initially designated as "Military Government" in the occupation of Germany, Italy, Korea and Japan and have deployed to every significant operation since. ***Today, the pressure on the Reserves is brutal because of frequent wartime deployments.***

1. Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go- The Role of the US Military in Nation-building³ "The military has a uniquely demanding job today. Instead of preparing for territorial defense, US troops must safeguard vaguely defined American and global 'interests' in an increasing number of far flung places."⁴ The US military has engaged in these nontraditional operations throughout its history, far more than it has waged conventional warfare. After the Mexican War in the 1840's, General Winfield Scott's occupation was such a model of excellence that one of his junior officers, Ulysses S. Grant remarked that the Mexicans regretted Scott's departure almost as much as they hated to see his arrival.

The CA branch of the Army originated as Military Government during World War II to meet requirements for military specialists to administer areas liberated from German and Japanese occupation and to govern areas in Germany and Japan occupied by the US Army during and after the war. Military personnel with appropriate civilian skills and education were formed into military government units to assure law and order and provide essential services to the populations of territories administered by the US Army. After World War II, these units were renamed "Civil Affairs." In its postwar mission of military government in Germany, Japan and Italy, US Army CA became the world's model for maintaining stability, restarting democratic civilian governments and preventing future wars. Unfortunately, CA in Korea remained a hit-or-miss, come-as-you-are operation until the last few months of the war. Few, if any, of the lessons of World War II had been learned. "The Army desired to put Korea behind it and go back to its preferred strategy, the defense of Europe against the Soviet hordes."⁵

By the early 1960s, almost all (97 percent) of the US Army's CA capability was in the Army Reserve, where it remains today. This was

(and remains) appropriate because the professional competence of CA personnel is derived principally from their civilian careers. In Vietnam, the concept of COIN was characterized as “winning the hearts and minds of the people.” That slogan was exemplified by US Army Special Forces and military advisors engaged in COIN. After America’s failed nation-building efforts in Vietnam, the Army swore “never again” and prepared to “win” conventional wars, not to “contain” or even fight counterinsurgencies. Certain important experiences of fighting COIN were forgotten again. Lessons learned about “winning hearts and minds” (i.e., civilian support and stability operations) faded to black. Enlightenment focused on achieving victory in conventional war. Securing the victory was taken for granted and fighting a COIN war was out of the question. There was no thought given to what must be done after the shooting stopped. Civil Affairs slid into the backwaters of the Army’s priorities—that is, until Panama in 1989.

Then Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell said this of the Panama intervention (*Just Cause*): “We are going to eliminate Noriega and the PDF [Panamanian Defense Forces]. If that succeeds, we will be running the country until we can establish a civilian government and a new security force.” The Panamanians were totally unprepared to govern, let alone make democracy work. Despite these handicaps, one Panamanian businessman remarked, “You [the United States] got the police working; not too well, but working, and you got the government ministries working’.” But General Powell concluded, “We did not plan well enough for reintroducing civil government.”⁶

In 1989, after the Russians were ousted the US walked away from its Afghan allies and gave them no significant help to build a government. The Afghans saw it as betrayal and abandonment.

Then in 1991, came Operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*. President George H. W. Bush mandated large-scale involvement of CA: “The legitimate [Government of Kuwait, or GOK] will be restored to its rightful place and Kuwait will once again be free.”⁷ CA advisors worked with the Kuwaiti ministries to “jump-start” GOK functions and to prevent human rights abuses. CA was instrumental in transition from military control to civilian control by GOK after war’s end. In 1991, after Operation Desert Storm, the US, while establishing “no-fly” zones, did not support Iraqi and Kurdish factions rebelling against the Saddam Hussein regime.

In Haiti in 1994, Operation *Uphold Democracy* once again placed demands on CA for specialized talent to work with heads of a foreign

government at the ministerial level. Short term objectives were met, but the Haitian government did not embrace the long term goals of democracy, economic reform, human rights and the rule of law that were bequeathed to them by US CA advisors. But, only Haitians could save themselves and they freely elected a government that was interested only in returning to business-as-usual and having the donor nations subsidize them.

