



2023 Civil Affairs Roundtable Report

Roundtable Closes Out Looking at Civil Affairs as “A Force for Winning without Fighting”

by Christopher Holshek

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Introduction

The 2023 Civil Affairs Roundtable on April 11th closed out the annual cycle of Civil Affairs intellectual readiness and capitalization, academic credentialing, and professional and force development on “Civil Affairs: A Force for Winning without Fighting.” The online event involving over 300 participants from around the world served to help deepen and broaden the formal processes for CA force development, advance a more strategic, comprehensive, and integrative understanding of civil-military capacities and capabilities, and foster a learning organization that includes allied and counterpart civil-military organizations and interorganizational partners.

The 2022 Civil Affairs Symposium Report published in Volume 9 of the [Civil Affairs Issue Papers](#)—which details the background to the discussion at the Roundtable—revealed critical observations for building a global civil-military network to strengthen alliances and attract new partners, as the war in Ukraine in the EUCOM region and rising strategic competition in the AFRICOM, SOUTHCOM and INDOPACOM regions are validating. Among these are:

- Beyond the traditional military-centric understanding of deterrence, integrated deterrence, introduced in the new *National Defense Strategy* (NDS), is much more than being able to defeat adversaries more quickly and decisively or even consolidating and shaping a more favorable post-conflict environment. Integrated deterrence is essentially about winning without fighting and civil-military integration at interagency, interorganizational, and multinational levels—gaining, maintaining, and denying political and informational positional advantages that obviate the use of force and ensure its success, must force be wielded.
- Civil Affairs is the *de facto* joint force of choice to win without fighting by supporting and implementing integrated deterrence to “secure the victory”—before, during, and after major combat and, increasingly, preventing it in the first place. More Army leaders, such as last year’s Annual Meeting keynote 1st U.S. Corps commander Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, are coming to realize that “secure the victory” does not apply solely to post-conflict situations. In fact, as Symposium keynote Brig. Gen. “Will” Guillaume Bearpère, Commanding General of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) argued, the “sheer scale of destructive power and the devastation to the global order that could result from a large-scale conflict with our strategic adversary should urge all of us to drive ruthlessly toward ‘winning without fighting’ – or, put another way, to achieve *victory before war*.”
- A military institutional understanding of CA as a [maneuver force](#) rather than an “enabler” or “multiplier” in the human dimension, in what NATO calls “[cognitive warfare](#),” means that these

warrior-diplomats must be organized, managed, resourced, and integrated with the same institutional and operational seriousness as combat forces. As such, this 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. Integrated deterrence finds its greatest positional advantages in the global civil-military network that civil-military entities gain and maintain through the interallied and interorganizational system among the world's leading democracies. This human network, for example, has enabled the U.S. and NATO to play a decisive stand-off role in thwarting Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As the premier civil-military and information force in the human dimension of integrated deterrence, CA forces facilitate civil-military situational understanding, strategic early warning, and superior politico-military decision-making through continuous civil reconnaissance, civil engagement, civil networking, and civil knowledge integration. According to a 2022 CA Proponent Capability Manager information paper, CA's main value proposition 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."

To improve or expand the inherent capacities and capabilities of CA forces and maintain readiness for multicomponent civil-military transitions, regional commands must include sufficient CA forces in deliberate contingency planning and have them ready and available for early entry. They must employ sufficient active and reserve component CA forces in persistent engagement and security cooperation to develop enduring relationships that shape and build the decisive positional advantages of a robust global civil-military network, provide civilian and military senior leadership with increased options and flexibility, and (as necessary) set favorable conditions in conflict and post-conflict. Exercises, including wargaming and experimentation, are a cost-effective way to program and integrate a more robust and persistent presence of multicomponent CA forces in regions and in integration with interorganizational partners.

As every year, the Roundtable shifted the CA Corps' annual force and professional development discussion towards how to best ready CA forces within the context of new strategic and policy guidance, this time on the CA role in integrated deterrence and strategic competition as explained by two politico-military keynote speakers: Christopher P. Maier, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict; and, Anne A. Witkowsky, Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), U.S. Department of State. Additional context came courtesy of the [Irregular War Initiative](#) and [Army Cyber Institute](#) at West Point. Dr. Stanislava Mladenova, Fellow at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and Dr. Karen Guttieri from the Army Cyber Institute and Department of Social Sciences at West Point explored the relationship between integrated deterrence, irregular and cyber-warfare (respectively), and civil affairs.

A round-robin of representatives from related institutional stakeholders, including the [Civil Affairs Proponent](#), [U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command \(Airborne\)](#), [95th Civil Affairs Brigade \(Special Operations\) \(Airborne\)](#), the [U.S. Army Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute](#), and others responded with respect to their own CA force development and mission readiness initiatives. They also provided organizationally related updates and reviewed initiatives to maintain continuous liaison and coordination with their counterparts to foster enterprise learning through an expanded civil-military learning network.

The editors of *Warrior-Diplomats*—Colonel Arnel P. David, U.S. Army Strategist and Association Vice President, Dr. Nicholas Krohley, Ph.D., Frontline Advisory, and First Sergeant Sean Acosta, Deputy Editor, *Eunomia Journal*—provided additional perspectives from their new seminal work on Civil Affairs in the 21st century. Last, as always, was the open discussion on the next annual theme for the *2023-24 Civil Affairs Issue Papers*, 2023 Symposium, and 2024 Roundtable.

