

# NEWSLETTER

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*Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*



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## Foreword

This publication provides a series of articles on interagency issues related to complex operations. Complex operations include stabilization and reconstruction operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare. These operations demand the integration of U.S., coalition, host-nation, and nongovernment capabilities to end violence, rebuild governments and societies, develop economies, and create the conditions for lasting peace and stability.

The articles have been compiled by the Center for Complex Operations (CCO). The CCO was initially formed in the summer of 2008 and is now located at the National Defense University (NDU). Its four overlapping functions, as directed by Congress, are to provide for effective coordination in the preparation of Department of Defense and other U.S. government (USG) personnel for complex operations; foster unity of effort among the departments and agencies of the USG, foreign governments and militaries, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations; conduct research, collect, analyze, distribute lessons learned, and compile best practices in matters relating to complex operations; and identify gaps in the training and education of military and civilian governmental personnel relating to complex operations, and facilitate efforts to fill such gaps.

The CCO is comprised of permanent representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, and the U.S. Agency for International Development and draws from the expertise of NDU, civilian academic institutions, the U.S. Institute of Peace, and the military services and commands. Recent CCU activities include conducting conferences and seminars on whole-of-government approaches to complex operations, developing training programs for Ministry of Defense advisors in Iraq and Afghanistan, and assessing the lessons learned by returning members of provincial reconstruction teams.

This publication is provided to those preparing to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan with the hope it may provide a better understanding of the capabilities, and sometimes concerns, which must be considered if we are to succeed in the highly complex civil-military environment that characterize the current conflicts we face.

Hans Binnendijk, PhD  
Vice President for Research  
National Defense University



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<b>Director</b>	<b>Colonel Thomas Joseph Murphy</b>
<b>Division Chief</b>	<b>Larry Hollars</b>
<b>CALL Analyst</b>	<b>Robert L. McDonald</b>
<b>Production Coordinator</b>	<b>Jenny Solon</b>
<b>Editor</b>	<b>Michael Brooks</b>
<b>Graphic Artist</b>	<b>Eric Eck</b>
<b>Distribution Manager</b>	<b>Candice Miller</b>

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## Introduction

The U.S. and many of its allies and partners have become increasingly involved in what is termed “complex operations,” which is more defined as stabilization and reconstruction operations around the world. Interagency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and several locations have exposed major shortfalls in both preparations for and implementation which can undermine prospects for success.

The U.S. has come to recognize that it must plan to respond to an atypical type of adversary from that of previous conflicts. Adversaries have a vote and do not inevitably use the same type of strategies and methods used in a conventional war. The attack of September 11, 2001 exemplifies that our adversaries have embraced an irregular fighting tactic.

Problems have existed on all levels of interagency coordination from the strategic level to the tactical level, but the strategic and operational levels must be immediately improved for success in future complex operations. Most civilian organizations do not maintain large staffs and are not equipped to conduct expeditionary operations. As a result, responses are often slow and ad hoc making it difficult to conduct military planning.

The U.S. government has undertaken a number of important initiatives building the capacities to respond to a complex operations scenario. A prime example is the creation of the Center for Complex Operations which was established to bring together interagency education, training, lessons learned programs, and academia to cultivate unity of effort in stability operations, counterinsurgency, and complex operations. Another example is the creation within the State Department of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, whose mission is to coordinate and lead U.S. government efforts to plan, prepare, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction operations.

Some of these capabilities will be discussed in this newsletter. It is designed to inform and educate both civilian and Department of Defense agencies of the interagency partnerships that currently exist.



## Chapter 1

### U.S. Government Interagency Lessons Learned Hub for Complex Operations

#### Enhancing the U.S. Government's Ability to Prepare for Complex Operations

#### Center for Complex Operations

The Center for Complex Operations (CCO) was initially formed in the summer of 2008 in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and moved in early 2009 to the National Defense University (NDU). Its four overlapping functions, as directed by Congress in NDAA09, are to provide for effective coordination in the preparation of Department of Defense (DOD) and other U.S. government (USG) personnel for complex operations; foster unity of effort among the departments and agencies of the USG, foreign governments and militaries, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations; conduct research, collect, analyze, distribute lessons learned, and compile best practices in matters relating to complex operations; identify gaps in the training and education of military and civilian governmental personnel relating to complex operations, and facilitate efforts to fill such gaps.

The CCO is comprised of permanent representatives from OSD, the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The CCO also draws from the expertise and experience of NDU, civilian academic institutions, the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), and the military services and commands. Recent CCO activities include conducting conferences and seminars on whole-of-government approaches to complex operations, developing training programs for Ministry of Defense advisors in Iraq and Afghanistan, and assessing the lessons learned by returning members of provincial reconstruction teams.

The CCO offers electives at NDU and supports training and education conducted both at NDU and by other agencies and organizations in DOD and the USG. The CCO maintains a Web site (<[www.ccoportal.org](http://www.ccoportal.org)>) providing up-to-date information and interface to the complex operations community of practice. Publications include *PRISM*—the professional journal of complex operations, special reports and briefings, and an anthology of strategic lessons learned by senior military and civilian leaders who participated in complex operations over the past two decades, titled *Commanding Heights*.

The CCO is a developing network of civilian and military educators, trainers, and lessons learned practitioners dedicated to improving education and training for complex operations, which includes stability operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare.

Principal roles of the CCO are to serve as a lessons learned hub and information clearinghouse, and to cultivate a civil-military community of practice for complex operations training and education.

The CCO is intended to:

- Serve as the central and institutionalized proponent for coordinating, facilitating, and supporting the implementation of lessons learned across interagency partners.
- Network existing institutions, not be another center.

- Enhance existing training and education rather than provide training and education itself.

Activities and accomplishments of the CCO include:

- Partnering with USIP to author *Sharing the Space: A Study on Education and Training for Complex Operations*, and to develop the CCO portal.
- Launching the CCO community of practice portal (<[www.ccoportal.org](http://www.ccoportal.org)>) with:
  - Searchable catalogues of curricula, experts, and training and education institutions.
  - An annotated events calendar.
  - Community discussion forums.
  - Featured commentary blogs from leading complex operations experts.
- Hosting workshops and events to enhance complex operations training and education and review complex operations doctrine.

The CCO will link USG education and training institutions, including related centers of excellence, lessons learned programs, and academia to foster unity of effort in stability operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare—collectively called complex operations. The DOD, with support from the State Department and USAID, established the CCO as an innovative interagency partnership. Recognizing that unity of effort across disparate government agencies and across DOD components requires shared intellectual and decision-making frameworks, the CCO will connect education and training programs across the government to foster a “whole of government” understanding, assessment, and approach to complex operations.

The CCO was specifically established to:

- Serve as an information clearinghouse and knowledge manager for complex operations training and education. The CCO acts as a central repository of information in areas like training and curricula, training and education provider institutions, complex operations events, and subject matter experts.
- Develop a complex operations training and education community of practice to catalyze innovation and development of new knowledge, connect members for networking, share existing knowledge, and cultivate foundations of trust and habits of collaboration across the community.
- Serve as a feedback and information conduit to OSD and broader USG policy leadership to support guidance and problem solving across the community of practice.
- Enable more effective networking, coordination, and synchronization to support the preparation of DOD and other USG personnel for complex operations.

- Support lessons learned processes and best practices compilation in the area of complex operations.
- Identify education and training gaps of the DOD and other USG departments and agencies, and facilitate efforts to fill those gaps.

The CCO grew out of three separate but conceptually related initiatives. DOD Directive 3000.05, *Military Support to Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction* called for the establishment of a center of excellence for stability operations. Likewise, the irregular warfare (IW) roadmap from the Quadrennial Defense Review asked DOD to develop a similar center for IW. Meanwhile, the State–DOD interagency counterinsurgency initiative sought to establish a center of excellence for interagency counterinsurgency. Rather than creating three new duplicative centers, interagency stakeholders decided that a consortium leveraging existing institutions would be more effective and efficient. The CCO is also supportive and complementary to the State Department’s S/CRS-led National Security Presidential Directive-44 initiatives.

A core CCO support center staff, led by the CCO director, manages CCO activities and program elements. Based out of the offices of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at NDU, the team leverages and networks within existing complex operations education and training, academic research, and lessons learned integration efforts across the USG. The support center team is augmented by detailed manpower support from other departments and agencies. Supporting departments and agencies include the State Department’s S/CRS and Political–Military Bureau, USAID Office of Military Affairs (OMA) and Headquarters Department of the Army Stability Operations Division, that provide part-time support. The CCO support center has been operational since July 2007 and was officially activated in April 2008.

## **CCO Governance**

### **CCO Executive Committee**

The strategic policy and governance of the CCO are directed by the CCO executive committee. Membership is comprised of USAID; State Department’s Political–Military Bureau and S/CRS; and the Joint Staff Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) Global Security Affairs. This committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the CCO’s strategic direction and investment plans and for choosing the CCO’s director. The executive committee is chaired by the director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy. Members of the executive committee include:

- Assistant Secretary Political–Military Bureau (State Department).
- Coordinator, S/CRS (State Department).
- Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (USAID).
- Deputy Director for Global Security Affairs (Joint Staff Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy [J-5]).

### CCO Steering Committee

The steering committee is made up of a group of peers from the DOD, State Department, and USAID. The role of the steering committee is to support the executive committee, develop the strategic plan, and shape the actions and events of the CCO. The steering committee also reaches out to leading complex operations entities, including the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Foreign Service Institute, and NDU. The steering committee is chaired by the CCO deputy director, OSD–Policy, Stability Operations Capabilities. Members of the steering committee include:

- Department of State Political–Military Bureau.
- Department of State S/CRS.
- USAID Office of Military Affairs.
- Joint Staff Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) Global Security Affairs.

The CCO is a DOD-led collaboration with the Department of State and USAID. It supports separate but conceptually related DOD and State stability operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare efforts.

For additional information or for assistance with complex operations training and education questions, please contact the CCO support center at <[info@ccoportal.org](mailto:info@ccoportal.org)>, or call 202 433-5217.

## Chapter 1

### U.S. Government Interagency Lessons Learned Hub for Complex Operations

#### Provincial Reconstruction Teams of the United States in Afghanistan: The Problems of Structure, Counterinsurgency, and the Afghan Perspective

**Matt Van Etten, Center for Complex Operations**

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As the Taliban were ousted from power in Afghanistan in late 2001, the international community was presented with a huge dilemma: what is the best way to create the foundations for a stable and effective state here? Over the next two years, American military planners developed a plan for a set of temporary civil-military organizations designed to generally extend the reach of the new Afghan government into the most remote locations of the country. These new structures were called provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). Today, there are 26 PRTs in all; 12 led by the U.S., mostly concentrated in the eastern part of the country, and the remaining 14 led by 13 other allied countries.<sup>1</sup> Given the wide range of conflict/post-conflict conditions around the country, PRTs were given only the most general guidelines towards supporting the end goal of a stable Afghan nation.

From the beginning, American PRTs have reflected a decidedly military-centered framework of ideas regarding how the Afghan nation should be secured and stabilized, especially since Afghanistan's level of security started to decline in 2006. This rise in insecurity in Afghanistan coincided with the ascent of the doctrine of counterinsurgency (COIN) in the U.S. military, a set of principles that has revolutionized American military efforts in Iraq. Based on a groundbreaking field manual put out by U.S. Army Headquarters in late 2006, COIN doctrine is rooted in "using all instruments of national power"—military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions—"to sustain an established or emerging government."<sup>2</sup> While written for the theater of Iraq, many leaders in both the military and civilian worlds (including U.S. commander General Stanley McChrystal) have been eager to apply its tenets to Afghanistan after its perceived success as a guiding doctrine in Iraq.

PRTs have been central in this effort, given their mission to synthesize the very combination of resources that COIN dictates as being the key to stability in a conflict to post-conflict zone. But within all this, a critical question emerges regarding PRTs and the search for a winning formula: how compatible is COIN with the military-centric structure of American PRTs, and in turn how does this relationship match up with the perceived and actual effectiveness of American PRTs in Afghanistan?

The following analysis reveals a problematic gap between the ways in which American leaders view and carry out the work of PRTs, and the ways that Afghans perceive the effectiveness of American (or otherwise U.S.-supported) PRT activities.<sup>3</sup> This gap exists largely because of the imbalanced structure of American PRTs, and specifically because the Department of Defense's (DOD) dominance in the PRT framework conflicts with the renewed importance that American leaders have placed on promulgating the principles of COIN doctrine through PRTs in Afghanistan. Many Afghans perceive PRTs to be inadequate in fostering development, and many do not seem to positively equate PRT activities to the legitimacy and/or effectiveness of the Afghan government. To more effectively carry out their mandate of providing security,

fostering development, and generally assisting the Afghan government in expanding its reach and perceived legitimacy around the country, American leaders must rebalance the civilian and military capabilities of their PRTs.

In the 12 PRTs led by the U.S., DOD personnel greatly outnumber those from civilian agencies. Of the 1,055 total U.S. government personnel assigned to American PRTs in Afghanistan in 2008, fully 1,021 of these represented the U.S. military, while only 34 represented civilian agencies. Of the 50 to 100 total personnel in each American PRT, only three or four individuals tend to be U.S. government civilians or contractors, the rest consisting of a wide variety of military civil affairs personnel.<sup>4</sup> These military personnel have direct access to much larger funding streams than their civilian counterparts giving the military personnel disproportionate influence in planning and conducting field-level operations. Though each PRT's military commander does not command non-DOD civilians, he is still known as "first among equals"—reflecting the primacy given to the security-centered approach that is characteristic of American PRTs.<sup>5</sup>

Why have American leaders chosen to put the military at the center of the PRT apparatus in Afghanistan? In one sense, the centrality of military personnel and resources reflects the overall dominance of the military in the U.S. government's ongoing mission in Afghanistan as kinetic activity persists across wide swaths of the nation's territory. Also, the U.S. military simply has a clear advantage in operating effectively throughout Afghanistan—especially in remote and volatile areas—given the Armed Forces' vast combined resources, clear organizational structure, and incomparable funding streams.

The most important funding stream going to American PRTs is the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) which allows a PRT commander to request massive amounts of money in a very short amount of time. Therefore, CERP funds allow American PRT personnel to implement development projects at a much faster rate than other nations' PRTs. However, interagency coordination—and overall American PRT efforts—ultimately pays a price. While official guidance calls for these commanders to coordinate CERP projects with their civilian counterparts, at the end of the day it is the commander who has primary access to this generous funding stream, as well as the power of initiative. In addition, once a CERP-funded project has been chosen, the commander presides over a great number of civil affairs personnel to assist in the implementation of the project.

Given the U.S.' relatively military-centered approach to PRTs, American leaders seem to have concluded that while the DOD may not be the best agency to forward development, it represents the best option available in a situation where substantial force protection is essential. Instead of taking the risk of allowing civilians to operate in highly dangerous areas it is better to train and equip military professionals to do the essential tasks of stability operations, or so the reasoning goes.

Given the imbalanced nature of American PRTs, as well as the considerably different security situations across the 12 areas of American PRT operations, the channeling of COIN principles through PRTs has produced widely varied results. In both stable and insecure provinces where American PRTs operate, examples can be found of COIN being employed to great effect when American PRT personnel forge creative ways to directly bolster the operations of, and local perceptions towards, the Afghan government. In Khost, a particularly violent province, the PRT commander reached an agreement with local officials to have district governors, as well as Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army officers, position themselves alongside his

troops during day-to-day operations. In addition, he agreed to place his own civil affairs officers in the local provincial government's own district-center offices. In other examples, American PRTs have maximized their flexibility and versatility to not only protect, coordinate, and train, but also to reach out to ordinary Afghans in efforts to foster dialogue and a greater general understanding of shared goals. In Paktika province, the PRT's leaders sponsored a provincial reconstruction workshop that brought together a hundred tribal elders, local government officials, and representatives from Kabul to discuss the new national development plan.

On the other hand, the main problems concerning the grafting of COIN doctrine onto the military-centric structure of American PRTs include the heavy hand of the military in the direction and implementation of development projects, general disorganization among all PRT members, and the divergent priorities of different actors within each PRT. As Robert Perito explains in his seminal 2005 U.S. Institute for Peace report on PRTs, American PRT commanders often put a heavy premium on getting a project in place as soon as possible—even at the expense of local Afghan involvement. PRTs “often reverted to what was familiar” in terms of maximizing efficiency and fast results in an environment of “rapid turnover among [military] civil affairs personnel,” as well as “pressure from senior military authorities to demonstrate progress” in a short amount of time.<sup>6</sup> Perito goes on to say that this institutional reflex stems in large part from a short-sighted habit of PRT members measuring their effectiveness by “the amount of money spent and the number of buildings constructed” during their short rotations on a PRT.

In addition, the “largely consensus-based decision-making process” within PRTs often leads to friction regarding the implementation of development programs, as constituent PRT representatives from the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Justice, and Department of Agriculture bring divergent mandates from their home agencies to the field.<sup>7</sup> American PRTs do not have central authority figures to set courses of action and focus the collective mandates and resources of the disparate agencies at work in each PRT. As a result, the representatives of these constitutive agencies are never truly compelled to work together.

