

**CIVIL AFFAIRS ISSUE PAPERS**  
VOLUME 7, 2020–2021

# Civil Affairs: A Force for Influence in Competition

## 2020 Civil Affairs Symposium Report

by Christopher Holshek

### ISSUE PAPER

#### **Changing the Business Model III: Renewing Civil Affairs' Influence-Based Capabilities**

by Robert Schafer & Shafi Saiduddin

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#### **Civil Considerations in an Era of Great-Power Competition**

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by Csaba Szabó & Robert Nicholson

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THE CIVIL AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

# **Civil Affairs: A Force for Influence in Competition**

CIVIL AFFAIRS ISSUE PAPERS, VOLUME 7, 2020–2021

PRESENTED BY

**The Civil Affairs Association**

AND THE

**Association of the United States Army**

IN COORDINATION WITH THE

U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School/  
Special Operations Center of Excellence,

Reserve Organization of America,

Foreign Area Officers Association,

Alliance for Peacebuilding,

AND THE

U.S. Global Leadership Coalition

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# Foreword

The Civil Affairs Association’s annual Symposium on Monday–Wednesday, 5–7 October 2020, *Civil Affairs: A Force for Influence in Competition*, was by far the largest single Association event in decades, with over 700 registrants. The expanded, multi-component, interservice and interorganizational platform for intellectual capitalization of civil affairs (CA) professional and force development has taken our enterprise to an unprecedented level of operational as well as institutional impact.

Through the Roundtable and Symposium this past year, the virtual format for the annual theme-based discussion of the future of CA has enlarged input and facilitated an expansion of the community, contributing to CA force development and intellectual readiness. Given this success and the environment that prompted us to turn to this new tool, the Association is hosting the spring Roundtable online and will look to an on-site event later in 2021.

The Association has continued to expand program content with the institutionalization of four workshops representative of the critical constituencies of the CA Corps—the CA proponent; the major CA command; noncommissioned officers; and junior leaders. Their involvement provides more anticipatory and deliberate input, bringing even more people and impact to the iterative process of determining the future of CA.

In addition to giving greater voice to younger CA professionals in current and recent operations, our expanding platforms have also enabled greater integration of enduring issues such as gender considerations in CA operations, interorganizational partnering and building a CA industrial base. The power of gender engagement in competition is an area that will reap substantial future rewards both for CA and the Army in the coming years.

To provide context, the Association published a *Spotlight* paper with the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), with which it partners.<sup>1</sup> To win in the competition continuum, the Army needs to “expand the battlefield” beyond physical domains to cognitive capacities, such as CA. The paper also warns that cognitive warfare capabilities like CA and psychological and information operations are not optimally structured for success in the competition continuum—and if they are not, then neither is the Army, the joint force, or the nation.

Special thanks go to our keynote speakers. Lieutenant Charles Hooper, USA, Ret., who headed the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. He did a brilliant job of setting the tone for the rest of three-day discussion, first by mentioning the importance of continuity in the Corps’ efforts to help educate, advocate and motivate the rest of the institutional leadership of the Army and DoD. He then focused on the growing importance of “strengthening alliances and attracting new partners” to win in competition—CA’s role in this resonated in every part of the Symposium and is reflected in all of the *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*.

The Association thanks the Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, Lieutenant General Jody Daniels, for her stated acknowledgment of the critical nature of CA to her force’s mission, as well as her commitment to work closely with the CA Corps and the Association. As a keynote speaker, she could not have been more on target in noting the importance of continuity in the Association’s priorities to help educate, advocate and motivate. Army Reserve Chief of Staff Brigadier General Robert Cooley, Jr., another former CA officer, added further insight in exhorting the CA Corps to see itself as part of an “enterprise of enterprises,” consisting of multifaceted organizations that can shape the future with allies around the world.

Sincere thanks also go to (former) Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs Stephanie L. Hammond for her impromptu summary remarks focused on her oversight and advocacy of CA and many related programs and initiatives in the Pentagon, to include the centrality of CA in interagency civil-military integration in stabilization during competition, as well as in DoD's strategy on Women, Peace and Security.

The Association will continue to build on established platforms, such as the Symposium and Roundtable, *Issue Papers*, *Eunomia Journal* and *OneCA Podcasts*. These help the CA Corps to advocate its increasingly vital values-added by, with and through Army, Marine and joint commanders, as well as through interagency and interorganizational leadership and policymakers—to include members of Congress, international partners and the public and media at large—on a variety of matters. These issues encompass such things as the need for a full Army accession branch for CA and a strong CA advanced school or university that could enable Army and Marines' CA, as well as our allied brothers and sisters, to make a greater strategic impact.

For too long, the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFK-SWCS) has been cursory in addressing the full-spectrum civil and military professional development needs of the CA Corps, especially above the tactical level. USAJFKSWCS would also be wise to update its programs to address the education needs of today's technologically-savvy Soldiers and Marines to win in competition as well as in conflict. Only by possessing the necessary tools—through CA-related training and enhanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and cyber platforms, that are specifically focused on CA functional specialty skills—can CA help the Army, Marines and joint force to support the nation and its allies in gaining and maintaining influence in people-centric competition and conflict beyond conventional ways.

The *Issue Papers* form the Association's original professional development capstone to deepen and broaden the formal institutional processes for CA force development along the lines of policy, doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF-P). Now in their eighth year of advancing a more strategic, comprehensive and full-range understanding of CA, they also help to foster a learning organization that goes beyond military command structures and the CA Corps, to include allies in counterpart civil-military organizations and interorganizational partners.

