



## **2021 Civil Affairs Roundtable Report**

### **Roundtable Identifies Opportunity for Civil Affairs to Help Shape “Competition”**

by Christopher Holshek

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The 2021 Civil Affairs Roundtable on April 14<sup>th</sup> closed out the annual cycle of CA intellectual capitalization, academic credentialing, and professional and force development on “Civil Affairs: A Force for Influence in Competition.” At the same time, it offered the possibility, if not the opportunity, for the extended Civil Affairs Corps to shape its own future by helping the Army and joint force better understand contemporary competition, for which CA, as a diverse, people-centric force for influence, collaboration, and competition in Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) in support of Joint All-Domain Operations (JADO) and Information and Irregular Warfare, is a force of necessity as well as choice. If CA and other influence capabilities are not optimally structured to integrate physical and informational power, then neither is the Army nor the joint force.

Picking up from the observations and findings captured in the Symposium Report in the [2020-21 Civil Affairs Issue Papers](#), participants looked at how Army and Marine Corps civil affairs, in collaboration with their many partners, must modernize for the mostly gray zones of great power competition. It also looked at how Army, joint, defense, and interagency institutions can structure development of the CA and wider civil-military enterprises for competition along the lines of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership & education, personnel, facilities, and, of course, policy. As an Association [Spotlight Report](#) for the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) noted, operationalizing integrated physical and informational power requires institutionalizing it.

An oft-mentioned theme at last fall’s Symposium was keynote speaker Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Hooper’s observation of the unique capacity and potential of the Nation’s “warrior-diplomats” to “strengthen alliances and attract new partners.” While this alludes to a more storied role of civil affairs in security cooperation, it has even more relevance in competition. “In the 21st century,” a [NATO Innovation Hub study on cognitive warfare](#) observed, “strategic advantage will come from how to engage with people, understand them, and access political, economic, cultural and social networks to achieve a position of relative advantage that complements the sole military force... They represent a network of networks that define power and interests in a connected world... The actor that best understands local contexts and builds a network around relationships that harness local capabilities is more likely to win.” This sounds a lot like civil affairs, albeit demanding a civil-military learning organization within and especially beyond current military structures.

The web-based event, including over 300 participants from both sides of the Atlantic, began with a keynote presentation by former Army Futures Command Deputy Commanding General Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Eric J. Wesley, with panels on: CA roles in interagency-led competition in the context of national strategies and policies; the role of CA in regional great power competition; and institutional updates and priorities for CA force modernization. It closed with a facilitated discussion on the theme of the fall Symposium and *2021-22 Civil Affairs Issue Papers*.

With his Army education as a Functional Area 39 (CA and PSYOP) officer, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Wesley, in his presentation on “Civil competition - civil affairs in the era of great power competition,” explained how his grounding in cross cultural communication and information operations helped during a formative combat experience as an armor officer in Iraq in 2003. It also helped him diagnose the future operating environment at the Army Futures Command, where he directed the Futures and Concepts Center, gaining a reputation as a forward thinker in terms of the Army’s role in competition, which foremost needs to see it as more enduring than episodic. “We have to *continually* be countering information warfare and unconventional warfare,” the West Point graduate is cited in the [AUSA report](#). “That requires day-to-day coordination among the U.S. military, U.S. civilian agencies and allies,” which he sees as a major integrative role for CA. Competition can’t be done “agency-by-agency or even country-by-country.”

The U.S. is “poorly postured for competition,” he admitted in partial answer to whether the Army is as well organized for competition as it is for combat. Western culture sees war as an anomaly and the U.S. is still heavily investing in strategic deterrence and conventional force superiority (an edge it is losing). This largely tactically oriented mindset is no longer the paradigm at play, as a revanchist Russia and revisionist China have been demonstrating. Rather than seeing competition as an extension of conflict in an application of Sun Tzu’s “winning without fighting” philosophy, as explained in a 2019 [Military Review article](#) on the Chinese approach to competition, U.S. military leadership sees it (as it see capabilities like CA) as an afterthought – “episodically or anecdotally.”

