The Future of U.S. Civil Affairs Forces

A Report of the CSIS International Security Program

February 2009

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The U.S. military has conducted civil affairs operations, under a variety of names, for over 200 years. The history of U.S. engagements overseas is replete with examples of complex, and often unanticipated, requirements to assist or lead economic, political, judicial, and security operations. These operations were seldom popular; the American public, its military, and its elected officials have consistently resisted long-term, sizable U.S. government presence in unstable regions. U.S. engagements in many failing states have often relied heavily on U.S. military personnel and expertise. At times, the U.S. emphasis on deliberate speed and light footprint has actually prolonged the length of U.S. engagement in order to stabilize societies.

The American experience since 2001 has reinforced these lessons from prior history. Today, the United States is conducting sizable counterinsurgency and/or stabilization operations in the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Whether the United States can break free from its historical pattern of complex operations overseas is a subject of substantial debate. The costs of assuming that it can, however, are high. As Defense Secretary Robert Gates states:

> The recent past vividly demonstrated the consequences of failing to address adequately the dangers posed by insurgencies and failing states... The kinds of capabilities needed to deal with these scenarios cannot be considered exotic distractions or temporary diversions. The United States does not have the luxury of opting out because these scenarios do not conform to preferred notions of the American way of war.\(^1\)

Despite such warnings, the U.S. government today lacks a holistic framework for its overseas preventative security activities. Moreover, it has made only limited progress in institutionalizing a coherent approach to stability operations at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The Obama administration must accelerate the nation’s efforts to develop a unified approach to complex operations, including the creation of a planning construct to guide the sizing and shaping of constituent civilian and military capabilities. Such a construct will most assuredly point to the need for greater and more rapidly deployable civilian capacity overseas. The framework must also describe the means by which civilian and military operators should coordinate activities in the field, building on lessons learned from World War II to Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Yet even with improved civilian capability, the U.S. military will require its own capabilities to meet internal security cooperation goals and combat requirements and to ensure U.S. capability

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for reconstruction and stabilization in less permissive environments or sectors. This includes support to military commanders in combat operations. The military has made doctrinal strides over the past several years on the importance of stability operations, irregular warfare, and counterinsurgency, all of which constitute or require civil-military operations. Civil affairs forces should be the vanguard of that military capability. They are designed to provide expertise to military commanders in their interface with civil societies, including in the fields of rule of law, economic stability, governance, public health and welfare, infrastructure, and public education and information.

In recent years, there has been some recognition of the important role played by civil affairs forces. Most of the civil affairs capability resides in the Army, which is currently expanding that capability. The Navy and Marine Corps have each developed their own civil affairs capabilities as well. Yet projected demand for civil affairs continues to outpace supply. Further, civil affairs continues to be treated as a stepchild in all the services, and its value is not fully realized at strategic, operational, or tactical levels. To strengthen its civil affairs capability, the Defense Department should undertake the following corrective actions:

- Reintegrate all Army civil affairs forces under U.S. Army Special Operations Command and create within USASOC a 1- or 2-star active civil affairs general officer to oversee and advocate for all Army civil affairs forces.
- Embed civil affairs expertise in key strategic organizations throughout the department and across the U.S. government. This includes the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Army staff, and Combatant Command headquarters, as well as the State Department, U.S. embassies overseas, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.
- Ensure additional training for civil affairs personnel in strategic and operational civil affairs competencies.
- Fully implement the decision to establish civil affairs as a branch of the U.S. Army and ensure upward mobility for civil affairs personnel.
- Significantly deepen general purpose and special operations forces’ understanding of the capabilities and application of civil affairs forces.
- Create active component civil affairs structure to integrate at all echelons (division/equivalent and below) in Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.
- For all new accession, track officer and enlisted personnel areas of civilian expertise and link them to appropriate civil affairs functional specialty areas.
- Ensure civil affairs functional specialty skills are included in the Global Status of Readiness and Training System (GSORTS) to facilitate force management of functional specialists.
- Require civil affairs personnel with identified functional specialties to take appropriate civil sector competency tests to validate and classify the achieved level of functional skills.
- Create a direct commission authority to enable services to access advanced functional skills at senior levels.

The above recommendations will marry the Department’s rhetorical commitment to excellence in civil-military operations—including stability operations, counterinsurgency, and aspects of irregular warfare—with concrete improvements in military capability. Absent such progress, the military may find itself, as it has so many times in the past, ill-equipped for missions that may be highly undesired but highly likely.
Study Background

In April 2008, the House Armed Services Committee staff released a report examining the Provincial Reconstruction Teams being used in Iraq and Afghanistan. The report made a number of findings concerning the role of civil affairs (CA) in stability operations. The report also recommended that the Defense Department examine a number of issues related to civil affairs, ranging from identifying the future requirement for civil affairs to whether a joint command structure for civil affairs might be necessary. In a related vein, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2009 included a requirement that the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) prepare a report to Congress on civil affairs to be submitted by April 1, 2009. In the discussion of civil affairs in the NDAA 2009, Congress noted that the Department of Defense’s recent recognition of stability operations as a core military mission may lead to the need for additional civil affairs capability.

To assist OSD as it prepares its report to Congress, the Stability Operations Capabilities Office within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy asked the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of civil affairs within the Department of Defense (DoD). The CSIS study team was asked to examine more than 10 issue areas, with a focus on the anticipated civil affairs requirement, how best to meet that requirement, whether the programmed force will meet that requirement, the issue of joint proponency, and how civil affairs fits into the broader construct of civil-military operations undertaken at the U.S. government level. Examples of issue areas the study team examined include:

- An analysis of the overall anticipated civil affairs requirement across component for both general purpose forces (GPF) and special operations forces (SOF), with a description of how that requirement is determined, by DoD Component;
- An analysis of whether the programmed force structure—Fiscal Year (FY) 2010–2015—will meet the anticipated requirement and appropriate changes by DoD Component;
- An analysis, by DoD Component, of whether the programmed civil affairs force structure between the active and reserve components is balanced and/or appropriate;
- An analysis of whether stability operations competencies (governance, economics, security) are sufficiently developed in the DoD civil affairs force and whether non–civil affairs forces are being used in lieu of civil affairs to meet these requirements;
• An assessment of the functional specialties required for civil affairs, by DoD Component, in support of stability and reconstruction operations;

• An evaluation of DoD/Joint Proponent responsibilities for civil affairs, including an analysis of the authorities required by the proponent and whether it is properly placed;

• An analysis of what innovative authorities or personnel management policies may be needed to assist in bringing needed civil affairs specialties and experience into the force on a temporary basis.

Study Methodology

To complete its comprehensive review of the civil affairs capacity in the Department of Defense, the CSIS study team developed three primary sources of information and analysis: case studies, a review of existing civil affairs literature and materials such as DoD briefings and information papers, and a series of extensive interviews with members of the civil affairs community.

For the case studies, the study team examined military operations in World War II, Korea, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, El Salvador, Grenada, Panama, Kuwait (Operation Desert Storm), Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The case studies describe the civil affairs operations undertaken and the kinds of civil affairs capabilities used and conclude by providing lessons learned for consideration in future operations. The first and second chapters of this report are drawn from the case studies and provide both a brief history of past civil affairs missions as well as an overview of mission characteristics that frequently emerged as common factors for most civil affairs operations.

The study team also conducted an extensive literature review of government reports, journal and other academic articles, think tank studies, and many other relevant written products related to the evolution and status of civil affairs in the Department of Defense. The team began the literature review early in the study so that perspectives and issues that emerged during the review helped inform the interview process.

To jump start the interview process, the study team held a project kick-off conference on September 25, 2008, which focused on a range of issues and included participants from throughout DoD as well as interested parties in the broader civil affairs community. Specifically, the conference hosted panels on determining the requirement for civil affairs, innovative concepts for integrating civilian and military capabilities in stability operations, issues connected to joint proponency, and barriers to an effective joint civil affairs force. After the initial conference, the study team conducted interviews with the full range of DoD stakeholders, as well as several outside experts, to assess the state of civil affairs in DoD and how the capability needs to evolve to meet likely future requirements. The study team interviewed representatives from all four military services, SOCOM, AFRICOM, NORTHCOM, the Joint Staff, the Civil Affairs Commands in the Army Reserve, the Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command at Fort Bragg, the Office of the Under Secretary for Policy, officials in the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of
State and several others. In each of these interviews the study team solicited views on the four primary areas of interest for the study: the missions and capabilities civil affairs forces should be capable of conducting; the appropriate mix of civil affairs forces for those missions (e.g., generalists and specialists, active component and reserve component, special forces oriented or general purpose forces oriented); education and training in civil affairs–related competencies for all forces; and whether there is a need for organizational or process changes to make civil affairs forces more effective in the future, to include the issue of joint proponency.

Finally, prior to writing the final report, the CSIS study team held a discussion session on its draft findings and recommendations with more than 25 members of the DoD civil affairs community. This meeting provided an opportunity for interested parties outside CSIS to give the study team feedback on its core conclusions and raise any concerns.

This report is composed of five chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 provide an overview of historical uses of U.S. civil affairs forces and discuss mission characteristics and lessons learned that appear common across many civil affairs operations. Chapter 3 describes the U.S. government approach to complex operations and the need for a more comprehensive framework to manage such operations. Chapter 4 outlines how military civil affairs forces fit into the larger U.S. government approach to complex operations. Finally, Chapter 5 describes existing military civil affairs forces in greater detail and provides recommendations for how to improve the effectiveness of civil affairs forces in the future.
The U.S. military has conducted civil-military operations, under a variety of names, for over 200 years. From the U.S.-Mexican War to World War II and more recently to Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq, civil affairs forces have evolved from being a minor element of military action to a recognized instrument of national power. This chapter provides a brief history of U.S. civil affairs prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. That history includes the use of civil affairs forces in the following operations:

World War II
Korean Conflict
Dominican Republic
Vietnam
El Salvador
Panama
Grenada
Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm
Somalia
Haiti
Bosnia
Kosovo

Civil affairs–related missions undertaken in these operations include humanitarian assistance, host-nation support, post-conflict reconstruction, peace operations, assistance to refugees and displaced citizens, and the rebuilding of indigenous institutions. The operations varied widely in mission duration and intensity. They required differing levels of resources, troops, equipment, civilian involvement, interagency collaboration, nongovernmental organization (NGO) coordination, international engagement, and public support.¹ Collectively, they render a telling picture of modern U.S. civil affairs operations and illuminate strategic, operational, and tactical

¹ To gather this information, the CSIS team’s case study template addressed objectives, strategies, missions/tasks, ends-ways-means relationships—and how each changed over the course of the operation—for the United States.
Civil-military operations—from preventing civilian interference with military operations to providing emergency humanitarian assistance and undertaking longer-term reconstruction efforts—have long been key components of the American war experience. Historians identify the U.S.-Mexican War as the first time the U.S. military conducted civil affairs/military government operations. In 1847 and 1848, the U.S. military governed Mexican civilians despite not having forces trained or dedicated to doing so. A decade later, during the era of Southern reconstruction, U.S. soldiers again conducted civil affairs/military government operations, enforcing rule of law and stability throughout the postbellum South.

Just after the turn of the century, U.S. soldiers applied these principles to help the Philippine government counter domestic insurgents. U.S. strategy principally sought to establish stability and rule of law so the Philippine government could supply its citizens with essential services. President William McKinley’s strategy of providing humanitarian assistance, promoting self-government and personal liberties, and establishing schools, public works infrastructure, and public health programs was widely acclaimed. But the failure of the United States to accomplish its first goal of establishing stability and rule of law inhibited the provision of government services and ultimately hindered mission success.

Less than a decade later, U.S. civil affairs/military government operations became necessary after the November 1918 World War I armistice. American soldiers, in conjunction with the British, sought to (1) ensure that Germany paid reparations, (2) protect France from renewed aggression, and (3) demonstrate America’s commitment to Europe. Despite engaging in no formal planning, and still having no soldiers specifically trained to execute these missions, U.S. and UK civil affairs/military government activities successfully restored order and maintained stability.