Given the lack of a unified vision in the PRT system, personality becomes the critical variable in forwarding effective programs and projects, implementing strategies, and coordinating the array of available resources at PRTs. “Where PRT commanders worked closely with civilian and military members, the PRT developed a common vision and sense of aligned purpose,” says a 2006 USAID report. “Where this was not the case, project implementation tended to be ad hoc and driven by response to higher headquarters versus local dynamics.”<sup>8</sup> Some of these issues of misunderstanding have been alleviated by the implementation of a joint, pre-departure training program of future military and civilian PRT personnel at Fort Bragg, NC. However, without a set structure, personality will always be the pivotal factor that determines how effective a PRT will be in carrying out innovative strategies for development and the enhanced legitimacy of the Afghan government.

By considering the perspective of Afghan citizens towards PRTs in their communities, we can more clearly determine the effectiveness of these units as COIN instruments. The reflections of Dr. Abdullah Khalil Ahmedi offer an important angle on how the work of American PRTs is perceived not only by an Afghan individual, but one whose job it is to implement development projects in an area where PRT leaders have attempted to do the same type of work. Dr. Ahmedi is an Afghan engineer working in Panjshir province, and currently serves as provincial manager of United Nations–Habitat (UN–Habitat), an organization managed and staffed by Afghans. When the U.S. established a PRT in Panjshir in late 2005, he says, it immediately altered the dynamic

of the pre-existing relationship between UN–Habitat and the people of the province. The primary reason for this shift was, and continues to be, the massive influence that PRTs can bring to bear through the CERP and other funding streams. Much of the work of UN–Habitat clearly overlaps with the mandate of PRTs in the development sphere, and Dr. Ahmedi says that only recently have PRT representatives really seemed to make an effort to coordinate their plans with members of his organization.

From his office deep in the Panjshir Valley, Dr. Ahmedi describes with frustration how PRT representatives have often heedlessly carried out conflicting projects in his and the PRT’s shared area of operations. “We have [had] a lot of struggle with the PRT,” he says. “They will directly contact the village and start their work, and there will be some duplication between our work and PRT work. So many times I would meet with them and request of them, ‘Please don’t get involved in our projects without our prior information or prior agreement.’”<sup>9</sup> Besides the duplication of projects, Ahmedi notes that such miscommunication has contributed to already high levels of corruption. Many Panjshiris have taken advantage of the communication gap between the PRT and UN–Habitat, soliciting both organizations for funding for the same project or program and then pocketing the difference. “These people are tricky people,” he says of the Panjshiris. “They want to pull the money from everywhere. They never mind about if this is from [UN–Habitat] or PRT. They don’t think about how it complicates the process.”<sup>10</sup>

For all the troubles in the past few years, Dr. Ahmedi insists that PRT representatives have recently been much better about communicating and offering avenues for project collaboration with his own organization. These days, he is often able to get advanced notice from PRT representatives (or other colleagues) about a PRT project in the works; and when he does, he will sometimes send another engineer from his office to the PRT headquarters to offer complimentary UN–Habitat resources. “Finally,” he says, “the most recent [PRT] team feels, ‘Oh, there is something that we should share with the UN–Habitat.’ Right now, they are in the proper way.”<sup>11</sup>

Bamyan province, one of the most under-developed and peaceful provinces in Afghanistan, has been hosting a PRT run by the New Zealand Defense Force since 2003.<sup>12</sup> Most Bamyans are members of the Hazara minority ethnic group, and have generally been neglected (and even systematically persecuted) by Afghan central governments for over two centuries. At a *shura* (council) meeting of around fifteen tribal elders, the men expressed exasperation that the international community continues to throw millions of development dollars at more hostile provinces, while conditions here in Bamyan are comparatively ripe for long-term, sustainable development. The people of Bamyan, they say, seem to be getting punished for being peaceful. This is a common complaint of Afghans in more secure provinces. Sadly, however, their plight becomes more understandable when the situation in Afghanistan is viewed through the lens of COIN, wherein those areas with the greatest security problems receive the most attention and resources.

These *shura* elders are generally grateful of the work that New Zealand’s PRT has done in Bamyan, especially in the realm of preventative security. But they also voice a more pressing concern that their PRT is wasteful and woefully underachieving in the realm of development. Many projects, one elder says, are only “for show. [They move] a few tracts of soil, then make a picture that they have invested a lot of money.”<sup>13</sup> Another elder says that many of the projects the PRT is doing “consume a lot of money, with a small output.”<sup>14</sup> This sentiment is echoed in other Afghan communities where the PRT has contracted out work to private companies.

A more incisive complaint comes from a couple of elders who call attention to New Zealand’s comparatively humble place on the totem pole of contributing nations in Afghanistan. “We ask

the PRT for more help, but PRT answers that they are not a rich country, they are a small country . . . New Zealand says they are a poor country, and Bamyan is a poor province, so zero plus zero equals zero.”<sup>15</sup> These elders make clear their belief that if the U.S. or Germany were the lead nation for their PRT, they would surely make bigger strides in development. “Is it possible that the world community should change this PRT team,” one says, “and put a rich country PRT team here, that they should do something for our reconstruction.”<sup>16</sup>

Judging by such protestations, these elders seem unaware that CERP funding is actually behind a great deal of development in Bamyan. Brent Iggo and Eileen Stiffey, two military staff officers at New Zealand’s PRT headquarters, say that American-provided CERP funds represent “the number-one funding avenue for big ticket stuff” here, but this money is more often channeled directly into the Afghan government, in pursuit of the long-term aim of strengthening capacity and increasing responsibility in areas like financial-management.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of the difference between the ways in which the Americans and New Zealanders choose to direct their funds, the fact remains that the U.S. military exerts a huge influence on the activities and priorities of both nations’ PRTs through the preponderance of CERP.

Seyd Talib Mortazavi, an administrative officer working for the Aga Khan Development Foundation in Bamyan, agrees the Bamyan PRT does not do enough for reconstruction, but what they do is truly appreciated (he mentions a recently built high school as one example). He also recalls being in the main bazaar in town one day and seeing members of a PRT security patrol being welcomed by, and mixing easily with, the local population.<sup>18</sup> PRT leaders must view this sort of natural interaction between their representatives and the Afghan people as an achievement, especially when the tenets of COIN hold that this kind of dynamic is a critical extension of the principle of civilian protection in the larger endeavor of winning hearts and minds. Noor Akbari, another development specialist in the provincial center, highlights the PRT’s general training center, which advises local Afghans on everything from “team-building, to purposeful writing, to expressing opinions.”<sup>19</sup>

In two other provinces with American PRTs, Parwan and Kapisa, additional responses further illuminate the broad range of local perceptions toward PRT activities, and also uncover an unexpected complication regarding PRT activities. At a kabob shop in Parwan, about 50 miles north of Kabul, a shopkeeper named Ali Rezah sings the praises of the PRT: they help people in the market area, they build what the elders in the local *shura* request, and they pave roads extensively around his area.<sup>20</sup> However, there is a potential problem in his five-star review—he has given all of the credit to the members of the PRT, and none to his own national government. American PRT projects are very successful, he says, and much better than anything done by the government—which is “corrupt one-hundred percent.”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, he feels the PRT is fighting well against the Taliban on the fringes of his province, while government officials are simply “not fighting.”

Though Ali Rezah’s enthusiasm for the PRT is somewhat encouraging, it is at the same time greatly discouraging—and sadly representative—that he sees a wide legitimacy gap between the effective PRT and the hapless national government, when one of any PRT’s primary goals is to bolster the Afghan government’s perceived legitimacy. In light of this reaction, as well as the generally positive comments of Noor and Mortazavi, it appears critical for Afghan security and development personnel to be portrayed as being out in front as they act alongside more experienced PRT representatives. As much as it is the responsibility of PRT members to train, equip, and prepare Afghan National Army and Police troops for their sovereign duties, PRT members should also make concerted—and even sometimes stage-managed—efforts to portray the Afghans as taking charge of the fate of their own nation.

In American PRTs, and in the Bamyan PRT run by New Zealand, CERP funding plays a disproportionately large role in the implementation of development projects and programs in Afghanistan. While the infusion of massive amounts of money in this way may lead to a profusion of quick-impact projects in areas of American PRT operations, the lack of real sustainability inherent in the current model may be causing an end result of only temporary, surface-level changes. In addition to this risk, the fact that DOD receives the largest portion of American financial and technical resources at each PRT creates an imbalance that reduces the voice of the other agencies in interagency planning and operations. In a COIN framework where the encouragement of stability relies on the coordination of security and development, a model in which the military dominates decision-making and project implementation is fundamentally counterproductive. One solution for increasing the effectiveness of American PRTs—and more importantly, the legitimacy of the Afghan government—is to support more projects and programs that focus on training Afghans themselves for development work. On this issue, New Zealand's PRT in Bamyan offers lessons that are readily applicable to American PRTs, given that such a large part of programmatic funding for Bamyan's PRT comes from CERP funds. New Zealand's PRT has been a fascinating hybrid of the American and European models, given its reliance on CERP but also its priority of working through the Afghan system to provide guidance in development. As one explanation for such an attitude, Major Bryce Gurney, a New Zealand PRT planning officer, says that many of the Afghans he works with are adequately skilled as engineers but have no training in management.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, they are at a disadvantage in bidding for local development contracts but they are not as far behind as one might think. A few focused courses on business training can provide a group of Bamyans with development skills they can apply to their work here for the rest of their lives.

Relatedly, American PRT overseers must realize that when it comes to long-term development, some jobs are better left to others. That is why PRT personnel must better engage and cooperate with organizations like UN-Habitat in the Panjshir Valley—because Dr. Ahmedi, and individuals in his same position, will be there much longer than the PRT and its members will be. While the PRT has distinct advantages in implementing large-scale projects for the people of Panjshir, these efforts are only short-term in nature, and do not adequately apply to programs like elections monitoring and security-sector reform (which require sustained guidance over many years and election cycles). With the relatively (and presumably) limited time that PRTs will be a part of life for the Afghan people, their energy and resources would be spent complimenting the efforts of groups that have been there, and will be there, for a much longer time.

Finally, in the realm of popular perceptions, both American PRT representatives and Afghans in their surrounding areas would be better served if the U.S. government carried out better public relations efforts through the PRTs. Perceptions, of course, are never as important as effective actions. But more substantial attempts at managing expectations on the part of PRT representatives, as well as other contributing country leaders, would allow PRT members to mitigate at least some of the visible frustration of Afghans who are not seeing rapid development unfold before their eyes. The critical *shura* leaders of Bamyan, for example, could be provided with more specific information, such as timelines for anticipated development projects, as well as explanations as to which types of projects are viable and which are not. Furthermore, efforts to show how the Afghan government is taking the lead on some PRT-supported projects could dramatically improve the perceived legitimacy of the Afghan government as well, and perhaps go some way towards preventing cases like Ali Rezah of Parwan who felt that the PRT was effective, but that his government was worthless.

It is important to remember that the failings and successes of PRTs, such as they are, are not the result of a breakdown in some predetermined framework. PRTs were designed to be open to a

sort of constant evolution and responsive to the widely varied conditions on the ground across Afghanistan. As the Obama administration considers all of the tools at its disposal in renewing the American effort in Afghanistan, it must instill a stronger balance within the PRT framework to ensure that the stability they aim to provide proves sustainable as the Afghan government strives to assume greater responsibilities.

## Endnotes

1. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq*, GAO-08-905RSU (Washington, D.C., 26 September 2008), p. 1.
2. David H. Petraeus and James F. Amos, *Counterinsurgency: Field Manual 3:24*, (Washington D.C., Department of the Army Headquarters, 15 December 2006), p. xi.
3. In the summer of 2008 I traveled through Afghanistan for 10 weeks, conducting one-on-one interviews and group discussions with both Afghans and members of the international community there. These discussions were held in Kabul as well as in the provinces of Panjshir, Bamyán, Parwan and Kapisa.
4. GAO-08-905RSU, p. 2.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
6. Robert Perito, “The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan.” United States Institute for Peace, October 2005, p. 8.
7. Nima Abbaszadeh; Mark Crow; Marianne El-Khoury; Jonathan Gandomi; David Kuwayama; Christopher MacPherson; Meghan Nutting; Nealin Parker; Robert Perito; Taya Weiss. “Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations,” The Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, January 2008, p. 50.
8. United States Agency for International Development. “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment,” June 2006, p. 10.
9. Discussion with Dr. Ahmedi, July 2008.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Bamyán province lies in the Regional–Command East security zone, where the U.S. is the lead nation in command. Therefore, the inhabitants of Bamyán, as well as all personnel in the New Zealand Defense Force in Afghanistan, are actually under the broader jurisdiction of the American forces in Afghanistan.
13. Group discussion with member of Bamyán *shura*, August 2008.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*

17. Discussion with Brent Iggo and Eileen Stiffey, New Zealand Defense Force officers, August 2008.

18. Discussion with Seyd Talib Mortazavi, administrative officer of the Program for Professional Development, Aga Khan Foundation, August 2008.

19. Discussion with Noor Akbari, development specialist, Aga Khan Foundation, August 2008.

20. Discussion with Ali Rezah, shopkeeper, August 2008.

21. Ibid.

22. Discussion with Bryce Gurney, New Zealand PRT planning officer, August 2008.

## Chapter 1

### U.S. Government Interagency Lessons Learned Hub for Complex Operations

#### Civil-Military Cooperation in Microenterprise Development

Borany Penh, USAID; Mayada El-Zighbi and Peter Stevens, *Banyan Global*

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Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq provide new opportunities for civil-military cooperation as well as new sources of contention.

Despite the concerns that PRTs have raised in Afghanistan, according to USAID's Borany Penh, who worked with PRTs in 2007 to develop a common planning framework, "With their unique potential to exploit complementarities and their access to knowledge of the local context, the PRTs likely will remain the primary vehicle for civil-military cooperation in Afghanistan well into the future."

During periods of conflict civilian actors often rely on the military for protection while retaining their neutrality; in natural disaster settings civilian and military actors also have a long tradition of working side by side, albeit sometimes uneasily. In recent years, however, the concept of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan and Iraq has provided new opportunities for civil-military cooperation as well as new sources of contention.

PRTs are a new model of civil-military cooperation to help the national government, in partnership with local communities, develop the institutions, processes, and practices to create a stable environment for long-term political, economic, and social development.<sup>1</sup> In Afghanistan, PRTs are working to improve security, extend the reach of the national government, and facilitate reconstruction in priority provinces until more traditional forms of development assistance can resume.<sup>2</sup> They range in size from 60 to 375 people, with civilians generally comprising a small minority.

The first Afghanistan PRT was established in the province of Gardez in December 2002. Currently 25 PRTs operate in Afghanistan: 13 are led by NATO/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the relatively more stable provinces, and 12 are led by the U.S. in less stable areas.<sup>3</sup> Most U.S.-led PRTs are headed by a commanding military officer with the civilian side represented by a U.S. Department of State officer and a USAID field program officer. Some PRTs are also staffed by a USAID alternative development advisor and an agricultural officer from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## **Civil-Military Cooperation on Microenterprise Development in Afghanistan**

Reconstruction projects implemented by the PRTs range widely: basic infrastructure and repair, cash-for-work, training in governance and other sectors, and enterprise development. Funding for these activities also varies, depending on who is leading the PRT. For U.S.-led PRTs, financing comes from either the Commander's Emergency Response Fund (CERP) or civilian assistance funds. CERP and civilian funds cannot be mixed, but they can be used for complementary activities and personnel from both sides can advise on their use.

USAID assistance to the PRTs comes from either its Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program, which is designed specifically to support the PRTs, or its other bilateral assistance programs. PRT support for microenterprise development in Afghanistan comes largely through collaboration with USAID bilateral programs such as: the Agriculture, Rural Investment and Enterprise Strengthening Program (ARIES); the Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP); the Afghanistan SME Development Activity (ASMED); and the Afghanistan Credit Support Program (ACSP).<sup>4</sup> USAID technical experts work with PRT personnel to identify microenterprise needs in the PRT province, design the intervention, and manage implementation of the activities.<sup>5</sup>

Although the civil-military collaboration process can be arduous, several collaborations look promising.

The Gardez PRT leveraged CERP and civilian funding to turn small, disparate agricultural cooperatives in Logar province into an organized and equipped business association with better market linkages and greater negotiation power. They began by providing \$175,000 in CERP funding to construct five solar-powered underground cold storage units, which allows the produce to be sold during winter at prices three or four times higher than at harvest time. The PRT took the process a step further by using the cold storage units as an incentive for the cooperatives to form an association, the Consolidated Agricultural Storage Association of Logar (CASAL). With \$10,000 in funding and technical assistance from the ASMED program, CASAL teaches members about the importance of quality assurance/control and functions as a market intermediary with more favorable prices than typical middlemen. Using the assets provided by the PRT as collateral, CASAL can also secure larger loans to invest in the association and its members. CASAL is now pursuing a \$25,000 collateralized loan with ARIES.