China’s One Belt, One Road Initiative is a prime example of “grand strategy at work,” Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Wesley attested, whereas the U.S. national security establishment has not institutionally embraced strategic thinking since the Cold War, relying instead on a “global whack-a-mole” approach. China has been very effective especially in Africa not just because it presents a compelling alternative (i.e., [authoritarian capitalism](#)) to Western political and socioeconomic models. The Chinese are often the only game in town – exacerbated by the U.S. retreat from many corners of the world in all aspects of national power. “You can’t compete if you’re not there,” he pointed out.

Both China and Russia have been effectively countering U.S. conventional deterrence by leveraging asymmetric investments to challenge in all domains (including cyber, information, and influence), deploying cheap, multi-layered, and massed long-range all-domain fires to limit U.S. freedom of maneuver and present the threat of a “*fait accompli*” attack, and (most importantly) leveraging the competition space that is expanded into economic and other “gray zone” contests the U.S. “is really bad at.” One of the reasons for the latter is because of a disinvestment in diplomacy and development. Another is that the Army is “not able to compete aggressively left of bang.”

Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Wesley also noted a serious conceptual gap in that the Army and the joint force lack a cogent, coherent, and operable understanding of “competition” itself (other than in terms of it not being combat). The recent [Army Chief of Staff Paper # 1](#) mentions the competition continuum in MDO, the importance of interorganizational and interallied partnering, and how the goal in competition “remains winning without fighting by leveraging all elements of national power.” It never explains, however, what competition is, or how the Army should organize, resource, equip, train, and educate for competition. It also does not discuss political, civil, or human considerations in competition – or information, psychological, or influence operations – in any serious way. Nor does it mention CA or PSYOP. Yet, in his presentation, the keynote speaker envisions competition taking place mainly in civilian, informational, economic, and political spheres. “The end point force is not adequately defined and CA is not adequately integrated in it,” he noted.

Beyond civil-military coordination and integration and strengthening alliances and attracting new partners, there is a critical role for CA in continuous “smash-mouth posturing and engagement” – the keynote’s own description of competition. At the Army level, competition includes day-to-day decentralized yet synchronized operations that assess, target, and influence key leaders and vulnerable and opportunity populations at all levels. This expands the space and speed of competition, changing adversarial decision calculus and mitigating, deterring, or defeating the threat of *fait accompli* attacks. As the premier U.S. land force, the Army stands to play a uniquely influential role in great power competition

Reminiscent of the “forward-deployed engagement” the British Land Warfare Center briefed at the Symposium (or, “80 percent of success is just showing up”), CA is the ideal small-footprint people-centric force to demonstrate U.S. involvement and interest in especially uncontested areas – with low-cost, high-impact potentialities for influence, data collection, civil knowledge and situational understanding, and strategic warning for U.S. embassies and regional commands. As an example of an “inside force” in the human geography of influence, as former Issue Paper author Maj. James Micciche explained to the author, CA enables direct, indirect, and narrative competition and can assist the joint force in gaining positional advantage in competition, help deter aggression in crisis, and mitigate time and distance in conflict. It would be an ideal part of a Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), whose mission in continuous competition is to “expand the competitive space, preserve conventional force readiness, and strengthen alliances,” in accordance with 24 January 2020 Department of the Army memorandum on the review of SFAB roles in MDO.

Although already well postured for influence-intensive competition, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Wesley noted CA can geometrically raise its level of play in target population analysis and civil knowledge integration by leveraging and participating in development of related artificial intelligence and machine-learning technologies at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency [Causal Exploration of Complex Operational Environment](#) (DARPA-CauseEx) program. This resonates with the Association’s objective to help build a CA industrial base in applied social sciences and related technologies as an investment in people more than platforms.

In discussing the core problem of finding a workable concept of competition, he saw an opportunity for the CA Corps and its information-related partners to shape future Army force development. “CA should help develop the storyboard for what we mean by competition – help the maneuver community understand what competition truly is and show the available tools and how CA participates in competition.” As the best part of the force for that, he challenged the Corps, along with its proponent, to engage the Army Futures Command to help with that transformation.