Opening

Newly elected Association president Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Hugh Van Roosen provided opening remarks, first thanking Col. (Ret.) Joe Kirlin for his leadership and direction in the remarkable growth of the Association over 12 years. This includes the institutionalization of intellectual capitalization platforms like the Symposium, Roundtable, Issue Papers, *OneCA* podcast, *Eunomia Journal*, etc., that provide the expanded Civil Affairs Corps as well as the Army, Marine Corps, joint force, and U.S. Special Operations Command a unique opportunity to deepen collective understanding of CA force development challenges. This moves CA force development forward faster and more coherently to keep pace with threats, and deepen, as well as widen, a worldwide civil-military learning organization through flank coordination with civil-military allies and interorganizational partners.

In addition to its convening role and platforms for multipoint dialogue, the Association has expanded its list of partner organizations to facilitate a global network of civil-military enterprises. In addition to the [Association of the United States Army](#), NATO [Civil-Military Cooperation Center of Excellence](#) (CCoE), [Reserve Organization of America](#), [Foreign Area Officer Association](#), [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#) and [U.S. Global Leadership Coalition](#), are: the [Modern War Institute](#) and [Irregular Warfare Initiative](#) at West Point; the [U.S. Army Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute](#) at the Army War College, the Joint Special Operations University; and, the [Joint Civil-Military Interaction Network](#). Its sponsors include: [The Patriot Fund](#), which supports the new Association scholarship fund to benefit the families of fallen, wounded, injured, or seriously ill service members; [Third Order Effects](#); [Civil Solutions International](#); [Valka-Mir Human Security](#); and [Conductrr](#).

Maj. Gen (Ret.) Van Roosen re-capped the three main points from this year’s discussion. First is the relationship between CA and integrated deterrence under the NDS; second is how to use CA as force for winning without fighting; and the third is fostering a better understanding of CA as an information maneuver force and not just an enabler or force multiplier. The goal of the discussion was to draw out lessons, observations, and recommendations to guide the way forward for not just the development of the CA Corps but the development of the Association.

Military Keynote Speaker

Major General Isaac Johnson, Commanding General of the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) provided opening remarks as he welcomed the attendees to the event and spoke about the world's changing nature and the resurgence of great power competition. He mentioned the four priorities of the NDS, which are: defending the homeland; deterring strategic attacks; prevailing in conflict; and building a resilient joint force. Then, Maj. Gen. Johnson introduced the Honorable Christopher P. Maier, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, or ASD(SO/LIC). Maj. Gen. Johnson acknowledged ASD Maier’s long-standing expertise in national security and special operations policy, including Civil Affairs. To enhance the opportunity of exposure to a credible resource, Maj. Gen. Johnson encouraged discussion and engagement with ASD Maier.

ASD Maier set the tone by explaining the importance of the ASD(SO/LIC)'s role in ensuring that Civil Affairs is integrated with a series of other capabilities and communities, as well as branches of the military. He mentioned how his directorate determines the priorities for organizing, training, resourcing, and integrating CA into other aspects of special operations and the joint force. As he discussed the NDS as a guiding document, he acknowledged how the national strategic priorities Maj. Gen. Johnson laid out should guide the development of joint CA capabilities.

ASD Maier stressed “campaigning” as the main way for the CA to support integrated deterrence. In the NDS, it is “...the conduct and sequencing of logically-linked military initiatives aimed at advancing well-defined, strategy-aligned priorities over time.” ASD Maier saw as a deliberate leveraging, layering, and linking of all elements of power to achieve desired strategic effects. More actionable and measurable than “competing,” it entails greater civil-military integration and steady state use of CA to win without fighting across the entire competition continuum, presenting new challenges for all CA force providers—special operations/conventional and active/reserve.

This also implies a larger pre-conflict role for CA—a point he made numerous times in his presentation. In addition to its ability to leverage soft power, CA’s singular economy-of-force ability to work with a multitude of partners, harness relationships, and build human networks is now a critical capability to demonstrate this inherent U.S. and allied power and comparative positional advantage in the regions, reassuring friends while placing foes in strategic dilemmas, which is at the essence of integrated deterrence. By working closely with local populations and international and regional actors, CA can help establish the conditions for sustainable peace and security. This is particularly true in regions where U.S. forces cannot maintain a large footprint, particularly on land, such as in INDOPACOM, SOUTHCOM, CENTCOM and AFRICOM.

CA’s storied history in stabilization support, drawn from its military government and functional specialties legacies, as well as its experience in counterinsurgency (COIN), irregular warfare, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations makes it an optimum force for campaigning in integrated deterrence. Because it enjoys a broader sense of fostering strong partnerships and alliances than most of the rest of the military, CA’s value proposition in terms of campaigning in integrated deterrence and augmenting the overall security posture is on the rise. As Maj. Gen. Johnson also affirmed, the demand signal among these combatant commands for information and engagement forces such as CA, psychological operations (PSYOP), and information operations (IO) is rising dramatically, presenting interesting challenges for providers of such forces.

CA can also help build a resilient joint force, improve interoperability and coordination among the services, and facilitate success beyond the joint force itself. CA is an integral part of the cohesion needed for these branches to act in concert for the success of a joint force, ASD Maier observed. With a renewed emphasis on building relationships, stabilizing post-conflict environments, and enhancing coordination, the importance of CA forces to be even more agile and adaptive is renewed as the challenges they face can vary greatly across different environments and contexts. There is also a DoD requirement to stress the significance of CA having a seat at the table during strategic discussions and regional planning. He noted that without CA's active involvement in these discussions, it becomes less likely that the CA discipline will receive the necessary resources and funding to fulfill its vital role. For him, CA is a unique military capability that can help to achieve strategic objectives by building relationships with local populations and institutions. However, CA is often not fully integrated into strategic campaign planning. This can lead to ad hoc and ineffective use of CA resources and can undermine the overall success of the campaign.