About Bosnia, Richard Newman wrote in US News & World Report, "As the multinational force [Implementation Force, or IFOR] . . . was waiting to enter Bosnia in 1995 . . . Army CA soldiers [drank very bad whiskey with local chieftains] . . . listening to their concerns that IFOR might disrupt their communities. . . . Ten years ago, integrating these unorthodox warriors into a major mission from the start would have been unthinkable. But today Special Operations Forces (SOF), which includes CA . . . are becoming the military's most sought after troops. . . . The unique capabilities and accomplishments of SOF appeal to ambassadors and [military commanders] alike. As a result, SOF missions had nearly tripled since 1991."⁸

Unlike Desert Storm, Haiti and Bosnia, CA in Afghanistan in 2001 was originally limited to logistical aspects of humanitarian aid. But necessity demanded that the mission expand, and newly formed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were recommending and coordinating projects that have impact at the national level to bolster the Karzai government.

We face threats which have no conventional military forces or clear national centers of gravity, as illustrated by Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti, and now Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and elsewhere in Africa. Here threats are sub-national groups, disintegrating social structures, disease and environmental degradation. The conventional forces that fight aggressor nations are usually not appropriate to address these unconventional threats. But Bernard Trainor, writing for The Wall Street Journal, was more critical. He said the military has trouble coming to terms with this post-Cold War phenomenon of peacekeeping in places like Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo. It is easy to understand the military's unease. US soldiers are trained to close on the enemy and destroy him with the utmost violence. COIN and postwar stability and peace operations, on the other hand, require a complex balance between carefully targeted violence against hardcore insurgents and restraint to avoid collateral damage to a population whose support is essential to mission success. It is difficult

to expect young American soldiers to be warriors, policemen and diplomats as well.⁹

Once again, there was heated debate on the extent of US military involvement in reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan. There was no support in the Bush administration for "nation-building" in Afghanistan or Iraq, but necessity dictated otherwise. Many civilian and military leaders believed that war-fighting was the only appropriate role of the military and, beyond exerting control, reconstruction must be done by civilians. They believed that military involvement in nation-building was wrong and that peace operations were a misuse of soldiers and resources. The US military intensely dislikes its involvement in nation-building. No matter how constricted the military mission at the outset, Afghanistan, Iraq and all of the failed-state peace operations have forced an expanded military role to engage in rebuilding efforts. Necessity has so dictated, and every sizable military operation since World War II has repeatedly demonstrated that necessity, not doctrine, dictates policy.

Jay Tolson wrote in US News & World Report that America recoils from the concept of "empire."¹⁰ United States foreign policy is conflicted between isolation and humanitarian intervention. The nation has agonized over not being principled enough while engaged in "realpolitik", a strategy whose objective is to maintain stability by endorsing the status quo regardless of how despotic and repressive the regimes we support. We have the state of mind of a country that has not decided what it wants to be on the world stage. As disagreeable to some who regard American imperialism as the root of all evil as it is to others who believe that the world beyond US shores is not the nation's business, there is a basic truth-Many people owe their freedom to the exercise of American military power.

US Army CA is the most qualified and competent military capability to initiate and manage reconstruction efforts that involve the civilian population. The U.N., nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and private volunteer organizations (PVOs) and the international donor community play a key role in distributing humanitarian assistance in high-risk areas in collapsed states. These civilian aid organizations play a huge role in nation-building when the military has control or where a functioning state exists. But in a conflict environment in which the US is an occupying power, or at the end of hostilities when a government is unable to provide essential services, or in COIN operations-whenver political objectives that require civilian support are more important than conventional military objectives-then CA

should take a priority role in coordinating military and civilian activities. In violent environments like COIN, there is no other US military or civilian capability that can manage and coordinate civil-military operations. Legitimacy is the primary objective, and building that legitimacy against insurgents requires public support. As the interface between the US military and the civilian population the mission of CA is to build the public support needed for legitimacy by helping to establish essential services and promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law through the supported government.

2. The Civil Affairs Mission- Civil Affairs is inherently a responsibility of command. There are four mission areas for Army CA, each having significant operational law guidelines:

1. Support for conventional operations. This includes support for combat operations by minimizing civilian interference and mobilizing human and natural resources for combat support. It also includes assessments to determine the humanitarian and life-sustaining operations and status of the foreign nation (FN) infrastructure.
2. Support for special operations, including irregular warfare and counterinsurgency (COIN).
3. Support for civil administration. This includes nation-assistance, which usually involves specialized advice and assistance to foreign nation officials based on CA expertise in those CA functional specialties listed below.
4. Military assistance to domestic civil authorities and support in domestic emergencies such as natural disaster and civil disturbances.