Keeping pace with the keynote speaker’s call for more intense interagency and interorganizational relationship-building for competition was a rich discussion of civil-military integration between CA and its partners in the defense, diplomacy, and development (“3D”) operations environment in the evolving strategic and political landscape, as described in the latest national security documents, among them the [United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability](#) and the [Interim National Security Strategy of the United States](#). Interagency panelists included Andrea Freeman, the Director for Fragility and Atrocity Response for the National Security Council’s Development, Global Health and Humanitarian Affairs Directorate; Jason Ladnier, Acting Director of the Office of Communications, Policy, and Partnerships in the State Department’s Bureau of Conflict & Stabilization Operations (CSO); Ciara Knudsen, the Director of U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation; and Pat Antonietti, the

Director for Stabilization & Peace Operations in the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability & Humanitarian Affairs, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy. Ryan McCannell, a member of the CA Association board of directors who also leads the new USAID Center for Conflict & Violence Prevention, moderated the discussion.

Although the global strategic landscape has transformed in recent years, core U.S. national security objectives endure in a new era of great power competition: protecting the American people, promoting prosperity and economic opportunity, and realizing and defending democratic values. The interim *National Security Strategy* (NSS) highlights these goals against a backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, strategic competition with China and other nations outside the U.S.-led alliance structure, a changing climate, and domestic political challenges, which Ms. Freeman noted “now serve as a prism through which we are seeing and approaching the challenges in a new world.” Rounding out these other challenges and new requirements is an increased attention to malign influence and the misuse of the information element of national power by adversaries.

Complementing the interim NSS is the 2019 [Global Fragility Act](#) (GFA), which enshrines into law several principles of interagency coordination featured in the earlier [Stabilization Assistance Review](#) (SAR). The GFA requires ten-year strategies in a handful of high-priority, conflict-affected countries, with greater attention to conflict prevention and evidence gathering about the impacts of U.S. Government interventions. At the Pentagon, 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 civil affairs to contribute to these larger strategic goals.

Although every interagency conversation focuses on coordination challenges, the panelists noted that no other nation possesses the range of policy and operational tools, nor the global scope and reach, that characterize U.S. foreign policy. In their view, deliberation among different agency perspectives can lead to better outcomes than the autocratic alternatives pursued by other great powers. Fragile states in particular present a complex set of problems that require a cohesive and comprehensive 3D approach to resolve or contain. Panelists underscored that CA plays a key civil-military integration coordinating role at multiple echelons, citing examples from Syria, East Africa, the Arabian Gulf, and Latin America where CA teams (CATs), civil-military support elements (CMSEs), and theater CA planning teams (TCAPT) opened doors for civilian agencies and non-governmental partners in contributing to a unified effort to stabilize fragile states.

To facilitate these efforts, Ms. Knudsen noted that USAID has designated U.S. mission civil-military coordinators (“MC2s”) at all its overseas posts, and Mr. Ladnier shared tips on how CMSEs can influence civilian-led Integrated Country Strategy plans at embassy country teams. Mr. Antonietti highlighted the TCAPT at the geographic combatant commands and the Joint Stabilization Studies course at PKSOI as innovations that have elevated CA as an interagency player. “You are part of the GFA and the SAR,” Mr. Ladnier reminded the audience.

However, Mr. Antonietti exhorted CA resource managers to ensure persistent representation at particularly the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy. They often open apertures in DoD policy, strategy, and execution orders by which CA strengths and capabilities can bear on contemporary problems, in actual operations and not just at policy level. This final point underscored how central these warrior-diplomats are in securing the victory in competition as well as conflict.

Regional experts then provided invaluable situational understanding on especially the Chinese *modus operandi* in the geographic regions. Moderated by Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Christopher Stockel, a Civil Affairs Association Vice President, the discussants included: Dr. Howard Gambrill Clark, Associate Professor of Influence Strategies and Psychological Warfare, College of Information and Cyberspace, National Defense University; David Des Roches, Associate Professor, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University; Col. (Ret.) Daniel Hampton, Chief of Staff, Africa Center for Security Studies, National Defense University; Dr. R. Evan Ellis, Research Professor of Latin American Studies, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute; and Mr. Timothy Faulkner, Senior Intelligence Advisor, U.S. Army Pacific Command G-2.