To address this issue, CA forces need to be integrated into strategic campaign planning in a more deliberate way, especially at the regional level. This means that CA practitioners need to be involved in the planning process from the outset, and that their unique capabilities need to be considered when developing the campaign's objectives and strategies. CA capacities in partnering and civil networking are more critical than ever, he reiterated. In today's complex and interconnected world, CA practitioners can help to build relationships with local populations and institutions and can leverage these relationships to achieve strategic objectives. For example, the 92nd CA Battalion (SO)(A) has leveraged its relationships with Ukrainian civil society organizations to provide civil-military advisory assistance to the Ukraine Armed Forces. This assistance has helped to improve the Armed Forces' ability to communicate with and understand the local population and has also helped to build trust and cooperation between the Armed Forces and the local population.

CA also plays the leading civil-military integration role in DoD support to the Global Fragility Act (GFA) strategy, which is closely linked to integrated deterrence. The GFA is a U.S. government strategy to prevent and mitigate fragility and conflict. With its ability to work with partners in fragile and conflict-affected states to build relationships, strengthen institutions, and promote economic development, CA helps to create conditions less conducive to conflict and instability. Integral to this, the CA value proposition needs to be part of the discussion of joint force allocation for campaigning. This means that CA practitioners need to be able to articulate the value of CA to the joint force, and they need to be able to demonstrate how CA can be used to achieve strategic as well as operational objectives, especially in terms of the new DoD Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP), for which CA is richly qualified to play a leading role.

Another critical integrated deterrence capacity is CA's regional forward presence and the ability of CA practitioners to be present in fragile and conflict-affected states. This presence can be achieved through security cooperation, exercises, training assistance, and other activities. As Maj. Gen. Johnson elaborated, this is changing the concept of "readiness" for CA because it helps to build relationships with partners and strengthen institutions, contributing directly to a likewise changed understanding of deterrence. CA, after all, is the premier capability in the joint force to win without fighting or in "non-kinetic warfare." CA practitioners use a variety of tools, such as communication, education, and economic development, to achieve strategic objectives. CA practitioners can help to prevent conflict, build civilian resilience, and promote economic development.

Among the follow-on questions was one citing current Army Secretary Christine Wormuth's 2009 [Center for Strategic International Studies](#) report on *The Future of Civil Affairs Forces*, in which she recommended re-designating all Army Reserve CA forces as Special Operations Forces (SOF) and subsequently reassigning them to USSOCOM and USASOC. While noting this very fair, relevant, and live question, ASD Maier deferred to the report's author and could not predict a specific probability on a potential re-designation. In response to a question on the challenges of integrating civil-military capabilities between the State Department and U.S. military's non-kinetic warfare support of the GFA strategy and integrated deterrence, ASD Maier acknowledged the complexity of the issue, but noted significant investments already made to address these challenges, as Assistant Secretary Witkowsky would later brief. He highlighted the preeminence of information operations and public diplomacy, noting their effectiveness in exposing malevolent Russian activity in Ukraine. He cited the role of stabilization and partner capacity building in strategic competition, best led by the State Department and USAID. ASD Maier concluded by stating that CA is well-positioned to work between the military and the State Department at various levels, playing a key campaigning role in integrated deterrence as well as helping to win without fighting in strategic competition.

In his closing remarks, ASD Maier reiterated the all-importance of strategic campaigning in integrated deterrence, the CA role as such of working with allies and partners to provide persistent and sustained access and placement while continuing to maintain its acumen in stabilization, HADR, COIN, foreign internal defense (FID) and crisis response. His parting thoughts also included the recommendation to invest CA efforts in its value proposition (as stated above) for strategic campaigning, promoting civilian resilience, and building civil-military capacities in partner nations. Post-conflict operations will still be relevant, but further development of the CA and civil-military enterprises writ large should focus left-of-bang to campaigning for conflict prevention in both strategic competition and integrated deterrence.

Civil Affairs Proponent and Command Responses and Updates

ASD Maier's closing comments were a perfect transition to the next session, designed to give Civil Affairs institutional and command representatives the opportunity to provide an update on their organizations' initiatives since the CA Symposium in November 2022 while tying their reports to the keynote remarks and the theme of "*Civil Affairs: A Force for Winning without Fighting*".

The session facilitator was Col. (Ret.) Dennis J. Cahill, Deputy Civil Affairs Capability Manager at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Force Modernization Center (UFMC) and a member of the CA Association Board of Directors. He noted how an important element of integrated deterrence and winning without fighting was understanding the operational environment (OE). Civil Affairs focuses on the civil component of the OE, particularly the political, social, and economic factors that affect the ability of host nation governments to provide security and governance for their citizens at the local, provincial, and national levels and ultimately affect military operations in those areas. This is particularly important in competition where Civil Affairs forces work with interorganizational partners under the GFA to support stabilization, resiliency, and governance within partner nations across the globe.

Col. (Ret.) Cahill stated that the institutional and command representatives would touch on these and related topics, including a report from two Civil Affairs Soldiers with an example of active Army and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) CA teams working with interagency analysts to understand the OE and support the early stages of a long-term stabilization campaign on the African continent.

Lieutenant Colonel Micah Baker, J39-Civil Affairs Branch and Proponent Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command, led the reports with updates in the areas of doctrine, personnel, training and education, and policy from the Joint Civil Affairs Proponent (JCAP). For doctrine, Joint Publication 3-57, Civil-Military Operations, is under review for revision and the next version should do a better job of explaining civil affairs operations (CAO) within the broader responsibility of Geographic Combatant Commands to execute CMO. The revision of USSOCOM Directive 525-38, Civil-Military Engagement, is complete and should be published soon. For personnel, the JCAP is working on extending the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, or ASD (SO/LIC) Policy Advisor, Lt. Col. Diane Parzik, for at least another year. She has done a tremendous job in filling a void in uniformed Civil Affairs representation on senior staff levels in the Pentagon. For training and education, given the recent focus on campaigning, competition, integrated deterrence, and the new language associated with the National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy, particularly regarding resistance and resilience, the JCAP is working closely with the Joint Special Operations University to create opportunities to increase education in those areas for CA forces.