Thanks go especially to AUSA in helping us to make this publication possible. Their sponsorship has been invaluable. Special thanks go to Mrs. Nzinga A. Curry, Director of Education & Programs, and to Ellen Toner and her editorial team for their diligence and cooperation. Additional thanks go out to our Issue Papers Committee: our Chairman, Brigadier General Bruce B. Bingham, USA, Ret.; Colonel Christopher Holshek, USA, Ret., who edits each volume; Major General Mike Kuehr, USA, Ret.; Colonel Leonard J. DeFrancisci, USMC, Ret.; and retired Army Colonels Larry Rubini and Mike Cleary—as well as the paper authors themselves.

While one goal is to mainstream CA into the larger discussions of the Army and Marines, the joint force and national security issues, the other is to help improve CA writing skills as a function of intellectual readiness and building human capital.

Our website continues to improve, while social media outlets have expanded beyond Facebook and Twitter to LinkedIn, Spotify and Stitcher. Thanks go to Association Vice President Lieutenant Colonel Arnel David and his team for their hard work in this regard.

We are grateful to Third Order Effects, Civil Solutions International, Valka Mir Human Security and the Patriot Fund for their support. We look forward to having them and more sponsors join us in the future.

The Association will continue to work in a more integral way with AUSA, the Reserve Organization of America, the Foreign Area Officers Association, the Military Officers Association of America, the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, the Alliance for Peacebuilding and other influencers of national foreign and defense policy with input into strategic initiatives for our nation’s future and for the growth of the CA mission and branch.

The Association is also grateful for the contributions of USAJFKSWCS, the Army Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute, the State and Defense Departments, the Agency for International Development, various functional and regional commands and the NATO Civil-Military Cooperation Center of Excellence, with whom we are advancing our common civil-military enterprise on both sides of the Atlantic.

Our thanks go to Vice Presidents Major General Daniel Ammerman, USA, Ret., and Brigadier General Christopher Stockel, USA, Ret., for bringing impactful senior civil and military leaders, such as our keynote speakers, into our discussions.

Special thanks go to Association Vice Presidents Colonel Christopher Holshek, USA, Ret., and Lieutenant Colonel Arnel David for putting together a great Symposium program.

Finally, our thanks go out to the many members and supporters of the Association who contribute quietly to the CA enterprise—to educate, advocate and motivate.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the 14 April online Roundtable. To learn more and to join the Association, visit [www.civilaffairsassoc.org](http://www.civilaffairsassoc.org).

“Secure the Victory!”

Joseph P. Kirlin III  
Colonel, USA, Ret., Civil Affairs  
President  
The Civil Affairs Association

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Colonel Christopher Holshek, USA, Ret., *Expanding Multi-Domain Operations to Win Moral Competition*, The Association of the United States Army, 19 August 2020.





# 2020 Civil Affairs Symposium Report

by Colonel Christopher Holshek, USA, Ret.

## Introduction

On the heels of a highly successful Roundtable, the Civil Affairs Association's<sup>1</sup> annual fall Symposium on Monday–Wednesday, 5–7 October 2020, introduced an expanded, multi-component, interservice and interorganizational platform for rich intellectual capitalization of civil affairs (CA) professional and force development. The theme for the *2020–21 Civil Affairs Issue Papers* is: “Civil Affairs: A Force for Influence in Competition.”

From its experience at the 2020 Roundtable, the Association decided to make the Symposium a web-based event. (Given the continuing pandemic, the next Roundtable will also take place online, on 14 April.) This format, the Association has learned, casts the net out to an expanding community to have input in an iterative force development process. This has also served to improve intellectual readiness. Being no- or low-cost, it has enabled greater participation, especially from reserve and younger CA leaders. The results have been dramatic. The record 700 registrants shows that attendance was not hampered by the change of format.

At the same time, the Association has now institutionalized four workshops that are representative of the critical constituencies of the CA Corps: the CA proponent; the major CA command; noncommissioned officers (NCOs); and junior leaders. By always having a place at the discussion table, they can provide more anticipatory and deliberate input. In addition to the *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*,<sup>2</sup> *OneCA Podcast*<sup>3</sup> and *Eunomia Journal*,<sup>4</sup> the fourth workshop especially gives greater voice to younger CA professionals in current and recent operations on the future of the enterprise in which they have the greatest stake.

Meanwhile, this year's panel webinars also facilitated greater focus on enduring issues such as gender considerations in CA operations (CAO) and allied and multinational perspectives.

This year's discussion picked up on the previous conclusion that CA can find better integration as a force for influence, collaboration and competition for convergent threats and challenges for Multi-Domain/Information Operations (MDO/IO) in support of Joint All-Domain Operations (JADO). As the nation's “warrior-diplomats,” the CA Corps must modernize, especially for gray-zone competition, by fostering a learning organization within and beyond military structures. It must reinforce supported command understanding of JADO-relevant CA core capabilities and must seize opportunities to be a greater force for influence through national strategic initiatives like the *Stabilization Assistance Review*<sup>5</sup> and the Global Engagement Center.<sup>6</sup> And, it must help build an industrial base in applied social sciences and related technologies.

To help provide contextual backdrop for the conversation, in August 2020, the Association published a *Spotlight* paper with the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), with which it partners. This report asserted that, to win in the competition continuum, the Army needs to “expand the battlefield” beyond physical domains to cognitive capacities, such as CA.<sup>7</sup> These full-spectrum capabilities to engage and influence the strategic and operating environment in decisive ways are as essential to war-winning as combat forces and do not exist merely to set conditions for victory in conflict or return to competition:

The Army's ability to influence populations and leaders through an effective narrative, combined with unified actions and informational power, are critical to holistic MDO.  
... It must not only build partner institutional and governance capacities and joint,

interorganizational and multinational (JIM) networks in order to see, understand, shape and influence the operating environment.<sup>8</sup>

To win in moral competition, it must also grow the needed strategic and operational capital that relationship-building creates—that also shapes success in crisis response—and meet non-linear challenges like hybrid warfare.