Dr. Clark spoke on the importance of educating the joint force on influence strategies, in which CA plays a pivotal role – at the core of campaign planning for competition (or “influence warfare”) and not just for an appendix. CA is a unique and vital influence warfare capability in strategic execution of alliance-building, which is at the heart of great power competition and the civil-military fulcrum of influence. It is the one joint capability that inherently understands that politics is war by other means, that power goes well beyond its heavily favored physical interpretation (e.g., in the currently accepted domains of MDO), and that influence warfare is heavily vested in an understanding of regional and local history, sociology, and politics. It also understands that “exacerbating divisions within a society is something our enemies think about every day.” To counter this, in addition to building civil-military networks and civil knowledge, CA builds trust – which cannot be purchased, surged, or built after a conflict starts, but leveraged as extant strategic and operational capital. CA planners and teams can advise joint planners and commands on how coercion and compliance through the threat of violence and sanctions only goes so far.

The U.S. and its interagency elements of influence must look to persuade and influence – which is much more about transforming narratives that shape thinking and decisions than simply messaging target populations. Leveraging and empowering local governance and leadership, such as done jointly among CA, USAID, and State Department operatives in eastern Syria, is a good model for the employment of interagency influence capabilities in the spaces between war and peace that is much of great power competition. But American influence warfare must be as much whole-of-society as whole-of-government. It must include corporate partners, non-profits and charities, humanitarian organizations, and others who have been at work in many of these contested areas for decades and maintain often greater credibility, access, and reach in and with local societies than military forces or government agencies.

These relationships and networks, however, must be cultivated institutionally in order to be optimized operationally – CA commands and institutions should build them now. There is as much to draw upon as to discover, Dr. Clark, concluded. Great power competition, as a mainstay of human conflict, has a large historical blueprint to learn from, and American and Western values, which are still compelling and influential, work best through this kind of civil-military synchronization and strategic patience.

Professor Des Roches, a retired CA officer with substantial political-military knowledge of the CENTCOM region, noted how civil-military and civil affairs operations are a form of “population centric warfare.” To understand the competition environment in regions like this is to understand the drivers of conflict in socioeconomic dynamics such as: massive youth bulges in countries like Egypt (for which he showed charts); corruption and the struggle for good governance between



traditional autocrats and rising popular expectations that prompted the “Arab Spring;” the immense impacts of climate change on water and food security and intraregional competition for these resources; and geostrategic impacts on complex, time-sensitive global supply chains – beyond the supply of fossil fuels to the criticality of the Suez Canal that the recent week-long lodging of the gigantic cargo vessel, the *Ever Given*, showed. Then there is the overarching political competition between Shi’ite and Sunni state and non-state actors. As a lesson from its involvement in Iraq, CA forces operating in the region must be even better educated on regional dynamics and connected to a multitude of contacts to be effective in competition than they were in conflict.

Col. (Ret.) Hampton, a former foreign area officer who worked for years with CA in Africa, similarly stressed how understanding regional and local subtleties in the operating environment is paramount in understanding great power competition in Africa. In his presentation, he described four “mega-trends” at work there: demography; urbanization; migration; and climate change. Urban areas, for example, will grow to 55% of African populations, in 18 mega-cities with doubling youth populaces. Climate change is an instability multiplier. Focusing on climate change is important for CA because Africa is at greatest risk from rising temperatures and sea levels devastating landscape and urban areas and forcing upheavals within existing social structures. A great reference for CA operators in Africa is Maj. James Micciche’s [Eunomia Journal article](#), “Civil Information Management in Urban Environments.” Col. (Ret.) Hampton also commended the CA community for its more serious attention to gender engagement in populations and the inclusion of Women, Peace & Security (WPS) principles in the next update of CAO doctrine.

As in the CENTCOM region, in readiness for competition, CA in Africa should focus more on local governance. While military-to-military relations and standard theater security cooperation activities are highly important, they are tied to the state structure, designed to improve state-to-state level relationships. However, in Africa, often the country’s central government structure – including its security sector – may itself be a driver of conflict and have legitimacy challenges. Mayors, tribal leaders, and local institutions are at the forefront of sustaining civil society and civilian resilience. It is essential for CA teams – operating by, with, and through country teams and in coordination with interagency and private sector partners – to engage with traditional as well as state-sponsored leaders. More than because of the threat of violent extremism, the penetration of China in particular in national economies through the One Belt, One Road initiative presents a momentous challenge to U.S. interests in Africa. For the most part and for now, China still operates at the national level which has a long flash to bang. CA can play a critical interdicting role through low-profile civil reconnaissance and (key leader) engagement activities at local levels in a highly coordinated fashion.