The work of CA was divided into 21 functional specialties which are not the equivalent of active component career specialties, but instead related to essential services provided by a government to its people: Rule of Law, Public Administration, Public Education, Public Safety, Public Health, Economic Development, Food and Agriculture, Public Communications, Transportation, Public Works and Utilities, Cultural Relations, Civil Information, Dislocated Civilians, Emergency Services, and Environmental Management, etc. That number was reduced further to 6 "specialty areas": rule of law, economic stability, governance, public health and welfare, infrastructure, and public education.

Civil Affairs elements in the US Marine Corps operate in support of conventional USMC amphibious-based combat operations. In the USMC, military lawyers are cross-trained to function as a CA staff officer until CA units arrive. USMC CA units remain in the Reserve and have fully engaged in COIN in Iraq. With most of the CA capability in the US Army, other branches of the US armed services have only recently-since the Iraq war-created a CA capability. The Air Force is creating a CA capability in civil aviation support. The US Navy has recently established CA units to engage in civil maritime development.

What does CA offer that is not found in the rest of the armed forces? It is the soldier capable of being a warrior-diplomat and possessing technical skills needed to build or manage a country's infrastructure-sanitation, public transport, rule of law, health care systems and other public services. This can be done only by soldiers with unique and appropriate civilian backgrounds. Highly skilled personnel from the reserve component have performed such jobs in Panama, the Persian Gulf, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, and Iraq, and they offer expertise that exists only in Reserve CA units. The functional specialists bring their civilian careers with them to the Active Duty.

The challenge to the Army is determining what CA operations and activities the world will need in the future. The trend for deploying CA soldiers will probably continue as has been the case in Iraq and Afghanistan. When the mission calls for an investment banker with fifteen years of Wall Street experience or someone who runs schools or a health care system, or an engineer who has built national road systems, the mission planner cannot go to the active component and say, "Give me one of these people." By their very nature, these functional specialty positions require civilian skills and must come from the reserve components because the Defense establishment cannot maintain them in the active component. CA's true value is its ability to access the necessary civilian-acquired skills, put those soldiers in uniform and deploy them to perform specific technical missions. The National Guard and the Reserve have been particularly effective in relating to the civilian-oriented needs because they bring to the table the wealth of experience gained in their civilian roles which is enhanced by their Guard and Reserve training. ***They can and have operated with the foreign-nation Prime Minister and the Ministers as their counterparts.***

3. Bridging the Gap- There is often a dangerous gap between the end of war (or intervention in peace operations) and the establishment of a stable foreign government capable of providing essential services.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, reconstruction continues amid instability as insurgents make war on Iraqi and Afghani efforts to establish a better way of life. The gap is “instability” in which victory on the battlefield can be lost to upheaval, violence and disintegrating social structures.

Military operations must continue to prevent anarchy and support both short-term and long-term recovery. After victory is achieved, the end-state now becomes “stability.” Even after Department of State (DOS) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) resume their responsibilities as lead agencies, the military is still needed to bridge the gap between military victory and political stability. With increasing frequency, host nations request help from CA. Afghanistan and Iraq have required it, and CA has filled the gap.

CA coordinates US Armed Forces activity with non governmental and private volunteer organizations (NGO/PVO), US civilian agencies and the international community to prevent duplication of efforts and to provide security and assistance for their activities.

In the long-term plan for recovery, there are three tiers to the CA mission that move the operation across the “Bridge to Stability”:

A. Civil-Military Operations (CMO) and Humanitarian Assistance

- CA generalists prevent civilian interference with military operations (e.g., assembling refugees out of the combat zone), mobilize civilian resources to support military operations (e.g., foreign nation labor, materials to be used by the military), and conduct emergency operations to sustain life (e.g., distribution of food and water).

B. Functional Team Assessments - CA specialists determine the status of the local infrastructure, develop short-term and long-term project and recovery plans, set project priorities based on reports of foreign nation water sources and food production, recommend projects to enhance production of food and potable water, and analyze necessity and “benefits versus risk” for the Civil Administration mission to achieve stability.

C. Civil Administration - CA specialists work directly with ***all levels of*** foreign nation ministries and the Inter-Agency Task Force to develop plans, develop human resources to assist the government, jump-start government services, implement reforms, and determine relations among the ministries (e.g., agriculture, veterinary and water

experts consult with ministers of agriculture and public facilities to develop comprehensive plans for water treatment plants and farming systems).