Operationalizing integrated physical and informational power, however, requires institutionalizing it. The Army does not holistically manage its capabilities for competition in the moral dimension with the same energy that it does for those capabilities in the material dimension. The U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), or USACAPOC(A), a clear example of both the problem and much of the solution, is not optimally structured for success in the competition continuum. To remedy this, the *Spotlight* recommends that the Army:

. . . should establish an engagement or influence warfighting function, with its own unified command structure, such as a U.S. Army Engagement Command. . . . It should also establish a center of excellence to organize all the forces and activities—with strategic direction from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)—that should be able to maneuver in competition the same way that infantry and armor do in combat. Above all, it must invest in people more than platforms.<sup>9</sup>

## Keynote Speakers

Following opening remarks by Association President Colonel Joe Kirlin, USA, Ret., Lieutenant General Charles Hooper, USA, Ret., former Director of DSCA, started the discussion with “Beyond Random Acts of Kindness: Coordinating Military Engagement in the Era of Multi-Domain Operations.” With moderation by Association Vice President Major General Daniel Ammerman, USA, Ret., Hooper talked extensively of CA’s critical role in one of the main objectives of the most recent *National Security Strategy* and *National Defense Strategy*; namely, to “strengthen alliances and attract new partners,” a theme frequently cited at the Symposium.

As one of the nation’s foremost experts on security cooperation, foreign military sales and the Chinese military, Hooper stressed that the unique strategic comparative advantage of the United States has come from its approach to a security cooperation that earns rather than buys friends, and from the understanding that by strengthening alliances and providing consistent long-term strategic, political and economic value to its partners, the U.S. strengthens its own security. Much of this has come through interpersonal connections that activities such as CAO enable. Persistent military engagement, now more important than ever, should be an alliance management tool of first resort, at operational and tactical as well as strategic levels. “The challenge is not attracting new partners; it is about retaining partners,” he noted.

As a diverse force, CA is singularly suited for this type of civilian, civic and military engagement that is ordered to gaining and maintaining influence in competition. Key U.S. military engagement resources—such as CA, psychological operations (PSYOP), information operations (IO), foreign area officers (FAOs) and state partnerships—under the direction of DSCA (as noted in the *AUSA Spotlight*), must become coordinated and synchronized. “Our engagement with our partners must be persistent, not episodic, to build the long-term relationships that provide our partners with the value they desire and [to] build human capital.” Normalizing a CA element at embassy country teams could also help with this. “We’re not building nations anymore,” he concluded. “We’re building networks.”

Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels, former CA officer and the first woman selected as Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC), followed up with remarks on “Civil Affairs and the Future of the Army Reserve.”

As it is an integral part of every major military operation involving the Army Reserve, she recognized that USACAPOC(A) provides the preponderance of conventional CA, PSYOP and IO support, with 90 percent of Army CA, 100 percent of its PSYOP and the DoD’s only strategic CA engagement capability. This highly diverse force for full-spectrum irregular warfare support to MDO provides critical cultural understanding, access and influence. In recognition of its contribution to the CA force and to professional development, she acknowledged the Association among her own extended team.

Among her goals for *WayPoint 2028* (formerly, *How the Army Fights*) is to build senior officer and NCO-grade strength through junior leader development. As it is one of the busiest parts of her command, she stressed how CA units must continue to be ready to deploy rapidly and be effective immediately. “CA must continue to focus on training, education and diversity of skills and experiences to better understand and appreciate culture,” she said, echoing the business community’s finding that workforce diversity produces better outcomes. To a greater extent than most of the reserve, it must “focus on junior leader development, empowering people and leveraging the team,” including interorganizational networks.

Brigadier General Robert S. Cooley, Jr., a CA officer and now U.S. Army Reserve Command Chief of Staff, closed with further discussion on how CA, as a unique “full-spectrum enterprise,” must be prepared to deliver more global influence through its unique “last inch influence” capability through civil reconnaissance (CR) and civil engagement (CE). CA is a particularly qualified cognitive domain/warfare force “that plays in spaces that are hard to quantify and qualify.” Structured more optimally, it can “package, deliver and validate influence at the time and place of our choosing” and it can “manage the transition points in MDO.”

The CA Corps, he added, needs to think about itself differently—to see itself as part of an “enterprise of enterprises,” per the *Joint Concept for Human Aspects of the Operational Environment*. It must think more creatively about power, information and influence, reconsider the concept of CAO, and look to be globally integrated along interorganizational lines. “We have moved to different modes of basic interaction, how we absorb information and how we fundamentally communicate.” Cooley noted how forums such as the Symposium are critical to this process, bringing in outside thinkers and introducing the Corps, for example, to the U.S. State Department Global Engagement Center (in 2019).

“The CA enterprise cannot fail. It must have the hard discussions now. We have organizations and leadership emotionally attached to yesterday’s organizational charts,” he concluded.

## **Workshop I: Civil Affairs Proponent**

Workshops began later that day, the first run by the Proponent at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS)/Special Operations Center of Excellence (SOCoE), kicked off with an information brief from the Army’s CA capability manager that focused on CA in current Army initiatives. As a follow-up to their presentation at the Roundtable in April, Colonel Jay Liddick and Colonel Dennis J. Cahill, USA, Ret., provided an update on Army CA force modernization activities and their integration into ongoing Army initiatives to build the future force. Discussants included Colonel Scot Storey, Director, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, and Colonel Mark Cunningham, U.S. Marine Corps, Commanding Officer, 3rd Civil Affairs Group.