The Uruzgan PRT, led by the Netherlands, is working closely with USAID and the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation to establish an investment and finance cooperative (IFC) in the province. These Sharia-compliant, member-based institutions offer communities a new range of financial services outside of the illicit poppy industry and keep members' capital in the province for local investment. The IFC will follow the model of other successful IFCs under the ARIES program. It will be subsidized for about two years after which it is expected to become self-sustaining through fees and its ability to attract shareholders. The IFC eventually will be run by Afghans, but initially international technical experts will work as trainers and mentors.

## **Despite Positive Developments, PRTs Face Obstacles**

### **Measuring Impact**

Despite the PRT mandate to facilitate provincial stability and reconstruction, there is considerable debate about the impact PRTs are having on the ground. The Afghanistan PRTs continue to operate without a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system. Although both

the civilian and military components are accustomed to such systems, the disparate composition of the PRTs poses an ongoing challenge.<sup>6</sup>

### **Lack of Technical Capacity**

Technical expertise is provided by civilian advisors who generally constitute the minority of PRT personnel. Moreover, not all civilian personnel have the technical capacity to manage or implement microenterprise activities in the special context of Afghanistan. USAID development advisors embedded in PRTs and collaboration with bilateral USAID programs can partially address these capacity gaps, but nonetheless the need for technical expertise far exceeds the available manpower.

### **Sharing Space with NGOs**

Many international NGOs were founded to provide humanitarian relief to populations affected by war and embrace common principles of compassion, neutrality and impartiality as well as an implicit source of security. The dual military/civilian structure of PRTs blurs the traditional distinction between these two actors, which affects perceptions about NGO neutrality and assistance. One report contends that “[w]hen international forces are involved in a spectrum of roles that ranges from capturing insurgents and bombing schools and clinics, confusing messages are sent to the civilian population about the differences between foreign military and civilian roles.”<sup>7</sup>

The United Nations has brokered dialogue and agreement between humanitarian and military actors in Afghanistan on core principles for delivering humanitarian assistance and on how to engage in the same space. This type of coordination mechanism has worked in the past (such as the NGO Coordination Committee in northern Iraq in 1991), but in several cases failed to avert tensions (such as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor, and Somalia). Yet, most of this coordination has focused on humanitarian assistance, while many NGOs are now working across the relief-development continuum, and the military is engaging more proactively in microenterprise development in Afghanistan. Some USAID microfinance partners have temporarily set up operations “inside the wire” at a PRT forward operating base to enhance coordination and speed the launch of activities. However, this arrangement is unlikely to become mainstream practice with the many NGOs concerned about perceptions of their independence and neutrality.

Despite the concerns that PRTs have raised in Afghanistan, according to USAID’s Borany Penh, who worked with PRTs in 2007 to develop a common planning framework, “With their unique potential to exploit complementarities and their access to knowledge of the local context, the PRTs likely will remain the primary vehicle for civil-military cooperation in Afghanistan well into the future.”

#### **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. Government.

## Endnotes

1. PRTs emerged from a struggle within the U.S. government to integrate a “whole of government” approach to post-conflict reconstruction at the local level.
2. ISAF PRT Handbook.
3. <[www.nato.int/isaf/topics/recon\\_dev/prts.html](http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/recon_dev/prts.html)>.
4. See <<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Programs.aspx>>.
5. Unlike CERP-funded activities which the military implement directly, most of USAID’s assistance programs are implemented by international and local partners ranging from private contractors to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
6. There are, however, current efforts led by the State Department’s Office of the Coordinator for Stability and Reconstruction (S/CRS) to systematize planning, including monitoring for results or effects.
7. <[www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr147.html](http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr147.html)>, page 5.

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## Chapter 1

### U.S. Government Interagency Lessons Learned Hub for Complex Operations

#### The Muscatatuck Center for Complex Operations

COL Barry Richmond

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#### The Beginning

The Indiana Farm Colony for Feeble Minded Young Men was created in 1919 in rural south central Indiana to provide custodial care for male youth with mental disabilities. Over the next eight decades that small, rural farm complex grew into the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center caring for both male and female patients of all ages with physical and mental disabilities. It became a small city of nearly 5,000 tucked away in the hills of southern Indiana where, at its peak, 2,500 patients were cared for by nearly as many health care providers.

In 1941, less than 50 miles away, the U.S. War Department was looking for a site to build a training center in anticipation of the U.S.' possible involvement in the war. Central Indiana was appealing because of the availability of rural land, vast underground water supply, and access to the nearly 250 daily trains that moved through Indianapolis and surrounding towns. From January 1942, when construction began, until June that year, when the first post order rolled out, over 15,000 civilians worked around the clock to build Camp Atterbury. When they were finished, a \$35 million dollar, division-sized training base of 40,000 acres and 1,780 buildings replaced nearly 750 farmsteads and two towns. The next four years saw over 250,000 soldiers trained for duty overseas and over 500,000 returning from World War II.

#### The Momentum Builds

Camp Atterbury evolved through a number of changes since World War II, closing and opening a number of times until 33,000 of its 40,000 acres was licensed to the Military Department of Indiana as a Reserve Forces training area in 1969. In coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, who administered the land title, the Indiana National Guard, through the National Guard Bureau, began a multi-million dollar modernization that continues today. Camp Atterbury had been one of the Army's state-operated mobilization stations for years and regularly practiced for mobilization, though few believed it would ever occur. In 2002, a trickle of mobilization support to other installations began, followed by assignment as one of FORSCOM's and First Army's mobilization platforms in January 2003. By the end of calendar year 2009, over 60,000 military personnel, mostly Army Guard and Reserve but some Air Force and Navy, will have mobilized for duty in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other overseas assignments. Camp Atterbury transformed from a National Guard Heavy Maneuver Training Center to an enduring Mobilization Training Center and Army power generation platform as one of the Army's principle force generation installations. Supported by First Army and the Army Installation Management Command, as well as the National Guard Bureau, Camp Atterbury's ability to mobilize and train military personnel has reached a new zenith.

Shortly following the September 11, 2001 tragedy, the Indiana National Guard strategic planners began to change the focus for meeting future training needs. They identified a need for training emergency responders and National Guard Soldiers in a catastrophic environment and began

looking across Indiana for training options to enhance Camp Atterbury's capabilities. The group became aware of the Indiana state government's intent to divest itself of the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center, tear down the structures, and return the site's original rural character. Though a memorandum of agreement to that effect was in place, the Indiana National Guard leadership, after visiting the Muscatatuck Hospital Complex, and realizing the remarkable urban training possibilities, convinced the Governor to stay the destruction, and give the Indiana National Guard the opportunity to develop Muscatatuck as a domestic urban training site. Muscatatuck Urban Training Center soon became a linchpin to realistic urban training and keystone of the strategic vision.

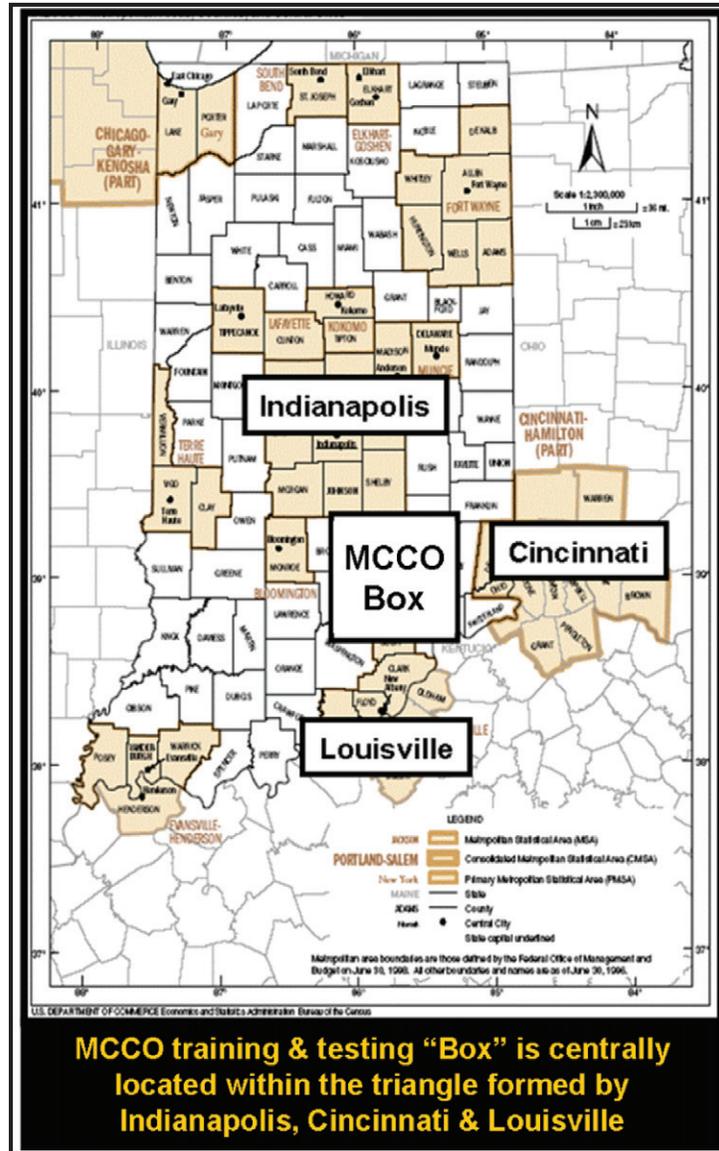
In July 2005, in a ceremony presided over by Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman and Adjutant General R. Martin Umbarger, the Muscatatuck facility was transferred to the Indiana National Guard to operate as an urban training center. The massive 1000-acre complex consisted of 68 structures constructed from 1920 to 1985 and offering nearly 900,000 square feet of floor space in unusual and complex layouts. Nine miles of circular road patterns and over a mile of underground tunnels, connecting nearly 80 percent of the buildings, added to the complexity. Little of this would be purpose built today because of the enormous expense of building a fully-functioning city infrastructure devoted solely to training.

### **The Vision Realized**

As a mechanism for converting vision into reality, the Muscatatuck Center for Complex Operations (MCCO) was developed as a "flat" business oriented organization overseeing the operations and development of Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Indiana Professional Education Center, and the aerial gunnery ranges at Camp Atterbury and Jefferson Proving Grounds. The MCCO is focused on developing a remarkable complex environment that seeks to create an accurate context in which the U.S. and whole of nation team can share a collective, team of equals experience prior to employment in harm's way.

The MCCO vision is providing the customer the most realistic, fiscally responsible, contemporary operating environment possible to train joint, interagency, inter-governmental, multi-national, and non-governmental (JIIM-NGO) teams. Focused on supporting training missions associated with protecting the homeland and defending the peace, MCCO has additionally embraced the research, development, test, and experimentation community presenting it with a unique opportunity to synchronize and synergize testing and training.





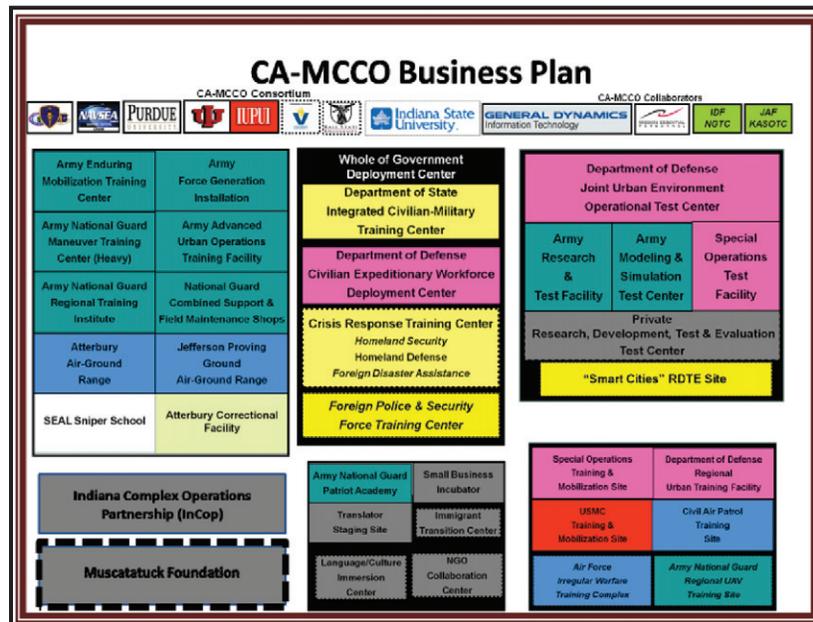
With a mission focus on the whole of nation team, MCCO provides mobilization and training capacity for military and civilian organizations in preparation for their deployments/ employments:

- Overseas in support of stability and reconstruction operations within failed, failing, or crisis-engulfed states.
- Domestically in support of prevention, protection, recovery, and response operations directed towards the mitigation of major natural and man-made catastrophes.
- Both overseas and domestically in support of operations directed toward deterring, disrupting, and defeating terrorist threats.

Additionally, the MCCO offers the capacity to integrate operational testing and evaluation of technology into on-going training to assist in rapidly deploying technology solutions to the field.

## Muscatatuck Center for Complex Operations—A Stone Soup Approach

As a way to facilitate the integration of Camp Atterbury and Muscatatuck, the vision was translated into a business-focused plan and organizational model. The business plan concentrates on building strong partnerships through a lean model that encourages innovation and creativity, and provides agility uncommon of most military structures.



*Stone Soup*, an old French folk tale transformed across many tellings, speaks of hungry soldiers passing through a famine-ravaged village. Unable to get anyone to feed them, they set up a boiling pot of water in the town square and ceremoniously tossed in some river stones. Their curiosity aroused, one by one, villagers were encouraged to each contribute a carrot, radish, cabbage, etc. from their meager stocks. The watery broth became a rich and robust “stone soup” shared and celebrated by the entire village. The moral: partnership creates a plenty greater than individuals could enjoy through their contributions alone. This stone soup approach was translated into an MCCO strategy of partnership and program development that continues to evolve.

While partnering is not necessarily unique across U.S. government agencies, the depth and breadth of MCCO’s intent and accomplishment to date is remarkable. Teaming with multiple agencies, academic institutions, and businesses the MCCO is transforming training opportunities into an affordable, rich texture of interwoven operations and opportunities that create unique training complexities not easily achieved elsewhere.

The MCCO is the integrating headquarters for a consortium of state, federal, and private facilities, capabilities, and programs. It operates under a unique business plan designed to bring together what otherwise would be stove-piped activities. Activities that, working together, form a common, highly realistic training and testing operating environment enabling the whole of nation team to train together as a team of equals prior to deployment/employment.

The business plan brings together all services, federal and state agencies, universities and colleges, private research activities, and not-for-profit businesses and programs. The plan design seeks to create the elements of the contemporary operating environment at little or no cost by capitalizing on the synergies generated by program cooperation and integration.

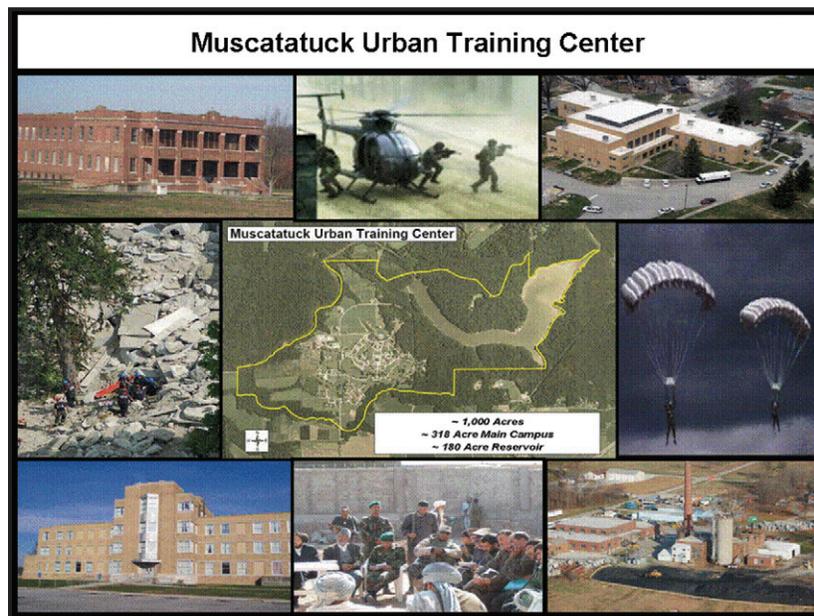
### Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center

Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center (CAJMTC) is a federally-owned, state-operated training and testing facility. Designated as a U.S. Army power generation platform and persistent mobilization site, CAJMTC provides the full suite of ranges, maneuver space, facilities, and airspace required to train the 21st century JIIM-NGO team. Capabilities are being significantly expanded over the next five years so as to create a capacity to simultaneously support an infantry brigade combat team or Marine expeditionary unit, an additional functional or support brigade, and a large mobilization load. The training capability will include the whole spectrum of live-virtual-constructive training domains with the capacity to integrate internal training events with external global exercises. The CAJMTC assets include special use airspace (both restricted and military operating areas), an integrated air-ground range, and the FCC license to employ electronic devices found in today's operating environments.