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2 This chapter summarizes the work of CSIS’s case study authors. For more detailed descriptions, please see http://www.csis.org/isp/civilaffairs/.
7 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
Despite the impact of civil affairs/military governance in operations from the U.S.-Mexican War to World War I, in the early 1920s many military officers still viewed these missions as anomalies, advocating avoidance of “military exercise of civil power under any but desperate circumstances.”\(^{10}\) Moreover, no dedicated civil affairs/military governance competencies existed within the military, at times meaning that CA efforts were ad hoc and disorganized.\(^{11}\)

Sensing this capability gap, COL Irwin L. Hunt, a commander during the post–World War I occupation, authored a report advocating that the U.S. military pay greater attention to civil affairs/military government. Hunt characterized civil affairs/military government as an important mission, concluding that in World War I, “the American army of occupation lacked both training and organization to guide the destinies of the nearly one million civilians under whom the fortunes of war had placed under its temporary sovereignty.”\(^{12}\)

Skepticism remained about whether U.S. military occupation of a foreign territory would occur again anytime soon, but over the next decade, pressure mounted in favor of institutionalizing civil affairs/military government capabilities.\(^{13}\) In 1934–1935 and then again in 1939–1940, War College committees recommended that the War Department create a field manual (FM) on civil affairs and military government, which was finally published in July 1940.\(^{14}\) FM 27-5, Military Government, disentangled the previously interchangeable terms “civil affairs” and “military government,” defining the former as military government on domestic or allied territory and the latter as civil affairs in enemy territory.\(^{15}\) FM 27-5 more specifically defines civil affairs as:

> The assumption by the responsible commander of an armed occupying force of a degree of authority less than the supreme authority assumed under military government, over enemy, allied, or domestic territory. The indigenous governments would be recognized by treaty, agreement, or otherwise as having certain authority independent of the military commander.\(^{16}\)

In the early 1940s, three events helped civil affairs gain recognition as a military specialty. First, Secretary of War Stimson directed the Provost Marshal General to begin training officers for military government. Second, the University of Virginia School of Military Government opened. Third, the Provost Marshall General’s Office created a Military Government Division of the Army.\(^{17}\) Despite building military capability in civil affairs and military government, in 1942


\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Ziemke, “Civil Affairs Reaches Thirty,” 130–131.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 131.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt delegated to the Secretary of State control over political, economic, and fiscal matters in liberated territories, ruling “military government/civil affairs to be a civilian matter,” thus relegating the War Department to a supporting role. 18

But in their first test—in North Africa—civilian agencies instantly proved ineffective in planning and administering civil affairs and military government. 19 By November 1943, civilian agency failures in coordinating postwar supply distribution forced President Roosevelt to reverse his decision, writing to Stimson that: 20

Although other agencies of the government are preparing themselves for the work that must be done in connection with the relief and rehabilitation of liberated areas, it is quite apparent if prompt results are to be obtained the Army will have to assume the initial burden of shipping and distributing relief supplies. 21

Now in charge of civil affairs/military government operations, the U.S. Army in World War II sought to maintain law and order, secure the civilian population, and prevent civilian interference with military operations. Military governance occupied much of the civil affairs community’s attention. Wherever possible, the United States sought to employ indirect control, advising government leaders on establishing law and order, instituting curfews, regulations, and other measures to provide public safety, rather than governing directly. In Germany, though, more direct control was necessary, requiring civil affairs personnel to hand pick new government officials or at times directly govern. In all, civil affairs involvement in World War II was largely successful, as 25,000 civil affairs personnel aided over 80 million civilians in enemy and allied nations, largely by governing or advising governments. 22

The Korean War marked a sea change in the U.S. approach to civil affairs, with those operations overtaking military governance as the chief mission priority for the first time. This shift was possible largely because the Korean government remained intact during the war. 23 Although U.S. civil affairs tasks were at first narrowly focused on protecting civilians, the overwhelming number of North Korean refugees migrating south led to social unrest, economic turmoil, and public health concerns. 24 In response, civil affairs assets undertook a three-phased mission:

1. Achieve peace;
2. Reestablish normal political economic conditions;

18 Hayward, “Co-Ordination and Civilian Civil Affairs Planning,” 19.
19 Ibid., 21.
20 Ibid., 24.
23 Ibid., 197.
24 Sandler, Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go, 331.
3. Hold free elections through which a unified Korean government would take sovereignty. After UN forces advanced into the north in 1950, the civil affairs mission widened again. Civil affairs forces helped stabilize the region by providing public health assistance, reestablishing civil law enforcement, and beginning critical infrastructure rehabilitation. In each of these cases, the United States nurtured preexisting capabilities in the Republic of Korea (ROK), encouraging the procurement of local labor and supplies to help the country become self-sufficient.

As the first major operation after World War II, Korea had helped civil affairs solidify its role within the U.S. military. In 1955, the Department of the Army created the Civil Affairs and Military Government Branch, U.S. Army Reserve, effectively divorcing civil affairs from the Provost Marshal’s office. In October 1959, the Army renamed the branch to remove the phrase “military government.”

U.S. deployment to the Dominican Republic in 1965 marked the first operation for the new Civil Affairs Branch. Following several years of political strife, and amid fears of a communist revolution, the United States deployed 23,000 troops—including reservist civil affairs personnel—to the country. Civil affairs forces assumed a relatively narrow mission, successfully distributing food, restoring power, and clearing trash from Santo Domingo’s streets. Civil affairs assets were unable to advise the Dominican Republic on government reform, however, because there was no legal framework to compel Dominican health officials to cooperate. In all, the mission proved successful, but better planning for civil affairs activities and better communication among U.S. government entities could have improved mission effectiveness.

Meanwhile in Southeast Asia, U.S. civil affairs assets undertook a highly ambitious mission in Vietnam, essentially fighting two wars with two separate strategies: A conventional battle in the north against the National Liberation Forces (NLF) and a counterinsurgency battle in the south against the smaller Viet Cong (VC) insurgency. The latter required engaging all 44 South Vietnamese provinces, first through civic action programs then a consolidated Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) infrastructure. CORDS sought to

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coordinate U.S. government civil-military pacification activities in Vietnam. According to one contemporary analyst, before CORDS, civilian agencies were in disarray and unable to function at wartime speed. In companies of roughly 60 officers and 100 enlisted soldiers, the largely reservist and generalist civil affairs missions in Vietnam had three primary objectives:

1. Eliminate the VC insurgency in South Vietnam;
2. Diminish the VC’s ability to recruit;
3. Recruit indigenous tribes to fight the VC and the NLF.

CA personnel also provided refugee assistance and reconstruction of schools, latrines, and other critical infrastructure.

CORDS sought to remove the VC from South Vietnam through a process of pacification. In support of this mission, CORDS undertook five tasks: new life development, revolutionary development cadre, refugee support, psychological operations, and public safety. Critical to its success was the decision to arrange military and civilian CORDS personnel under a single chain of command to improve efficiency and accountability. The organization proved effective, creating interagency coordination and helping the military begin development projects and coordinate them with overall security strategies. The CORDS program was considered a substantial success, leading to increased civil-military accountability, coordination, and communications.

Three minor engagements during the 1980s conspired to keep the pace of civil affairs operations high. First, combating an emerging insurgency in 1979–1980, the United States bolstered the El Salvadoran government’s legitimacy, its commitment to human rights and democracy, and its economy. With Vietnam still vivid in the public consciousness, U.S. civil affairs missions were limited and indirect. The United States provided troop training and advising in support of the Salvadoran military’s civic action and civil defense operations. The U.S. military applied lessons from the CORDS experience, providing tactical training and supplies such as helicopters, and teaching the military to protect the populace and gain its support. The mission nevertheless suffered from the Salvadoran population’s mistrust of their government, which had a longstanding history of oppression.

While activities in El Salvador continued, the United States in 1983 entered Grenada to rescue American medical student hostages, restore the popular government, and prevent Grenada from falling into Cuba’s sphere of influence. Again, U.S. efforts were narrowly scoped in the wake of Vietnam. Despite a lack of civil affairs planning before the invasion, once on the ground, civil

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34 Sandler, Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go, 357–358.
35 Civil affairs forces were not officially considered special operations forces until 1987.
affairs teams secured the environment and reconstructed the island, conducting tasks such as caring for displaced citizens and rebuilding infrastructure, including schools, public utilities, communications, public works, roads, and sewage systems.38

At the end of the 1980s, President George H.W. Bush faced an international crisis in Panama just months after taking office. On the heels of General Manuel Noriega’s takeover of his nation’s government, Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) attacked two U.S. service members, killing one. The United States sought to bring Noriega to justice, restore popular government in Panama, and protect American lives, property, and the Panama Canal.39 Historian Stanley Sandler identified five key tasks that civil affairs forces conducted as part of the U.S. operation:

1. Support U.S. military efforts to establish law and order;
2. Provide CA support to the new Panamanian government;
3. Establish and run a refugee camp
4. Establish civil-military operations support;
5. Aid in conducting nation-building operations.40

Civil affairs personnel cared for displaced persons, assisted the new Panamanian government, restored public services, and reestablished law and order.

Also in 1990, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait evoked swift international reaction.41 President George H.W. Bush deployed U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf seeking the peaceful withdraw of Iraqi forces (Desert Shield), but the mission eventually changed to an offensive operation (Desert Storm) after the Iraqi regime proved unwilling to leave Kuwait. Civil affairs assets, which were originally slated to play a minor role, were suddenly in greater demand. From preventing civilian interference with combat missions to handling displaced citizens and refugees and providing emergency aid to Kuwaitis immediately following that country’s liberation, civil affairs personnel played a vital role in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The most unique aspect of this mission was the Kuwait Task Force, which undertook a massive planning effort to ensure that the United States could provide emergency assistance and reconstruction in Kuwait.42 Largely due to the stockpiling of food, water, and medical supplies, there were minimal shortages of medical supplies following the liberation of Kuwait.43 Numerous problems existed in Kuwait, however, including the lack of electricity and running water. Task

38 Ibid., 374–375.
40 Sandler, Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go, 378.
Force Freedom first sought to repair Kuwait’s infrastructure—particularly its electrical grid, which was determined to be most critical to accomplishing the civil-military mission. In some cases when repairs could not quickly be completed, U.S. civil affairs personnel coordinated delivery and supervised installation of temporary generators. Civil affairs teams also assisted with a multitude of additional tasks: delivering water and food, working with hospitals, helping Kuwaiti police repair their vehicles and communications systems, and even caring for Kuwaiti zoo animals. Civil affairs forces also helped Kuwaiti officials in recruiting commercial vendors, rebuilding the labor force, restarting banking operations, and contracting for over $500 million in emergency services.

The U.S. experience in Somalia serves as a striking contrast to its success in Kuwait. U.S.-led action in Somalia followed failure of the UN humanitarian mission to Somalia (UNOSOM), amid the mission’s inability to secure the region. When the United States took over from the United Nations in December 1992, its goal was discrete: to provide security so that humanitarian relief organizations could feed the country. Once complete, Operation Restore Hope sought to establish conditions for transitioning authority back to the United Nations. Since the military did not consider reconstruction part of its mission, only 30 civil affairs personnel—at most—were ever deployed to the theater at a time. Civil affairs personnel assisted in coordinating security for food convoys until the now infamous “Blackhawk Down” incident in which 18 U.S. Army Rangers were killed, leading eventually to a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Following the U.S. experience in Somalia, concern about military mission creep dampened enthusiasm for the deployment of U.S. forces in so-called humanitarian missions. The 1990s nevertheless proved to be a busy decade for U.S. civil affairs forces. In 1993, six years after the Cohen-Nunn Act created a U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Army civil affairs forces became part of the special operations community. This realignment was aimed at enhancing the breadth of civil affairs capabilities. Only two years later, civil affairs forces were put to the test during Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti. In that operation, a U.S.-led UN force of 20,000 soldiers initially sought to restore President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti following a military coup. After reaching an agreement that secured his return, the operation became a peacekeeping mission intended to secure conditions in Haiti for a transition back to democracy. After participating in an extensive military planning effort, U.S. civil affairs assets worked in country with civilian agencies and NGOs, but suffered a variety of coordination and

44 Ibid., 81.
45 Ibid., 81.
46 Ibid., 78.
47 Ibid., 86.
48 UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I).
49 USACAPOC, “Fact Sheet: Civil Affairs.”
communications problems. Planning, moreover, underestimated the challenges associated with rebuilding the nation and restoring the government to power. It also suffered from the misconception that conditions in Haiti would be similar to those in Somalia. Despite these hurdles, the narrowly bound mission objectives ultimately proved attainable and U.S. civil affairs units completed hundreds of reconstruction projects.