The brief contained four main items: a summary of recent changes made to the structure and responsibilities of the CA branch proponent and its force modernization directorate; a presentation of the new CA logic map that will appear in the next version of Field Manual (FM) 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*;<sup>10</sup> a discussion of the means, ways and ends that make up the CA operational approach; and a comprehensive discussion of the themes and messages used by the CA capability management division as it describes the execution of Army CAO in competition, large-scale combat operations (LSCO) and rear areas during Army conversations of future force requirements.

In the first item of the brief, Colonel Liddick described U.S. Army Special Operations Command's (USASOC's) August 2019 decision to create the USASOC Force Modernization Center (UFMC) as the single entity responsible for USASOC capability development and force modernization. This consolidated the force modernization functions and responsibilities for the three Army branches—CA, PSYOP and special forces—formerly executed by the commanding general (CG) of the USAJFKSWCS SOCoE, and the force modernization functions and responsibilities for the Army special operations units assigned to USASOC, formerly executed by multiple sections across the USASOC staff.

The first step in that action was the immediate reassignment of the O-6-level branch commandants to USASOC to assume the role of capability manager for their respective branches. They were replaced by O-5-level branch proponent directors under the CG, USAJFKSWCS, who retained the branch commandant responsibilities of doctrine development, training development, leader development, education and personnel management. Lieutenant Colonel Scott Dickerson, who led the CA Force Modernization Assessment (FMA), assumed that role for the CA branch.

The CA branch proponent's priorities and actions included:

- urgent revision of the April 2019 version of FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*;
- doctrinal review of joint, multi-service, Army [U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)], U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), USAJFKSWCS, NATO civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and interagency publications;
- a temporary hold on CA Army Technique Publications and graphic training aids;
- CA combined-arms training strategy operational planning team;
- revisions to Army Regulation (AR) 600-3, *The Army Personnel Development System*, to AR 600-25, *Salutes, Honors and Courtesy*, and to Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 611-21, *Military Occupational Classification and Structure*;
- branch refinement, including new military occupational specialties (MOSs) for active component enlisted CA Soldiers, direct commissioning of 38G military government specialists and a study to integrate FAOs into the branch;
- a CA leader development roadmap; and
- inculcating governance as a CA role in doctrine.

The next step was the formal reassignment of the CA force modernization directorate, led by Colonel Cahill, from the CA branch proponent at the UFMC on 1 July 2020, redesignated as the CA capability manager division with Colonel Liddick as the CA Capability Manager and Colonel Cahill as the Deputy CA Capability Manager. Despite the transfer to higher headquarters, the division has retained its former responsibilities for concepts, experimentation, requirements and capabilities development, as well as exercise support for the total CA force—special operations, conventional, active and reserve components. As part of the UFMC, it synchronizes

and integrates CA doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and policy (DOTMLPF-P) solution sets in support of Army and joint capability programs in coordination with the CA branch proponent, UFMC capabilities development and integration division (CDID), fielded force integration division, USASOC deputy and assistant capability managers, all Army CDIDs across the Army Futures Command (AFC), and the SOCOM joint CA proponent.

The CA Capability Manager's priorities and actions included:

- integration of the CA Capability Manager Team into the UFMC;
- completion of the CA FMA;
- *WayPoint 2028* integration;
- Army functional and supporting concept development;
- CA Solution-Army program development;
- military government/transitional governance operational planning team;
- support to 38X (CA candidate) program development;
- CA force design update junior—consolidation of 38Gs at CA Command (CACOM);
- 95th CA Brigade (SO)(A) DOTMLPF-P change recommendation, internal reorganization;
- an information advantage way ahead (this includes the: Information Warfare Task Force; Multi-Domain Task Force and Intelligence, Information, Cyber Electronic Warfare and Space; and Information Warfare Brigade);
- rewrite of DoD Directive (DoDD) 2000.13, *Civil Affairs*; and
- irregular warfare forums.

In the second item of the brief, Colonel Liddick presented the new CA logic map that was developed for rapid revision of FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*; a draft of this will be staffed for field review and comment before the end of 1st quarter, Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21). The logic map framework follows this line: the conduct of joint operations is *Unified Action*; the Army's contribution to joint operations is *Unified Land Operations*; and the CA contribution to *Unified Land Operations* is *Civil Affairs Operations*. It then lays out a revision of the CA role and core competencies that appeared in FM 3-57 in 2019.

The revised role focuses Army CA forces on governance: to engage and leverage the civil component of the operating environment while enhancing, enabling or providing governance. Governance, as defined in joint doctrine, refers to “the state's ability to serve the citizens through the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in a society.”<sup>11</sup> The revised core competencies are now focused on transitional governance, civil network development and engagement, civil knowledge integration and civil-military integration. Together, these competencies put CA at the center of the activities of all elements of national power, for consideration and integration into military plans and operations. They also recognize governance as a key ingredient in successful stabilization across the competition continuum, which, ultimately, is the endstate goal of military operations.

The logic map also contains a new list of CA missions required to execute the core competencies—CR, CE, civil network development, civil information evaluation, establishment of a civil-military operations center, support to civil administration and transitional military authority. These missions use stability mechanisms and integrating processes in unified land operations

to enable mission command, gain and maintain influence, maintain operational tempo, preserve combat power, consolidate gains and create effects in the civil component.

In the third briefing item, Colonel Liddick revealed an operational approach for CA, organized in terms of the means, ways and ends, that demonstrates how CA forces support military operations across the competition continuum. In other words, the operational approach outlines the CA units of action, authorities and processes (means) used to conduct key tasks under the core competencies (ways) in order to achieve the desired purpose, effects and endstate (ends) for which military forces are employed in competition, LSCO and transition back to competition.