Dr. Ellis explained how U.S. great power competition on China and secondarily on Russia within South America, Latin America, and the Caribbean is radically changing U.S. interests in a region it once dominated alone. As elsewhere, China’s principal mode of influence is largely economic, with \$160-billion of direct foreign investment in the region, including network connectivity as well as physical transportation infrastructure, in the last 10 years in the region – dwarfing anything from either the U.S. or Europe. To date, 19 countries in the region have signed up for One Belt, One Road assistance and 10 of these are strategic partners, providing more favorable terms for China in leveraging influence in those countries. In addition to its foreign direct investments, China has floated loans of \$137-billion since 2005 – much greater than from the more rules-based World Bank. Additionally, bilateral trade has grown to the point where the People’s Republic of China is the first or second largest national trade partner of most countries in the region.

China's soft power influence is also increasing through Huawei's build-up of the 5G digital network, urban development assistance (Latin America has been urbanizing as quickly as Africa). Chinese firms are methodically buying out poorly performing local firms by increasing their investment portfolios in them. As such, in addition to penetrating national decision-making, China is an "incubator for leftist authoritarianism and corruption." This includes the provision of surveillance technologies to state partners while making these leaders increasingly dependent on Chinese largesse – as Putin has been with Maduro in Venezuela. China funds many of their political campaigns, in exchange in part for dropping their national recognition of Taiwan.

CA's role in answering the Chinese challenge in the SOUTHCOM region has numerous avenues of opportunity as part of a larger regional strategy. As in Africa, CA in SOUTHCOM should focus more on local governance to help prevent the cycles of bad governance and unrest that bring populist leaders to power. Coordination of military support to humanitarian and development efforts to help stabilize populations heavily afflicted by COVID-19 as well as mass migration are among the most promising ways to do this. At that same time, CA can help build local civil-military capacities to do likewise and thus improve public confidence in partner governments and security sectors. As such, they can help build trust and partnership with institutions in order to offer an alternative to Chinese assistance. In strengthening good governance at particularly local levels, as suggested for Africa, CA can become a "partner of choice" for both military and civilian actors.

Given its uniqueness for competition-related activities, CA can be an extremely valuable asset in tactical actions producing useful strategic outcomes. CA may be able to gain access and influence in places where other U.S. forces or even its partners cannot, gathering critical insights on the concerns of populations that could help mold policy. As in Africa, well-coordinated civil reconnaissance and civil engagement, coincidental to building partner capacity, can help generate greater strategic understanding about Chinese actions and activities and their impacts on the ground, thus ensuring the right mix of organizational responses and projects. Likewise, how CA ensures its activities compliment other friendly projects as part of a coherent strategic response is paramount. This includes information activities to include social media that, among a few things, help protect the CA brand and mitigate the misperception of CA as intelligence operatives from the "gringo" military. At the same time, CA must recognize its need to swim in the same waters as U.S. adversaries, e.g., working in digital systems network created by the Chinese.

Mr. Faulkner picked up where Dr. Ellis left off by covering China's "unrestricted warfare" in the INDOPACOM region. China has gained positional advantages in traditional and nontraditional areas that, if left unchecked, will allow it to dominate in terms of diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic power. Its published strategic goals of becoming the premier world power are in line with the upcoming one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the communist state in 2021 and 2049, respectively. We would do well to understand this mindset, he warned. U.S. and allied responses to this – globally as well as regionally – require understanding the Chinese approach to warfare. Its new principles of war are no longer "using armed force to compel the enemy to submit to one's will, but instead using all means, including armed forces or non-armed forces ... lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one's interest." For the Chinese, competition and conflict are extensions of each other, as he explained in his 2019 [Military Review article](#) on "Contemporary China – In Conflict, Not Competition." One way U.S. CA can gain an instinct for this, Mr. Faulkner suggested, is to watch more (soccer) football, which is more strategic and better reflects the flow of competition in all these regions than more tactically oriented and set-piece (American) football.