The same year the United States intervened in Haiti, a deadly attack in a crowded Sarajevo market drove NATO into action to keep peace in the former Yugoslavia. NATO’s Operation Deliberate Force air campaign eventually coerced Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia to end hostilities and sign the peace-brokering Dayton Accords. Amidst U.S. requirements that its engagement in the Bosnian peacekeeping and reconstruction mission be narrowly bound to avoid mission creep, NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) troops deployed to the region to implement the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP).

The GFAP’s emphasis on implementing military objectives rather than accomplishing civilian objectives hamstrung CIMIC missions in 1996 and early 1997, significantly limiting U.S. civil affairs involvement and influence in Bosnia. During the initial 18 months of NATO’s operation, therefore, U.S. civil affairs soldiers undertook mostly military tasks that only tangentially improved Bosnian civil society. Only during the second and third years of the mission were U.S. civil affairs soldiers able to facilitate important nonmilitary activities, such as the holding of local elections and other reconstruction efforts. The progression in Bosnia led one analyst to describe this operation as a time when “Civil Affairs came of age, especially for NATO and the framework nations,” including the United States.

As U.S. efforts in Bosnia wound down, the world’s attention turned to Kosovo, where evidence of ethnic cleansing and a mounting refugee crisis was unfolding. In the wake of an 88-day bombing campaign against the Serbs, U.S. civil affairs forces deployed to Kosovo to end the region’s refugee crisis. Some estimates at the time tallied as many as 400,000 people driven from their homes, with another 3,000 dead. After the bombing ended, civil affairs units began humanitarian assistance efforts, coordinating with allies and NGOs to construct refugee camps and emergency food stations and working to disperse hundreds of tons of humanitarian aid. As the months passed,

51 Fishel, Civil Military Operations in the New World, 213.
55 CIMIC is NATO’s doctrinal terminology for civil-military cooperation.
57 Williams, Engineering Peace, 121.
58 Ibid., 127–129.
requirements for emergency humanitarian assistance faded, and reconstruction became a higher priority.

U.S. civil affairs forces thus increased the time and resources devoted to conducting damage assessments and assisting in the administration of development programs. This not only facilitated projects that CA personnel undertook themselves but also enabled them to provide detailed and timely information to allied countries and NGOs conducting their own projects. By June 1996, after one year of NATO engagement, the alliance had clearly made progress in providing emergency humanitarian assistance, but longer-term reconstruction and civil administration still lagged behind. In support of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) civil administration tasks, U.S. civil affairs forces facilitated the creation of civil governance structures and services including firefighting and sanitation. Despite NATO’s failure to articulate an overarching campaign strategy, U.S. civil affairs assets played a significant role, coordinating large-scale humanitarian assistance efforts with U.S. government agencies and NGOs, supplying food, medical care, and shelter for refugees.

59 Wentz, Lessons from Kosovo, 483.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., 32.
62 Ibid., 483.
FACTORS AFFECTING CIVIL AFFAIRS: INSIGHTS FROM AMERICAN HISTORY

Across the breadth of U.S. experience, there are a number of key environmental and operational determinates for civil affairs success. These include:

- Permissiveness of operating environment
- Knowledge of area of operation
- Coordination, cooperation, and communication between military and civilian agencies
- Coordination, cooperation, and communication between the military and NGOs
- Understanding of civil affairs capabilities and how to use them
- Impact of emphasis on force protection
- Domestic pressures and public perception
- Deployment, mobilization, and rotation of personnel

Permissiveness of Operating Environment

A key factor affecting civil affairs operational success is the permissiveness of the environment in which U.S. forces must operate. Permissiveness is determined by the level of hostility that U.S. personnel encounter during an operation. This is particularly important to civil affairs operations because the level of permissiveness determines whether NGOs and civilian agencies can operate in the region, the burden of responsibility carried by armed forces, and the endurance of U.S. and international will to sustain international operations.

In the Dominican Republic, civil affairs teams unexpectedly had to assume control of several Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) distribution centers because the areas in which they were located became insecure. In Vietnam, CORDS leadership considered security a prerequisite for pacification and civic action efforts. The initiatives aimed at fostering security included Project Takeoff, which trained and equipped South Korean police forces, helped build prisons, and developed national identification cards. In another effort, the so-called Good Neighbor Program, the U.S. Army’s 4th Infantry Division
embedded civic action soldiers with the Montagnards to provide security and quality of life and, in the process, also deny support to the North Vietnamese.¹

Security also proved an essential element of failed UN and U.S. efforts in Somalia. First, in 1992, the UN humanitarian mission to Somalia (UNOSOM) failed due to lack of security, as rival clans fought among themselves.² The sole mission, therefore, of the U.S. military in 1993 was to provide security for the NGOs supplying humanitarian relief. The nonpermissive environment, however, ultimately prevented mission success. Collapse of order within Somalia rendered aid distribution impossible.³ The deaths of 18 U.S. soldiers in a Mogadishu shootout sapped U.S. willingness to continue the mission. Although civil affairs units accomplished some required tasks, the overall mission failed amid rampant security problems.

Knowledge of Area of Operation

Another key factor in civil-military operations is the extent to which the U.S. government possesses up-to-date knowledge of the region. Regardless of the specific type of engagement, the cases suggest that civil affairs soldiers suffer dramatically without current or accurate information about the environment into which they are entering.

In several cases, civil affairs efforts were hampered by poor or outdated intelligence regarding conditions on the ground. In Korea, the United States had extremely limited knowledge of the region—its culture, geography, and language.⁴ The same deficit hindered U.S. civil affairs efforts in Vietnam, where, despite U.S. assistance to France against the Viet Minh insurgency, few soldiers knew anything about the country.⁵ In the Dominican Republic, the lack of Spanish-speaking civil affairs officers available for deployment hindered civil affairs operations.⁶ In all three cases, communication with citizens proved difficult, and lack of cultural awareness was a major weakness of the U.S. effort.

Conversely, the Kuwait Task Force succeeded due in part to its emphasis on gaining intimate knowledge of the area of operation prior to deployment. The Task Force worked with exiled Kuwaiti government officials in Washington throughout the fall of 1990, during the run-up to war. Because of the knowledge about conditions on the ground that planners and soldiers gained, the Task Force proved extraordinarily effective in humanitarian aid and longer-term reconstruction efforts.

² UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I).
³ James Dobbins et al., After the War: Nation Building from FDR to George W. Bush (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), 44.
⁵ Sandler, Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go, 353.
⁶ The majority of Spanish-speaking military personnel were deployed to Vietnam at the time.
U.S. experiences in Bosnia and Kosovo drew perhaps the starkest contrast in knowledge of the operational environment. Many civil affairs soldiers who deployed to Kosovo had previously served in Bosnia, where they had entered the theater with accurate, up-to-date information about political conditions, culture, infrastructure, and other key areas. For civil affairs forces entering Kosovo, however, information was scant. For instance, soldiers had almost no understanding of the gravity of Kosovo’s infrastructure problems prior to deployment, due to outdated and missing information. This information deficit hindered emergency assistance and longer-term reconstruction projects. Particularly for soldiers who had served in both theaters, the problems posed by limited information in Kosovo were readily apparent, especially in the early stages of that operation.

Coordination, Cooperation, and Communication between Military and Civilian Agencies

Civilian agency involvement in overseas operations is one of the most decisive factors in mission success. The history of U.S. civil affairs forces repeatedly illustrates the importance of military assets working closely with the U.S. Department of State and USAID to coordinate emergency response and longer-term reconstruction efforts. Perhaps even more important is for civilian government agencies and the U.S. military to have an accurate assessment of each other’s potential contributions to U.S. government efforts before reaching theater. Early coordination and constant communication are therefore central elements of success.

The U.S. experience during and following World War II exemplifies civil-military coordination failures. In 1942, President Roosevelt assigned to the U.S. State Department control over political, economic, and fiscal issues in liberated territories, determining these to be civilian matters. But civilian agencies quickly proved incapable of shouldering this burden, particularly in North Africa. Frustrated by civilian failings, General Dwight Eisenhower quipped, “I am having as much trouble with civilian forces behind aiding us as I am with the enemy in front of us.” Ultimately, and somewhat begrudgingly, the Army remained the lead U.S. government entity during much of the remaining reconstruction period.

Civil-military coordination, cooperation, and communication greatly aided the U.S. mission in Vietnam. Robert Komer, President Lyndon Johnson’s special assistant initially in charge of the CORDS program, told the president that civilian agencies were a “mess” and incapable of functioning “at the high tempo that the war required.” In order to improve civilian agencies, the CORDS program arranged military and civilian personnel under a single chain of command.

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7 Williams, Engineering Peace, 141.
8 Hayward, “Co-Ordination and Civilian Civil Affairs Planning,” 19.
9 Ibid.
Despite overall U.S. failings in Vietnam, this highly progressive structure proved largely successful, leading to increased civil-military accountability, coordination, and communications.

The United States largely failed to put the valuable lessons from the CORDS experience into practice in subsequent operations. During planning efforts for Somalia, USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team leader William Garvelink reported directly to a commanding general, but it remained unclear to whom presidential envoy Ambassador Robert Oakley and his U.S. State Department staff reported. The lack of a clearly defined relationship between the military and Ambassador Oakley caused the State Department to be left out of much of the planning for the Unified Task Force (UNITAF). In contrast, the establishment of a civil-military operations center, jointly commanded by CENTCOM and USAID, proved a highly effective civil-military coordination hub.\(^\text{11}\)

In Haiti, civil affairs planners overestimated the surge capacity of civilian agencies, whose staff are largely undeployable and therefore were not on the ground until 30 days after the operation began. Even if civilians had been ready to deploy immediately, they had no means of transportation because members of Joint Task Force (JTF)–190 deployed to Haiti without making provisions for their civilian counterparts to follow.\(^\text{12}\) The military’s assumption that USAID could start work immediately showed a lack of understanding of the agency’s standard operating procedures, which require time to bid contracts for projects and then to get the necessary staff in place.\(^\text{13}\)

### Coordination, Cooperation, Communication between the Military and NGOs

Particularly in operations during the past 20 years, the ability of civil affairs personnel to liaise effectively with the growing NGO community has been a key determinate of mission success. Proper coordination requires overcoming operational, cultural, and environmental hurdles.

NGOs played a significant role in Somalia, in part due to the lack of a Somali government. From the World Food Programme to very small organizations, the influx was enormous, fueled by the region’s stabilized security environment. The presence of so many NGOs challenged the capacity of the Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) created to help the military interact with NGOs. Charged with tracking all the relief workers, civil affairs officers built an aid worker database and issued identification cards so workers could access food storage areas. That process worked well, and in all, the military-NGO coordination was so effective that civil affairs personnel suggested

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\(^{13}\) Ibid., 4.
engaging NGOs early in future mission planning processes as a result of the value they brought to the mission.