In the final item of the brief, Colonel Cahill highlighted the themes and messages used by the CA capability management division across AFC, TRADOC and USASOC to describe CAO execution in competition, LSCO and rear areas during Army conversations of future force requirements. He highlighted three points in particular:

- Army CA is an information-related capability, but its broader, active role of enabling, enhancing or providing governance increasingly places Army CA under the maneuver support function, which is where the Army usually categorizes CA in depictions of the Army in *WayPoint 2028* and *AimPoint 2035*.
- the term “civil affairs” refers to the human factors that motivate people and organizations (e.g., needs or *interests*), what they do to pursue those interests (*functions*), the resources they have to achieve success (*capabilities*) and the existing environmental conditions that could hinder success (*vulnerabilities*); and
- CA Soldiers execute tasks with interorganizational partners and in whole-of-government approaches to meet stabilization challenges in competition, in LSCO in rear areas during LSCO and in the transition back to competition. These tasks are designed to understand CA in a given area of operations and to reduce the need to apply military resources against civilian problem sets.

Colonel Cahill used AFC, TRADOC and USASOC slides to describe how the Army will “fight” with CA in competition, LSCO and corps rear/consolidation areas. In competition, CA forces—active, reserve, special operations and conventional—execute the CA core competencies in global persistent engagement activities and through interorganizational cooperation with unified action partners. Together, they map the human terrain and create conditions that promote or sustain strong governance and stable environments. If required, a CA unit may stand up a CA task force (CATF) for command-and-control support to U.S. interagency response to a natural or man-made disaster that requires medical, engineer and MP capabilities in addition to CA and interagency assets.

In LSCO, CA forces operate with maneuver forces to confirm or deny conditions, attitudes and behaviors of populations and government institutions in areas of operation and influence and, as needed, to mobilize civilian resources against civilian problem sets and military requirements. In rear areas, CA taps into existing political, economic, social and other civil networks that would normally exercise the stability activities of civil security, civil control, essential services, economic and infrastructure development and governance long before military forces arrive. Their ability to successfully consolidate gains in rear areas depends on how well CA forces executed their core competencies in theater in competition.

Colonel Cunningham, in a follow-up to the Roundtable, reminded the audience of how Marine CA is fully integrated in Marine Air-Ground Task Force Information Groups for Operations in the information environment. The Marines, in fact, consider information a joint

warfighting domain, an idea that the Army remains hesitant to embrace. Many agreed that the Marine model of CA in anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) in particular could also be instructive for Army CA, meriting closer attention from the CA proponent and AFC.

## **Workshop II: USACAPOC(A)**

The second workshop was on USACAPOC(A) and featured the new CG, Brigadier General Jeffrey Coggin. His command strategic initiatives focus on “harnessing collective influence” to integrate CA, PSYOP and IO, as well as growing functional specialists and other human capital in partnership with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The command overview, moderated by new Chief of Strategic Initiatives Colonel Marshall Straus Scantlin, included command major objectives, values and lines of effort (LoEs). The workshop spent a great deal of time on USACAPOC(A)’s contribution to Army and joint dominant convergence (information advantage) as well as on the 38G functional specialist program.

Brigadier General Coggin shared his vision for USACAPOC(A) to become among the most highly-trained, professional and ready operational commands in the Army, prepared on a moment’s notice to conduct the full spectrum of integrated CAO, PSYOP and IO in support of MDO. He then communicated his command priorities—people, readiness, modernization and reform. Among his command values was to “realize and advocate that the CA, PSYOP and IO skills we bring to bear in the physical domain can also come to bear influence and effects in the cognitive domain.”

The four command LoEs and activities apply across CA, PSYOP and IO organizations and personnel. Innovation and culture are important for the future role that the command has in the U.S. Army, with modernization cutting across the first three LoEs:

- LoE 1 (manning) focuses on retention and recruiting. Retention includes anticipating the needs of Soldiers and providing meaningful training. Recruiting involves bringing qualified Soldiers back to USACAPOC(A), transitioning from active to reserve billets, transferring will-train Troop Program Units from other reserve formations to the command and boarding qualified personnel to be 38G functional specialists.
- LoE 2 (training) looks at adaptive training in the COVID-19 environment at schools, overseas deployments for training, culminating training events and unit events and at the changes in the reserve Captains Career Course program of instruction.
- LoE 3 (transformation) focuses on turning in or laterally transferring excess equipment and on receiving new equipment, resulting in more time to maintain authorized equipment and to train on new equipment. USACAPOC(A) is the first USARC to receive joint light tactical vehicles (JLTVs). The 353rd CA Command and 2d PSYOP Group will receive 548 JLTVs in FY21.

The final line of effort, LoE 4 (innovation) is most significant to the unique Army and joint capabilities that the USARC CG, Lieutenant General Daniels, had mentioned in her earlier remarks as something that CA brings. It currently focuses on the 38G program, Military Support to Governance, and on “dominant convergence (information innovation).” The 38G program proponent is collaborating with institutions like the Smithsonian to provide expert-level training and to build a community of interest between not only the 38G specialty and a partner institution but also within the 18 specialties and the greater 38G branch. Recruiting is also underway for professionals for direct appointments and transfers for one of four sectors and 18 specialties within the 38G program that USACAPOC(A) utilizes.