At the strategic level of the Ministerial Advisory Team (MAT) mission, CA is a tool of the commander and/or the ambassador to maintain stability, assist in accomplishing US foreign policy objectives at the national level, and to fulfill the commander's legal and moral obligations. This mission develops human resources in the foreign nation, mentors reformers and establishes an ethic of governing for the benefit of the governed. Civil Affairs teams assist the host nation (HN) to secure a safe environment in which the rule of law can survive, whether performing CMO, conducting functional team assessments or advising HN ministries through Ministerial Advisory Teams. The HN must demonstrate its legitimacy by responding to the needs of the very people the insurgency is trying to influence. Civil Affairs has proven its value as a force multiplier in US military operations since World War II, but this is often forgotten, as it was again during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. To achieve the political objectives of COIN and stability operations, CA must be part of operational plans and deployed across the spectrum of US conflict, from civil-military operations to civil administration.

4. An Exit Strategy- Civil Affairs units provide the most qualified, skilled and capable personnel in the inventory of the US government to go into troubled areas during and immediately following hostilities to guide a nascent democracy in the recovery and reconstruction process. With that said, CA does not contemplate seeing that recovery and reconstruction through to conclusion. CA establishes the process, sets short-term, mid-term and long-term goals and objectives, and plans for the transfer of the assistance mission to mid and long-term aid providers such as the UN, USAID, NGO/PVO community and the host nation itself. In other words, CA works its way out of a job once stability is achieved.

To develop an exit strategy, one must first determine the conditions of those ministries of the HN that are responsible for the rule of law, providing essential services and establishing a viable economy. Using the different models of Kuwait, Haiti and Bosnia, and now Iraq and Afghanistan, we know that even after the most basic humanitarian assistance mission (e.g., food and water distribution), CA cannot simply depart the Area of Operations (AO). CA soldiers must devise a transition plan and exit only upon achievement of the transition criteria.

The end-state of a CA mission is stability, and CA soldiers are the gap-fillers to achieve it and initiate the hand-off. Military planners should relate their exit strategies to the end state of stability. Stability operations are qualitative, not finite. Such operations require that the military work with a foreign population, often to break with the past. That defies setting an absolute end-date. Haitians said, "How soon you want the troops to leave depends on how soon you want them back."¹¹

5. A Never-Ending Debate and the "Flat Learning Curve"- But why is this a job for the US military? Isn't it a responsibility of the Department of State (DOS)? Interventions in Haiti and Bosnia proved once again that the need for ministry advisers in Panama in 1989 and Kuwait in 1991 was no fluke. Ever since Franklin D. Roosevelt considered the first military government missions during World War II, this has been a never-ending debate. At first President Roosevelt wanted civilian agencies to exercise control over conquered and liberated areas. After all, wasn't this DOS business? But political preferences could not long resist the course of the war. Adverse experience in the North African campaign showed there was an immediate need for experts with critical civilian skills not found in the Active Component, and that DOS personnel could not function in such environments. These experts had to be soldiers because only soldiers could operate under such dangerous conditions. These specialized civilian-soldiers had to collaborate with local civilian authorities and their DOS counterparts to fulfill their civil-military mission. And contrary to opinions held by many conventional military thinkers, the mission was much greater in scope and complexity than mere "control" or low-level sustainment of foreign civilians. The Army had the capability to perform the mission while civilian agencies did not. Necessity, not doctrine, dictated the policies that deployed military government units and gave birth to modern CA.¹² Until December, 2006, the debate on the role of the military in Iraq as well as postwar and peace operations continued unchanged and unabated. With war casualties and costs mounting and no stability achieved, it was as divisive as any debate over US involvement in rebuilding other nations. The long-held conventional sentiment was that the exclusive mission of the military is to kill people and destroy things. Over-simplistic to be sure, but conventional military thinking was that the employment of combat forces in COIN, peacekeeping and postwar was a misuse of its soldiers and resources.

While that sentiment is widespread, necessity has overruled it again and again. ***The reasons that CA ends up doing these missions is***

that the DOS and DOJ and other civilian agencies never show up. The debate over the scope and extent of the CA mission has repeated itself for every major deployment, and in Iraq and Afghanistan, necessity has again trumped doctrine and driven policy.