Understanding the role of CA in competition, he added, merits understanding the criticality of seeing, understanding, and influencing the human geography. CA must further both strategic and operational objectives in competition. This includes: access, information, messaging, economics, the strategic and operational environment itself, and how this information looks feeds into the commander's estimate. For competition, CA needs first to conduct its own self-assessment. What collaboration tools and reporting architecture, for example, are required of CA in this fight? This includes real-time social network analysis (as particularly our Canadian allies pointed out at the Symposium). If CA operates in the "green," G/J3s in "blue," and G/J2s in "red," how does CA need to look at its role in this array? In an era of competition, the strategic education of CA operators is even more significant. Do we also need to relook the training of CA officers and NCOs? More so in competition, CA must provide informed recommendations to which key leader engagements supported commanders should attend to and why. In a competition environment, the forward presence of a CA senior leader and plans team is a must. Engagements must be well planned and thought out to achieve the desired effect. An overwhelming focus on civil-military operational preparation of the environment and building relationships and networks early and often will result in reinsuring allies and gaining and maintaining partners.

In the discussion that followed, the panel balanced its apprehension about the Chinese challenge with the need to understand their weaknesses and vulnerabilities as well as strengths. The One Belt, One Road strategy, for example, risks a debt trap that may create diplomatic challenges for the Chinese in the future. If you measure by deeds and reception on the ground, the Chinese have failed more often than advertised – and, as brought up earlier in the Roundtable, the reason for Chinese success in access and influence in many regions and localities is because they are the only game in town. Even then, it is not always a binary choice between bipolar great powers – we often view the human environment as consisting of either good guys or bad guys.

CA is a priceless asset in this ongoing, open-ended fight, each panelist asserted. In its conduct civil reconnaissance, civil engagement and civil knowledge integration more as strategic human sensors, informing political-military decision makers on what the local issues are and how they feed into policy. In readiness for competition, CA must also pay much greater attention to the attributes of good governance (among them transparency) to mitigate civil vulnerabilities that provide inroads to adversaries more interested in promoting autocracy than democracy. As the discussion closed, the panel urged CA planners and operators to leverage regional subject matter experts who see CA as a critical force in regional great power competition going forward, at such institutions as the National Defense University and the Army War College, to tap into their copious information platforms and depth of knowledge for CA as a green force in influence warfare.

Pulling many of the previous pieces together was the CA force panel that reported on institutional updates and priorities for ongoing CA force modernization and initiatives for which there is a lot of work behind the scenes at various Joint, Army, U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) proponent offices to advance the interests and equities of Civil Affairs Operations, Stabilization, Peace Operations, and Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC). This recurring panel of CA Symposia and Roundtables provides an opportunity to inform the civil affairs communities of practice and interest on the major issues on which their institutions are working. Col. (Ret.) Dennis J. Cahill, Deputy Civil Affairs Capability Manager at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Force Modernization Center (UFMC), and a CA Association board of directors' member, moderated and participated as the UFMC representative.



His discussants were: Lt. Col. Dave Henning of the Joint Civil Affairs Proponent at USSOCOM; Col. Scot Storey, Director of the U.S. Army PKSOI; Mr. Aaron Weiss, USMC Civil Affairs Strategic Planner at the Office of the Deputy Commandant for Information (DCI) and a senior CA non-commissioned officer and Association director; and, Lt. Col. Stefan Muehlich, Branch Chief of the Concepts, Interoperability and Capabilities Branch at the NATO [CIMIC Center of Excellence](#) (CCoE).

