



2018 Civil Affairs Roundtable Report

The Role of Civil Affairs in Stabilization Finds Definition

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The Civil Affairs Regiment’s critical role in stabilizing conflict-affected areas received new definition, in addition to the past year’s discussion on the future of the Regiment around the theme of “Civil Affairs: A Force for Consolidating Gains,” under a revised interagency policy framework released just before the annual Civil Affairs Roundtable in Washington, D.C.

The Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR), produced by the Departments of State and Defense, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), provides a much-needed common conceptual framework for U.S. stabilization efforts and Civil Affairs Operations as well as looks to align authorities and funding streams. “We must consolidate security gains, reduce levels of local instability, and work with local partners to peaceably manage change and provide legitimate and responsive governance,” says the SAR’s foreword. “Our national experience over the past two decades has taught us that it is not enough to win the battle; we must help our local partners secure the peace by using every instrument of power.”

The 2017 Symposium in Chicago and *2017-18 Civil Affairs Issue Papers* revealed a wide consensus among the community of practice that CA is the force of choice for consolidating gains in enabling the larger interagency stabilization effort while synchronizing it with related Joint Force and Army missions across the full range of operations. At the 17 April 2018 Roundtable at the Washington National Guard Armory, the community of policy affirmed the earlier finding of the Regiment’s criticality to this growing integrated enterprise across civil-military, interagency, and public-private lines – before, during, and after the outbreak of violent conflict. This began with keynote remarks from Mark Swayne, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs at OSD Policy Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC).

Swayne briefed the audience of more than 80 that, for the first time, the United States Government now has a unified definition of stabilization: “A political endeavor involving an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can manage conflict peacefully and prevent a resurgence of violence.”

This understanding resonates well with the Regiment's dialogue over the past three Symposia and *Issue Papers*, infused in particular from a consistent narrative about the criticality of consolidating military and security gains into political and civil outcomes. Strategic leaders such as Secretary of Defense James Mattis, former National Security Advisor Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster (keynote at the 2015 Symposium), and Civil Affairs scholar Nadia Schadlow, author of *War and the Art of Governance* and much of the new *National Security Strategy* have shaped this narrative.

The SAR draws on lessons familiar to CA and their civilian partners on the ground in development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian assistance. Rather than wholesale top-down projects that have largely failed, the SAR emphasizes a retail bottom-up, community-based and adaptive process focused on nuanced local, national, and regional societal and governing dynamics, agents, and systems leading to civil dialogue and political accommodation versus violent extremism. "According multiple studies, targeted and smaller programs are better at the outset to achieve local outcomes and build momentum." CA teams, which think strategically, act tactically, and constantly consider political imperatives, are ideal military enablers to this distributed approach.

As at the Peace & Stability Operations Training & Education Workshop (PSOTEW) the next day at the U.S. Army War College, Swayne advised a humbler attitude: "Instead of doing things in our own image, we should start with where they may want to go rather than where we think they should, adapt problems to capabilities rather than the other way around, focus more on the sustainable versus the ideal, and manage expectations by recognizing our own political blinders."

Swayne's next citation of the capstone policy made the significance of CA in stabilization more apparent: "Stabilization activities are necessary to consolidate military gains into lasting strategic success, and may include efforts to establish civil security, provide access to dispute resolution mechanisms, deliver targeted basic services, and establish a foundation for the voluntary return of displaced people." These intended outcomes closely parallel the essential tasks and core functions of Civil Affairs outlined in the newly revised Army doctrine FM 3-57 (Civil Affairs Operations).

What will give even greater impetus to the re-emerging role that Civil Affairs has long played as a national strategic capability for civil-military transition and conflict management is the conceptual framework for DoD's role and core responsibilities during U.S. stabilization efforts in DoD Directive 3000.05 (Stabilization), a revision and upgrade of DoD Instruction 3000.05 (Stability Operations), last published in 2009, which Swayne noted will be out later this year.

Among his requests, including the deployment of more CA personnel as civil-military advisors in Iraq to help consolidate gains in wake of the military defeat of ISIS, Swayne exhorted the Regiment to somehow find a replacement for the Policy Assistant for Civil Affairs at SO/LIC, a post discontinued under mandated military staff cuts at OSD.

As a follow-up to Swayne's presentation, an interagency panel moderated by Kevin Melton, Senior Civil-Military Transition Assistance Specialist at USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), held an interactive discussion of the more granular implications of the SAR. Joining Melton were Peter J. Quaranto, the State Department's Senior Advisor on Peace & Security at the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F) and Kelly Uribe, Senior Policy Advisor at the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability & Humanitarian Affairs.