## Muscatatuck Urban Training Center

The Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (MUTC) is a state-owned, federal-licensed, state-operated advanced urban training facility. A “living, breathing city,” MUTC is capable of supporting the stability and reconstruction training requirements of both kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities—with heavy emphasis on the non-kinetic. The site incorporates a design feature that seeks to replicate the contemporary operating environment in its three complexity vectors: infrastructure, electromagnetic/informational, and human. The site contains the full spectrum of urban critical infrastructure, all of which is operational and all of which can be attacked/compromised to support specific training scenarios. Training venues support the essential tasks lists for the whole of government and whole of nation team components. Like CAJMTC, MUTC assets include special use airspace (both restricted and military operating area), an integrated air-ground range, and the FCC license to employ electronic capabilities found in today’s operating environments.

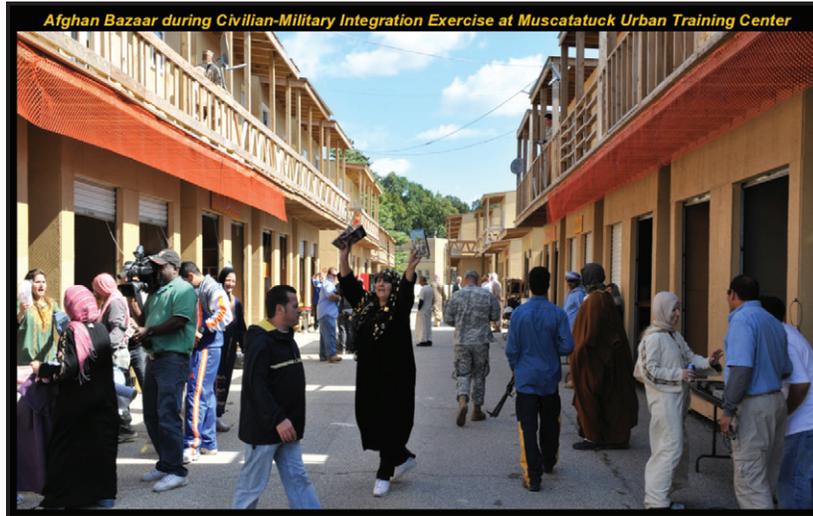


## Current Training & Programs

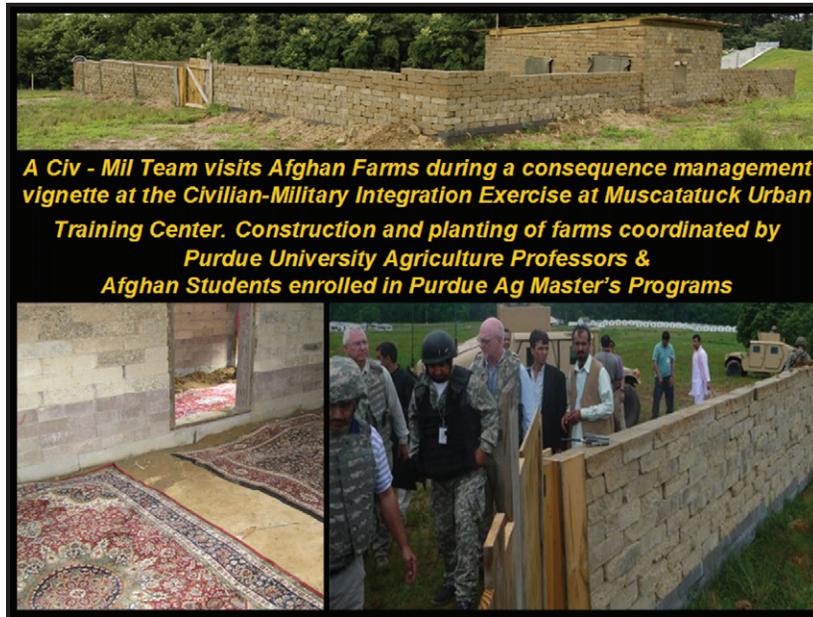
Camp Atterbury’s current core mission is supporting First Army and the mobilization of thousands of military personnel each year. Through creative resource scheduling, Guard, Reserve and Active Component also conduct pre-mobilization and sustainment training. The two aerial gunnery ranges support a number of Air Force, Reserve and Guard aircraft each day as well as supporting Army, Marine, and other air support missions. An airspace system of restricted, military operational airspace and other airspace management structures blanket the facilities and surrounding areas offer necessary airspace complexities. Noteworthy programs include:

- Civilian-military training. In 2009, the Camp Atterbury–Muscatatuck complex was selected by the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) to initiate a unique immersion training exercise focused on special needs of the civilians deploying to provincial reconstruction teams, district support teams, embassy support, and other specialty areas. Working closely with the SRAP office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Foreign Service Institute, the MCCO and

the Indiana National Guard have developed a unique immersion training experience for deploying civilians. Collaboration with Purdue and Indiana Universities, as well as other academic institutions, offers robust cultural, language, and hard science technical experience and capabilities. The Civilian Expeditionary Workforce program and Civilian Response Corps are also developing programs to capitalize on MCCO capabilities.



- Homeland security and defense. Over the past two years, large ARNORTH/NORTHCOM exercises such as 2007 Ardent Sentry and 2009 Vigilant Response have used Camp Atterbury as a base support installation and Muscatatuck Urban Training Center as exercise core. The rich facility complexities coupled with superior support services of the two installations is making the MCCO facilities a destination of choice for large-scale homeland security and defense exercises. Muscatatuck is used for civil support team validation exercises and a variety of federal, state, and local law enforcement and emergency management training venues.



- Research, development, testing and experimentation (RDTE). One of MCCO's core mission sets is to support RDTE and link it to concurrent training, offering the testing program offices a remarkable opportunity for "beta" testing equipment and techniques. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) J-9 Experimentation established a RDTE enclave to better support their cyclical testing requirements, and MCCO is assisting Test Resource Management Command of Research, Development, and Experimentation Command in the Joint Urban Environment Test Capability and other urban research projects.
- Special Operations/USMC. The East Coast Navy SEAL Scout Sniper Course has called Camp Atterbury home since the late 1980s. In FY 2008 the Navy consolidated the West Coast Scout Sniper Course into a single location at Camp Atterbury. SEAL and other SOCOM weapons modifications and support come from Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane which is located in Crane Indiana and is an MCCO partner. Other SOCOM units such as 5th Special Forces Group, 160th Special Air Operations Regiment, and others have long taken advantage of Camp Atterbury's range and training complexes and now look to Muscatatuck's unique urban environment for specialized training. Capitalizing on extensive, non-contiguous MCCO training capabilities, the USMC conducts realistic urban training and exercises a Marine expeditionary unit each year.

### **The Future**

The MCCO continues to build facilities, capacity, and expertise through development of robust partnerships with joint, intergovernmental, interagency, multi-national and nongovernmental organizations. An intense customer-focused and non-prescriptive support approach (MCCO does not tell users who, what, or how to train) is the heart of MCCO's ethos. Fostering an innovative spirit of collaboration lets users own and tailor their programs. Taking advantage of the benefits, economies, and synergies of the evolving programs and partnerships at MCCO empowers users to expand and enhance their own initiatives, often well beyond their individual capabilities. The

future vision is a shared vision—an unfolding reality shaped by JIIM–NGO leadership who reshape paradigms, recognize opportunity, and reward innovation:

- The Muscatatuck Urban Training Center is a living, breathing city of businesses, a school, and language, culture, government and social/cultural structures populated by 1,500 to 2,000 residents and employees—a city that is “in play”, every day, in its entirety.



- Camp Atterbury and Muscatatuck Urban Training Center each support up to 5,000-person exercises with the agility and opportunity offered by strong partnerships that span a noncontiguous south central Indiana training box.
- MCCO provides the U.S. and its allies a unique whole of government and whole of nation training and deployment capability.

For further information about MCCO, CAJMTC, and MUTC please call (812) 526-1499 ext. 2420.



## Chapter 2

### Interagency Operations: Coordination for Reconstruction and Stabilization

#### Whole of Government Approach to Reconstruction and Stabilization Coordination and Lessons Learned

Melanne A. Civic, Center for Complex Operations

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The “trials and errors” of U.S. engagements in fragile and failing states since the early 1990s have led to the recognition that such challenges likely are to become an enduring part of the U.S. security landscape, and that the U.S. government—civilians and military—need to be prepared to respond in a structured and coordinated manner that effectively utilizes the capabilities across the Agencies. The development of this capacity has taken more than a dozen years and three successive Administrations, through Presidential Directives and Department of Defense Directives. Over the past two years, Congressional authorization and appropriations has meant that, on the civilian side, a proactive, “whole of government” approach to conflict prevention and stability operations is coming into being, coordinated through the Secretary of State’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS).

Taking a step back to 1997, President Bill Clinton, in recognition of the complexity and multi-dimensional character of post-conflict, transitional and other stability operations encountered in Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti issued Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD-56). Although it remains a classified document, an accompanying White Paper<sup>1</sup> was produced to outline the general principles of PDD-56, which included establishing a unified strategy and training for the whole of government, collecting lessons learned from operations, and integrating these lessons into improved training and planning for the next engagement.<sup>2</sup> The White Paper made explicit the policy goal of minimizing the U.S. military engagement beyond traditional roles, to assure the judicious deployment of the military, and avoid open-ended military engagements. The White Paper describes that PDD-56, in recognition of the national security challenges of future “complex contingency operations,” calls for U.S. Government agencies to institutionalize lessons and develop and conduct interagency training programs.<sup>3</sup>

In 2005, in response to the lack of sustained progress in preparedness, the continued *ad hoc* approach to stability operations, and massive gaps in coordination most apparent through the efforts of the U.S. Government agencies working with the Iraq Coalition Provincial Authority, and the national security challenges of Afghanistan, Sudan, Haiti, and elsewhere, President Bush issued the National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44).<sup>4</sup> NSPD-44 has been described ironically by the first Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, Ambassador Carlos Pascual as doing for the civilians what Goldwater-Nichols did for the armed services, except without legislative authority and without funding.<sup>5</sup> Although not explicitly building upon PDD-56, NSPD-44 takes a similar approach and a significant a step further.

NSPD-44 calls for a permanent structure for stability operations—under civilian leadership. According to NSPD-44, the Secretary of State is directed to “coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts” among the civilian agencies, and with the Secretary of Defense.<sup>6</sup> NSPD-44 establishes the policy imperative of “improved coordination, planning, and implementation for reconstruction and stabilization assistance for foreign states and regions

at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife.”<sup>7</sup> NSPD-44 has been complemented by Congressional authorization in the “Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act of 2008,” Title XVI of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009,<sup>8</sup> which permanently establishes S/CRS in the Department of State and authorizes the development of a standing civilian surge mechanism to respond to reconstruction and stabilization. S/CRS works exclusively within the framework of stability and reconstruction operations, to seek to thwart conflict or stabilize post-conflict.<sup>9</sup>

Concurrent with NSPD-44, the Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 (DODD 3000.05)<sup>10</sup> of 2005 raised Stability Operations to the level of a core military capability that “shall be given priority comparable to combat operations.”<sup>11</sup> It was developed in consultation with NSPD-44, mirrors the civilian-military coordinating provisions, and mandates DOD and the military services to coordinate with S/CRS, the civilian Agencies, international institutions, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector.<sup>12</sup> DODD 3000.05 was updated and reissued in 2009 under the Obama Administration. Over the last several years, DOD has been developing guidance and doctrine for coordinated military-civilian engagements, particularly for those skills frequently called upon in transitional security contexts—stability policing and rule of law mentoring.<sup>13</sup> DOD and S/CRS have collaborated together and with other interagency partners in military exercises, experiments, training and workshops.

NSPD-44 sets out a mechanism for the National Security Council to oversee agency collaboration to seek to resolve policy issues and decide on unified action.<sup>14</sup> A coordinating body—first known as the Policy Coordinating Committee and now the Interagency Policy Committee (IPC)—is co-chaired by the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, and a member of the National Security Council staff. It is charged with overseeing and facilitating the integration of all military and civilian contingency planning, and civilian R&S operations, in collaboration with coordinating entities for a particular country, region, or subject matter.

The civilian agencies of the Reconstruction and Stabilization IPC include all those currently involved in or with pertinent skills and interests in developing capabilities for responding to reconstruction and stabilization crises. Some of the most active civilian partner agencies include the U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Justice, Department of Commerce, Department of the Treasury, Department of Agriculture, Department of Homeland Security, in addition to input from the Department of Transportation, Department of Energy, and Department of Labor, among others. The “heavy lifting”—the recommendations that the Principal Officers consider in the IPC meetings, are developed at the mid-management and working levels from among the interagency partners—including civilian Agency partners and DOD/OSD, JFCOM, and various military services representatives, through sub-groups and working groups. These groups are organized on the basis of subject areas considered most pertinent and pressing to achieving coordinated stability and reconstruction planning and operations, including sub-groups on Readiness, Planning, Equipping, and working groups on Best Practices; and Stability Police.

Several tasks and processes are outlined in NSPD-44 and affirmed in the authorizing legislation, including the development of improved and coordinated strategies, programming, and foreign assistance funding within and among the agencies; establishing a civilian surge response capability; and identifying lessons learned to inform improvements in operations.<sup>15</sup> S/CRS follows a multi-pronged approach: best practices; a planning framework; an interagency management system; a conflict assessment tool, and development of an interagency corps of civilian experts trained and ready to prevent conflict and respond post-conflict.

First, S/CRS brought together the civilian agencies involved in stabilization and reconstruction operations to capture essential tasks for planners and implementers, in the Essential Tasks Matrix (ETM).<sup>16</sup> Throughout many months of discussions, Department of State bureaus working in these areas, USAID, and domestic-based agencies drew on their experiences in the field, and their knowledge of lessons learned from numerous engagements to come up with as comprehensive a list as possible of all essential activities across the R&S sectors. The ETM embodies best practices, and provides a menu of activities that can be considered by practitioners, and selected and modified according to the particular circumstances of the country or region. Over the past several years, not only has feedback from civilian and military partners indicated that the ETM is a practical tool, but the exercise of bringing together the interagency set the stage for and accustomed the interagency to participate in collaborative efforts.

S/CRS next facilitated civilian agencies and DOD discussions to formulate a USG Planning Framework for Stabilization and Reconstruction according to which the whole of government approach could be organized for response. The Planning Framework is a template for strategic planning across sectors for the particular mission, based on defined objectives that directly support USG national interests. This strategic level planning forms the basis for the operational and tactical level planning that goes on at the mission level or that will be integrated with COCOM level planning, after it is presented to the NSC Deputies or Principals Committee for approval.

Targeting the prevention of conflict, S/CRS and partner agencies developed the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF). The ICAF is a template for U.S. Government interagency collaboration to evaluate the internal conflict dynamics of a country at risk of failure, and to reach U.S. Government consensus on recommendations for potential entry points for additional USG efforts in conflict prevention and transformation.

As a blueprint for coordinated engagement, S/CRS facilitated the development of the Interagency Management System (IMS). The IMS is designed to provide coordinated, interagency policy and program management for highly complex crises and operations, involving widespread instability; which may require military operations; and engage multiple US agencies.<sup>17</sup> The IMS clarifies “roles, responsibilities, and processes for mobilizing and supporting interagency [reconstruction and stabilization] operations,” and will provide one structure under which civilians can be organized when they are called upon to participate in stability operations. The IMS is to be comprised of the Coordination of Reconstruction and Stabilization Group (CRSG), which is an IPC-level decision making body that is supported by a Secretariat, an Integrated Planning Cell (IPC), Advance Civilian Teams (ACTs) and Field Advance Civilian Teams (FACTs). The Secretariat is designed to support policy making, and ensure a single channel for information, draft a unified plan for U.S. government action, and monitor the implementation of policy decisions. The IPC will deploy to the relevant combatant command to ingrate civilian and military plans. The ACTs and FACTs will be the field headquarters and implementation elements, respectively.

S/CRS is substantially increasing the “boots on the ground” civilian readiness capacity to respond to conflict prevention, stabilization, and reconstruction crises. The Civilian Response Corps is a novel government entity that has a hybrid character. Its members are employees of the participating agencies, yet, while engaged in training, planning and operations, function as an interagency team, applying the whole of government approach, are funded through the Department of State and USAID, and coordinated by S/CRS.