For policy, the JCAP is heavily involved in the implementation of the CHMR-AP and the creation of a Civilian Environment Analyst position that will reside in the newly created Civilian Environment Team at USSOCOM headquarters. The JCAP is also supporting the update of the DoDD 2000.13, Civil Affairs, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Parzik. Finally, the JCAP is now leading a bi-monthly synchronization meeting alternating between the bi-monthly theater Civil Affairs planning team synchronization meeting led by ASD (SO/LIC).

Col. Kurt Sisk, Civil Affairs Capability Manager, U.S. Army Special Operations Command Force Modernization Center, highlighted his current priority efforts, then provided updates on policy development, concept development and experimentation, and exercises, including the innovative Civil Affairs Science and Technology Learning Ecosystem (CASTLE). For policy development, the CA Capability Manager Division is working closely with ASD(SO/LIC), the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), Headquarters, Department of the Army, USSOCOM, and Interagency Partners to ensure that current and future CA capabilities are properly captured at the policy level, to include DoDD 2000.13 and the CHMR-AP. The division is also working closely with the 95th CA Bde (SO)(A) and other organizations in GFA implementation. In concept development, the division is actively supporting development of the Army's Operating Concept 2040, the USASOC Campaign Plan, and the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) Operating Concept 2040.

In experimentation, the division has worked closely with the Mission Command Training Program (MCTP) and USACAPOC(A) to develop the master scenario event list for the III Corps Warfighter Exercise (WfX) 23-4 that takes place in April 2023 and will exercise a brigade-level Civil Affairs Task Force (CATF) for the first time as well as demonstrate SOF-CF CA integration, interoperability, and interdependence. Responding to a comment in the chat room, Col. Sisk noted that the CATF will fill the role that Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) did in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The division is also planning to observe a tabletop exercise in May 2023, led by the 95th CA Bde (SO)(A), that will demonstrate civil-military integration.

On CASTLE, the division is making further progress in documenting a process that leverages applied social, data, and learning sciences to address the social, political, economic, and cultural factors that influence populations in multi-domain operations and irregular warfare. This initiative is combining artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and analytics with CA capabilities to provide decision-makers a deep understanding of population centers through the intelligence, operations, and targeting processes. Col. Sisk introduced Capt. Mike Magerman, of the 352nd CA Command (CACOM), and Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Boggs, of the 91st CA Bn (SO)(A), to discuss a proof-of-principle from the AFRICOM area of responsibility (AOR) from 24 February to 30 March 2023, that brought together a cross-disciplinary team of analysts from the Department of State Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) Advanced Analytics (AA) Directorate and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency to demonstrate the application of the new CA analytical process.

Capt. Magerman started by introducing Brig. Gen. Brian Cashman, the Deputy Commanding General of the Southern European Task Force, Africa (SETAF-A), who acknowledged the tremendous value of CA forces in the AFRICOM theater campaign plan. Ninety members of a USAR CA battalion operate persistently in four countries and episodically in three to four others, integrating CAO into Security Force Assistance Brigade activities, Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAPs), and other Army exercises in this posture-limited theater. Capt. Magerman then proceeded to describe his team's experience as part of an interagency working group that analyzed the country of Ghana in response to the request for information (RFI) they received:

How is climate change and the subsequent decline of access to traditional water sources affecting migration patterns and what are the consequences on the civil populace within the littorals?

He was followed by Sgt. 1st Class Boggs, who explained how the result of their 45-day effort was the development of a solid process and an RFI Research Report (R3) format adopted by AFRICOM, the 91st CA Bn (SO)(A), CSO/AA, and NGA as a common framework for information sharing among these partner organizations moving forward. Dr. Tracy Saint Benoit, Senior Research Scientist for the CA Capability Manager Division, and Dr. Pete Griffith, of CSO/AA, thanked the various participants in this effort and commented on the relationships developed during those 45 days that will undoubtedly grow as CA forces get more involved in GFA-related activities.

Col. David J. Kaczmarek, Commander, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (SO) (A), focused his update on three priorities during the past year. In the area of investing in people, managing people and talent in the Army has become challenging. Soldiers from the brigade have been successful in competing for commands, but there are also many officers and NCOs who excel in staffing and planning and have taken advantage of Army processes and opportunities to put people in assignments that play to their strengths at operational and strategic levels while promoting the CA narrative. In the areas of operational tempo (OPTEMPO) and global force employment, diminishing focus on the Global War on Terrorism has reduced rotational requirements and increased persistent presence missions. The brigade has been working with USSOCOM and the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) to rebalance and reprioritize missions against regional requirements for a more stable OPTEMPO. Finally, the area of innovation and experimentation continues to get a lot of attention and the brigade recognizes it cannot execute CAO without its conventional USAR counterparts. With that in mind, the brigade has been busy focusing on integrating special operations and conventional CA force capabilities in competition and large-scale combat operations (LSCO) in events such as the WfX mentioned by Col. Sisk. The Brigade is also working to perfect its integration with interagency partners to gain large-scale return on investment through a whole of government approach. It is taking a hard look, with the assistance of the CA Capability Manager and the CASTLE effort, at the development of AI and ML and their application to civil reconnaissance. Lastly, the Brigade is looking at how to integrate better with its USAR counterparts and their unique capacities by sharing talent between the formations of the active and reserve components.