Melton reported a major reorganization of USAID was underway, including the creation of a separate Bureau for Conflict Prevention & Stabilization, for which USAID has the operational lead, as well as a growing enabler role for "participatory development" for OTI, which operates much like Civil Affairs. Quaranto noted that the State Department is more purposefully taking up the lead for political and diplomatic direction of those efforts from particularly the Bureau of Conflict & Stabilization Operations (CSO), which has some operational capability.

While the presence of State and USAID personnel on the ground may still be limited, the new approach intends a bigger impact despite their low profile. Melton pointed out the "white helmet" operations in Syria supported by OTI as a good example of this emerging operational model.

There was nonetheless wide acknowledgement that military operators (essentially CA teams) may have to forge a stabilization bridgehead, as done in Eastern Syria and parts of Africa (discussed at the last Symposium), until pockets of basic security form. The SAR calls basic security the minimum conditions where U.S. assistance partners can operate and monitor activities, access local stakeholders, and where security actors can engage in building trust with local communities.

To fill this gap, Uribe explained, DoD has proposed a \$25-million Defense Support to Stabilization program in the FY19 budget to fund transitional, small-scale stabilization activities in less permissive environments such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen – where CA teams of all kinds have already been at work. In addition to providing military support to U.S. interagency stabilization working with NATO, UN, and other interorganizational partners, the Title 10 standing global authority of the DSS will close with the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) program that funds U.S. military support to humanitarian assistance, which the SAR sees as separate but complementary.

Panel members added that, given the increasing importance of stabilization in conflict prevention, the Regiment should consider devoting a discussion of the role of Civil Affairs in Security Sector and Security Force Assistance as interagency partners adopt the concept of "transitional public security" connected to the rule of law and governance. "We have a lot of awesome data," Melton noted, "that we're not very good at building the security sector or the rule of law."

Among the main findings that carried over from the Symposium, the panel noted, was the SAR's observation that "close civilian-military planning and coordination has been a key determinant in effective stabilization outcomes across all cases examined... DoD should assign stabilization planners through the Department, especially at Geographic Combatant Commands, and ensure professional military education [PME] prepares future leaders to operate effectively with civilian partners at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels." Melton noted that OTI looks to form an even closer planning and operational relationship with the Regiment, including the possibility of posting a representative at Ft. Bragg and hosting a CA counterpart in Washington.

The planning relationship issue, which extended into the CA stakeholder panel discussion, once again revealed the need to grow and staff CA planning officers at various supported commands, especially at operational and theater strategic levels as well as at select interorganizational partner offices, as copiously discussed in the 2016-17 *Issue Papers*. This led to reiteration of the longstanding need for the Civil Affairs Branch Proponent at the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare Center & School and Special Operations Center of Excellence (USAJFKSWCS/SOCoE) to develop and field an advanced Civil Affairs course that builds these critical Civil Affairs Operations capabilities at higher as well as lower levels of force and civil-military integration.

Colonel (ret.) Dennis J. Cahill, Director of CA Force Modernization at the CA Branch Proponent, USAJFKSWCS/SOCoE, moderated the Roundtable's military panel. Representing CA force stakeholders, it included: Major General Darrell Guthrie, Commander of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), or USACAPOC(A); Colonel John E. Stefula, CA Operations Officer at the U.S. Army Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI); Colonel Jason Slider, Commander of 95th CA Brigade (Airborne); Colonel Charles R. Burnett, Commandant of the Civil Affairs Branch Proponent; and Lieutenant Colonel Shane Donahue, Inspector and Instructor (Fulltime Support), 2nd Civil Affairs Group, U.S. Marine Corps. Their charge was to discuss the implications of these policy and development frameworks for CA force development as it applied to their organizations.

The panel acknowledged another, related takeaway that carried over from the Symposium, with respect to the critical role of CA in civil-military integration for interagency stabilization. They agreed that CA can help fill serious civil-military interagency gaps in stabilization and consolidation. In that regard, the Regiment must articulate CA consolidation tasks in concepts and doctrine – and then leverage and develop the force along these lines. The first opportunity came soon enough at the PSOTEW beginning the following day.

"Civil Affairs Role in Stability" was the focus of Work Group 5 of the 18-20 April PSOTEW, led by Colonel Jay Liddick, the Civil Affairs Advisor and Irregular Warfare Integrator who will be the next CA Commandant later this year. PKSOI, which hosts the PSOTEW, has worked with the Association to publish all four annual volumes of the *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*.