The Civilian Response Corps is conceived of as three distinct yet mutually supporting components: Active, Standby and Reserves. S/CRS piloted the Active and Standby components within the Department of State in 2006, with a group of nearly a dozen highly trained Active personnel located within S/CRS, and a roster of approximately 200 Standby personnel. Members of this initial group participated in planning, conflict prevention and stability operations in countries including Lebanon, Haiti, Sudan, Chad, Kosovo, and Georgia. In September 2008, the Active and Standby components were expanded beyond S/CRS to other Department of State Bureaus and multiple U.S. Government agencies. Presently, the Agencies that form the Civilian Response Corps, in addition to the Department of State and USAID, include the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, Health and Human Services, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Treasury. Additional Agencies may choose to become participating agencies of the Civilian Response Corps.

While all three components of the Civilian Response Corps—Active, Standby and Reserves—have been authorized by Congress, only the Active and Standby currently are funded. In 2008 Congress provided initial funding under the FY2008 Supplemental.<sup>18</sup> Additional regularized funding was received in FY 2009.<sup>19</sup> The Reserves remains theoretical.

The Active Component members are full-time U.S. Government personnel who are employed by their home Agency, and whose primary duties involve training, planning for, providing direct support to, and conducting U.S. Government stabilization and reconstruction field operations. Active members commit to be available to deploy worldwide within 48 hours of call-up.

The Standby Component also is comprised of full-time U.S. Government personnel, who have skills applicable to the stabilization and reconstruction context, but their primary work duties may not involve, on a day to day basis, international reconstruction and stabilization. Standby members receive advance training and other preparation, and agree to be available to be called upon to deploy rapidly in the event such expertise is needed to support a reconstruction and stabilization response through a decision of the R&S Policy Coordinating Committee or its successor entity. Standby personnel provide expertise supplemental to other civilian responders in support of a coordinated U.S. Government reconstruction and stabilization response.

Hiring of Civilian Response Corps Active members currently is vigorous and aims at 250 across the participating U.S. Agencies. Additionally the target for identification and training of Standby members is 2,000 across the Agencies. The Active and Standby Corps members are undergoing training, participating in Washington-based planning, and some overseas field-based R&S operations and activities. Active Component members are being readied to serve as experts, mentors, program managers and implementing officers and train and operate together in cross-Agency teams. They also collaborate with the U.S. military through exercises and experiments, and will participate in civilian-military stability operations in the field.

The Reserves component will complement the Active, Standby and other response capacities of U.S. civilian Agencies, and will bring additional skills and capabilities that do not exist in sufficient quantities in the federal government, such as police officers, rule of law advisors, judicial mentors and others. Reservists will be drawn from state and local government entities and the private sector. During required annual training, Reservists will be employed as temporary federal government employees, and when deployed, they will have the status of U.S. Government term employees. The Reserves will provide American citizens another opportunity to engage in public service and to provide the US Government with a corps of individuals with greater breadth and depth of expertise in areas including specialties in rule of law and security. The Reserves ultimately has the goal of recruiting and training of 2,000 members.

During the first several years of its existence, S/CRS experienced what has been characterized by some as “growing pains,” including stalled Congressional authorization and funding, and the challenges of achieving interagency coordination amidst distinct Agency cultures. Despite Presidential and bipartisan Congressional support from the beginning, Congressional authorization was stalled for approximately four years, and direct program and projects funding for nearly as long. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee originally introduced the Lugar-Biden Bill in 2004 to establish S/CRS, but a hold was placed on the Bill by one Senator, preventing its debate on the Senate floor. Ultimately, in 2008, the Bill was enacted through incorporation into the NDAA for 2009, as noted above.<sup>20</sup>

During these early years, the most steadfast and visible ally of S/CRS was DOD, advocating for S/CRS on the Hill, and providing funding for stabilization and reconstruction programs through the “1207 funds.”<sup>21</sup> The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) introduced Section 1207 into the National Defense Authorization Act of FY 2006<sup>22</sup> and FY 2007, in order to jumpstart S/CRS with funding for short-term projects involving interagency coordination reconstruction and stabilization, and DOD was authorized to provide up to \$200 million over two years in funds, services and defense articles to the Department of State.

The challenges of achieving interagency policy coordination were acutely apparent in negotiations to formulate a memorandum of agreement to set the terms and conditions to establish the Civilian Response Corps. Over a nine month period, representatives of the founding eight participating Agencies—policy experts and attorneys-- came together to discuss their Agency’s equities and practical ways to work within this whole of government approach. As one Agency representative commented, “I’m not saying we expected it to be easy, but we didn’t expect it to be so complex either or contentious even at times . . . particularly we didn’t anticipate such institutional resistance from within our own Agencies where international R&S is not part of our core mission.” Another Agency representative noted that “the easy part was acceding to the shared goal of a unified, coordinated approach—the hard part was determining how to get there, while at the same time learning how to communicate across distinct Agency cultures, and to find a path to shared understanding.” As positively concluded by yet another Agency participant, through negotiations of the memorandum of agreement and related processes, “S/CRS is institutionalizing the foundation for dialogue upon which all else will be built.”

Indeed, such growing pains are viewed as understandable by the first Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, Ambassador Carlos Pascual, who noted that the task of achieving “jointness” is a difficult one: “It was a good 15 years from the time of the passage of Goldwater-Nichols until the military started feeling like it was really getting jointness under its belt and understanding what it meant. And so [civilians] must have a similar expectation on these sets of issues. We’re going to have a similar kind of growing process, but we have to keep that vision in mind of the overall U.S. Government strategy of individual agencies cooperating.”<sup>23</sup> Ambassador John E. Herbst, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization characterized the interagency process at first as “a seemingly Sisyphean task”—each advance was met with push-back from all sides and new challenges, and notes that successes in cooperation and coordination “represents the steadfast ability of the U.S. Government interagency to come together with shared interests and goals to address the critical process of whole of government reconstruction and stabilization.”<sup>24</sup>

## Endnotes

1. White Paper on the Clinton Administration's Policy on Complex Contingency Operations: Presidential Decision Directive 56, May 1997.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. "Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization," National Presidential Security Directive (NSPD)-44, signed December 7, 2005
5. Ambassador Carlos Pascual Remarks, All Elements of National Power: Military, Civilian and NGO Perspectives on Collaboration in Post-Conflict Reconstruction Ops, Young Professionals in Foreign Policy, May 5, 2007, <<http://www.yfpf.org/content/all-elements-national-power-military-civilian-and-ngo-perspectives-collaboration-post-confli>>.
6. Ibid.
7. NSPD-44 at 1.
8. Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, P.L. 110-417.
9. S/CRS and its Civilian Response Corps are not designed as a humanitarian response unit, except where a humanitarian crisis is a driver of conflict.
10. DODD 3000.05, signed November 28, 2005
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. See *Rule of Law Handbook—A Practitioner's Guide for Judge Advocate*, <[http://www.loc.gov.rr/frd/Military\\_Law/CLAMO.html](http://www.loc.gov.rr/frd/Military_Law/CLAMO.html)>.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. <<http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/52959.htm>> (last visited August 12, 2008), which builds upon the Joint CSIS/AUSA Post-Conflict Reconstruction (PCR) Task Framework" from *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, (Robert C. Orr, ed. 2004).
17. John E. Herbst, Coordinator for the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization, Statement Before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations Learning from the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Experience (Oct. 30, 2007), available at <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/rm/94379.htm> (last visited November 19, 2009).
18. The Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008, P.L. 110-252.

19. P.L. 111-8, Division H, commonly known as the FY09 Omnibus Bill
20. Op. Cit. at footnote 8.
21. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, P.L 109-63, Sec 1207.
22. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, P.L 109-63; Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, P.L. 109-366.
23. Interview with Ambassador Carlos Pascual, Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy Studies of the Brookings Institution, JFQ / issue 42, 3 d quarter 2006, <[http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq\\_pubs/4226.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/4226.pdf)>.
24. Ambassador John E. Herbst comments, October 27, 2008.



## Chapter 3

### **Five Essays: Commanding Heights, Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations**

#### **Effective Civilian-Military Planning at the Operational Level: The Foundation of Operational Planning**

**BG H.R. McMaster**

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One of the most important lessons of the war in Iraq is that achieving an outcome consistent with U.S. interests demands effective interdepartmental and multinational planning at the operational level. Although it is clear that decentralization is an essential feature of effective counterinsurgency operations, success at the tactical level, if not connected to well-designed operational plans and a fundamentally sound strategy, is unlikely to be sustained. Moreover, junior leaders and soldiers must understand how their actions fit into the overall plan to defeat the enemy and accomplish the mission. Defeating insurgent organizations and addressing the fundamental causes of violence require a comprehensive approach that must be visualized, described, and directed by an operational commander. Commanders at the operational level—that is, the level of war that “links the tactical employment of forces to national and military and strategic objectives” through the integration of “ends, conditions, ways, and means”—must prioritize efforts and integrate them to achieve clearly defined goals and objectives.<sup>1</sup> Clear operational objectives and plans help ensure that the full range of activities and programs are consistent with and contribute to the achievement of policy goals. Sound and continuously revised operational plans are also essential to ensure consistency of effort among units, between military organizations and civil military teams, and over time as the mission progresses.

In addition to integrating the efforts of subordinate organizations, operational commanders and senior civilian officials must also help ensure consistency of effort within multinational coalitions and the interdepartmental, civilian-military team. While an integrated interdepartmental effort in Washington will help in that respect, working together as an integrated team at the operational level is vital. A campaign plan that is understood and accepted by all members of the multinational, civilian-military team is the foundation for achieving unity of effort. The U.S. Army Counterinsurgency field manual emphasizes the importance of integrated civilian-military operational design.

Through design commanders gain an understanding of the problem and the COIN operation’s purpose within the strategic context. Communicating this understanding of the problem, purpose, and context to subordinates allows them to exercise subordinates’ initiative. . . . While traditional aspects of campaign design as expressed in joint and Service doctrine remain relevant, they are not adequate for a discussion of the broader design construct for a COIN environment. Inherent in this construct is the tension created by understanding that military capabilities provide only one component of an overall approach to a COIN campaign. Design of a COIN campaign must be viewed holistically. Only a comprehensive approach employing all relevant design components, including the other instruments of national power, is likely to reach the desired end state.<sup>2</sup>

The military commander and the senior civilian official must form interdepartmental, civilian-military planning teams. Planners must have relevant expertise, knowledge of the situation, and the seniority and Effective authority to speak for their departments.<sup>3</sup> When possible, the planning team should include representatives of the supported government, including its security forces. If political sensitivities do not permit their direct participation, it will be essential to consult government representatives to ensure that the operational plan will help achieve unity of effort with the supported government.

Civilian-Military Planning at the Operational Level Areas of expertise include intelligence, security, security sector reform, diplomacy, international development, public finance, economics, reconstruction, rule of law, and governance.

Operational design begins with the commander and the senior civilian official deriving their mission and operational goals from policy guidance. A solid connection between policy and operational plans is critical to ensuring that plans are relevant and sufficient resources are available to accomplish the mission. Armed with an understanding of what is to be achieved, the commander and senior civilian official should use their planning team to help them understand the nature of the conflict.

Senior commanders and civilian officials must ask first-order questions to ensure that plans and efforts are feasible and appropriate. Inquiry might begin with an effort to identify and describe the causes of violence. Fundamental causes might include grievances or fears, actions of malign external actors (e.g., hostile states or transnational terrorist organizations), the weakness of the government, and communal competition for power and resources. Ultimately, operational design must address fundamental causes of violence if operational plans are to be effective. If operational design is inconsistent with policy or the nature of the conflict, planning is likely to be driven by what planners might like to do, such as minimize the number of forces committed, avoid difficult state-building tasks, or transition rapidly to indigenous government and security forces that are unprepared to assume full responsibility for security and critical government functions.

Because counterinsurgency operations are inherently complex and uncertain, planning will be based on assumptions. Planners at the operational level must identify assumptions explicitly and ensure that they are logical, essential to the plan, and realistic. If assumptions critical to the success of the plan are unrealistic, the plan is likely to have no effect, or do more harm than good. As the conflict evolves, commanders and their staffs must continue to reexamine assumptions, and adjust the plan if events or conditions invalidate them.

An accurate, comprehensive, and constantly revised intelligence estimate is the foundation for planning. Intelligence efforts at the operational level must place the military situation in the context of the political, social, and economic dynamics that are shaping events. The vast majority of intelligence in counterinsurgency comes from below, and from human, rather than technical sources. Although some believe that operational net assessment and other information-based processes can deliver a “system of systems” understanding of the situation, intelligence that is not placed in nuanced political, historical, social, and cultural context, and is not subjected to expert analysis, is useful only for targeting the enemy, and not for understanding the dynamics that are most critical in shaping the outcome of the conflict. Whenever possible, those charged with developing plans at the operational level should travel to sub-regions within the country to gain a detailed understanding of the enemy and political, economic, and social dynamics at the local level. Visits should include meetings with local government officials, tribal or community leaders, and security force leaders. Planning teams must include military and civilian officials with deep historical and cultural knowledge of the country and the region.

After developing the mission and broad objectives, and armed with a comprehensive intelligence estimate, operational planners assist the commander and the senior civilian official in developing the operational logic that will underpin the effort. The operational logic is communicated in the form of commander's intent<sup>4</sup> and the concept of operations.<sup>5</sup> The commanders' intent describes the broad purpose of operations and identifies key objectives that must be accomplished to ensure mission success. The concept of operations may be the most important part of an operational plan, because it describes to military and civilian leaders how they will combine their own efforts and coordinate those efforts with the partner government to accomplish the mission. The concept describes how the operational commander and senior civilian official see the effort developing over time based on the actions and programs they initiate, as well as the anticipated interaction of those actions and programs with the enemy and other sources of instability. A sound concept is essential for allowing subordinate units and civilian-military teams to take initiative. Moreover, a commonly understood concept serves as a foundation on which planners can develop detailed plans in critical focus areas, or along what are now commonly called "lines of effort," while ensuring that those plans are consistent with the overall concept and are mutually reinforcing.

### **The Essential Elements of Operational Plans**

Because an insurgency is fundamentally a political problem, the foundation for detailed counterinsurgency planning must be a political strategy that drives all other initiatives, actions, and programs. The general objective of the political strategy is to remove or reduce significantly the political basis for violence. The strategy must be consistent with the nature of the conflict, and is likely to address fears, grievances, and interests that motivate organizations within communities to provide active or tacit support for insurgents. Ultimately, the political strategy must endeavor to convince leaders of reconcilable armed groups that they can best protect and advance their interests through political participation, rather than violence.

The political strategy must also foster and maintain a high degree of unity of effort between the supported government and the foreign forces and civilian authorities supporting them. Unity of effort depends, in part, on a common understanding of the nature of the conflict, definition of the problem set, and agreement on the broad approach necessary to defeat insurgent organizations and achieve sustainable security. If the indigenous government pursues policies or takes actions that exacerbate rather than ameliorate the causes of violence, the political strategy must address how to influence the government by demonstrating that an alternative approach is necessary to avert defeat and achieve an outcome consistent with its interests. If institutions or functions of the supported state are captured by malign or corrupt organizations that pursue agendas inconsistent with the political strategy, it may become necessary to employ a range of cooperative, persuasive, and coercive means to reverse that situation and restore a cooperative relationship.

The military component of operational plans must be derived from and support the political strategy. The concept for military operations must be grounded in the intelligence estimate. Planners must understand the nature and structure of enemy organizations, their ideology or political philosophy, the strategy that they are pursuing, their sources of strength, and their vulnerabilities. At a high level of generalization, operations should aim to isolate enemy organizations from sources of strength while attacking enemy vulnerabilities in the physical, political, informational, and psychological domains. Defeating the insurgents' campaign of intimidation and coercion through effective population security is a necessary precondition for achieving political progress and gaining the intelligence necessary to conduct effective offensive operations. Military forces pursue "irreconcilables" not only to defeat the most committed and dangerous enemy organizations, but also to convince "reconcilables" to commit to a political resolution of the conflict.

Operational plans must integrate reform of the indigenous government's security agencies and the development of capable and legitimate security forces into the overall security effort. To defeat an insurgency or end a communal struggle associated with an insurgency, people must trust their own government and security forces to fulfill their most basic need—security. While local military units and civilian-military teams focus on training and operating alongside indigenous police and Army units, senior commanders, civilian officials, and their staffs should focus on building the administrative capacity and professionalism of security ministries. Senior commanders must work with the host government to craft a plan for the development of ministerial capacity that is grounded in a common understanding of security force roles and missions, and the force structure necessary to perform those roles and missions. The plan must be long-term. Plans must initiate work on systems and capabilities that take time to mature, such as leader development, public financial management, personnel management, logistics, and infrastructure. Because indigenous forces will ultimately be responsible for maintaining security, security force capability and capacity must be sufficient to maintain security after foreign supporting forces depart.

Identifying and developing capable leaders who are committed to improving the security of all citizens rather than advancing a particularistic agenda or personal interests may be the most critical requirement. Because a lack of trust and confidence in security forces often fuels an insurgency, particular attention must be paid to the loyalty and professionalism of those forces (e.g., through leader development and thorough screening of recruits), and a sustained effort must be made to mediate between those forces and their own populations to build confidence. Because all insurgencies include a dimension of civil conflict, it is important that operational planning for security sector reform be closely integrated with the political strategy and ensure that security forces are generally representative of the population and contribute to improved security rather than to conflict between communities competing with one another. Operational plans must also emphasize fostering cooperation between indigenous military forces, police forces, and intelligence services.