Lt. Col. Henning started with a review of the size of the current Joint Civil Affairs force, which includes a combined number of 10,742 U.S. Army Soldiers and Marines. Of that number, 82% are in the reserve component and 18% in the active force. By service, 81% are assigned to the conventional force Army, 15% to USSOCOM, and 4% in the USMC. Ongoing Joint-level efforts include: reviewing multiple Joint and Service doctrinal publications, including updating and synchronizing JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, with JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*; participating in multiple DoD, Joint, Service, and Interagency working groups; serving as the J3 lead for the Joint Supporting Concept for Information Advantage; participating in policy updates for multiple DoD directives; and publishing the first Joint Civil Affairs Annual Assessment in response to the Joint Staff Action Process. The latter found that the Joint CA Proponent was not executing its full set of responsibilities directed by the Secretary of Defense in 2009. Its long-term plan of action to address these shortfalls was briefed to principals at the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Cahill discussed outgoing Army CA Capability Manager Col. Jay Liddick's priorities and ongoing tasks and efforts. Among the 30 tasks or efforts were five priorities from last year's CA Force Modernization Assessment (FMA) in support of the Army's work to build the MDO-capable *WayPoint* force of 2028 while keeping an eye on the MDO-ready *AimPoint* force of 2035 and beyond. He noted that, in getting to this point, the Army CA branch proponent and capability manager division enjoyed great teamwork from the entire operational force, including USACAPOC(A), the 95<sup>th</sup> CA Bde, the 83<sup>rd</sup> CA Bn, and CA staff members across conventional and special operations formations, which is critical to the collective success of the Civil Affairs Corps. In the interest of time, Mr. Cahill highlighted the first seven efforts on his list, which can be found in the slides accompanying this report. These include:

1. The Director of the Army Futures Command's Futures and Concepts Center is reviewing the final FMA for signature shortly.
2. A Transitional Governance & Stabilization Capability Development Operational Planning Team (OPT) is developing an operating concept and updating DOTMLPF-P changes to ensure that Army CA force is able to provide required 38G and governance support to operations across the competition continuum.
3. Another OPT, on Civil Knowledge Integration Systems & Technology Development, is working with Army Capability Managers, the Center for Civil-Military Operations at West Point, as well as USSOCOM, to develop a software solution that leverages artificial intelligence and machine learning, and is flexible and adaptable to technology changes.
4. The CA Capability Manager Division is developing a CA analytical framework that considers multiple science disciplines focused on human geography, data, social networks, and other related areas to close a gap in CA human analysis processes.
5. Three Organizational and Operational (O&O) concepts for the conventional and special operations force capabilities, used in Army experimentation to design the future CA force, will be completed in June 2021. Additionally, the CA Capability Manager Division is developing a paper that outlines the concept of employment for the Civil Affairs Task Force (CATF) in both large-scale combat operations and competition.

6. USAJFKSWCS, USACAPOC(A), and Army Reserve commanding generals have concurred with CA Branch recommendations to pursue accessions for Reserve Component CA Soldiers, leading to an OPT to analyze the issue and develop a way ahead.
7. The DoD Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate awarded the Capability Manager an opportunity to obtain funding to support the development of governance-related training products for institutional and unit training programs.

Finally, Mr. Cahill briefed the Army will publish the new FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, in the next two to three months. It contains substantial changes in how to describe and execute CAO and captures many dynamic issues of Branch importance, including, for example, integration of gender in CAO and inclusion of WPS principles into CA doctrine, in accordance with DoD's WPS Act & Strategy, as discussed at the Symposium.

Col. Scot Storey reviewed the origin of PKSOI as the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute in the early 1990s, the addition of stability operations in 2003, and its current status as the Army's proponent for Peace Operations and Protection of Civilians with Joint proponent responsibilities for Stabilization for Army TRADOC. It is also the Army's office of primary responsibility (OPR) for WPS. While reassigned to the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, KS, in October 2019, PKSOI remains at the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, PA, to leverage its proximity to government and academic institutions of the National Capital Region and the United Nations in New York. PKSOI is the center of a network of U.S. government, academic, and international organizations working on peace operations and stabilization. It is also a great partner to CA.

PKSOI is involved in the publication and revision of a variety of materials, including DASD-SHA's Biennial Assessment of Stabilization, NATO's allied joint doctrine for the military contribution to stabilization and reconstruction, a variety of UN training materials, and the Joint Stabilization Studies Course of the U.S. Army War College. PKSOI supports Geographic Combatant Command and Army Service Component Command exercises through master scenario event list (MESL) input related to stabilization. PKSOI is also a Partnership Training Education Center for NATO, providing training products to NATO partners. Finally, as the OPR for WPS, PKSOI conducts a holistic analysis of where gaps in Army doctrine, training, and professional education exist regarding the challenges of WPS in military operations.