Just a few years later, however, U.S. efforts to replicate Somalia’s military-NGO working relationship in Haiti proved largely unsuccessful. Despite some military interest in engaging NGOs in mission planning, this proved largely impossible because the planning process was mostly classified. Failure to coordinate led to a number of problems. The U.S. military believed and planned for NGOs to arrive quickly in theater to distribute food. But NGOs took longer to arrive than they did in Somalia, and those who did saw their mission more as a long-term reconstruction effort rather than emergency assistance. As a result, insufficient personnel existed to distribute food from boats arriving in Port-au-Prince. The disorganization proved so monumental that the CMOC was unable to determine how many NGOs were in the area—estimating the number as being between 20 and 100 organizations. Due to the mistrust felt by the majority of NGOs toward the military, joint operations between the NGOs and military were scant, and many NGOs actually struggled to cooperate among themselves.

In Kosovo, NGOs claimed that the size and complexity of the U.S. military hindered coordination. Perhaps due to specialization or, more likely, to the cultural chasm between general purpose forces and civil affairs forces, NGOs characterized U.S. civil affairs teams as detached from broader Task Force Falcon and suggested that this chasm limited civil affairs forces’ ability to garner resources from commanders.

Understanding How to Use Civil Affairs Assets

A key operational factor affecting the quality of civil-military operations is the ability of military commanders to employ civil affairs assets effectively. The history of U.S. civil affairs employment unfortunately illustrates persistent deficiencies in commanders’ understanding of civil affairs capabilities and how to use them.

U.S. commanders in the Korean War were unsure how to employ civil affairs assets, despite the successful employment of civil affairs in World War II and the production of the Army Field Manual 27-10 in the 1940s. Some commanders classified civil affairs assets as disaster relief teams, not including them in the big picture. Only later in the war did military leadership begin

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16 Ibid., 17.
17 Ibid., 19.
18 Ibid., 34.
educating commanders regarding the ways that CA capabilities could help them accomplish political and military objectives. 20

Civil affairs contributions to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm were similarly handicapped by commanders’ uncertainty regarding their use of civil affairs assets. From the start of operations, “Most units did not know what to do with a civil affairs unit, and CA advance parties arriving in Saudi Arabia found that the tactical and support units to which they were assigned often did not even know they were coming.”21 Despite nearly all civil affairs assets residing within the U.S. Army, many Army unit commanders were nonetheless unaware of how to use CA assets.22 In the words of the Secretary of the Army: “A civil affairs colonel who is a municipal planner or an expert in some type of municipal service, who’s called to active duty [should] not have to first explain his credentials and why he’s called. That took place repeatedly in the Gulf War.”23 Indeed, these continued shortcomings suggest a wider failure in educating general purpose forces on the advantages of civil affairs assets.

Impact of Emphasis on Force Protection

Inherent in the success of civil affairs operations is the ability of units to relate with, be responsive to, and solve the problems of civilians. At times, however, stringent and inflexible U.S. force protection requirements may hinder the capacity of civil affairs personnel to meet civilian needs.

In Bosnia, civil affairs personnel were required to wear helmets, flak jackets, and all other combat military gear even when working in permissive environments among locals in an attempt to distinguish them from general purpose forces.24 A U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) After Action Report argued that “the combination of heavy protective gear and large convoys had the adverse effect of creating the impression amongst Bosnians that U.S. forces were ‘more afraid’ of the locals and less capable of protecting the public.”25

Similarly, in Kosovo, U.S. civil affairs teams maintained steady force protection schemes. Civil affairs personnel wore helmets and flack jackets, carried weapons, and traveled in convoys, threatening to intimidate the local population.26 As one officer told an analyst, “being dressed like a Ninja Turtle gets in the way.”27 Wearing these full uniforms and combat gear, civil affairs

21 Sandler, Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go, 401.
23 Sandler, Glad to See Them Come and Sorry to See Them Go, 401.
24 Ibid., 261.
25 Ibid., 262.
26 Ibid., 484.
personnel often were indistinguishable from combat units, limiting their ability to interface with locals.\textsuperscript{28} Soldiers were also prohibited from giving and receiving hospitality from locals and from consuming alcohol with them, again hindering their ability to build relationships.\textsuperscript{29}

**Domestic Pressures and Public Perception**

At least five U.S. overseas operations since World War II occurred amidst a tumultuous political climate in the United States, which led to political pressure to avoid casualties and mission creep. In some of these cases, political pressures may have hindered the effectiveness of civil affairs forces by constraining their ability to assist the civilian sector. The paradoxical effect of such limitations may be the extension of missions until success can be achieved.

In Vietnam, despite CORDS' establishment of an effective civil-military bureaucracy, which therefore enabled the significant removal of the Viet Cong from South Vietnam through pacification, U.S. political pressures eventually necessitated withdrawal.\textsuperscript{30} U.S. missions in El Salvador, Grenada, and Panama were all tightly constrained due to the lingering effects of the Vietnam War, which left policymakers generally unwilling to authorize direct action in anything but the direst of circumstances. In El Salvador, for instance, instead of conducting kinetic operations, U.S. civil affairs personnel served as advisers, training the Salvadoran military in civic action and civil defense operations.\textsuperscript{31} In Grenada, U.S. military leaders tried to sidestep responsibility for stabilization and reconstruction efforts, leading to the allocation of insufficient resources and inferior planning for civil affairs operations.

Political pressures were a major factor in several interventions in the 1990s, as well. The killing of 18 U.S. troops in Mogadishu left policymakers and the American public opposed to so-called peacekeeping and nation-building missions. Less than one year after Somalia, in Haiti, although some in the Executive Branch viewed Haiti as supporting a weak democracy, military leadership viewed this as a “nation-building” mission, fraught with potential for mission creep.\textsuperscript{32} Perhaps as a result, civil affairs soldiers were deployed in very low numbers, hindering emergency assistance efforts.

Later in the decade, memories of the failed mission in Somalia still endured as a majority of Americans harbored reservations about U.S. engagement in Kosovo. Some analysts claim that this sentiment made the U.S. military leadership casualty averse and fearful of mission creep. By this logic, the United States was heavily involved in the Allied Force air attacks because the mission

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\textsuperscript{29} Mockatis, *Civil-Military Cooperation in Peace Operations*, 15.


\textsuperscript{31} Civil affairs forces were not officially considered special operations forces until 1987.

\textsuperscript{32} Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World*, 213.
was narrowly constrained, but the United States contributed less to the resulting humanitarian assistance effort for fear of becoming embroiled in an operation with no exit strategy. One analyst claims that this limiting of U.S. involvement backfired because it hindered mission success and ultimately extended the mission.

**Personnel: Deployment, Mobilization, and Rotations**

For several years, civil affairs assets have been deployed for extended periods of time due to the practice of partial mobilization. In many pre–September 11, 2001 operations, however, they arrived belatedly in theater, often due to early planning processes that did not incorporate civil affairs, stringent deployment standards, or inefficiencies within the mobilization and deployment process. Ideally, civil affairs soldiers arrive in theater early, setting the stage for subsequent general purpose forces deploying in their wake. Many of these historical operations underscore the difficulties associated with short-term deployments of civil affairs personnel.

In the Korean War, rules requiring U.S. civil affairs assets to rotate in and out of theater every four and a half months discouraged personnel from undertaking long-term missions. These short rotations frustrated the ROK, which characterized civil affairs as having limited capabilities and inconsistent execution, and they eventually hindered the ability of civil affairs personnel to effectively build relationships.

Nearly 30 years later in Panama, short rotations of civil affairs reservists once again hindered execution, forcing the Task Force to reorganize in order to cope with changing skill sets. Mitigation efforts were not entirely successful, however, resulting in logistical and transportation problems due to insufficient troop numbers and a lack of standardization in training.

Civil affairs forces in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm had to meet stringent requirements before being deemed ready to fight, with validation to be conducted at Fort Bragg rather than dispersed at stations all across the country. This process slowed the deployment of civil affairs forces. Although many soldiers complained that the standards were simply too high, then-SOCOM Commander General Wayne Downing later reflected that the validation process was necessary because it provided soldiers with credibility in combat zones. Even with these

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34 Ibid.
efforts, however, the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Inspector General concluded that “many reserve personnel were not mentally or physically prepared to go to war.”\(^{38}\) Although civil affairs units eventually arrived in Saudi Arabia just before the land campaign began, one critic has argued that “they could have done a much better job if they had been with their supported units for several months”\(^{39}\) and that, as a result, “CA units should deploy at the same time as their supported units.”\(^{40}\)

In Bosnia, beginning at the start of Operation Joint Endeavor, NATO deployed roughly 400 civil affairs personnel at any given time.\(^{41}\) Of those, U.S. civil affairs assets in theater constituted a significant majority—numbering roughly 310 to 320 soldiers at a time.\(^{42}\) To maintain that number and to comply with U.S. laws preventing reservists from serving for more than 270 days,\(^{43}\) roughly 1,400 CA personnel—mostly reservists—deployed in all during the first two years of the operation.\(^{44}\) But U.S. civil affairs assets were mobilized late, meaning that they arrived in theater late as well.\(^{45}\) This slow deployment limited civil affairs assets’ opportunity to liaise with the local population and with strategic allies including other nations and NGOs.\(^{46}\)

A few years after Bosnia, some NGOs that interfaced with U.S. civil affairs soldiers in Kosovo claimed that U.S. short-term deployment in Kosovo (270 days maximum for reservists) hindered cohesiveness and institutional memory. In one compelling incident in Kosovo, “One aid worker recounted how a CA officer showed up at her door, insisting that more Serbian doctors be brought to Gjilan hospital so that Serbians would feel more comfortable being treated there. She politely informed him that such a program already existed and that Serbian doctors had been attending patients at the hospital for some time.”\(^{47}\) This type of incident perpetuated the common perception that civil affairs forces are often in theater for too short a time to effect meaningful change.

\(^{39}\) Brinkerhoff, “United States Army Reserve in Operation Desert Storm: Civil Affairs in the War with Iraq,” 40.
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{45}\) Wentz, *Lessons from Bosnia*, 129.
\(^{46}\) Ibid.
\(^{47}\) Ibid., 17.
The U.S. government’s approach to complex overseas operations has evolved over the past decade. Civil affairs forces support military commanders, special and conventional forces, as well as ambassadors and other civilian officials in their execution of national command authority direction. This chapter first describes the U.S. government’s approach to complex operations as it has evolved over the past decade. It makes recommendations on ways to improve the quality and coherence of U.S. approaches to preventative security and complex operations. It then delineates the U.S. military’s efforts to co-evolve its strategy, doctrine, and capabilities in line with broader U.S. security objectives. The chapter concludes by highlighting the implications of these trends for civil affairs forces and recommending invigoration of civil affairs capabilities to support operations in the future.

U.S. Government Approach to Complex Operations

Integrated Planning

In May 1997, President William Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive (PDD)–56 to establish processes for interagency planning, coordination, and execution of complex crises.

These processes built directly on prior Clinton efforts to improve planning and execution of multiagency operations. Although the PDD-56 processes generated numerous political-military plans, the directive was never fully tested in a crisis before the administration ended.

The Bush administration took no official measures to rescind PDD-56 after its assumption of power. In practice, however, the Clinton directive’s coordination, exercise, and training elements were abandoned from the outset. There were no equivalent civil-military planning efforts preceding Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan or Operation Iraqi Freedom. During the execution of these operations, policy integration has been the responsibility of the National Security Council structure and operational integration the responsibility of forward elements. In Iraq, field integration originally took place through the Defense Department’s Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs and later through its Coalition Provisional Authority.

In response to concern that civilian reconstruction efforts required better integration, the State Department created the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) in 2004. The Department of Defense had lobbied hard for the new organization’s creation; initial State Department receptivity was, however, less enthusiastic. In December 2005, President George W. Bush signed NSPD-44, Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization, which gave the State Department, through S/CRS, the responsibility to “improve the coordination, planning and implementation of U.S. Government reconstruction and stabilization missions in states and regions at risk of, in or in transition from conflict or civil strife.”