The integration of reconstruction and economic development into security operations is critical to rekindling hope among the population and demonstrating that tangible benefits will flow from sustained cooperation with counterinsurgent forces. Local commanders and civilian-military teams need access to funds and development expertise. Technical assistance should put indigenous systems and leaders at the center of the effort and focus on such critical functions as public financial management. Programs that initiate sustainable economic growth and employment, such as agricultural programs and microloans and medium-size loan programs, are particularly valuable. Operational-level plans should identify and advance macroeconomic policies that remove obstacles to economic growth (e.g., legal impediments to foreign direct investment, and subsidies that provide a disincentive to entrepreneurship or incentivize corruption) and provide a stable economic environment (e.g., low inflation). Plans should also account for international and non-governmental organizations' development programs to reduce redundancies and identify opportunities for collaboration and burden-sharing. If improvements in this area are to be sustained, local efforts must be recognized by and connected to governmental institutions. For example, an effort to build clinics at the local level will fail without ensuring that the health ministry hires health care providers and funds maintenance of the facility in its operational budget. Similarly, efforts to improve governance and law enforcement at the local level must be tied to efforts at the provincial and national levels. Despite the best efforts to improve security and move communities toward political accommodation, the pool of popular discontent from which an insurgency draws strength will grow if local government is ineffective.

Because establishing the rule of law is a particularly important element of effective counterinsurgency operations, it must receive focused attention from military and civilian officials at the operational level. Senior commanders and civilian authorities must work with indigenous government personnel to help establish a legal framework that allows the government to defeat the insurgency while protecting basic human rights. Because effective rule of law poses a threat to the insurgent organization, insurgents will seek to intimidate police and judges. Counterinsurgents, therefore, must protect as well as build police investigative and judicial capacity. Until security conditions permit the normal functioning of the judicial system, government and counterinsurgency forces may have to develop a transparent, review-based detainee system that ensures humane treatment. While it is important to ensure that innocents are not imprisoned, it is also important to keep committed insurgents behind bars. As David Galula observed, if the counterinsurgent releases insurgents back into a violent environment, “the effects will soon be felt by the policeman, the civil servant, and the soldier.”<sup>6</sup> Because detention facilities are critical battlegrounds, it is important to assist the supported government in extending counterinsurgency efforts into those facilities. Important measures include the segregation of leaders, intelligence collection, and rehabilitation prior to release and reintegration.

Operational level commanders, civil authorities, and the local government must infuse all of their activities with effective communications to relevant audiences, especially the indigenous population and the leaders of the supported government and security forces. Critical tasks include clarifying the counterinsurgents’ intentions, countering enemy disinformation and propaganda, and bolstering the legitimacy of the government and its security forces. It is also important to trace the population’s grievances back to the enemy while exposing the enemy’s brutality and indifference to the welfare of Effective Civilian-Military Planning at the Operational Level the population. Operational plans must connect themes and messages to appropriate media platforms and establish a means of assessing how communications are perceived by the population. Decentralization is critical, because local political and cultural dynamics (and their associated messages) will vary considerably. Senior commanders and civil authorities must, however, provide guidance such that local efforts in this area are mutually reinforcing.

Operational planning must also develop an “external solution” to complement the counterinsurgency effort inside the country. Diplomatic, economic, and international law enforcement efforts are necessary to help isolate insurgent organizations from external support. In general, diplomatic efforts should aim to integrate the supported government into the region and enlist the support of reluctant or uncommitted neighbors. Diplomatic or military efforts might also be necessary to convince malign regional actors to desist from activities that undermine the effort.

Once the plan is framed and broadly consistent with the nature of the conflict and the situation, it is important to identify long-term, intermediate, and near-term goals in each focus area and identify the key tasks, programs, and actions necessary to achieve those goals over time. Planners and analysts should identify obstacles to progress in each focus area and propose how to overcome those obstacles. Plans must identify and allocate the resources necessary to accomplish tasks and affix clear responsibility for accomplishing them. Near-term goals should contribute to the first priority of achieving sustainable security and stability. Longer-term goals should aim to help transform the society such that the fundamental causes of violence are dramatically reduced. Ideally, actions and programs undertaken in the near term build toward achieving long-term goals. While it is important to keep long-term objectives in mind, it is also important to understand that there may be no long term if the supported government is unable to achieve

visible progress and gain the trust of the population. Critical, long-term efforts, such as civil service reform, the implementation of anticorruption measures, establishment of the rule of law, and the development of leaders in the security sector must be initiated early if adequate progress is to be made in time to stabilize the situation.

### **Continuous Reassessment**

It is difficult to overstate the importance of constant reassessment. The nature of a conflict will continue to evolve because of continuous interaction with enemies and other destabilizing factors. Progress will never be linear, and there will have to be constant refinements and readjustments to even the best plans. Commanders and senior civilian officials should be aware that overreliance on systems analysis can create an illusion of control and progress. Metrics often tell commanders and civilian officials how they are executing their plan (e.g., money spent, numbers of indigenous forces trained and equipped, districts or provinces transferred to indigenous control), but fail to highlight logical disconnects. Estimates of the situation often underestimate the enemy and other sources of instability. These estimates, in turn, serve as a foundation for plans that are inconsistent with the nature of the conflict. An overreliance on metrics can lead to a tendency to develop short-term solutions for long-term problems and a focus on simplistic charts rather than on deliberate examinations of questions and issues critical to the war effort. Moreover, because of wide variations in conditions at the local level, much of the data that is aggregated at the national level is of little utility.

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### **Endnotes**

1. Joint Publication 3.0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, September 17, 2006), xiii, xx, available at <[http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_0.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_0.pdf)>.
2. Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, December 2006), available at <<http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf>>., 4-4.
3. Areas of expertise include intelligence, security, security sector reform, diplomacy, international development, public finance, economics, reconstruction, rule of law, and governance.
4. “A concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired end state. It may also include the commander’s assessment of the adversary commander’s intent and an assessment of where and how much risk is acceptable during the operation,” DOD Dictionary, available at <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/data/c/11499.html>>.
5. “A verbal or graphic statement that clearly and concisely expresses what the joint force commander intends to accomplish and how it will be done using available resources. The concept is designed to give an overall picture of the operation. Also called commander’s concept or CONOPS,” DOD Dictionary, available at <<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/data/c/3316.html>>.
6. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 62.

## Chapter 3

### Five Essays: Commanding Heights, Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations

#### Complex Operations in Practice

**General Peter W. Chiarelli**

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The U.S. experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan underscore the complexity of modern conflict and the lack of U.S. Government organizational constructs that can effectively deal with this complexity. Despite some useful adjustments since 2001, the U.S. Government fundamentally remains organized for an era of bipolar containment and deterrence rather than the challenges of stabilizing failed and failing states. The multi-dimensional challenges of modern conflicts have resulted in ad hoc orchestrations of all the instruments of national power that are not in tune with the strategic context.

As the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF II), and subsequently as the commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq in 2006, I learned that managing the interwoven kinetic and non-kinetic complexity of modern conflict, not only within the host nation, but within the joint, interagency, and international environments, is the defining characteristic—therefore the challenge—of future operations.

The only national security instrument organizationally designed to operate in complex environments—the military, with its numbers and resources—swamps the capabilities of other, often more appropriate agencies designed for the non-kinetic aspects of complex environments. Short of full-scale overhaul of the U.S. Government, how can we create the capacity to manage and dominate these environments while our national security functions catch up to the speed and flexibility needed in an information age security environment? Part of the answer is to make adjustments to our military forces so they can respond to a greater range of challenges. The Army has taken some major steps in this direction. The other part of the answer is to get our strategy right, being able to identify, understand, and rapidly adjust ways and means to achieve strategic objectives to events on the ground.

#### **A Full Spectrum Army**

The Army concept of full spectrum operations<sup>1</sup> recognizes that we must work in tandem with joint, interagency, and international stakeholders to balance the application of all the instruments of national power. It assumes that purely kinetic operations are no longer the norm, and in most cases the decisive elements in complex operations are more likely to be non-kinetic and informational than kinetic. It fully recognizes Sir Rupert Smith's dictum:

War amongst the people is different: it is the reality in which the people in the streets and houses and fields—all the people, anywhere—are the battlefield. Military engagements can take place anywhere: in the presence of civilians, against civilians, in defence of civilians. Civilians are the targets, objectives to be won, as much as an opposing force.<sup>2</sup>

The Army recently published a field manual on stability operations, FM 3-07.<sup>33</sup> Written with the assistance and collaboration of multiple government and nongovernmental organizations, it provides a framework within which Army forces can work in concert with other agencies and interested stakeholders. FM 3-07 prescribes a level of coordination that will facilitate more rapid movement from concept to action to results.

The Army has also moved away from an organizational model based on large divisions to a much more flexible, brigade-centric structure. This new approach allows the Army to provide a versatile mix of “tailorable” organizations operating on a predictable, rotational cycle to provide a sustained flow of trained and ready forces for full spectrum operations and at the same time hedge against unexpected contingencies at a rate sustainable for our all-volunteer force.

### **Operational and Strategic Flexibility**

FM 3-07 captures many of the difficult civil-military lessons I learned as the operational commander in charge of day-to-day operations in Iraq in 2006. This transitional period was complicated by a political stalemate and an internally and externally fueled sectarian conflict. Sunni and Shia extremist groups were waging not only a counter-government campaign, but also a broader, ethno-sectarian struggle for power in the country. Once the Government of Iraq (GOI) was seated in late May 2006, the level of sectarian chaos that ensued stunted the political and economic progress that had been achieved in 2004 and 2005.

It was difficult for many to see the Iraqi government as anything more than an agent of a Shia conspiracy rather than the hoped for unity government. The operational themes, or lines of effort, were no longer balanced to support the desired outcome; a pronounced adjustment was identified but did not materialize. The design of the operation needed to adjust to the shifting context.

As an enduring lesson for the execution of complex operations, I would submit that not only recognizing transitions, but changing the campaign design in light of changing realities is fundamental to success. This requires structure and leaders who can create and exercise strategic flexibility, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable bureaucratic inertia.

### **Shared Objectives**

Though we approached the GOI strategically as though it were a monolithic rational actor, it was clear there were diverse organizational dynamics complicated by historical sectarian precedent and contemporary politics. During division operations, and later as the Multi-National Corps-Iraq commander, I learned the importance of cultural awareness to force protection. We intuitively recognized the tactical importance of understanding culture and enforced the strategy through training and re-training.

Understanding the basics of culture is not the same thing as sharing objectives with the host-nation government. While the United States saw the escalating violence in Baghdad in 2006 as a crisis requiring immediate action, the Iraqis did not always share our sense of alarm. It seemed the Iraqis were going through a massive, societal convulsion as they worked through their differences. As the body count in Baghdad continued to rise, I confronted senior Iraqi leaders in an effort to push for a coordinated Coalition-GOI solution. Our differing perceptions became clear in their response: “What’s the problem? It was worse under Saddam.” The cultural disconnect created a mismatch between Coalition and GOI visions for the country. This disconnect had major tactical, operational, and strategic consequences.

## **Fighting the Mission, not the Plan**

According to FM 3-07, unified action is “the synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort.”<sup>4</sup> From a Coalition and interagency perspective, clearly working to define operational objectives at an interagency as well as the joint Coalition Force/GOI level ensures a unified operational approach. An important corollary is to continuously fold into the design the strategic value of tactical actions. When actions on the ground significantly alter the construct of the campaign, it is time to reevaluate the ways and means.

The actions of Multi-National Force-West in the Al Anbar region in leveraging a shift of alliances of key informal governance (tribal) powerbrokers at the same time the GOI was struggling to establish legitimacy and capacity revealed a strategic opportunity that could have been leveraged earlier. A unified approach cannot become so rigid that parties become slaves to their plan. The approach must adapt as the actions and results on the ground reveal tactical opportunities that have strategic value.

At the same time, the collaborative approach to unified action needs to optimize and leverage the strengths each partner brings to the operation and the impact it could have on a joint-campaign plan.

As the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations, under Paul Brinkley, worked diligently to reopen many of Iraq’s 162 SOEs, resistance began to emerge in an operational context, where development, diplomacy, and defense were pragmatically linked. Ideology replaced pragmatism along a critical line of effort focused on the Iraqi economy. Incorporating different contextual lessons from Eastern Europe, some could not see the impact of employment on the force protection of our servicemen and women and the direct impact creation of jobs would have in marginalizing extremist elements. Opening even a third of the Iraqi SOEs represented a boost in employment, which, as demonstrated in OIF II, has a direct and visible impact on extremist platforms. Yet, at the national level, there was little understanding of complex operations past the establishment of security.

## **Keeping it Real**

The hybrid nature of modern wars demands that we address information as a domain of the global environment. As we waited for the Iraqi government to define itself through the first half of 2006, we simultaneously engaged in an intense information campaign targeting the Iraqi populace in an effort to marginalize extremists and enhance the legitimacy and capacity of the incoming “unification” government. Transplanting a Western concept, we developed many suggestions for tasks that the GOI could accomplish in its first 100 days. An expectation began to emerge of great things to come.

But we failed to understand that the Iraqis had other priorities. For those involved in complex operations over extended periods, the lesson is, don’t become too enamored of your own message. The expectations we created in the process impacted the expectations not only of the populace, but also the Coalition. We created our own perception of capacity in a situation where capacity was almost nonexistent, and the organizational dynamics of diverse GOI entities—both legitimate and illegitimate—did not fit the expectations created in the information campaign.

In many ways we repeated the mistakes of past wars. Robert Komer's 1972 DARPA report on the organizational dynamics and institutional constraints in the U.S. approach to the Government of Vietnam is eerily prescient. Replace "GVN" with "GOI" and "Vietnamese" with "Iraqi" and you get a sense for how our own optimism may have impacted our approach:

The sheer incapacity of the regimes we backed, which largely frittered away the enormous resources we gave them, may well have been the greatest single constraint on our ability to achieve the aims we set ourselves at acceptable cost ... for many reasons we did not use vigorously the leverage over the Vietnamese leaders that our contributions gave us. We became their prisoners rather than they ours; the GVN used its weakness far more effectively as leverage on us than we used our strength to lever it.<sup>5</sup>

Our intense desire for the GOI to succeed blinded us to the facts on the ground. We failed to leverage the control we had over ministry and national level capacity and legitimacy because of an optimistic belief created by ourselves that unification across the sects and a rational-actor approach to governance would emerge. Our own doctrine now incorporates this lesson in stark language: "Stability operations leverage the coercive and constructive capabilities of the military force."<sup>6</sup>

### **The Value of Values**

The U.S. military is an incredible learning organization. No other government organization I know can so fundamentally change its approach to how it does business with such efficiency and effectiveness as the U.S. Military. Yet the force during 2006 was uneven in understanding the complexities of counterinsurgency and stability operations. We had not yet completed the cognitive transformation to full spectrum operations and Rupert Smith's understanding of how integral the populace was to creating progress.

It is important to note that, as the complexity of operations rises over extended periods, the challenges to ethical and moral decision-making increase. Exposure to brutal acts grinds on the fundamental belief systems of our servicemen and women. The clarity of a "just cause" in the grey area between peace and war becomes questioned in the mind of even the strongest. Balancing the cultural understanding needed in complex operations, the impact our culture can have on a host nation, and the horrific acts that are witnessed requires leader attention and consistent "retraining" of the value sets that define our Nation. When the espoused values of the profession of arms are tested by the brutality of extended operations in the harshness of a culturally foreign place like Iraq, the emerging actual values must be addressed. As Abu Ghraib and other incidents have clearly demonstrated, slips in our value set, no matter how "grey" the operating environment may become, can have clear strategic consequences.

### **Conclusion**

Sir Rupert Smith gives us a view into the future of conflict, while Robert Komer starkly reminds us that, "we have been here before." As the fundamental nature of how we define war changes—where linearity is replaced by the interplay of intertwined operational themes, and the populace becomes the battlefield—complexity will rise exponentially.

The balance between lines of effort must be backstopped by cultural understanding, interagency cooperation, unified action, an acknowledgement of our values within the operational context, and flexibility of operational design. If we are to exist and dominate the current and near-term strategic environment, we must address the nature of warfare with a singular focus across the instruments of national power.

What we learned from history we are relearning in Iraq and Afghanistan: lack of any overall management structure contributed to [the strategy's] over-militarization . . . the absence of a single agency or directing body charged with [counterinsurgency or pacification] contributed greatly to the prolonged failure to carry it out on any commensurate scale.<sup>7</sup>

The complexity of modern wars and the inability to create a government-level, unified, security apparatus for the contemporary strategic environment forced an ad hoc interagency approach and a personality-driven strategic realignment in early 2007 that was, in fact, quite successful.