1. Economy and Infrastructure:
  - a. 4A: industry and production
  - b. 5Y: emergency management
  - c. 6C: finance, money and banking
  - d. 6E: commerce and trade
  - e. 6F: transportation
  - f. 6G: public water and sanitation
  - g. 6R: technology and telecommunications
  - h. 6U: agri-business and food
2. Government and Administration:
  - a. 4C: civil administration
  - b. 4D: laws, regulations and policies
  - c. 4E: environment and natural resources
  - d. 4F: energy
3. Rule of Law and Civil Security:
  - a. 4G: judiciary and legal system
  - b. 4H: corrections
  - c. 6H: law and border enforcement
4. Public and Social Services:
  - a. 6D: education
  - b. 6V: heritage and preservation
  - c. 6W: archivist

“Dominant convergence (information innovation)” features collaboration with U.S. Army Cyber Command to achieve information advantage and cognitive dominance through new ways of assimilating cognitive and technical capacities and capabilities to support MDO/IO and JADO. As collaborative influencers, USACAPOC(A)’s integration of CA, PSYOP and IO forces creates converged dominance with collective influence.

These formations will conduct reconnaissance, targeting and assessments in the information environment to unify and synchronize all influence-related capabilities and operations. They will also:

- enable application of information advantage capabilities applied with the speed of relevance;
- enable operations to disrupt, deny, degrade and influence a combatant command’s priority threats in multiple domains across the competition continuum; and
- synchronize reconnaissance, targeting and assessments from tactical to strategic levels in the information and cognitive domains.

In this way, they can create unity of effort across interagency departments and organizations and so can reduce adversary traction and effectiveness in the MDO/IO environment.

### **Workshop III: Noncommissioned Officer Forum**

On the second day, the Symposium resumed with “The Role of the CA NCO in Multi-Domain and Joint All-Domain Operations.” Retired Sergeant Major Timothy Kohring, Supervisor Training Specialist for Collective Training at the Army CA Branch Proponent, USAJFK-SWCS at Fort Bragg, NC, facilitated the newly-established NCO forum, which also included: Sergeant Major Garric Banfield, CA Proponent Sergeant-Major, USAJFKSWCS; Command



Sergeant Major Jeremiah Grow, 83rd CA Battalion; and Master Gunnery Sergeant James Flaherty, G9 Planner, 3rd CA Group (CAG), USMC Reserves.

The overarching observation was that the lack of doctrinal and institutional specificity on the role of CA NCOs in MDO (or any NCOs within MDO) is a shortfall that requires both proponent and Army attention. The conversation then moved quickly into how the NCOs' main mission to supervise, train, manage and lead their Soldiers maintains an element of stability and continuity to enable the Army and Marines to carry out the mission in whatever operational environment they encounter.

The CA NCO in particular can do even more than most, especially given how reserve NCOs can leverage the knowledge, skills and other capacities unique to their civilian lives. These attributes may, in fact, be as or more important than their military skills in many situations. The group agreed that their services should better enable CA NCOs to obtain higher civilian education, technical training, language skills, etc.—that are hard enough for active component NCOs to access but even more difficult within the reserves. This relatively low-cost, high-yield investment is offset by the fact that, in a conventional sense, CA is not a highly technologically driven force. Its human capital is, in fact, its warfighting platform.

An indicator of this is the generational change from CA NCOs of the past, for whom a college education was more unusual, to CA NCOs of the present, for whom it is now a rarity to not have some post-secondary education or perhaps even an advanced degree. Still, the promotional systems in the Army and Marines lag in recognizing this as a vital component of contemporary CA NCO capacities. While this education is a positive for most Soldiers and Marines competing for promotion, it is not uncommon for boards to consider this highly important discriminator, especially for CA NCOs, as little more than an “extra merit.”

Still, in terms of the CA FMA, the proponent should look to complete an overarching civil knowledge platform that CA NCOs would be well-suited to manage. Single-sourced and shareable across the entire expanded CA Corps, it would house information that CA professionals can quickly and comprehensively leverage for preparation for any mission in every corner of the world. While identified many times over the past two decades, with a fair amount of investment over the last few years, this initiative has produced uneven results. It has worked well for active, special operations CA that primarily support special operations missions, but not for reserve CA that are focused on a multitude of conventional maneuver forces, on mission and on regional and operational command requirements as needed.

#### **Workshop IV: Junior CA Leaders in Current Operations**

The fourth and final workshop is also the newest, arising out of an effort by the Association to give greater voice to junior CA leaders on the future of their force. Army Strategist and CA officer then-Captain James P. Micciche, Security Forces Assistance Command G5, led a discussion of current CAO with those working closer to the ground in the major combatant command (COCOM) regions worldwide. The workshop featured five CA professionals who represent the whole of the CA enterprise—active, reserve, conventional, special operations, Army and Marines. In addition to its joint and multi-component nature, the workshop presented a global overview of how CA elements support defense and U.S. government (USG) objectives and goals, especially given all of their deployments to each of the global combatant command areas of responsibility (AoRs) over the past year. Participants included:

- Major Thomas Westphal, 351st CACOM, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command/Republic of Korea (RoK); CA Planning Team, Combined Command Post Training 20.2, RoK;

- Major Majel Savage, 352nd CACOM, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM); Civil Liaison Team Jordan Team Chief, Joint Training Center-Jordan;
- Captain Lukasz Kramarz, 83rd CA Battalion, U.S. European Command; CA Team Lithuania, Team Leader;
- Staff Sergeant Abraham Blocker, USMC, 4th CAG, U.S. Southern Command; 4th CAG Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Guatemala; and
- Staff Sergeant Christopher Bryant, 91st CA Battalion, U.S. Africa Command; Civil-Military Support Element, Burkina Faso, Team Medic.

The workshop highlighted how CA operators integrate into the joint force across the entire competition continuum, enabling the Army to execute all four of its strategic roles and for the Marine Corps to do likewise. Examples included: planning CAO and civil-military operations (CMO) support to LSCO alongside RoK partners (armed conflict); enhancing the capacity of the Jordanian Armed Forces through developing their female soldiers and officers (cooperation); and denying transnational criminal organizations access to key terrain in Central America (competition below levels of conflict). The workshop clearly demonstrated the importance of CA in great-power competition.