Col. Jason Arndt, then USACAPOC(A) Director of Strategic Initiatives and now the Command G-3, discussed his takeaways from ASD Maier's keynote speech. ASD Maier talked about the need for CA forces to create enduring advantage, create resilience by working with local community groups, and be a portal for DoD to our partners as well as a portal for our partners to DoD. This led Col. Arndt to consider how the CA Corps is getting to a common operating picture given the fact that different theaters have different ways of doing things. He concluded that we have not gotten our arms around this in a way that we can demonstrate our value proposition to commanders, allies, and partners. He then spoke to pending force structure changes that will add CA positions to formations focused on creating information advantage as well as campaign of learning events that will use current CA formations to replicate the future structure to inform how those formations will be used in future operations. He noted that, once the USAR CA Force Design Update (FDU) works its way through the FDU process, the force will start converting to the new design in September 2025. USACAPOC(A) is working with USAJFKSWCS to develop an accessions course for new CA lieutenants that will begin entering the force at that time. Because the redesign calls for inactivation of four USAR CA battalions to accommodate growth in CA teams and companies, the USACAPOC(A) staff is also developing a plan to smoothly transition Soldiers from those inactivating CA battalions to other units.

Col. Arndt then spoke about some of the areas of modernization that will result from the redesign, most notably the addition of CKI capability, the increased capability and capacity of CA teams, and the ability of CA formations to form CATFs. He then reviewed the numerous exercises each year in which USACAPOC(A) participates, including 86 Joint Exercise Programs (JEPs). These JEPs allow USACAPOC(A) teams to inform combatant command campaign plans. As mentioned by earlier speakers, WfX 23-4 will bridge many gaps identified in previous corps and division level training events and is expected to be the beginning of more frequent integration of USAR CA forces in future such events. Additionally, USAR CA units will take on more operational missions in anticipation of the 83rd CA Bn's inactivation in 2024. USACAPOC(A) has scheduled Operation Toy Drop 2.0 for 3-16 December 2023 and its Military Ball for 9 December 2023. USACAPOC(A) has also taken advantage of the reduction of Army medical structure, the resultant over-recruitment of USAR medical officers by the Army Medical Education Department (AMEDD), and a rare Human Resources Command exception to policy that allows medical officers to transfer to shortage branches. As a result, 212 medical 2nd and 1st lieutenants have already transferred to CA units and another 50 candidates are still working processing reclassification. Finally, Col. Arndt announced that USACAPOC(A) Deputy Commanding General Brig. Gen. Andree G. Carter will take command of the 350th CA Command this summer. Her backfill will be Brig. Gen. James P. Sanders, who commands the 352nd CA Command.

Regrettably, Col. Jay Liddick, Director of PKSOI, was unable to participate in as he was traveling outside the United States in support of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy's office of Counternarcotics and Stabilization Policy. At his request, Col. (Ret.) Cahill reported that PKSOI continues to work on institutionalizing the Joint Inter-agency Stabilization Course (JIASC). The PKSOI is also planning a Resiliency Summit, tentatively for 22-24 August, that is designed bring together stabilization practitioners from across the echelons (including the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)) to cross level best practices and new relevant information for resilience, identify current challenges and potential solutions, and build the network of those who work these challenges from an institutional and operational perspective. Col. Marcus Snow, from PKSOI, reinforced Col. (Ret.) Cahill's comments about the JIASC and Resiliency Summit in response to questions on those topics in the Chat room.

Col. Jennifer M. Farina, Director of the U.S. Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School (USMCCMOS) at Quantico, Virginia, updated the audience on developments in the USMC CA force. She provided one basic slide for her presentation, noting a larger slide deck that provides additional information about professionalization in the USMC that is available through the Association website. She reported that the USMC is combining CA and Psychological Operations (PSYOP)/Military Information Support Operations (MISO) into one military occupational specialty (MOS) focused on "influence" in the USMC active component, although there will still be CA-pure formations in the USMC's reserve component Civil Affairs Groups. Influence Marines will be in the new Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Information Groups and on the staffs of all Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) and MEFs. The USMC's Force Design 2030 initiative, therefore, allows for more professionalization in the force and provides opportunities for active-duty Influence Marines to attain the ranks of Sergeant Major or Colonel. The initiative includes the creation of a Marine Corps Information Maneuver School by FY25 that will consolidate training to reduce inefficiencies, streamline MOS production pipelines, and increase advanced training opportunities. Col. Farina then took a few minutes to address the question of AI and ML. She noted that the USMC's CA capability operates within cross-functional teams and these teams are challenged with integrating multiple common operating pictures (COPs), dashboards, and vendor products.

The USMC is working through proofs-of-concept to pull these things through the Marine Corps Civil Information System (MARCIMS) into the cloud and integrating them into the command-and-control information environment (C2IE). This effort is bringing Marine S/G-2s and S/G-6s together to develop viable programs of record that include Influence Marine requirements. Toward that end, Col. Farina stated her interest in the Army's CASTLE initiative and, before the session ended, Dr. Saint Benoit reached out to Col. Farina in the chat to coordinate collaboration of these efforts. Finally, Col. Farina lauded USAJFKSWCS and USSOCOM for reaching out and including USMC CA into their respective force development efforts.