The “Flat Learning Curve” has been travelled again. Army leadership assumed that every war could be fought like *Desert Storm*, which was the last battle between conventional armies and determined by overwhelming force. ***The “mission accomplished” syndrome explains the Army’s desire to depart as soon as the shooting stops and to dump the CA mission on someone else.*** Our enemies were not so considerate. They chose and will always choose to fight us where we are the weakest. All elements of military and civilian assistance must have security to function. The CA capability is one that can function and coordinate with civilian agencies in the violent and unforgiving environments of COIN and post-war stability operations.¹³

In its “Report to Congress on Civil Affairs”¹⁴, DoD presented its overview for utilizing Civil Affairs capabilities across the range of military operations within a “whole-of-government” framework for stability and reconstruction operations. Contrary to a preliminary CSIS report¹⁵, the DOD report recognized the need for a “whole-of-government” approach where the Services will continue to leverage Reserve Component forces to provide the preponderance of Civil Affairs functional specialists given that the Reserve Component personnel bring a wealth of experience gained in their civilian careers.¹⁶ But, the listing of functional specialties has been reduced from 21 to 6 and there has been a decrease in the use of CA functional specialists as the Services focused on meeting the demand for generalists at the tactical level.¹⁷

6. The Debate Is Resolved...at least for now- Although there were lonely voices arguing that the Army needed to focus on COIN in the wake of the Cold War, the sad fact is that when an insurgency began in Iraq in the late summer of 2003, the Army was unprepared to fight it. The US Army was designed, organized, trained and equipped to defeat another conventional army. It was not prepared for an enemy that knew it could not hope to defeat the US Army on a conventional battlefield, and therefore chose to wage asymmetric warfare from the shadows. ***And because commanders did not know COIN or were risk-averse to any casualties on non-combat missions, they held back on CA activities for fear of being docked on an Officer Efficiency Report. Examples came out of Haiti and Bosnia***

where commanders considered their prime (or sole) mission as force-protection with no room for any mission with risk. The US was again slow to adapt, but adapt it did. The surge strategy of General Petraeus, one of the authors of the *Counterinsurgency Manual*, was to use an influx of US forces as a constabulary force in Iraqi neighborhoods to protect civilians and win popular support for the Iraqi government. That, in combination with the “Anbar Awakening”, the change of alliances negotiated by the Army and Marines with the Sunni fighters in Anbar Province, turned defeat into a gradual and tenuous victory. That resulted in more cease-fires throughout Iraq.¹⁸

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates has fully recognized these problems and stated that the Pentagon has to do more than modernize its conventional forces; it must also focus on today’s unconventional conflicts, as well as tomorrow’s. The defining principle of the Pentagon’s new National Defense Strategy is balance. The US cannot expect to eliminate national security risks through higher defense budgets that buy everything to do everything. The strategy strives for balance in three areas:

- between trying to prevail in current conflicts and preparing for other contingencies,

- between institutionalizing capabilities for COIN and foreign military assistance and maintaining the US conventional and strategic technological edge against other military forces; and

- between retaining those cultural traits that have made the US armed forces successful and shedding those that hamper their ability to do what needs to be done. The US ability to deal with future threats will depend on its performance in current conflicts. To fail-or to be seen to fail-in either Iraq or Afghanistan would be a disastrous blow to US credibility, both among friends and allies and especially among potential adversaries.¹⁹

The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School, US Army Center for Law and Military Operations has published The Rule Of Law Handbook- A Practitioner’s Guide For Judge Advocates 2008 which states: “It is highly likely the Global War on Terror (GWOT) will require the US military to engage in operations that include rule of law operations as an essential part of the overall mission. The term was mentioned nine times in the 2002 National Security Strategy, and sixteen times in the 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS). As the 2002 NSS explains: America must stand firmly for the nonnegotiable

demands of human dignity: *the rule of law*; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property.

But, still feeling whipsawed in the “never-ending debate,” the authors expressed frustration while recognizing necessity. “While there is little debate over the need for such a practitioner’s guide, there is little else in the rule of law arena upon which there is widespread agreement. There are divergent, and often conflicting, views among academics, various US government agencies, US allies and even within the Department of Defense (DOD), as to whether or not to conduct rule of law operations, what constitutes a rule of law operation, how to conduct a rule of law operation, or even what is meant by the term “rule of law.” As in the case of any emerging area of legal practice or military specialty, doctrine is non-existent, official guidance is incomplete, and educational opportunities are limited. While acknowledging the above challenges, the Judge Advocate General’s Corps leadership still recognizes the inevitability that Judge Advocates on the ground under extraordinarily difficult conditions will be called upon to support, and even directly participate in and lead rule of law operations.