However, without true understanding of the essence of decision, how bureaucracies create their own inertia, the complexity of modern wars, and the importance of unified efforts, we risk repeating ourselves as we continue forward into an era of persistent commitment.

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## Endnotes

1. “The Army’s operational concept: Army forces combine offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations simultaneously as part of an interdependent joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve decisive results. They employ synchronized action—lethal and nonlethal—proportional to the mission and informed by a thorough understanding of all variables of the operational environment. Mission command that conveys intent and an appreciation of all aspects of the situation guides the adaptive use of Army forces.” FM 3-0, Full Spectrum Operations.
2. Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force, The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 3.
3. Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, October 2008), available at <<http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/repository/FM307/FM3-07.pdf>>.
4. FM 3-07, 1–3.
5. Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN Performance in Vietnam*, RAND Report R-967-ARPA, August 1972, iv, available at <<http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2005/R967.pdf>>.
6. FM 3-07, 2–2.
7. Komer, ix.



## Chapter 3

### **Five Essays: Commanding Heights, Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations**

#### **Command in Afghanistan 2003–2005: Three Key Lessons Learned**

**LTG David Barno, USA (Ret)**

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The operational experience and lessons learned described in this article result from my 19 months as the overall commander of U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan from 2003–2005. As the senior U.S. commander, I held geographic responsibilities to U.S. Central Command for a sub-region that included all of Afghanistan, most of Pakistan, and the southern portions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan—a four-country joint operations area. My first task upon arrival in theater was to establish a new three-star headquarters in Kabul from the ground up, while concurrently assuming overall command of ongoing training and combat operations across the entire area of operations. This unique opportunity provided a host of “lessons learned” stemming from a set of challenges few other commanders at that time faced. My command responsibilities spanned a set of tasks best described on the spectrum of operations as reaching from theater-strategic/pol-mil through the high end of the operational level; my subordinate two-star combined joint task force held tactical and lower end operational level responsibilities across our battlespace.

Three key lessons pertaining to strategic and operational command in irregular warfare during this demanding period stand out. First, focusing on the big picture: strategy not tactics, winning not simply battles, but the war became the central task. Second, the vital importance of integrating the civil-military effort, beginning at the most senior levels, was crucial to success. Finally, the essential task of communicating and building relationships of trust with key players of disparate backgrounds was a prerequisite to achieving effective results. Each of these topics is worthy of an extensive discussion, but this piece will attempt to summarize the most salient points related to each.

Focusing on the big picture seems an obvious principle to promote at the senior level of military command. Unfortunately, the U.S. Army’s cultural predisposition toward “war-fighting” (fighting and winning battles) versus “war-winning” (bringing conflicts to a successful conclusion) remains a powerful influence affecting theater level leadership, so emphasizing the primacy of the big picture deserves strong reinforcement.

Senior commanders are drawn from an environment that rewards tactical level performance. Successful two-star division commanders are drawn from successful colonels and brigadiers who have proven their mettle not as strategic leaders, but as master tacticians. Three- and four-star leaders are chosen from successful two-star commanders—thus a predilection toward the importance of tactical performance is reinforced by our promotion and selection system. Senior commanders are often unwittingly pulled toward operating and prioritizing in ways that have delivered success in their career—a dynamic that often works at cross purposes with the need to understand leadership in new ways, which is the sine qua non of successful operational and strategic command.

Moreover, despite the central civil-military dynamic that defines effective counterinsurgency, the temptation for the U.S. military to “go it alone” and conduct military operations not fully harmonized with civil action remains a challenge—and one played out on several occasions in Afghanistan from 2002-2008. “War-fighting” may not always require civil players to achieve success—“battles” are won, after all, by soldiers—but the much more complex notion of “war-winning” almost always requires a whole of government approach. Successful counterinsurgency campaigns, in the famous characterization of French COIN expert David Galula, are often 80 percent non-military and only 20 percent military.<sup>1</sup>

Focusing on the big picture requires a clear understanding of the policy goals that the military effort is designed to serve. In most cases those goals will not be simply military in nature; some degree of interagency (and sometimes, international) effort will be required to achieve most policy objectives. This presents military commanders with a dilemma: how much should they get involved outside the military sphere? Commanders will not “command” many of the interagency actors whose combined actions will be needed to achieve the policy goals handed down from Washington. Conversely, in such situations, military leaders may not be held fully accountable for the outcome. Do military commanders simply “stay in their lane,” work on the military and security lines of operation, and define their mission statement narrowly to deliver the “military requirement?” Or do commanders extend their horizons, seek maximum flexibility in their mission statements, leverage their military capacity (nearly always the biggest resource available), and drive their organization toward a broader set of whole-of-government policy goals to enable the overarching policy objectives to be met?

From 2003–2005 in Afghanistan, my approach was the latter. As I shared with an overworked staff officer in my headquarters in late 2003, “We own it all.” This outlook was strikingly different from the approach taken by previous commanders (likely operating under other guidance). Previous commanders had limited interaction with the civilian leadership and were operating from a military headquarters that was a 90-minute drive outside the capital of Kabul. In fact, my orders in standing up a new headquarters were explicitly to position it in Kabul and build closer connections with the U.S. embassy and newly arriving U.S. ambassador. This guidance was in belated recognition that (by 2003 at least) geographically separating the U.S. civilian and military leadership during a prolonged engagement in Afghanistan was not a productive approach.

Creating a unified, civil-military approach was a second major challenge. Fortunately, our new U.S. ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad, fully understood this necessity and became an ideal partner in this formidable task. Personalities matter immensely in conditions of crisis, and ours meshed—no small bit of good fortune! Our staffs began to recognize that there would be no seams or “white space” between the U.S. ambassador and the senior military commander, and that expectations were being set for strongly integrated efforts between the two organizations. I understood that if the U.S. military “succeeded” in Afghanistan—won every tactical engagement, killed more of the Taliban—yet the U.S. embassy failed—could not facilitate a nation-wide presidential election, could not complete the Ring Road project, failed to disarm and separate warlords—the overall mission would fail, and U.S. policy goals would not be achieved. This was a fundamental realization that quickly began to shape all of our military endeavors.

The implementation of a unified civil-military approach took a myriad of forms. My day began and ended at the U.S. embassy (where I also resided in a half-trailer)—to better encounter the ambassador at off moments. The first 2 hours of the day included meetings with the ambassador for country team meetings (to demonstrate our one-team approach) and security core group

meetings to cross talk among all the senior U.S. military and interagency players in Afghanistan and synchronize directions. U.S. military officers were seconded to many embassy offices, and five senior military planners were provided to the ambassador to form an “Embassy Interagency Planning Group” that would provide strategic planning for the ambassador and devise metrics and performance measures for the overall U.S. mission in Afghanistan. Ambassador Khalilzad and I would often travel together to key events outside Kabul, and we attended all openings of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) together. This close relationship paid us both huge dividends and was a benchmark for our military and diplomatic organizations (Defense coming from “Mars” and State from “Venus”), clearly demonstrating the expectations for close and supportive relations at all levels.

Communicating and building relationships with actors of all different backgrounds was another critical lesson learned. Military officers are raised and schooled in environments consisting largely of other military officers. The political-military environment of senior command in Afghanistan was anything but military in nature. As the commander of U.S. Central Command, General John Abizaid, noted in his concise initial guidance to me: “Your job, Dave, is big Pol and little Mil,” alluding to the scope of the political-military challenge and the priorities needed in our new approach. To implement this guidance, I began to spend large portions of my time interacting with the many actors in Kabul who significantly influenced the overall international effort in Afghanistan. They too would have immense impact on the success or failure of U.S. policy objectives—whether Afghan ministers, ambassadors from NATO nations, or key UN officials.

Key to achieving some degree of synergy of effort between this diverse set of players were personal relationships. I began to realize early in my tenure that building a personal relationship with each of these key individuals—something which extended beyond simply good manners in office calls—became a “force multiplier,” in military parlance, and created a wellspring of good will and trust that might be of substantial future importance. Mutual trust became an essential ingredient to resolving thorny and contentious issues that were inherent in the international effort in Kabul.

A salient example of the importance of trust-building was the relationship that evolved between the U.S. military and the United Nations in Afghanistan. On a personal level, this was embodied in the relationship that developed between the U.S. military commander and the Senior Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG). Institutionally, these two organizations were highly dissimilar—in some ways from opposing cultures, and populated by dedicated and committed individuals of very different backgrounds who largely viewed each other with suspicion. Given the central importance of the UN mission in Afghanistan to the legitimacy of the international mission, as well as to the looming first-ever Afghan presidential election, an uncooperative or contentious relationship between the UN and the U.S. military was fraught with peril.

At his invitation, the SRSG, Jean Arnault, and I began to have breakfast every Monday morning at his residence. A Frenchman who was a career diplomat, Jean was of dramatically different background and interests than any American general. Yet, these informal get-togethers produced not only useful discussions on issues of mutual importance, but laid the foundation for an increasingly strong personal connection between Mr. Arnault and myself—one that continues to this day. We grew to trust each other and to clearly see where our two organizations had much in common as we looked to the desired outcome in Afghanistan. Moreover, we intuitively realized that neither of our organizations could accomplish its objectives without the help of the other.

The importance of a genuine relationship of shared trust and confidence between two leaders of different organizations was immense. Just as with the institutional diplomatic-military benefits accruing to my ties to the U.S. ambassador, SRSG Arnault's and my organizations (the UN mission and the U.S. military) quickly began to understand that "the bosses got along" and would not brook the "staff wars" that often endanger good relations between institutions with different outlooks and missions. Conversely, the close relationship between the two senior leaders fostered an environment in which subordinates could take broad initiatives on a host of issues knowing that over-arching institutional goals and objectives were shared. When a crisis might erupt in Afghanistan that threatened the security of international aid workers—four Médecins Sans Frontières physicians were murdered in early 2004, and MSF left the country—our personal relationship of trust helped both the United States and the UN evaluate the threat and react in ways that, absent that personal relationship, might have caused the UN to shut down key parts of its vital operations across Afghanistan.

Relationships of mutual respect and confidence with host-nation counterparts are equally crucial in an irregular warfare environment. My senior leader engagements regularly took me to meet with the Chief of General Staff of the Afghan National Army (ANA), General Bismullah Khan. General Bismullah was a Tajik and former mujahid who had fought the Soviets and then the Taliban for his entire adult life. Though only in his mid-40s, he was prematurely aged by long, hard fighting. He spoke always through an interpreter, which further complicated dialogue. That said, we struck a very close relationship and built close ties between our two organizations. Our discussions over tea in his office were always wide-ranging and often very indirect. The highest compliment I ever received from an Afghan came from Bismullah after I had returned to the United States: "(General Barno) never told us what to do in our meetings, but when he left the office, we always knew what he wanted us to do." Indirection and respect for cultural norms had a powerful influence when coming from a commander whose forces were in very real terms guests within the sovereign nation of Afghanistan.

In sum, my "lessons learned" boil down to this: theater level command in an irregular warfare setting demands a broader set of skills than those required of conventional war at the same level. Some basic questions arise as to whether our selection and development of senior officers for command in this environment adequately recognize this fact. Our military leaders today are superbly trained and equipped by their lifelong experience to lead difficult military contingency operations anywhere in the world. Where they may fall short is in understanding the leadership requirements across the increasingly important non-military sphere and their centrality to success in irregular warfare.

Lack of civil resources in most conflict settings will demand that military leaders and their organizations play a very large role in the non-military dimension of irregular warfare and stability operations. Senior military leaders have limited experience and often even less preparation for this role—although 8 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan have now provided some hard-won knowledge that is slowly becoming more common at senior levels. More and more, senior commanders must clearly see the big picture, understand how the military can engage to deliver whole-of-government policy objectives to achieve strategic ends, and possess the personal and cross-cultural skills to build relationships of trust with key actors outside the military sphere. In today's environment of prolonged complex contingencies, these talents are paramount requirements for overall success. We need to closely examine whether our process of educating, developing, and selecting our senior military leaders can meet this strategic leadership challenge.

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**Endnote**

1. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964).



## Chapter 3

### **Five Essays: Commanding Heights, Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations**

#### **Retaining the Lessons of Nation-Building**

**Ambassador James Dobbins**

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Observing America's first year in Iraq, one might be forgiven for thinking that this was the first time that the United States had embarked upon such an enterprise. In fact, this was the seventh occasion in little more than a decade that the United States had helped liberate a society and then tried to rebuild it, beginning with Kuwait in 1991, and then Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and finally Iraq. Six of these seven societies are dominantly Muslim.

Thus, by 2003, there was no army in the world more experienced in nation-building than the American, and no Western army with more modern experience operating within a Muslim society. How, one might ask, could the United States perform this mission so frequently, yet do it so poorly? The answer is that neither the American military nor any of the relevant civilian agencies had regarded post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction as a core function, to be adequately funded, regularly practiced, and routinely executed. Instead, the U.S. Government had tended to treat each of these missions as if it were the first ever encountered, sending new people with new ideas to face what should have been familiar challenges. Worse yet, it treated each mission as if it were the last such it would ever have to do. No agency was taking steps to harvest and sustain the expertise gained. No one was establishing an evolving doctrine for the conduct of these operations, or building a cadre of experts available to go from one mission to the next.

Since the end of the Korean War, America's conventional battles have ended in a matter of days in overwhelming victories with few if any friendly casualties. Nation-building, counterinsurgency, and post-conflict reconstruction, on the other hand, have always proved much more time-consuming, expensive, and problematic. One reason for this disjunction is that the U.S. Government is well structured for peace or war, but ill-adapted for missions that fall somewhere in between. In both peace and conventional war, each agency knows its place. Coordination between agencies, while demanding, does not call for endless improvisation. By contrast, nation-building, stability operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare all require that agencies collaborate in ways to which they are not accustomed. Consequently, these missions are among the most difficult for any President to direct. The U.S. Government simply is not structured for the purpose.

Administrations get better at these types of operations as they gain experience. Unfortunately, their improved capacity does not automatically carry over to their successors. The expertise acquired has been developed on an ad hoc and largely personal basis, and is not built into the relevant institutions. Therefore, it can be easily lost. One can trace this process of progress and regression in the decade following the end of the Cold War, which saw an upsurge in nation-building-type missions.

## **Nation-Building**

During his 8 years in office President Clinton oversaw four successive efforts at stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction. Beginning with an unqualified failure in Somalia, followed by a largely wasted effort in Haiti, his administration was eventually able to achieve more enduring results in Bosnia and Kosovo. Each successive operation was better conceived and more competently conducted than its predecessor, as the same officials repeatedly preformed comparable tasks.

The Clinton administration derived three large policy lessons from its experience: employ overwhelming force, prepare to accept responsibility for the provision of public security, and engage neighboring and regional states, particularly those making the most trouble.

### **Overwhelming force should be applied until security is established**

In Somalia, President George H.W. Bush originally had sent a large American force to do a very limited task: protecting humanitarian food and medicine shipments. Bill Clinton reduced that American presence from 20,000 soldiers and marines to 2,000, and gave the residual force the mission of supporting a UN-led, grass roots democratization campaign that was bound to antagonize every warlord in the country. This sent capabilities plummeting even as ambitions soared. The reduced American force was soon challenged. The encounter chronicled in the book and movie “Blackhawk Down” resulted in a firestorm of domestic criticism and caused the administration to withdraw American troops from Somalia.

From then on, the Clinton administration embraced the “Powell doctrine” of applying overwhelming force, choosing to super-size each of its subsequent interventions, going in heavy and then scaling back once potential adversaries had been deterred from mounting violent resistance and a secure environment had been established.

### **Planners and policymakers should assume the responsibility for public security until local forces can meet the local security challenge**

In Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo, the United States had arrived to find local security forces incompetent, abusive, or nonexistent. Building new institutions and reforming existing ones took several years (and in Somalia was not even seriously attempted). In the interim, responsibility for public security devolved on the United States and its coalition partners. The U.S. military resisted this mission, to no avail. By 1999, when they went into Kosovo, U.S. and NATO military authorities accepted that the responsibility for public safety would be a military task until international and local police could be mobilized in sufficient numbers.

### **Engage all neighboring parties, including those that are most obstructive**

Neighboring states played a major role in fomenting the conflicts in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. This problem was largely ignored in Somalia, but faced squarely in Bosnia. The Presidents of Serbia and Croatia, both of whom bore heavy responsibility for the ethnic cleansing that NATO was trying to stop, were invited by the United States to the peace conference in Dayton, Ohio. Both men were given privileged places in that process, and continued to be engaged in the subsequent peace implementation. Both men won subsequent elections in their own countries, their domestic stature having been enhanced by their exalted international roles. Had Washington treated them as pariahs, the war in Bosnia might be underway still.

By 1999, the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, had actually been indicted by the international tribunal in The Hague for genocide and other war crimes. Yet, NATO and the Clinton administration negotiated with his regime again to end the air campaign and the conflict in Kosovo.