In addition to the SAR and Army FMs 3-0 (Operations) and 3-57 (Civil Affairs Operations), the Civil Affairs White Paper – a living document from the proponent – informed much of the two days of intensely rich debate among representatives from various geographic, functional, and CA commands, interorganizational partners, and the Association. It resulted in the following recommended across-the-board CA tasks for stabilization:

- Lead military planning for stability activities.
- Lead integration/coordination of military stability activities with unified action partners.
- Provide mission command for military forces executing stability tasks.
- Provide forces to execute stability tasks.
- Conduct preparation of the environment to illuminate, understand, and share the political, economic, social, and infrastructure elements of the civil operational environment.

While these tasks are not unfamiliar to Civil Affairs, the stakeholders' panel at the Roundtable was as much seized with the capabilities, coherence, and force integration of the Regiment as with its missions. The more active voice in the task statements reflected a greater assertiveness to claim Regimental responsibilities for which CA capabilities could be further developed along doctrinal, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy lines.

“We need to appreciate the capabilities we have and produce a narrative to explain them in a way that shows our readiness for operations, influences the PME for the bigger Army we support, and leverages the Army systems that we must understand,” Slider said at the Roundtable in his suggestion to mainstream CA in the broader discussion of the Army and Joint Force.

In addition to ensuring the presence of CA officers at SO/LIC and the Army Staff, as well as strategic and operational plans groups, as already recommended in last year's *Issue Papers*, the panel identified the opportunity for CA to make its presence known at the new Army Transformation Command. It also identified the need to discuss CA in the Joint Strategic Campaign Plan and the Global Force Management process. Finally, it suggested that CA units preparing for operational deployments and exercises, for example, at combat training centers should be evaluated not by the commanders of higher CA headquarters but by the commanders or deputy commanders of supported operational forces. Guthrie added the Regiment should review the organization of its CA forces, especially in his command.

“We need to re-structure USACAPOC for the world that's out there now and not the world that was out there then.” He also challenged the Regiment to re-brand itself in a way that tells a story that shows commonalities more than differences among a diverse force – including active and reserve component, special operations and conventional force CA units, and Army and Marine personnel.

Burnett and others agreed. “We need CA Soldiers and Marines to clearly explain what they do ... CA is one of the few military elements focused on grass-roots engagement.” Its two main mission areas, he stressed, are reducible to: civil reconnaissance (related to understanding the civil operational environment and human geography) and civil-military engagement (related to shaping and influencing that environment and geography to support military lethality in combat operations and consolidation and stabilization in all operations).

The Regiment will have an excellent opportunity to review and revise a Civil Affairs narrative that reaches back to its rich legacy of operating in the human environment in order to explain its roles in securing the victory in contemporary competition and conflicts of influence. The Civil Affairs Centennial and Symposium event at Ft. Bragg, scheduled for 2-4 November 2018, the Branch Proponent briefed, will commemorate the Hunt Report and deployment of Civil Affairs/Military Government units to the Rhineland after the armistice ending World War I.

More than further intellectual capitalization and educating itself and the Army on Civil Affairs, however, the Regiment will also have the unique opportunity to heed the advice of Symposium keynote speaker Major General Kurt L. Sonntag, USAJFKSWCS/SOCO CoE Commander, to break the more traditional role of Special Operations as “quiet professionals” and more aggressively tell the Civil Affairs story to a much wider audience – beyond forums like the Symposium and Roundtable and the *Issue Papers* and beyond the Centennial this fall – to the body politic and public at large to help develop a narrative to recruit members as well as supporters of the Regiment.

“As members of the CA force, both past and present,” he said last fall, “no one is better able to tell our story not only to our leaders and decision makers but more and more to the young Soldiers currently serving as well as young men and women in your communities who have yet to make the decision to serve. Now more than ever, we need you to build the Regiment and strengthen our Special Operations family by being our most ardent recruiters, advocates, and ambassadors.”

“Great organizations recognize indicators before they become problems,” Slider summarized in his remarks. “Great organizations are also learning organizations. They see the future is already here.”

Note: The Stabilization Assistance Review and other documents cited in this report are posted on the Civil Affairs Association website. The call for papers for the 2018-19 Civil Affairs Issue Papers will be posted by the end of May. For further information, go to the Association website at: www.civilaffairsassoc.org/