Key discussion points included:

- **Cross-service and cross-component collaboration.** There is immense benefit in utilizing all aspects of the CA enterprise to achieve objectives. However, there are also impediments to achieving cross-enterprise unity of action and effort. The most common observation was the need for pre-mission training and coordination between the various compositions and services, something that is not always feasible under current manning, mobilization and deployment constraints.
- **Civil information management (CIM).** CIM is a major enabler of mission success and is a facilitator of unified action and partner-nation collaboration; but there are systemic and structural issues with CA CIM doctrine and processes. The lack of a common CIM platform for the entire CA enterprise is a major detriment to unified action, impeding understanding of the operational environment among teams from different services and components. Additionally, the lack of an organic CA assessment framework for stability and the human domain results in a lack of common operational picture among CA teams operating in the same AoR, preventing seamless coordination and mission transition. Finally, the inability to share information/data with non-USG partners is a major impediment to unified action through CIM to support to mission objectives. Social network analysis provides tremendous value-added to operational CA teams but, once again, the lack of an overarching framework impedes cross-component collaboration.
- **Multi-domain effects.** Within the context of MDO, all panelists agreed that the information domain is the most important to CAO and CMO within an AoR to support USG objectives. This capacity is underdeveloped, and relationships built with IO elements in-theater were often slow to yield results.
- **Vulnerable populations.** One of the key aspects of multiple mission sets for competition below levels of armed conflict and cooperation elements of the competition continuum is in identifying vulnerable populations whom competitors and rivals target with malign influence to achieve their objectives or to degrade U.S. influence. This is an important aspect of how CA enables success in competition and assists partner nations in building resiliency to such nefarious actions.

- **NCOs.** Many panelists highlighted how important building a professional NCO Corps is for partner nations and how especially reserve CA NCOs regularly showed what “right looks like” in terms of the citizen-warrior. Further, while tactical level CMO training is important for partner force professionalization, institutional development is likewise necessary to ensure that it becomes acculturated through doctrine and training pipelines.

## Panel I: Interagency Young Leaders

Panels on special topics began later on the second day. The first was a well-established Symposium interagency coordination forum that has picked up on the youth movement in Association platforms: “Young Leaders Working Across Gaps and Along Seams.” Civil Affairs Association Director Mr. Ryan McCannell, who is also Director, Center for Conflict and Violence Prevention, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), facilitated the discussion in which two of the three panelists, from Department of State (DoS) and USAID, also serve in Army and Marine reserve CA:

- Ms. Caitlin Conaty, Women, Peace and Security Advisor, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense, Policy; former Africa Specialist, DoS Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (State/CSO);
- Captain Emelia Fujita, former U.S. Special Operations Command Africa Liaison to USAID/West Africa Regional Mission in Accra, Ghana; and
- Sergeant John Phillips, USMC Reserve and USAID Management and Program Analyst; on detail as a Stabilization Advisor to State/CSO and Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration.

The discussion focused on the role of CA in supporting interagency relationships at the operational and tactical levels. This approach differed from past years, when the focus was at the strategic level and centered on various “inside the Beltway” policy processes and strategy documents that nominally set the conditions for interagency collaboration. This year, in keeping with the theme of putting the spotlight on the future of CA, the interagency panel highlighted the work that younger personnel working for DoD, DoS and USAID perform in-theater to close gaps and shore up the seams of interagency collaboration.

Drawing from their experiences working within, or detailed to, at least two of the “3D” agencies, the panelists reviewed the benefits that CA brings to interagency collaboration, as well as the challenges they face. In particular, the panelists cited improved access to non- or semi-permissive environments as a key benefit of collaboration, and one that can flow in both directions, depending on the flexibilities and limitations associated with COCOM vs. chief-of-mission authorities. CA teams often operate in a liminal space between these two command structures, where their networks and contacts with civilian agency colleagues can offer or benefit from additional leverage for commanders and country teams alike. For example, CA teams can sometimes provide access and security for civilian colleagues to unstable regions (e.g., in the coastal regions of Kenya). They can check in on projects and populations of interest to civilian agencies on their behalf, when conditions are unsafe for civilians (e.g., Northeastern Syria). CA teams can even benefit from indirect access, *through* their civilian contacts, to enhance CR in areas that military personnel may not be authorized to visit (e.g., parts of the Sahel following the Tongo-Tongo ambush).

A second theme was centered on information-sharing and the sensitivities it sometimes provokes among different agencies. Clearly, the diplomatic, defense and development agencies

(as well as the intelligence community, law enforcement agencies and other players) all scan and assess the operational environment for their own unique purposes. However, it can be challenging to request and obtain access to other agencies' information sources and products unless the requestor is sensitive to the acceptable uses—and even the terminology—that each agency employs regarding the information it collects. Panelists and participants in the dialogue highlighted how CA personnel can serve as a bridge across these information gaps, but only to the extent that they recognize how CR differs from intelligence in purpose, classification and use. Conflating the two complicates the challenge of building useful information sharing relationships with USAID and its many (non-governmental) implementing partners. The panelists cited instances where, for example, an NGO receiving USAID development assistance funds might freely share their assessments of local conditions, until and unless they hear military colleagues use terms like “intel” and “exploitation of the local population” associated with their data. The takeaway is that CA personnel need to understand and communicate the purposes of CR effectively and need to be sensitive to the red flags of non-military partners.