As stipulated by NSPD-44, the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization works with 16 interagency partners to guide “the development of U.S. planning for reconstruction and stabilization operations by facilitating coordination across federal agencies and aligning

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5 Ibid.
interagency efforts at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. It does so through a three-part framework:

1. An Interagency Management System (IMS) for managing high-priority and highly complex crises and operations. The system is “specifically designed to integrate military and civilian planning at the Washington, Combatant Command, and Embassy/Joint Task Force levels.” The NSC—along with Cabinet Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries—is charged with determining when the IMS is needed for a specific operation. The IMS “is not intended to respond to the political and humanitarian crises that are regularly and effectively handled through current organizations and systems.” It is designed to improve U.S. whole-of-government capacity to plan for and execute integrated conflict and crisis prevention, mitigation, or response operations.

2. A U.S. Government Planning Framework for Reconstruction and Stabilization and Conflict Transformation, designed to guide planning specific reconstruction and stabilization operations. The guide is intended to facilitate coordination across federal agencies at the “strategic, operational, and tactical levels.” It designates the Secretary of State as the coordinator and primary initiator of policy formulation and strategy development for each operation. Implementation planning responsibility resides with the individual agencies. First published in 2005 by the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization and U.S. Joint Forces Command, the framework, along with a Conflict Assessment Framework, was recently updated and approved in July 2008.

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8 GAO, “Stabilization and Reconstruction.”
10 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 12.
3. Procedures for initiating government-wide planning, including the IMS and the planning guide. The National Security Council approved such procedures in 2007.\textsuperscript{13}

An additional S/CRS innovation has been the creation of a Civil-Military Activities Review Team (CMART) to share information, develop objectives, and coordinate the participation of other civilian interagency members with respect to civil-military exercises and other partnership activities related to reconstruction and stabilization and NSPD-44.

Despite the creation of S/CRS and the processes codified in NSPD-44, integration of current operations is largely taking place outside of those procedures.\textsuperscript{14} In Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. Ambassador and counterpart senior military commander have established their own structures and processes for managing activities. Since May 2007, these leaders have been assisted by the White House’s “war czar” for Iraq and Afghanistan, Lieutenant General Doug Lute. In addition, Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been working at the subnational level in Afghanistan since 2002 and in Iraq since 2005 to coordinate civilian and military assistance and reconstruction efforts. No standardized processes exist for PRT decisionmaking, doctrine, and training. Moreover, the effectiveness of PRTs has not yet been well documented.\textsuperscript{15} Staffing them with adequate and appropriate civilian experts has been a significant challenge for the U.S. government.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Recommendation:} The Obama administration and Congress must significantly accelerate prior efforts to establish a comprehensive U.S. government approach to preventative security, stabilization, and reconstruction missions from Washington and NATO Headquarters to the field.
\end{itemize}

Both the outgoing and incoming presidents have acknowledged that U.S. interests are threatened by failing or fragile states.\textsuperscript{17} Given the history of the nation’s engagements overseas, it is clear that it will at times operate in such places, either in an effort to prevent violence or in its aftermath. Neglecting these requirements puts taxpayer dollars, American lives, and the United States’ reputation at grave risk.

The lack of well-institutionalized stabilization and reconstruction doctrine, planning, training, and related processes is almost universally acknowledged as a failure of leadership within the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} For a description of these criteria, see GAO, “Stabilization and Reconstruction.”
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Limited exceptions include State Department–led planning efforts relating to potential contingencies in Sudan, Haiti, and Kosovo.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} For a more detailed discussion of PRTs, see J. Stephen Morrison and Kathleen Hicks, \textit{Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance} (Washington, DC: CSIS, January 2008).
  \item \textsuperscript{16} House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight, \textit{Agency Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility: Lessons We Need to Learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan}, Committee Print 8, 41-409, April 2008, 24.
\end{itemize}
Executive and Legislative Branches. The Bush administration’s agency-centered approach to integration relied on the Secretary of State to champion S/CRS’s mission. For several years, neither Secretary Colin Powell nor Secretary Condoleezza Rice made stabilization and reconstruction issues a priority; in 2008, Secretary Rice began to change that precedent. A similar seven-year delay this time invites needless loss. The Obama administration should quickly clarify a coherent approach to interagency framework for complex operations and vest responsibility in an official with strong support from the President and acknowledged as an authority by the National Security Adviser, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. The administration should build on the best practices gleaned from PDD-56 and NSPD-44 rather than succumb to the “not invented here” allergy that plagues many new administrations. It should also seek to standardize lessons learned from U.S., NATO, and coalition experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Less generally discussed, but equally important, is the lack of a coherent framework for preventative security approaches abroad. The National Security Strategy is not currently bolstered by any regional or country-specific security strategies. The U.S. Ambassador is responsible for developing an annual Mission Strategic Plan for his or her country, but there is questionable upstream connectivity of these plans to policy guidance from Washington and downstream connectivity to resource decisions across the breadth of U.S. agencies engaged in a given country. The Obama administration should ensure tightened connectivity between the decisions of the Washington, DC, policy community and the activities of departments and agencies, including regional combatant commanders, in support of preventative security and foreign policy.

**U.S. Civilian Capacity for Complex Overseas Operations**

The limited nature of U.S government and historical sensitivities regarding the potential of abuse by a standing army have proscribed the military’s role in missions at home and abroad. For most preventative security and stabilization and reconstruction tasks in permissive environments, civilian actors are preferred to military ones. This is due to their agencies’ expertise and training, their embodiment of civilian control of the military as an American ideal, and their lower profile in potentially fragile civil environments. Growing the capacity of civilians to undertake such operations has thus been a goal of development experts and military officials alike. S/CRS has led the effort to develop a Civilian Response Corps, which only slowly gained traction on Capitol Hill and in the Bush administration. The Corps comprises three elements:

1. **Active Response Corps:** The State Department’s FY2008 budget provides for 100 full-time State and USAID personnel for deployment in a crisis situation with as little as 48 hours notice. The Department’s FY2009 budget request, if approved, would provide a total of 250
personnel for the Active Response Corps drawn from eight federal departments and agencies.18

2. Standby Response Corps: In the FY2008 budget, Congress approved training for an additional 500 State and USAID employees to deploy to a crisis within 30 days for up to 180 days. The FY2009 budget request, if approved, would expand the Standby Response Corps to 2,000 personnel. Like the Active Response Corps, these civilians would be drawn from a broad range of participating U.S. government departments and agencies.

3. Civilian Reserve Corps: The State Department seeks to create a reserve corps of 2,000 nonfederal employees who could provide expertise resident in the private sector and state and local governments. Its FY2009 funding request would provide for the recruitment and training of these experts, who would sign a four-year (renewable) contract with State and be subject for 12 months of deployment.19

These efforts are laudable, but they are in nascent stages of development.

- **Recommendation:** The Obama administration must actualize civilian capability growth for preventative activities and complex operations, from Washington and NATO Headquarters to the field.

As the history of U.S. operations has made clear, the capacity of civilian agencies to deploy quickly and in sufficient numbers has had a significant effect on the use of U.S. military forces, including civil affairs. It is thus perhaps unsurprising that Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was the Bush administration’s most vocal proponent of greater civilian capacity. “The Department of Defense has taken on many…burdens that might have been assumed by civilian agencies in the past,” he noted in a 2007 speech at Kansas State University. He continued:

> “Still, forced by circumstances, our brave men and women in uniform have stepped up to the task, with field artillerymen and tankers building schools and mentoring city councils – usually in a language they don’t speak. They have done an admirable job….But it is no replacement for the real thing – civilian involvement and expertise.”20

In describing the benefits of its proposed civilian reserve corps, the State Department likewise acknowledges that “establishing, training, and providing resources for a pool of civilian specialists allow the military to focus on its core responsibilities, with the assurance that civilian experts will

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18 The participating federal entities are the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Treasury, the Department of State, and USAID.


be available to address critical reconstruction and stabilization tasks.”

The next few years will be critical to the growth of deployable civilian capacity for rule of law, economics and finance, internal security, and other governance missions.

- **Recommendation:** The Obama administration must provide a government-wide “capability planning construct” to guide the sizing or rebalancing of supporting civilian and military capabilities.

The U.S. government does not currently have a mid- to long-range planning framework for determining the size and shape of needed military and civilian capabilities for preventative security, stabilization, and reconstruction. Such a framework would help the President and his advisers identify key capability needs and associated gaps or overages. It would also provide the means by which to assess potential alternative authority and resourcing solutions, including which actor—civilian or military, private or public, U.S. or foreign—should be expected to provide a capability. The planning framework could be a powerful analytic tool for explaining resourcing requests with authorizers and appropriators in Congress. Without it, potential civilian and military contributors may not develop needed capabilities, or may not maintain them in the needed quantity, to address the expected range of future contingencies.

The Defense Department has perhaps the most experience in mission area analysis. The Department of Homeland Security has also developed a scenario-based capability planning approach. The Obama administration should draw on experts in both Departments and vest S/CRS (or follow-on national coordinating authority) with the responsibility for creating and using a similar framework.

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The United States is severely handicapped by its undersized and under-resourced civilian planning and operational capacity for preventative security, stabilization, and reconstruction. Yet even with actualized aspirations for improved civilian capability, the U.S. military will require its own capabilities to meet security cooperation goals, abide by the Law of War\(^1\) during combat, and ensure U.S. capability for reconstruction and stabilization in less permissive environments or sectors. Civil affairs forces should be the vanguard of that military capability. This chapter sets forth the U.S. military’s evolving perception of its role in complex operations, describes the role and potential of civil affairs forces for assisting in fulfillment of that role, and underscores the requirement for all military personnel to understand civil-military operations across the spectrum of potential conflict.

### The Military’s Role in Complex Operations

The U.S. military’s role in complex operations has been defined under a number of monikers. In recent years, these terms have most notably included stability operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare. In late 2005, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England issued a landmark directive stating that stability operations are “a core U.S. military mission” and would be given priority “comparable to combat operations.”\(^2\) DoD Directive 3000.05 defined stability operations very broadly as “encompassing military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States and regions.”\(^3\) The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report reiterated England’s conclusion several months later. In theory, the identification and development of needed U.S. military stability operations capabilities, from doctrine and training to personnel and information systems, became a priority. In reality, attention to stability operations capability was a relatively minor focus for most Defense Department programmers and planners. Their attention was paradoxically focused on the twin priorities of current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and protecting traditional materiel programs.

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3. Ibid.
Approximately one year after DoD released the Stability Operations Directive, the U.S. Army published its Counterinsurgency Manual. This doctrinal publication described counterinsurgency as “a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations” that “requires Soldiers and Marines to employ a mix of familiar combat tasks and skills more often associated with nonmilitary agencies.” More pointedly, the manual states that members of the U.S. land forces must be “nation builders as well as warriors.”

The pace of doctrinal change has continued to accelerate since the 2005 issuance of DoD Directive 3000.05. Within the past few months, two more pieces of Defense Department guidance have emphasized the importance of military preparedness for complex operations. In October 2008, the Army released its stability operations doctrine. In contrast to the extremely broad definition of stability operations in the 2005 England directive, it follows joint doctrine in narrowing the scope of those operations to post-conflict situations:

[Stability operations encompass] various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.

It nevertheless notes that these capabilities are relevant to security cooperation activities undertaken in the absence of conflict.

In December 2008, Deputy Secretary England released an Irregular Warfare directive. The directive defines irregular warfare as “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s)” and, in language similar to DoD Directive 3000.05, states that it is “as strategically important as traditional warfare.” The directive also argues that irregular warfare proficiencies are likely to assist with stability operations.