Lt. Col. Stefan Muehlich, Chief of Concepts, Interoperability, Capabilities at the NATO accredited Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Centre of Excellence (CCoE) in The Hague (Den Haag), provided information on CIMIC developments within NATO that are relevant to the Civil Affairs community. His first update was NATO's approved definition for multi-domain operations and that the definition is a positive for CIMIC in that it contains "synchronization of military and non-military activities." However, although NATO has agreed upon updated definitions of NATO CIMIC and Civil-Military Interaction (CMI), neither the new NATO policy on CIMIC and CMI (MC 0411) nor the NATO CIMIC doctrine publication have progressed since the Symposium. At the same time, and unfortunately, some CIMIC positions (and, therefore, relevance) have since been cut in the NATO Command Structure, reducing the ability to integrate understanding of the civil environment into NATO plans and decision-making. Study Draft 2 of Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 3.19, Allied Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation, is currently being staffed from 1 March to 30 May 2023 with the intent of developing a ratification draft by the end of June.

The CCoE project to synchronize NATO CIMIC and U.S. Civil Affairs continues in coordination with the 7th Army Training Command, the U.S. European Command J9 and others to find billpayer positions for a full-time U.S. CA officer and NCO to join the CCoE. The new Director of the CCoE, German Colonel (GS) Andreas Eckel, will visit USAJFKSWCS in August to sign a formal agreement to institutionalize the instructor exchange between the two organizations. Finally, the CCoE has finished a paper that compares NATO's Protection of Civilians Policy with the U.S. DoD's CHMR-AP and is available by email for anyone who is interested in receiving a copy. Lt. Col. Muehlich also announced the initiation of the 3rd edition of CCoE's academic text, *From Civil-Military Interaction to Civil-Military Interoperability and Integration*, and that he is seeking European and North American authors to provide a transatlantic view. Before ending his presentation, Lt. Col. Muehlich showed a poster-like slide that provided an overview of NATO CIMIC Basics from the Draft AJP 3.19.

With only six minutes after these richly informative updates, discussion centered on GFA knowledge gaps in the CA force that require coordination with interagency partners and what the operational force CA units are doing to address the faster speed of industry innovation than of government innovation, including the nascent integration of AI and ML into CA analysis and planning.

Special Discussion by the Editorial Team of *Warrior-Diplomats*

The editors of *Warrior-Diplomats: Civil Affairs on the Front Lines*—Colonel Arnel P. David, U.S. Army Strategist and Association Vice President, and Dr. Nicholas Krohley, Ph.D., Frontline Advisory provided additional perspectives from their new seminal work on Civil Affairs in the 21st century. This tome of contemporary scholarship provides a compelling narrative for Civil Affairs forces in the 21st century. While urging CA to be the tool it needs to be for the nation, the book calls for the Joint Force to recognize its value and needed investment.

There are chapters on strategic competition, the gray zone, human domain, the strategic value of civil reconnaissance, “cancelling the crosswalk” of the ASCOPE/PMESII (areas, structure, capabilities, organizations, people, events and political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure) model to analyze and understand the civil environment, networks of influence, multicomponent integration, Marine Corps CA, and the criticality of building a global civil-military network (the previous Civil Affairs Association annual *Issue Papers* theme).

Dr. Krohley identified the book’s three big ideas woven throughout the book. First, the world order and competition between states is changing. A popular view that is macro does not recognize the importance of local dynamics on the ground. Second, CA has a key role to help provide a granular understanding of what is happening on the ground. CA leaders at all levels need to provide a contextual understanding to inform decision-making. The third thread is on how CA can fuse all the civil information collected on the ground into a strategically coherent framework for shared understanding. Does CA have a suitable investigative framework to do this?

For a limited time, Association members can buy the book through [Cambria Press](#) at a 20% discount using the code: SAVE20. With a formidable blend of real-world experience and academic rigor, it illuminates the importance of the warrior-diplomat (CA professionals) in the U.S. military—and the need to invest in and strengthen capabilities in the human domain. Observing the limitations of technology in the provision of causal understanding, this book puts humans front and center in the military’s approach to understanding and action in that all-important dimension of war and peace.

Civilian Keynote Speaker

This year’s civilian keynote speaker was Anne A. Witkowsky, Assistant Secretary (AS) for the State Department at the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO). A great friend of CA, Assistant Secretary Witkowsky brings a broad perspective on Departments of Defense and State policies. When she spoke with the Civil Affairs Association almost a decade ago, she was serving in OSD Policy with Stability & Humanitarian Affairs. Her comments during this Roundtable had three parts. First, she provided background, a status, and the way ahead for the implementation of the strategy in compliance with the GFA. Second, she discussed how the GFA and the subsequent strategy to implement it relates to integrated deterrence. Third, she discussed how the extended Civil Affairs Corps, as a critical part of the DoD supporting effort, could help implement the GFA strategy in support of integrated deterrence as explained in the *National Security Strategy*.

As further backdrop, the 2019 [Global Fragility Act](#) (GFA) is a law that prioritizes conflict prevention and how the U.S. partners with countries affected by fragility and conflict for a more peaceful and stable world—it has led, in turn, to the 2022 [Global Fragility Strategy](#). The law was the result of a bipartisan effort to develop a long-term strategy. Consistent with the Act, the 2020 [Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability](#) conceives and integrates an evidence-based, prevention-focused, and field-driven approach to address drivers of fragility that can threaten U.S. national and international security. It is grounded in principles of stabilization based on the lessons learned over the past 20 years to prevent conflict—captured in the 2018 [Stabilization Assistance Review](#).

Led by the Department of State and in coordination with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and DoD, both the GFA and integrated deterrence are whole-of-government efforts in partnership with other countries, institutions, and organizations. They emphasize locally driven approaches to diplomacy, development, and security sector engagement. CSO is the lead for

implementation of this 3D (diplomacy, development, defense) strategy on behalf of the State Department. GFA Priority Partners are Haiti, Libya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, and the coastal West African region (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo). For each of these Priority Partners, there was a field-led 10-year plan developed with the leadership of respective U.S. Embassies with support from Combatant Commands and in coordination with the high-level diplomats of these countries, international partners, and input from many stakeholders.