Mr. Aaron Weiss reported how, in recent months, the USMC DCI's Information Maneuver Division has taken over advocacy of civil affairs and other information-related capabilities in the USMC. It is working to further professionalize the USMC's small CA community in both the active and reserve components. One consideration is combining CA and PSYOP into a single military occupational specialty, which entails new training programs and organizational structures. A recent CA working group session will soon report its findings, including the arrangement of over 30 CA tasks into four categories: career progression and professionalization; utilization and improvements to the Marine Corps civil information management system (MARCIMS); updates to doctrine; and updates to mission essential tasks. One improvement for USMC civil affairs is the inclusion of 18 active component CA positions across three operational formations in the emerging new Marine Littoral Regiment. At institutional level, a new policy was approved for consolidation of three major Marine Corps organizations – DCI at the Pentagon, Combat Development and Integration Division at Quantico, and the Marine Corps Training and Education Command at Quantico – for continued development of USMC CA capabilities.

Lt Col Stefan Muehlich finished up with an overview of main projects underway at the CCoE. First, NATO is working on an update of its MC 4/11 policy on Civil-Military Interaction (CMI), which CIMIC supports, due out this September with new definitions of NATO CIMIC, CMI, and the civil environment. A second project involves a concept on the analysis and development CIMIC capabilities, which appears to overlap with the Army's CA Science Framework and the USMC MARCIMS effort. A third is the synchronization of civil affairs and Euro-NATO CIMIC, which is advancing through lines of effort focused on education, doctrine, and academia, all three of which include ongoing collaboration with U.S. Army and USMC civil affairs units and proponents and with the Smithsonian Institute. The CCoE has also rolled out a new course on civilian resiliency in light of renewed interest in layered resiliency in several European countries.

In response to a request for information from the Association, Lt. Col. Muehlich then clarified the possible role of CIMIC in "cognitive warfare," mentioned in a [recent NATO Innovation Hub report](#). While the current Allied Joint Publication 1, *Joint Doctrine*, makes no mention of *cognitive domain* or *cognitive warfare*, it does describe *physical*, *virtual*, and *cognitive* dimensions. Likewise, the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC) describes *cognitive superiority*, which includes the human dimension and (strategic) understanding of the operational environment. Of the five areas of long-term development outlined in the NWCC, Lt. Col. Muehlich sees the main contribution of CIMIC in *layered resilience* and *cognitive superiority*. This is clear if one accepts a definition of *cognitive warfare* as "maneuvers in the cognitive domain to establish a predetermined perception among a target audience in order to gain advantage over another party," where the intent is to defeat, persuade, or break down the will of individuals or populations.

While CIMIC is not primarily about humans, persons, and perceptions, it is proactive in nature, focuses on synchronization and harmonization of civilian and military activities in operations, and seeks cooperation, common goals, maximal coordination of efforts based on trust and transparency. Finally, of the eight NATO Joint Functions, the two most applicable for integrating CIMIC effects are Information and Intelligence. Overlapping CIMIC effects are: enhancing and protecting friendly cognitive capabilities while impeding adversarial cognitive capabilities (these are outlined in a Cross Joint Functions Effects Matrix depicted in Lt. Col. Muehlich's presentation). Ultimately, CIMIC is not a primary tool for offensive cognitive warfare, but CIMIC can enhance cognitive capabilities of friendly forces and support defense cognitive warfare.

Throughout his slide presentation and the follow-on Q&A period, Lt. Col. Muehlich sought the collaboration and assistance of related enterprises to advance ideas, materials, and operations related to NATO CIMIC and civil affairs, per his recent Civil Affairs Issue Paper. He received repeated assurance of widespread interest among our communities to tear down stovepipes and improve channels to move CA and CIMIC forward together.

The Roundtable closed with a facilitated discussion for nominations on the theme for the fall Symposium and *2021-22 Civil Affairs Issue Papers*. Among the ideas considered was CA's need to building an extended, interagency, interorganizational, and international learning network.

The Roundtable agenda, slide decks, and other documents related to the discussion are available in the "2021 Roundtable" folder in the Research Library on the Association website. The [2020-21 Civil Affairs Issue Papers](#) and this Roundtable Report are also available on the website.

The 2021-22 call for papers outlining the next annual discussion theme will be out by June.