The parity between, and interrelationship of, conventional warfare and unconventional warfare is a consistent theme in this newest strain of DoD doctrine and guidance. Equally striking is the guidance’s emphasis on working with nonmilitary partners and within a broader civilian-led context, wherever possible. “Military forces have to operate with the other instruments of national power to forge unity of effort through a whole of government approach,” the Army Stability

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4 Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, December 2006), foreword.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., vii.
9 Ibid., 2.
10 Ibid., 3.
Operations Manual states. “This approach accounts for a wider range of considerations beyond those of the military instrument, ensuring that planning accounts for broader national policy goals and interests.”

**Definition and Role of Civil Affairs**

Civil affairs forces were designed to provide expertise to military commanders in their interface with civil societies. All U.S. military commanders are charged with overseeing civil-military operations within their areas of responsibility. Joint doctrine defines civil-military operations as

> The activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile operational area in order to facilitate military operations, to consolidate and achieve operational U.S. objectives. Civil-military operations may include performance by military forces of activities and functions normally the responsibility of the local, regional, or national government.

Civil affairs forces support a commander’s civil-military operations. Civil affairs forces are organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct and support civil affairs operations. Civil affairs activities and operations have three characteristics:

1. enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in localities where military forces are present;
2. require coordination with other interagency organizations, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, indigenous populations and institutions, and the private sector; and
3. involve application of functional specialty skills that normally are the responsibility of civil government to enhance the conduct of civil-military operations.

The types of functional specialty skills that civil affairs forces might provide are in the fields of rule of law, economic stability, governance, public health and welfare, infrastructure, and public education and information. Although all civil affairs support the commander’s civil-military operations responsibility, commanders may draw on a range of capabilities beyond civil affairs forces.

- **Recommendation:** DoD must treat civil affairs forces and civil-military operations as integral to its success across the range of military operations.

With skill sets well suited to civilian environments, some interviewees with whom the study team spoke consider civil affairs forces to operate only at the low-intensity end of the conflict spectrum.

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13 Ibid., GL-6.
Just as stability operations, irregular warfare, and counterinsurgency intersect with traditional warfare, civil affairs forces are valuable across the range of military operations. They can support general purpose forces as well as special operations forces. They are valuable in planning and supporting kinetic and non-kinetic operations and in immediate post-hostility environments, at home and abroad. They can even operate in direct support of civilian authorities, such as a U.S. ambassador, in order to link civilian and military activities.

Civil affairs forces could provide the United States with unique value at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

- At the strategic level, civil affairs personnel should assist the Cabinet Departments and Agencies, as well as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in understanding the meaning of operating in a complex environment, especially as it relates to the role of the U.S. military.

- At the operational level, civil affairs personnel could assist in planning for the use of all elements of U.S. power for various contingencies or in peacetime. They could also serve as an ambassador’s conduit to military personnel operating in country and provide a Geographic Combatant Commander with valuable cultural and regional knowledge.

- At the tactical level, civil affairs personnel could assess the needs of a town or village, such as water and sanitation, then plan and execute a project in coordination with the host nation, other U.S. government agencies, or other stakeholders.

Despite these potential contributions, commanders and civilian leaders do not currently employ civil affairs forces as effectively as they should. The CSIS study team found two major factors contributing to this undervaluation.

First, there are a number of institutional biases undermining the relationship between civil affairs forces and maneuver forces. Civil affairs is regarded as a stepchild mission. Only in the U.S. Army is civil affairs a professional branch, and even there it is regarded by some infantry officers as a backwater. The career-ending reputation of civil affairs as a branch (Army) or military occupation code (Navy and Marine Corps) compounds the view of some that the branch attracts subpar personnel. Although the study team encountered many high-quality civil affairs personnel during the course of its investigation, it was clear that they served in civil affairs because of their passion for the issue set and not for the promotion potential. Long-standing biases about the quality of Reserve personnel further compound negative views of many active duty maneuver units, particularly in the Marine Corps and Army. Chapter 5 will provide recommendations aimed in part at addressing these issues.

A second obstacle in the effective use of civil affairs forces is the lack of sufficient authorities, multiyear resources, and training to execute activities. With each year’s resource allocation dependent on thorough expenditure of the prior year’s funds, commanders have an incentive to complete projects, regardless of their value. Moreover, with only one year to conceive a project and implement it, activities can be ill considered, involving little consultation with USAID, host nations, prior civil affairs teams, or other stakeholders. The short duration of deployments in the
current operational environment only worsens the inability of civil affairs teams to have a meaningful impact on long-term development during their tour. Finally, civil affairs activities and resources are governed by a confusing set of authorities—including Commander’s Emergency Response Program, Commander’s Initiative Funds, Operations and Maintenance accounts, and Overseas Disaster, Humanitarian, and Civic Aid funding—in which civil affairs personnel lack sufficient training. Although the authority and funding issues associated with civil affairs activities were beyond the scope of CSIS’s inquiry, the study team believes they merit further investigation.
Civil Affairs Capability in DoD Today

Within the U.S. military, most of the civil affairs capability resides in the Army. The Navy and Marine Corps have each developed an initial civil affairs capability that they are expanding, reflecting the growing realization in the Department of Defense that irregular warfare and stability operations can no longer be treated as “lesser included cases” of traditional war fighting. Currently the Air Force does not have a civil affairs capability.

Army

The Army has conducted civil affairs operations since World War II. Army civil affairs personnel have deployed to Korea, Vietnam, many Latin American countries, the Persian Gulf, Haiti, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, and most recently Iraq and Afghanistan. Within the Army there are approximately 7,500 personnel categorized as civil affairs qualified. Of those personnel, 4 percent are in the active Army, while the remaining 96 percent of Army civil affairs capability resides in the U.S. Army Reserve. Particularly in the last two decades, Army civil affairs units have routinely met the criteria to be considered a high-demand, low-density capability because the requirement for this capability typically exceeds its supply in the force structure.

Currently there is a single active duty civil affairs brigade in the Army, the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade assigned to U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg. The active duty civil affairs teams primarily support special operations forces. The Army is expanding its active duty civil affairs force and intends to complete the expansion plan by 2009. The Army recently established the 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, aligned with U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command. The 96th, 97th, and 98th Battalions are aligned with U.S. Central Command, U.S. Pacific Command, and U.S. Southern Command, respectively.¹ A fifth battalion is intended for U.S. European Command by 2012. The 95th brigade serves as headquarters for the Army’s expanding civil affairs force structure. By 2009, the Army plans to create 16 civil affairs companies, an expansion of more than 250 percent in 4 years.

In the Army Reserve, there are currently 8 brigades and 28 battalions that primarily support Army General Purpose Forces. The Army is also expanding its reserve component civil affairs structure,

and by 2011 it plans to increase the number of companies within the 28 battalions from 56 in 2003 to 112 in 2011, through a redesign action that changes the size of a CA company from 64 to 32 personnel and allows for additional CA company structure to support the Army’s 76 Brigade Combat Teams. The Army Reserve civil affairs brigades located within the continental United States are organized under 4 regionally oriented Civil Affairs Commands (CACOMs), which report to the Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command at Fort Bragg, which in turn reports to U.S. Army Reserve Command.

The bulk of the Army’s civil affairs capability was placed in the Army Reserve in the early 1970s as part of a larger restructuring of the Army that resulted from the decision to end the draft and shift to an all-volunteer force. At this time, the Army Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams, decided to shift much of the Army’s combat support and combat service support capability into the Army Reserve. Moving combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) force structure into the reserve component was a way to control costs without unduly sacrificing effectiveness, because in most cases the CS and CSS units were not “first to deploy” units under the war plans.

Since the Vietnam War, however, the U.S. military has been involved in a wide variety of contingency operations presenting significant civil-military challenges. These operations typically did not allow for long mobilization periods, and as a result, civil affairs units were called up from the reserve component far more frequently, and for longer duration, than ever anticipated almost 40 years ago. The relative difficulty of accessing the civil affairs capability in the Army Reserve has become a significant element in the broader DoD debate about how best to meet future civil affairs requirements.

Not only is the vast majority of Army civil affairs capability in the Army Reserve, most functional specialists within the civil affairs community are reservists. Maintaining functional specialists in the reserves, where individuals can maintain and further develop their functional skills as part of their civilian life and work, has generally been viewed as more efficient than trying to develop mechanisms to grow the equivalent functional expertise inside the military system.

**Marine Corps**

The Marine Corps began developing a civil affairs capability in 1965, but it remains dramatically smaller than civil affairs in the Army. As of 2008, the Marines have a total of 381 civil affairs positions authorized. Just over half of these individuals are in the Marine Corps Reserve, while the other half are in the active component. The active duty positions were created based on lessons learned in Operation Iraqi Freedom and reflect the Marine Corps view that civil-military operations are central to the active force mission.

In the Marine Corps Reserve, civil affairs personnel are organized primarily into the 3rd and 4th Civil Affairs Groups (CAGs). The Marines have also assigned individual Marine reservists with civil affairs skills to the Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs), Joint Forces Command, Marine
Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and various other USMC headquarters around the world.

Active Marine civil affairs personnel are generally assigned to the MEFs and the Marine Corps artillery regiments in detachments of 47 personnel. Smaller numbers of active Marine civil affairs personnel are assigned to the headquarters companies of the infantry regiments as well as the Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) and a range of other headquarters elements around the world, including U.S. Africa Command, where they serve as civil-military operations planners.

The Marine Corps uses its civil affairs capability to support Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) civil-military operations throughout the spectrum of conflict as well as theater security cooperation activities. It also envisions civil affairs as an important component of irregular warfare operations, such as those undertaken as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Although both the Marine Corps and the Navy operate in the littoral area, Marine civil affairs personnel primarily provide direct support to the MAGTF commander, reducing the likelihood of overlap with Navy civil affairs assets.

Marine civil affairs personnel are currently trained by attending officer and enlisted mobilization and requalification courses at U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) or by civil-military operations mobile training teams sponsored by the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC).

Navy

Like the Marines, the Navy has about 330 civil affairs personnel. The Navy developed a small civil affairs capability to support its global presence mission and organized the capability into a Maritime Civil Affairs Group that produces regionally oriented maritime civil affairs teams. Navy civil affairs teams support Navy forces conducting Phase 0 regional engagement and shaping activities. At present the Navy views its civil affairs personnel as existing to fulfill primarily U.S. Navy requirements. The small size of the Navy capability does not allow it to mitigate the demand for Army or Marine Corps civil affairs capabilities.

Navy civil affairs personnel receive six weeks of training in combat skills and six weeks of civil affairs training geared toward producing civil affairs generalists. In addition to its basic training courses for civil affairs personnel, the Navy also provides language training through a program at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. To further enhance its evolving civil affairs capability, the Navy has established a partnership with its foreign area officers program to provide cross-fertilization between Navy foreign area officers and Navy civil affairs personnel.

As part of its civil affairs program, the Navy has established a functional specialty area comprising skills corresponding to the functional areas recognized in joint doctrine. But it also has established three additional functional specialty areas: Marine and Fisheries resources, Commercial Port Operations, and Port and Harbor Infrastructure and Maintenance. Navy civil affairs functional specialists play a role in planning, resourcing, and executing civil-military operations projects as well as providing special and focused capability to deploying maritime civil affairs teams as
needed. These functional specialists are trained to interact with other U.S. government agencies specifically to facilitate “whole of government” approaches to operations.

The demand for a civil affairs capability within the U.S. military has been consistently high for well over a decade. In response to this demand signal, and recognizing that the military is likely to be increasingly engaged in irregular warfare and stability operations for the foreseeable future, the Army has begun increasing its civil affairs capability and as noted above, the Navy and Marine Corps have created an initial civil affairs capability.

Given the central role of the U.S. Army in providing forces for sustained missions in civil environments, it is entirely appropriate that the majority of the overall military civil affairs force continue to reside in the Army. At the same time, Army forces are not the only forces operating in civil-military environments so it is logical that other services are developing the capacity to conduct civil affairs operations and are tailoring those capabilities for their particular operating environments. Moreover, even as the Army expands its civil affairs capability and the Navy and Marines build new civil affairs capability, DoD is still not able to meet the demand for civil affairs forces comfortably. Development of new civil affairs capabilities by the Navy and Marine Corps will enhance the ability of the military writ large to meet civil affairs requirements and expand the range of civil affairs functions for which the U.S. military is capable without undermining the legitimate primacy of the U.S. Army in this area.