These plans gained approval from President Biden earlier in 2023 and were then transmitted to Congress. AS Witkowsky provided examples of GFA strategy implementation in terms of the ways ahead for these Priority Partners. She also discussed how U.S. interagency efforts work through a standing working level interagency secretariat and a Prevention and Stabilization Steering Committee to continuously review the strategic impact of these plans and adjust them based on real-time lessons-learning. CSO also maintains officers at the respective embassies, geographic bureaus, and Combatant Commands to assist with strategy implementation, politico-military policy guidance, civil-military integration, and interagency collaboration.

AS Witkowsky also discussed how the GFA and the DoD concept of integrated deterrence are related. Both are what could be described as integrated prevention, relying on engagement and collaboration with international partners to prevent incipient conflict at the lowest end of the conflict spectrum. DoD policy and legislative tools such as [DoD Directive 3000.05](#) on stabilization, the *Defense Support to Stabilization* authority, the [Irregular Warfare](#) annex to the *National Defense Strategy*, and Section 1210-A of the National Defense Authorization Act all provide avenues for CA to contribute to these larger strategic goals. The interagency authorities, in turn, provide the leading agencies for stabilization and conflict prevention to leverage CA in support of their efforts in security cooperation settings in broader support of strategic competition.

Civil society will continue to play an even more pivotal role in a whole of society approach to prevent conflict well as integrated deterrence. Hence the importance of CA force engagement in forward areas in the entire competition continuum and not just during and after combat operations. Civil Affairs forces, in the context of DoD's supporting effort in integrated deterrence, can help execute the GFA strategy by working with the respective U.S. embassies to implement the civil engagement aspects of their plans. Army Special Operations and CA can help by being an extension of the embassy political effort by working in places that the embassies cannot due to safety or other reasons. Civil Affairs can bring their language skills and knowledge of the environment and infrastructure to engage local leaders and partners (civil engagement), provide ground truth (civil assessment) and gather essential information (civil reconnaissance).

To provide this help, CA must understand the aforementioned documents related to the GFA strategy as well as its specific 10-year plan and be able to work closely with the U.S. embassies. As a valued partner, CSO looks to work closely with CA at the strategic as well as operational and tactical levels. She also explained how the CASTLE tool, co-developed with CSO and USAID among the civilian agencies and the 91st CA Battalion (SO)(A) and 352nd CACOM as the DoD entities involved, enables such interagency teaming to better fulfill information collection needs, use that information in real time to inform policy, and push information back to the field to shape next steps. CSO also participates in the Civil Affairs Qualification Course training exercise to help CA students learn about interagency operations and interagency frameworks for stabilization assistance, the GFA strategy, and conflict prevention. "What we learn as we implement the GFA must inform our strategy, CA doctrine, and CA training," she noted.

“We must stay focused on our long-term goals of peace and stability as opposed to temporary gains that do not strengthen our position,” she added. Effectively implementing the U.S. *Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability* will depend on all the capabilities that we develop, our cooperation, and our ability to apply lessons learned. We must continue to build on our history of collaboration and cooperation in the context of integrated prevention.

Integrated Deterrence, Irregular Warfare, Cyberwarfare, and Civil Affairs

Following AS Witkowsky, two scholars associated with the Modern War Institute and Irregular Warfare Initiative at West Point provided their insights on the relationship among integrated deterrence, irregular warfare, cyberwarfare, and civil affairs. Facilitated by Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Christopher Stockel, an Association vice president, the scholars were: Dr. Stanislava Mladenova, Global Fellow, Brown University Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies, and Fellow, U.S. Military Academy at West Point; and Dr. Karen Guttieri, Research Analyst, Army Cyber Institute and Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and Honorary Member of the Civil Affairs Corps.

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Stockel opened with some context by citing Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Sasha Baker’s [4 March 2023 testimony](#) on the upcoming *National Defense Strategy*. At the core of the *National Defense Strategy* will be “integrated deterrence,” which Baker said is “a framework for working across warfighting domains, theaters and the spectrum of conflict, in collaboration with all instruments of national power, as well as with U.S. allies and our partners.” The facilitator then added that [DoD defines irregular warfare](#) (IW) as, “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s).”

Dr. Mladenova then started by building on AS Witkowsky’s presentation, forwarding the growing necessity of well thought-out, enhanced, and integrated CA capabilities across interagency structures at institutional as well as operational levels. As recent conflicts highlighted the military’s interagency support role, particularly with USAID, CA will figure even larger especially with respect to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). Unlike conventional warfare, IW often talks about tools more than terrain. Constantly shifting and adapting, it cuts across interagency and interorganizational missions such as peace operations, disaster response and complex emergencies, foreign internal defense (FID), counter-terrorism (CT), counter-narcotics, etc. As the context for conflict and war has changed, IW in integrated deterrence is changing with it. While the military still plays an interagency and interorganizational supporting role in such operations, often the military, including CA, is most able to operate in increasingly complex, semi-permissive environments.

The GFA strategy, she noted, could be a litmus test as well as a catalyst for civil-military integration in integrated deterrence. Fragility spaces are much more dynamic and simultaneously complex than in a long-term Marshall Plan like scenario—not everything that makes good sense at the policy level makes good tactical sense. In addition to having greater tactical flexibility, we must think critically about security on a wider, more expansive level, able to speak with stakeholders outside of our areas of interest and operations. CA, with its global civil-military network capacities and capabilities, including the relationships still enjoyed by retired CA operators in many of these spaces, must be continuously and conscientiously leveraged. (Implied here is the informal convening and coordinating role of the Civil Affairs Association in contributing to the growth and maintenance of a global civil-military network, with interagency, interorganizational, multinational, commercial, and academic contacts, as discussed in the 2021-22 *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*.)