In Iraq and Afghanistan US policy makers suffered from a lack of focus in choosing development initiatives and rotating personnel. Bureaucratic turf battles and demands for “credit” plagued efforts to establish legitimacy and an effective rule of law ***and governmental capacity***. Mission success required seeking the common good rather than promoting narrow agency and personal agendas. ***In another replay of the “Flat Learning Curve”***, these problems were evident in civilian-based Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) which are dedicated to rebuilding critical infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan such as schools and utilities. The PRTs were plagued by low funding, not enough staff and poor leadership. PRTs are mostly ad-hoc outfits, commonly described as a “pickup game.” Because government workers lack many of the skills needed for post-conflict reconstruction, private contractors (many with military backgrounds) are hired. Lacking institutional precedents, PRTs are largely personality dependant for their success or failure, and there are no clear lines of authority because the leaders often answer to multiple agency commands both in country and back in Washington.

A significant challenge is finding people with the needed skills ***and*** willing to serve in combat zones. ***Whenever military personnel are***

put in CA assignments in divisional organizations, Joint Task Forces or whatever, these soldiers feel that their assignment is career diminishing and not career enhancing. The Defense Department provides the majority of PRT members, but there are not enough CA staffers to fill all the teams' open slots. Several sources told committee investigators that they feared that serving with a PRT would be a "career disruption, not career enhancing," because officer promotion boards might not place the same value on this service as they would for service in conventional combat units. Neither the military nor civilian agencies offer a career track for personnel performing what the government calls "stability and reconstruction operations."²⁰

7. Conclusion- US Army Civil Affair is the Army's Bridge to Stability- The strategic lessons experienced but not learned from US military history, especially since Vietnam, should have taught that COIN is not an obsolete concept, and that military operations other than war-by whatever name-are essential to protect US interests postwar and in peacetime. Painful lessons have taught that traditional combat capabilities are unsuited for these non-combat operations. Dr. Stanley Sandler, a historian, said the fact that conventional US military officers find themselves adrift in such operations is not without irony, in that these undertakings are nothing new. Rather, the US military has engaged in nontraditional peace and stability operations more than conventional warfare throughout its history.²¹

Yet, the "Flat Learning Curve is alive and well. The Active Component continues to diminish the role of CA, especially in the Civil Administration support role where the Reserve Component is the prime source for the mission. They continue to view Reservists as second-class soldiers. ***CA assignments should be seen as career enhancing and not career diminishing.*** Recently in Iraq one military deputy PRT leader recommended that the deputies should not come from the military's CA brigades, as is common, because these deputies tend to be *reservists viewed as civilians by the combat brigade leadership*. Instead, he argued, the deputies should be active duty combat arms officers. In the eyes of the brigade leadership, they have more credibility in explaining PRT capabilities to higher ranks and are thus better positioned to get the PRTs needed support.²²

In wartime, CA supports combat forces; but in COIN there is a complex balance to be achieved between "wining hearts and minds" and killing or capturing those who can never be persuaded. In postwar and peacetime, priorities are most often reversed: combat

forces end up supporting CA missions. In a seamless Total Force, CA civilian soldiers are not just Reservists, but are full partners not only with their active-component counterparts, but as an extension of both the US military and the diplomatic corps in an interagency and multinational environment. Much of the opposition to military operations other than war has to do with their unconventional nature, which requires the unique leadership found in CA **Reserves**. ***The Reserves combine the characteristics of both the warrior and the diplomat and with levels of expertise that match the highest levels of their foreign nation counterparts in government.*** Post-Cold War strategy requires military capabilities that are as constructive during peacetime as they are destructive during wartime.

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- ³ Stanley Sandler, *Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go: A History of US Army Tactical Civil Affairs/Military Government, 1775-1991* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: US Army Special Operations Command, 1998)
- ⁴ Jay Tolson, "The New American Empire?" *US News & World Report*, 13 January 2003, pp. 34-40.
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- ⁶ Colin L. Powell, *My American Journey: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 431.
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- ¹⁰ Tolson id.
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- ¹⁴ Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Low Intensity Conflict & Interdependent Capabilities "Report to Congress on Civil Affairs" April 29, 2009 [ROA Website location](#)
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²² Grant, [Barber](#) and [Parker](#), id.