Elevating and Strengthening Civil Affairs

Civil Affairs in the Army

Although the bulk of civil affairs capability inside the Army has long resided in the Army Reserve, the entire Army civil affairs force has been part of the special operations community and has been organized under U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) since the mid-1980s. Placement of civil affairs within the Army under USASOC created unique challenges for the Army’s civil affairs community. Special operations forces tend to be highly focused on kinetic, “kick down the door” operations, while the nature of civil affairs is inherently non-kinetic. Special operations forces reside almost entirely within the active component, while most civil affairs forces reside in the reserve component. Until very recently, civil affairs was not a branch within the Army. There are no active duty civil affairs general officers anywhere in the Department of Defense, nor are there any O-6 level positions on the Army headquarters staff dedicated to civil affairs issues. In contrast, special forces in the Army are the elite of the elite. There are many special forces general officers throughout Army commands and in its headquarters staff in the Pentagon. General Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army from 2003 to 2007, came from the special forces community. Although civil affairs forces have historically been linked to the special operations community, the many differences between the communities have made civil affairs an institutional stepchild within the Army.
Shortly after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld began asking the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chief of Staff of the Army whether civil affairs truly belonged in the special operations community. Secretary Rumsfeld sent a series of “snowflake” memoranda on this issue to senior military leaders throughout 2004 and 2005. In these memos, the Secretary appeared to view civil affairs as inherently different from special operations forces and repeatedly wondered whether civil affairs should be moved elsewhere in the Army organization to better orient civil affairs with general purpose forces within the Army. In response to these snowflakes, the Army repeatedly argued that shifting civil affairs outside of the special operations community was not necessary. In particular, the Army argued that moving civil affairs forces organizationally would not necessarily facilitate greater integration of civil affairs forces with general purpose forces. The Army also argued that while a move might not achieve the Secretary’s specific goal, moving civil affairs out of USASOC might well degrade the effectiveness of these forces in the short term, which would be ill-advised given the significant role that civil affairs forces were playing in operations as part of the larger global war on terrorism.

Although the Army argued against moving civil affairs out of the special operations community for almost two years, in October 2006, Army Chief of Staff General Peter Schoomaker ultimately signed an official memo directing that all active Army civil affairs units be administratively assigned to USASOC under Special Operations Command and all reserve component civil affairs units be administratively assigned to USACAPOC, which would report to U.S. Army Reserve Command. In essence, this memorandum designated that active Army civil affairs personnel would be considered special operations forces, but reserve Army civil affairs personnel would not. Commonly referred to as “the divorce,” the decision to split Army civil affairs into special operations forces and general purpose forces generated a number of negatives outcomes.

Culturally, the designation of only active civil affairs personnel as special operations forces created an “us-them” mentality that exacerbated broader active component-reserve component tensions and fueled the perception that reserve civil affairs personnel were somehow second class citizens relative to their active component brethren.

Organizationally, command relationships prior to the divorce were relatively simple, with all civil affairs personnel and issues being handled by USACAPOC under USASOC, reporting to SOCOM. After the bifurcation, command relationships became far more complicated, as illustrated in figure 1.

Although Army Reserve Command has a better understanding of the mobilization process and the unique needs of reserve soldiers than does USASOC, and while it has demonstrated good intentions in terms of administering reserve civil affairs units, it has not succeeded in better

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integrating civil affairs with Army general purpose forces. Under Army Reserve Command, civil affairs forces continue to have low visibility inside the Army for a number of reasons, not least of which is the lack of civil affairs representation in the general officer community. From a budget perspective, reassigning reserve civil affairs units to the Army Reserve rather than SOCOM meant that reserve civil affairs units were no longer able to access Major Force Program 11 funds. Even under SOCOM, civil affairs has often struggled to secure sufficient resources for its mission, but under the Army Reserve, civil affairs now competes against a much wider range of budget needs. While reserve civil affairs units have generally done better under the Army Reserve Command in terms of acquiring some kinds of general equipment, it has often been more difficult to secure sufficient funding for more specialized equipment, operations, and various kinds of training.

Figure 1. Civil Affairs Command Relationships within DoD

While not the intention of the divorce, the study team concluded that dividing civil affairs in the Army between the special operations community and Army Reserve Command has significantly impeded progress toward improving civil affairs within the total force. Secretary Rumsfeld’s snowflakes were the initial impetus that ultimately led to the split in responsibility within the Army for civil affairs. His fundamental argument seemed to be that civil affairs forces are not equivalent to special operations forces and hence civil affairs should perhaps be moved organizationally to affiliate more closely with general purpose forces within the Army. Ironically, the October 2006 memorandum signed out by General Schoomaker split the baby in terms of
where to place civil affairs forces. Placing reserve civil affairs units under Army Reserve Command has not noticeably improved the integration of civil affairs with general purpose forces, but by leaving active component civil affairs forces in the special operations community, the split did foster additional tension between the active and reserve forces and furthered the stepchild dynamic that has hampered the development of civil affairs for many years.

- **Recommendation:** Reintegrate all Army civil affairs forces under U.S. Army Special Operations Command and create within USASOC a 1- or 2-star active civil affairs general officer to oversee and advocate for all Army civil affairs forces.

The Department of Defense needs to reverse the split between Army active and reserve civil affairs forces and reintegrate them under a single organization. At present, USASOC is the most appropriate organization within the Army to serve as the organizational advocate for Army civil affairs. To ensure USASOC can be effective in this role, the Army should create a 1- or 2-star active civil affairs general officer position within the command to focus exclusively on Army civil affairs forces. Recognizing that the majority of civil affairs forces reside in the Army Reserve, this general officer should at a minimum have a reserve officer serving as deputy. These senior officers at USASOC would oversee a total force U.S. Army Civil Affairs Command and focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of civil affairs within the Army special operations community.

**Civil Affairs in the Department of Defense**

Just as civil affairs forces are something of a stepchild within the Army, they are also insufficiently understood and represented within the Department of Defense more broadly, both in terms of DoD as an organization and within the military services. Indicative of its stepchild status, the study team found a striking paucity of senior personnel in the Pentagon who focused routinely on civil affairs issues. There are no active general officers, even at 1-star rank, solely responsible for civil affairs issues in the Army staff, the Joint Staff, or the Office of the Secretary of Defense. For example, when the study team contacted the Joint Staff to interview a representative with responsibility for civil affairs issues, the team was directed to the Army staff and to SOCOM. In many cases the individuals working on civil affairs issues in the Pentagon are personnel with civil affairs backgrounds who are working the issues as “other duties as assigned” and out of sheer commitment to the mission.

To help strengthen civil affairs as a mission area, the Army did establish a civil affairs branch in 2006. Prior to creation of the branch, there was no real career path for officers or enlisted personnel who chose to focus on civil affairs. The lack of an established career path and upward

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3 Although this study was limited to an examination of civil affairs, it is likely that there is a need for a similar command under USASOC that would focus exclusively on psychological operations forces, which have encountered many of the same challenges as civil affairs within the Army.
mobility for personnel was an impediment to attracting talented individuals to work on civil affairs and was a further indication of the stepchild status of civil affairs in the military.

Not only is there a dearth of senior advocates for civil affairs within DoD, there also is a profound lack of familiarity with civil affairs missions and forces outside the immediate civil affairs community itself. Civil affairs is not part of the broader education and training curriculum within military schoolhouses, experience with civil affairs in the broader Army is very limited, and anecdotes of negative experiences with civil affairs personnel in the field are common, although in many cases the negative experiences are by-products of the stepchild status of civil affairs. While the special operations community has a greater familiarity with civil affairs than do general purpose forces, because they have operated with civil affairs for many years, there is still relatively little understanding or appreciation even in this community for the capabilities of civil affairs forces or how civil affairs forces operate in the field.

**Recommendation:** The Department of Defense needs to embed civil affairs expertise in key strategic organizations throughout the department and with its partners.

The Department of Defense could take a major step forward in terms of improving the quality and effectiveness of military civil affairs forces by embedding civil affairs expertise much more broadly throughout the department. DoD should place active civil affairs officers in 1-star level positions in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Joint Staff, and in appropriate positions in the Army staff. In addition to creating senior level positions for civil affairs officers across the department, DoD also should revise the charter of the Assistant Secretary for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict and Integrated Capabilities in Policy to include responsibility for oversight of civil affairs policy, planning, and programs. Finally, DoD should also go beyond the department and create positions at the O-6 level for civil affairs officers to serve at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and within the State Department’s regional bureaus and S/CRS. In several cases, these changes will be easy to effect. Combatant Commands already embed liaison officers at USAID, for instance. Filling these liaison positions with civil affairs officers would improve the quality of ongoing integration. Indeed, distributing civil affairs expertise throughout DoD and the interagency more broadly would both help elevate the civil affairs mission institutionally and support efforts to develop a more comprehensive approach to civil-military operations across the U.S. government.

**Recommendation:** SOCOM, as the likely joint proponent, should ensure additional training for civil affairs personnel in strategic and operational civil affairs competencies.

In addition to placing more individuals in key positions within strategically oriented DoD organizations, SOCOM also should provide additional training for civil affairs personnel in

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4 If ASD/SOLIC/IC is reorganized by the new administration, responsibility for oversight of civil affairs issues should be placed in the office of the Assistant Secretary whose responsibilities fit most closely with civil affairs.
strategic and operational civil affairs competencies. For example, civil affairs personnel would benefit from additional training in national level strategy and policy guidance, strategic planning, and strategic communication.

- **Recommendation:** The Army should focus on implementing the decision to establish civil affairs as a branch and ensure upward mobility for civil affairs personnel.

At present, the Army’s decision to establish civil affairs as a branch has not been fully implemented. Technically, the Special Warfare Center and School is the civil affairs branch and personnel proponent, but civil affairs as a branch has not yet achieved parity with other branches within the Army. Professional education and development paths and requirements have not been fully established, and upward mobility within the branch remains extremely limited due to the lack of senior positions for civil affairs personnel in DoD, as discussed above. Traditionally, branches within the Army have a dedicated school led by a 1- or 2-star general officer who maintains a visible profile as the primary advocate for the branch, robust staffs for training, doctrinal development, establishment and oversight of personnel standards, and a professional journal. The Army should focus on fleshing out the decision to establish civil affairs as a branch and ensure there are meaningful advancement incentives for individuals within the branch.

- **Recommendation:** General purpose and special operations forces should significantly deepen their understanding of the capabilities and application of civil affairs forces.

Looking to the future, it is clear that military forces will almost always be operating in a civil-military environment and will need to understand how to conduct civil-military operations effectively. To facilitate the proficiency of the U.S. military to conduct civil-military operations, the services should introduce civil-military operations concepts and understanding of civil affairs forces at a much earlier point in the officer professional education and development process. At a minimum, the services should consider developing instructional modules on civil-military operations for inclusion in the curricula at command and staff college level, senior staff college level, and in other command-preparatory venues. Ideally, services would include a teaching module on civil-military operations in appropriate courses at the military academies, and as part of the Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Course. The purpose of infusing exposure to civil affairs and civil-military operations into the officer education and development system would be to help both general purpose forces and special operations forces understand how to better leverage civil affairs at all levels of operation—strategic, operational, and tactical. In addition to placing greater emphasis on civil-military operations and civil affairs in the military curriculum, the services should elevate their training standards for civil-military operations as well as how they certify training in this area.