Institutionally critical to this is how Congress sees how such civil-military networks and interagency capacities are a good national and international security investment. Dr. Mladenova also addressed measures of effectiveness and performance under resourced constraints. Understanding second- and third-order effects are keys in planning and the execution of civil-military initiatives and projects. This implies that interagency partners must be more open to new and shared methods to measure success along the lines of civil than state security. This means asking questions in a different way. For example, how does training security forces impact a country's economy? What do expanding social services or longer life-expectancy mean for the security sector of that country? Better integration during planning will certainly yield better operational outcomes, she concluded.

Dr. Guttieri explained how her experience with the USAF Cyber College prepared her to work with the Army Cyber Institute at West Point. With "information superiority," as an operational term, clearly a bridge too far, the USAF concept of information warfare offers a more strategic view by combining cyber, information and psychological operations, electromagnetic spectrum operations, intelligence, public affairs, and weather. The Army's concept of information advantage emphasizes initiative and actor behavior, with CA helping to create the conditions for information advantage. She argued that the digitization of everyday life introduces civil-military interdependencies and civilian and critical infrastructure vulnerabilities that affect CA Operations and CMO. She then depicted how the strategic information warfare environment is already contested and volatile: a shooting war with China could happen as early as 2025, Russia is now in Ukraine, and the cyber-information war is already ongoing. U.S. cyber strategy is to defend forward, be present in a system to exploit a vulnerability—the best defense is a good offense. Arguably, conventional deterrence has already failed. In addition, in the human dimension, climate change is increasingly driving mass migrations, exponentially increasing need for humanitarian assistance.

This has considerable implications for the role of CA as an information force. CA must prepare and assess both soft and hard power considerations in an integrative information environment. Misinformation and disinformation complicate CAO and CMO. When the U.S. loses good will abroad, it provides opening for actors such as China (e.g., the expansion of cobalt mining concession in Africa under the Belt & Road Initiative). Resilience, whether for U.S. allies or the United States itself, requires the Army to not only withstand and fight through, but also to help afflicted populations recover quickly from cyber-related disruptions, emerging even stronger than before. As CA is about both populace and resource control, civilians and military alike are reliant upon critical infrastructure systems that are vulnerable to cyberattacks, at risk of cascading failures, and largely in the control of the private sector. CA is likely to encounter these factors both abroad and at home, in FID, HADR, Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA), and other established missions.

The DSCA mission has important homeland defense infrastructure and authority implications for CA, complicated by the "home vs. away game" dichotomy of U.S. national security since 9/11. For well over a century and a half, the U.S. military has orientated towards external adversaries in expeditionary campaigns. The 2022 *National Defense Strategy* draws no clear lines between this and homeland defense. Nor does the Civil Affairs Operations manual, FM 3-57. The Army Cyber Institute is involved in an ongoing Jack Voltaic research project examining local through federal response levels. Partners and allies with greater depths of experience in military involvement in homeland defense can provide a range of examples and ideas to consider. Reflecting upon her Naval Postgraduate School education program work on CA, Dr. Guttieri observed that experiences then and knowledge now in the digital world are important considerations in training CA, along with more international partners and a sectors approach.

Audience questions included how understanding cyber players and trolls and their objectives are key civil assessment priorities, as well as the integration of cyber and CA with regards to civil infrastructure. A major consensus point was how finding partners and allies in training could yield additional civil-military capacities. Pairing CA experts with domestic exercises should also be considered, in which the ASCOPE/PMESII analysis frameworks may provide important concepts for DSCA scenarios. In any case, civil-military integration is key at especially the tactical level.

“How do organizations need to adapt?” Dr. Mladenova asked during the final discussion. Strategic thinking and situational understanding at various levels require well thought out, integrated models—“smart people thinking within smart structures.” By 2030, she stated, one in four people in the world will be living in a fragile space. These are not conventional spaces. This requires an ability to play the long, unconventional game. “We need to step outside our comfort zones.”

Dr. Guttieri added how the concept of prevention is so appropriate to CA to “secure the victory” (as noted at the 2022 Symposium) or to win without fighting well before the first shots are fired. Citing George Kennan’s observation on how, after World War II, the U.S. had an abundance of strategic capital in good will is a reminder of the importance of moral authority. As warrior-diplomats, the expanded CA Corps is a good example of the preventative power of engagement.

Conclusion

The Roundtable closed with a facilitated discussion for nominations on the theme for the fall Symposium and *2023-24 Civil Affairs Issue Papers*. Among the ideas considered was how to create a civil interagency as well as a military demand signal for a consistent presence of CA forces at theater, joint, and service commands and at U.S. embassies, for civil and politico-military situational awareness and understanding, civil-military planning and integration, civil-military security cooperation and other “persistent forward engagement” missions in order to shape and build the decisive positional advantages of a robust global civil-military network in order to prevail in strategic competition, military support to stabilization and conflict prevention, and LSCO.

Later on, with input from numerous partners and CA stakeholder commands, the Association [published its call for papers](#) on “Campaigning and Civil Affairs,” with papers due on September 15th.

The Roundtable agenda, slide decks, and other documents related to the discussion are available in the “2023 Roundtable” folder in the Research Library on the Association website. The [2022-23 Civil Affairs Issue Papers](#) and this Roundtable Report are also available on the website. Videos of the discussions are also available on the *Eunomia Journal* [YouTube channel](#).

*The views expressed in this Report are those of the participants and the editor and do not necessarily reflect any official policy or position of the United States Government or any of its agencies or institutions.
Thanks to the discussion facilitators for their inputs.*