### **Starting Over**

Each of these lessons was rejected by a successor U.S. administration initially determined to avoid nation-building altogether, and subsequently insistent on doing it entirely differently, and in particular more economically.

Ironically, the Powell doctrine of overwhelming force had been embraced only after General Powell left office in 1993, and was abandoned as soon as he returned in 2001. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's views were diametrically opposed. He argued in speeches and op-ed articles that flooding Bosnia and Kosovo with military manpower and economic assistance had turned these societies into permanent wards of the international community. The Bush administration, he explained, by stinting on such commitments, would ensure that Afghanistan and Iraq more quickly become self-sufficient. This line of thinking transposed the American domestic debate over welfare reform to the international arena. The analogy could not have proven less apt. By making minimal initial efforts at stabilization in Afghanistan and Iraq, and then reinforcing its commitments of manpower and money only once challenged, the Bush administration failed to deter the emergence of organized resistance in either country. The Rumsfeld vision of defense transformation proved well suited to conventional combat against vastly inferior adversaries, but turned out to be a much more expensive approach to post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.

During the 2000 Presidential campaign, Condoleezza Rice wrote dismissively of stability operations, declaring that "we don't need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten." Consistent with this view, the Bush administration, having overthrown the Taliban and installed a new government in Kabul, determined that American troops would do no peacekeeping in that country, and that peacekeepers from other countries would not be allowed to venture beyond the Kabul city limits. Public security throughout the rest of the country was to be left entirely to the Afghans, despite the fact that Afghanistan had no army and no police force. A year later, President Bush was asking his advisers irritably why such reconstruction as had occurred was largely limited to the capital.

The same attitude toward public security informed U.S. plans for post-invasion Iraq. Washington assumed that Iraqi police and military would continue to maintain public order after Saddam's regime was removed. The fact that this had proved impossible not just in Afghanistan a year earlier, but also in Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo, was ignored. In the weeks leading up to the invasion, the Pentagon leadership cut the number of military police proposed for the operation by U.S. military authorities, while the White House cut even more drastically the number of international civilian police proposed by the State Department. Lest there be any doubt that these police were not to do policing, the White House also directed that any civilian police sent to Iraq should be unarmed. For the next several years, as Iraq descended into civil war, American authorities declined to collect data on the number of Iraqis getting killed. Secretary Rumsfeld maintained that such statistics were not a relevant indicator of the success or failure of the American military mission. Only with the arrival of General Petraeus in 2007 did the number of civilian casualties become the chief metric for measuring the progress of the campaign.

America's quick success in overthrowing the Taliban and replacing it with a broadly based government owed much to the assistance received from nearby states, including such long-term opponents of the Taliban as Iran, Russia, and India. Yet, no sooner had the Karzai government been installed than Washington rebuffed offers of further assistance from Iran and relaxed the pressure on Pakistan to sever its remaining ties with violent extremists groups. The broad regional strategy, so critical to both Washington's initial military victory and political achievement, was effectively abandoned.

A regional strategy was not even attempted with respect to Iraq. The invasion was conducted not just against the advice of several of Washington's most important allies, but also contrary to the wishes of most regional states. With the exception of Kuwait, none of Iraq's neighbors supported the intervention. Even Kuwait cannot have been enthusiastic about the announced American intention to make Iraq a democratic model for the region in the hopes of inspiring similar changes in the form of government of all its neighbors. Not surprisingly, neighborly interference quickly became a significant factor in stoking Iraq's sectarian passions.

In his second term, President Bush worked hard to recover from these early mistakes. In the process, his administration embraced the mission of post-conflict stabilization with the fervor of a new convert. The President issued a new directive setting out an interagency structure for managing such operations. Secretary of State Rice recanted her earlier dismissal of nation-building. The State Department established an Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization charged with establishing a doctrine for the civilian conduct of such missions and building a cadre of experts ready to man them. The Defense Department issued a directive making stability operations a core function of the American military.

In Iraq, more forces and money were committed, public security was embraced as the heart of a new counterinsurgency strategy, and efforts were made to better engage neighboring states, not even excepting Iran. The lessons of the 1990s had been relearned, and Iraq was pulled back from the abyss.

### **Retaining Hard Won Lessons**

The 2008 American elections returned a new President of a different party, and consequently offered every prospect of another abrupt fall off this hard-won learning curve. Fortunately, President Obama decided to keep Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense, General David Petraeus at Central Command, and Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, along with a team of professional military, diplomatic, and intelligence officers advising him and organizing the interagency management of both wars. The result has been a degree of continuity that leaves some Democrats uneasy, but offers hope that the lessons of the past two decades will not be lost once again in the transition from one administration and governing party to the next.

As articulated so far, the Obama strategy for Afghanistan is an effort to replicate the success achieved in Iraq in 2007 by employing many of the same elements: a counterinsurgency doctrine focused on public security, increases in U.S. and Afghan military manpower needed to execute such a mission, financial incentives to economically motivated insurgents to change sides, intensified regional diplomacy—particularly with Pakistan, but also Iran, Russia and India—and a willingness to envisage accommodation with some elements of the insurgency. President Obama has sought to distinguish his approach rhetorically from that of his predecessor by downplaying nation-building and focusing instead on counterterrorism as the reason for being in Afghanistan. Yet he accompanied this apparent narrowing of the American mission by increasing manpower and money devoted to it. Further, the President's immediate rationale for an increase in

American troop strength was the need to secure the upcoming Afghan elections. Nation-building thus remains at the core of the American strategy for Afghanistan (and Iraq), even if the term is still officially eschewed.

While the Bush administration made a start, after 2005, in building institutional capacity for stability operations, much still needs to be done if the current level of expertise is not to degrade again after the immediate crises recede. Forestalling such a regression will require the establishment, by legislation, of an enduring division of labor between the White House, State, Defense, and USAID. There must be an allocation of responsibilities that cannot be lightly altered by each passing administration, for no agency will invest in activities it may not long need to carry out.

In assigning these responsibilities, the role of the White House should be to set policy and make sure agencies adhere to it. The role of the State Department should be to ensure that all programs conducted overseas, by any agency, support the President's policies and are optimized to achieve his objectives. The Defense Department should execute only those programs for which the military has a comparative advantage. Other programs should be executed by civilian agencies—the default agency should be a reformed and expanded USAID, which should be given cabinet status and renamed the Department for Development and Reconstruction. But control over funding for all non-military activities conducted in stabilization missions should remain with State, as this is the only means that agency has to play its assigned role as the operational link between a policy-setting White House and the multiple program-executing agencies.

America's experience in Afghanistan and Iraq has illustrated the costs of unprepared nation-building. The cost of sustaining the capacity to conduct these operations, and thus retaining the lessons of the past two decades, is trivial by comparison.

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## Chapter 3

### Five Essays: Commanding Heights, Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations

#### The Politics of Complex Operations

James Kunder

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While serving as Director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance at USAID, I was ordered to Somalia in November 1992, when that nation was in the throes of a major humanitarian and political crisis. In January, 2002, while working as a private consultant, I was asked to rejoin the U.S. Government and was ordered to Afghanistan to reopen the USAID mission there. Aside from these two deployments, from the early 1990s until leaving USAID in January 2009, I conducted assessment missions or managed government or non-governmental programs in a range of complex operations venues, including Angola, Bosnia, Colombia, Georgia, Iraq, Liberia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and the West Bank/Gaza. From these varied experiences I have distilled three lessons I would like to share in this essay.

Let me begin in a spirit of sincere humility. Complex operations are, as the term suggests, inherently difficult. My Chief of Mission when I arrived in Kabul, Ryan Crocker, had previously served as U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Syria, and Lebanon, before going on to high achievement in Iraq. Ambassador Crocker was fond of noting the number of difficult assignments he and I had attempted before arriving in Kabul, then dryly joking that, “it is obvious Jim and I will continue to be sent to these places until we get it right!” That is to say, I recognize that whatever lessons learned I convey here can serve only as data points, not formulas, for those grappling with complex operations in the future.

My first observation or lesson is that every one of these complex operations in which I have served was, pure and simple, a political event. Now, it may seem unnecessary to state this simple lesson, but I do so for a purpose: to urge that we practitioners in complex operations not become excessively enamored of technique, or prisoners of our own elegant programs. Let me elaborate.

One of the positive developments in complex operations in recent decades is progress in the techniques available to practitioners, both civilian and military. To our credit, we have developed military doctrine to enshrine the advantages of working closely with civilian partners. Commanders now arrive at the site of complex operations with Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds to address local community needs. USAID has developed stand-by rosters of specialists in complex operations, a precursor to a much expanded Civilian Response Corps. We link State, Defense, and USAID personnel in provincial reconstruction teams. And the linkages between demobilized fighters, jobs, and recruitment are better delineated. This list of enhanced techniques could be extended. In short, the civilian crisis manager or military commander shows up at a complex operation today with a much more effective toolkit than his or her predecessor of just two decades ago.

The downside of having this 21st-century toolkit is that we spend a very large amount of time, from the highest levels of the U.S. Government to the most isolated forward operating base, sorting through our tools for the array of programs that we will employ. And each tool in the kit has a bureaucratic constituency. Will we focus on microenterprise job creation to offset the recruitment appeal of insurgent groups? What increment of additional power generation will best promote restoration of stability? Are the critical ministries functioning properly, with good financial accounting systems and home-grown inspectors general? Are we tracking revenue collection closely enough? Now, all of these issues, in a given complex operation, may be important, even essential. But they may also cloud the essentially political nature of the crisis.

In each of the complex operations in which I have served, I have been struck by the deep-rootedness of the underlying political conflict that spawned the complex crisis. The political conflict often goes to the heart of identity issues, those dynamics—driven by religion, ethnicity, tribe, clan, language, heritage—that are close to the core of the human condition. And, although complex operations practitioners can apply their program and budget toolbox to ameliorating such issues, neither programmatic interventions nor better program coordination can substitute for addressing underlying political conflict. Let me give a concrete example.

While deployed to Bosnia in 1991–92, I had occasion to observe residents destroying Yugos, the compact automobile that had been the pride of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Now, Yugos may not have run that well, but they were produced in factories where laborers received wages comparable to those paid in Western Europe, and the destruction of the market for the cars—as well as the cars themselves—made absolutely no rational sense by the standards of complex operations practitioners. We wanted to create high-paying jobs, in the familiar logic, so that people would have hope for the future and put aside their inter-ethnic difficulties. But here was a society that was destroying high-paying jobs by destroying Yugos—hence suppressing the market for them—because the name of the automobile conjured up a political entity with which they no longer identified.

In a world where political issues, and underlying issues of human identity, produce such counterintuitive results, it is essential that complex operations address the political issues head-on to achieve stability. A positive trend in both Afghanistan and Iraq, in my view, is the new policy of incorporating three to five individuals carrying full ambassadorial rank into the senior leadership of the U.S. embassies. We need more senior diplomats, buttressed by strong language skills, on the site of complex operations. But this is only a down payment. Developing a sound, complex operations strategy for Afghanistan, for example, requires a substantial national investment in understanding Pashtun nationalism and the reaction that nationalism provokes in Hazaras, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and others. There is no shortcut, no elegant combination of employment programs and donor coordination centers, that will stabilize the country without taking on the underlying political conflicts of Afghanistan. In this sense, Afghanistan is like every other complex operation.

The second lesson I would like to share from my experience in complex operations is the imperative that we get serious about effective civilian command and control in reconstruction and stabilization operations. In my view, the current state of coordination among civilian agencies—American, other governments, international agencies, the UN, the NGOs and private contractors, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, and, not least, the government we are supposedly trying to help—veers between tragedy and farce, and always exhibits chaos. The costs of under-coordinated civilian response, in delay, wasted motion, and funds are apparent in many complex operations. This is an area ripe for improvement.

Let me be clear about what I mean by effective civilian command and control in complex operations. I am not addressing the issue of conflict between civilian and military policy, nor suggesting that civilian agencies need more control over military forces in complex operations. The necessity of integrating civilian and military policy is a serious issue that deserves further attention, but that is not the point here. Rather, the command and control issue that, in my observation, most needs attention is ensuring that the many civilian reconstruction and stabilization agencies that operate in a complex operation synchronize their efforts. Minimal coordination among civilian agencies is the rule in most complex operations, and the costs of minimal coordination are high. Moreover, the highest-profile complex crises with the highest strategic stakes often draw the largest number of outside civilian organizations, thus exacerbating coordination issues precisely where synergy is most needed.

Let me return to Afghanistan for an example. The numerous civilian agencies operating there cannot perfectly harmonize their reconstruction and stabilization efforts, but they can, at the absolute minimum, maintain a standard, transparent database indicating where and on what they are working in order to avoid duplication. The need for a centralized civilian agency database of projects and programs was recognized in Afghanistan soon after Coalition forces arrived in 2001. In 2002, donors, led by the U.S. government, created a reconstruction data center in the Afghan Finance Ministry to serve as a central clearinghouse of civilian projects. But, as recently as May 2009, a senior United Nations official in Kabul reported to me that several major donors do not even report their program data to the Finance Ministry, which renders the data hub only minimally useful as a coordination tool.

This example barely scratches the surface of the problem. There is, in reality, no accepted system of civilian agency coordination during complex operations. The closest that practitioners come in most complex operations is a degree of voluntary coalescing around the leadership of the United Nations, especially when the severity of the crisis leads to the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). Even this arrangement tends to fray when the international response to a complex operation is a “coalition of the willing,” as opposed to a formal UN peacekeeping mission under chapters VI or VII of the UN Charter.

The problem of civilian coordination is profound. Simply put, there is no global legal, doctrinal, treaty, or other basis on which to establish an authoritative command and control wiring diagram when a complex operation begins. There is no civilian NATO. The large, bilateral donor nations (the United States included) that arrive at a crisis venue with deep pockets and their own technical reconstruction staff often determine their reconstruction priorities based on direction from their capitals. The International Committee of the Red Cross, or other elements of the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, may have a large presence, but they report neither to the UN nor to any bilateral donor. The UN agencies sometimes barely coordinate between themselves. The major multilateral financial institutions, like the World Bank, often strive to establish—with the best of intentions—their own coordination centers and processes. Non-governmental organizations and civilian contractors may cluster around combinations of each category of donors as funding support becomes available for one priority or another. Often at the periphery of all this activity is the entity that should be at the center of the action: the government of the country in crisis. As is widely recognized, outside troops and civilian agencies are likely to leave a complex operation only once the host-nation government is functioning.

Efforts have been undertaken to solve this civilian coordination conundrum. In the complex operations I have observed, various combinations have been tried with varying degrees of success. These include strenuous efforts by the SRSG to establish central control, creation of

a range of “trust funds” coordinated by a central team into which donor agencies can make contributions, creation of donor coordination centers or humanitarian operations centers, and establishment of sectoral councils (for employment, health, education, transportation, energy, and other sectors), with each council headed by the relevant minister of the host-nation government. But none of these mechanisms has achieved more than limited or passing success. Ineffective command and control of civilian agencies is an unfortunate but ubiquitous feature of complex operations.

My third lesson is that practitioners—and I include myself—often pay too little attention to success stories and invest too little time in disseminating information on what works. In workshops and after-action reviews I have noticed a disproportionate focus on a limited number of case studies—Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, and Rwanda come to mind. It is perhaps natural to focus on the most interesting or compelling case studies, especially those in which U.S. or other foreign troops played a major role. Unfortunately, interesting and compelling cases often are those in which something did not work very well. In my view, there are a number of quite successful strategic and tactical responses to complex crises in places like El Salvador, the Philippines (especially Mindanao), Mozambique, and even Tajikistan. I have seldom encountered serious discussions of these examples.

In Mozambique, the brutality and tribal nature of the long civil war during the 1980s and 1990s made prospects for a successful resolution seem bleak. Now Mozambique is a relatively successful model of stability and economic growth in southern Africa. The intercommunal, peacebuilding techniques employed there, and the role played by an international religious organization with contacts on both sides of the fighting (the Community of Sant Egidio), are elements that could be usefully studied by complex operations practitioners.

El Salvador, in my view, is an extraordinarily useful model of how a carefully negotiated peace agreement that addresses underlying issues of exclusion and political repression can serve as a catalyst for peace and stability. El Salvador is not without problems, but, the decades of violence there from the 1930s to the 1980s, and the historical dynamic of ethnicity and Marxism, made peace seem a distant prospect during many of those years. The peace treaty ending the civil war is an extraordinary and voluminous document that addresses issues ranging from reconstitution of the security forces, to land reform and political access, to the establishment of truth commissions for those accused of atrocities during the fighting.

In my experience, I seldom hear discussion of these positive case studies as examples that might usefully impact in Iraq or in Afghanistan, even though I have heard some thoughtful analysts suggest that Mindanao is perhaps the single best example worldwide of successful coordination between military counterinsurgency operations and development/reconstruction efforts. As lessons learned in the field of complex operations are developed further, it would be worthwhile to examine carefully such lesser-known examples of successful attempts to address problems of failed states, complex contingencies, and integrated civilian-military interventions.

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