**Sizing and Shaping Civil Affairs Forces**

As noted above, despite the increases in Army, Navy, and Marine Corps civil affairs end strength, projected demand for civil affairs continues to outpace supply.
In 2008, a Total Army Analysis study determined that the requirement for Army civil affairs forces exceeded current supply, given the active or reserve dwell ratios set by the Secretary of Defense. In June 2008, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England acknowledged a need not only to grow Army civil affairs even further, but to rebalance more of the force into the Active Army in support of general purpose force requirements. Accordingly, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy submitted a Program Change Proposal for the FY 2010–2015 Army program. It recommended additional Army and Army National Guard civil affairs structure at the Corps, Division, and Brigade Combat Team level, as well as additional training capacity to manage the additions. The effect of the change would have been the shifting of the Active/Reserve Army civil affairs ratio from 4 percent/96 percent to 30 percent/70 percent.

The Army, already faced with multiple demands on its planned increase in end strength, made a counter proposal, which OSD ultimately accepted. The deal would create 20 additional Reserve Component civil affairs teams and 30 additional Active Component teams, an increase that would meet current Iraq and Afghanistan demand within the Secretary of Defense’s prescribed dwell ratios. As of December 2008, the Army had not provided its proposal for how it would organize these 50 additional civil affairs teams. Many civil affairs experts have speculated that the Army is biding its time on this decision until Deputy Secretary England has left the Pentagon and the service can clarify what changes the Obama administration might seek to its program.

The Marine Corps and Navy have not yet faced similar pressure to expand civil affairs forces by exponential amounts. Indeed, the Navy has reportedly cut its FY 2010–2015 civil affairs program by close to 40-percent.

- **Recommendation:** Create Active Component civil affairs structure to integrate at all echelons (division/equivalent and below) in Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.

Across the range of military operations, the future environment will be a civil-military one. The lack of integration between maneuver units and civil affairs experts puts commanders at significant risk of failure in such environments. Even a small number of Active Component civil affairs experts could significantly improve operations down to the brigade/equivalent level. Civil affairs forces’ accessibility to the maneuver commanders, from training to deployment, is vital to their understanding of the projected environment and how civil affairs can assist. Moreover Active Component forces are trained for the generalist role needed at the tactical level, assessing civil-military needs and accessing functional specialists as required.

Active civil affairs forces must be able to specialize in order to retain their value to maneuver units. Rotations in ongoing military operations, embassy teams, allied or host nation civilian organizations provide opportunities to refresh assessment, language, and cultural skill sets. Services should consider the use of Reserve Component forces to round out civil affairs structures within end strength ceilings. As operational tempo allows, services should consider further

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5 These dwell ratios are 1:2 for active forces and 1:5 for reserve forces.
readjustments in their Active/Reserve Component mix for civil affairs, taking into account functional specialist needs and accessibility requirements.

Recent Army experience with integrating artillery units has left some analysts wary of integrating other branches with maneuver units. The CSIS recommendation differs in a significant way from artillery’s experience, however. Namely, artillery units in the Army were integrated with Brigade Combat Teams but are not represented at higher echelons. As a result, the branch is seen to be atrophying, as the expertise provided by artillery professionals is not appreciated or used. Perhaps a better analogy for civil affairs is the Signal Corps. As one interviewee noted, every soldier must know how to use a radio, yet the Signal Corps is represented at all echelons to serve as a backbone of technical support and operate more complicated equipment. So, too, should civil affairs units be seen as a civil-military operations resource for the total force yet be available to provide on-site expertise to the commander.

Significant elements of the existing civil affairs force structure are the four regionally oriented Civil Affairs Commands (CACOMs). The CACOMs reside under USACAPOC and Army Reserve Command. Each CACOM is commanded by a 1-star reserve civil affairs officer. In terms of operations, a major role for the CACOMs is to assist the relevant geographic combatant commands during the planning process by providing civil affairs expertise, particularly functional specialist expertise. Administratively, the CACOMs house significant numbers of senior functional specialists at the O-5 level and above, and they manage and oversee subordinate reserve component civil affairs units, particularly in supporting the regional focus and training of these units.

In practice, it is not clear the CACOMs are playing the role they were intended to play in terms of providing civil affairs expertise to planners at the geographic combatant commands. During interviews, the study team found most combatant command staffs had very little interaction with individuals at the affiliated CACOM. This may in part be due to the fact that the CACOMs are not colocated with the geographic combatant commands, so there tends to be an “out of sight, out of mind” dynamic. Because the interactions between geographic combatant command staffs and CACOM staffs are so limited, however, the functional specialist expertise available at the CACOMs appears to be underutilized.

- **Recommendation:** Move the civil affairs planning function out of the CACOM and colocate it at the geographic combatant commands. Evaluate whether administrative function for eight brigades requires the CACOMs or if brigades could report directly to proposed USACAC at USASOC.

The civil affairs planning function of the CACOMs would be more effective if the core planning staffs at the CACOM were colocated with the associated geographic combatant commands. There is ample precedent for use of reserve component personnel at the combatant commands, so this would not cause reserve component civil affairs personnel to be cut out of the deliberate and contingency planning processes. Embedding the planning function housed at the CACOM today at the geographic combatant command level also would be consistent with the recommendation
to create and integrate civil affairs structure at all echelons because it would further the integration of civil affairs into broader military operations and activities.

If the planning function of the CACOMs is colocated with the geographic combatant commands, the need for four separate standing 1-star level administrative commands between USASOC and the eight brigades is less clear. The Army should carefully evaluate whether the CACOMs as currently configured are still needed, or whether the administrative responsibilities and functional specialist reachback capabilities of the CACOMs could be handled directly by the proposed 2-star level Civil Affairs Command at USASOC.

Turning to the shaping aspect of DoD’s civil affairs force structure, historically there has been an emphasis on the importance of functional specialists in the civil affairs community, particularly in the reserve component. Reserve civil affairs officers frequently have specialized skills associated with their civilian employment. Civil affairs personnel have used their functional specialties in a variety of ways in past military operations, such as assisting in the development of rule of law in Haiti, establishing a contracting system in Kuwait, drafting police regulations in Bosnia, upgrading the public health system in Afghanistan, and rebuilding a number of national ministries in Iraq.\(^6\)

In recent years, however, the emphasis on functional specialties seems to be declining; in the field there has been much more emphasis on use of civil affairs generalists. The shift away from functional specialists may have a number of causes. At the organizational level, the Army as part of its October 2006 revision of civil affairs doctrine eliminated the more numerous functional specialties that had existed previously and replaced them with six broad “functional specialty areas.” These specialty areas include: rule of law, economic stability, governance, public health and welfare, infrastructure, and public education.\(^7\)

Currently the Army has skill identifiers for 11 civil sector functions, although there are likely far more than 11 civil sector functions relevant to the conduct of civil affairs operations. Not only are the current functional specialty areas quite broad, during the course of this study numerous interviewees raised the concern that it is difficult to validate the actual level of functional expertise currently resident in the civil affairs community. The study team heard numerous anecdotal cases of functional specialists who when asked to perform specific tasks at the theater or strategic level were not able to apply their skills appropriately. For example, a civil affairs officer who is an elementary school teacher in his or her civilian life and is designated as having the functional specialty area of public education is nevertheless not qualified to design a provincial or national school system. At present it is difficult for the system to distinguish easily between individuals with functional skills at the tactical level, such as teaching, and those with functional skills in the same broad area but at the strategic level, such as school system administration. It is not clear the current system of classifying and managing functional specialists within the civil affairs

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\(^6\) Civil Affairs Association, Civil Affairs Issue Papers, November 2007, 2-1.

\(^7\) Ibid.
community is optimized for accessing specialized skills at the appropriate level and when they are most needed.

Not only do the services have difficulty identifying personnel with functional specialties, they also face difficulties accessing specific skill sets that may be most needed at a given time. Frequently, functional specialties are most needed at the theater or strategic level to assist U.S. forces in rebuilding systems, infrastructure, and ministries at the national level. To interact effectively with host nation personnel at this level, civil affairs functional specialists need to be relatively senior in rank. Under the current system, even if the U.S. military can identify a specific individual already in the civil affairs community who has the necessary skills, or can find such an individual the private sector, there is no way to increase the rank of the soldier already in the system, or bring the private-sector individual into the military at an appropriately senior rank so that one or the other person has the credibility to interact with senior foreign officials.

Given the challenges associated with identifying and accessing personnel with relevant functional specialties, and the less than optimal use of functional experts at the Civil Affairs Commands to assist regional combatant commands in their planning activities (discussed in greater detail above), there appears to be an overall decrease in the use of functional specialists at the operational and strategic levels. High operational tempo is also probably contributing to this trend, as services are understandably focused on meeting the rotational demand for civil affairs forces. In many instances this has translated into putting personnel through the nine-week general civil affairs training course and deploying almost immediately after completion of the course, with little emphasis on whether these individuals may have functional expertise that could be better used above the tactical level.

- **Recommendation:** For all new accessions, the services should track officer and enlisted personnel areas of civilian expertise and link them to appropriate civil affairs functional specialty areas.

To enhance the ability of the services to identify relevant functional skills in the force, the services should upon accession track any civilian skills new personnel may have. Tracking relevant civilian skills, at the outset, of individuals joining the military would facilitate the ability of the services to identify and access civilian skills resident in the military for use during military operations rather than relying on ad hoc management of the force as is currently done today. DoD already uses the Civilian Employment Information (CEI) database to track some information about the civilian employment of reserve component personnel, but this initiative has had only limited utility. The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves found that the CEI has not been a useful tool because it “does not capture updated employment information and because the way it records civilian skills data is not standardized for practical use.”

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8 Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force: Final Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense* (Arlington, VA: Commission on National Guard and Reserves, January 2008), 150.
like the CEI could be an effective way to track civilian skills, but to make it more effective the types of information being collected need to be standardized, and Congress should direct that the database be updated annually to increase the likelihood that information resident in the database is current.

- **Recommendation:** Ensure civil affairs functional specialty skills are included in the Global Status of Readiness and Training System (GSORTS) to facilitate force management of functional specialists.

Inclusion of functional specialty skills in the Global Status of Readiness and Training System (GSORTS) would enable DoD to track not only what types of civil sector functional skills reside in the force but also to monitor the level of specific types of expertise across the force. GSORTS could also be a useful tool to ensure resources become available to incentivize individuals to further develop civil sector skills and be tested on the level of competency in specific civil sector areas (see below).

- **Recommendation:** Require civil affairs personnel with identified functional specialties to take appropriate civil sector competency tests to validate and classify the achieved level of functional skills.

To ensure functional specialties identified in the force, particularly among civil affairs personnel, are valid and to better understand the level of proficiency associated with specific functional specialties, civil affairs personnel should be tested periodically on the type and level of their civil sector skills. One option might be to use the classification system that already exists to determine skill types and levels for government civil servants.

- **Recommendation:** Create a direct commission authority to enable services to access advanced functional skills at senior levels.

To enable the military to access very specific functional skills needed in future military operations, or to access specific skills at a very high level, the services should create a direct commission authority for the civil affairs community that would enable them to bring required individuals into the military at relatively high ranks. The military services already possess this kind of authority to commission medical professionals and use it to access specific types of medical skills on an as needed basis.

**Conclusion**

Department of Defense leaders must begin to treat civil affairs forces and civil-military operations as integral to the nation’s success across the range of military operations. Civil affairs forces should be in the vanguard of unified civilian and military operations to assist foreign governments in preventing security threats from arising and mitigating the effects of state fragility and failure when threats emerge. They should complement and facilitate the needed growth in deployable civilian capacity for such missions. In particular, civil affairs forces can assist in civil-military coordination, provide regional knowledge and cross-cultural awareness, and serve as a ready pool
of civil sector experts for nonpermissive environments. Today, however, the quality and utility of civil affairs forces are significantly impaired by high operational tempo, insufficient training, poor personnel incentives, inadequate resourcing and authorities, and lack of advocacy at the Department’s highest levels. Without a substantial commitment to improve these forces, and to train all members of the Total Force to operate in a civil-military environment, the United States will lack the requisite breadth and depth of capacity for military commanders and their civilian leaders to succeed.
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