Many of the panel's other remarks reflect persistent challenges for CAO in stabilization: the gap between theoretical collaboration—for example, the CA Qualification Course versus the actual experience of working in a country team setting; problems with CIM and the transfer of data across platforms; and the constant handover between redeploying and incoming CA teams, which tend to cycle through deployments more quickly than a typical Foreign Service tour. The panelists' recommendations focused on: improving the regularity of pre- and post-deployment briefs with partner agencies; and the importance of persistent structures at the country team level—such as civil-military support elements at embassy Offices of Defense or Security Cooperation—to ensure institutional knowledge and to maintain relationships, despite all the comings and goings.

All three panelists expressed that CA's role is critical to interagency collaboration. The community has learned from its occasional missteps and applied many important lessons over the past several years. If it continues along these lines, CA can help the United States to “secure the victory” in competition in some of the toughest spots in the world. This is gaining new context for interagency engagement and civil-military integration “left of bang” under the new *United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability*—a natural progression from the *Stabilization Assistance Review* and *Defense Support to Stabilization* concepts.<sup>12</sup> This will receive more treatment at the spring Roundtable.

## **Panel II: Gender, Population Engagement and Civil Affairs**

The second panel webinar was on a topic driven by the Army's growing interest in the role of women in land warfare operations, the unique role of CA in this and how that should be reflected doctrinally. Given his coordinating role, retired Army Colonel Bill Hestwood, G-5, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, explained the Army's look at gender considerations in CAO doctrine. In addition to those who worked on this project, a panel that included women who are CA and DoS leaders joined the conversation on “Gender, Population Engagement and Civil Affairs: Army Doctrinal Changes.” The panel included:

- Ms. Caitlin Conaty, Women, Peace and Security Advisor, OUSD/Policy; former Africa Specialist, DoS/CSO;
- Colonel Jody M. Prescott, USA, Ret., Judge Advocate;
- Colonel Caroline Pogge, Commander, 1st Brigade, Atlantic Training Division;

- Lieutenant Colonel Susan Gannon, CENTCOM Military Advisor to USAID; and
- Lieutenant Kristen Kennedy, 450th CA Battalion (Airborne).

Global competition and conflict are evolving rapidly, and the need to identify sustainable security and stability solutions to meet the needs of entire populations is greater than ever. As adversaries and competitors continue to seek strategic advantage, the United States and its allies and partners must be better prepared to meet security challenges by recognizing the diverse roles women play in peace as well as in conflict, and by incorporating gender perspectives in operations. This drives DoD's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Act & Strategy along three efforts: modeling WPS in the composition of the joint force; working with partners to similarly diversify their fighting forces; and minimizing gender-related violations of human rights in the joint force and its partners.<sup>13</sup> As an adaptation of the 2000 UN Security Council Resolution 1325, *Women, Peace, and Security*, the DoD WPS Strategy views these efforts as essential for national and international security as well as for operational effectiveness in the competition continuum.

Mr. Hestwood explained how the Army's interest in doctrinal integration of gender in CAO doctrine. Among the important changes to the revision of FM 3-57, due out in mid-2021, will be the inclusion of WPS principles into CA doctrine. Another recommendation is the repurposing of the civil-military operations center (CMOC) to facilitate greater gender considerations in day-to-day CAO, including CR and CE on the ground, as articulated in the recently revised *UN Infantry Battalion Manual*.

Mr. Hestwood conducted a short survey of the presence or absence of gender in joint, U.S. Army, NATO and Australian Army doctrines. While, for example, Joint Publication (JP) 3-29, *Foreign Humanitarian Assistance*, and JP 3-07, *Stability*, briefly discuss the role of gender in operations, other publications, such as JP 3-06, *Joint Urban Operations*, JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, and FM 3-57 do not—reflecting what Colonel Prescott calls serious “gender blindness” in U.S. military doctrine. NATO civil-military doctrine, however, discusses the importance of gender considerations and gender advisors. Meanwhile, NATO has the Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations involved in updates to NATO operations doctrines, to include gender considerations. Australian doctrine provides a good example of more robust inclusion of gender in Joint Doctrine Note 2-18, *Gender in Military Operations*, and its civil-military coordination doctrine (Land Warfare Doctrine 3-8-6, *Civil-Military Cooperation*).

With the additional consideration of the UN's foundational role in the creation and global socialization of WPS in peace and military operations policies, the panel consensus was that gender is a critical element of military operations in an era of people-centric competition for influence, especially when considering the risks of ignoring it in planning and in execution. Gender considerations, as civil considerations, need to go well beyond FM 3-57's view of women as “vulnerable” people. Rather than the potential problem that this mindset implies, women provide opportunities as the primary way to gain and maintain access and influence among certain civilian populations, especially in competition, not just in conflict.

With a universal understanding of this, operations would have greater information and intelligence about all human factors in the operational environment, due to a more comprehensive assessment of friendly and adversarial actors. Gender-focused operations can better provide strategic warning and identify and mitigate unintended consequences of military action that inflict harm on host-nation civilians. Lieutenant Colonel Gannon and other CA leaders on the panel noted that the above understanding of integration of gender is much better at the tactical than at the operational and strategic levels. Lieutenant Kennedy suggested that—beyond

the obvious need for the CA Corps to recruit and develop more women operators and leaders—women CA leadership needs to grow more from the ground up rather than as late branch transfers “finding their way into the formations.” She also noted the shortage of female CA NCOs, both in the formations and at discussions like the Symposium and Roundtable.

She and Colonel Pogge (who spent most of their careers in CA) added that the CA Corps needs to look more at how to capitalize on women already in CA formations, forming gender analyses around questions like: whom might this course of action impact in a different way?; have we accounted for the presence of women, especially culturally?; and, most important, what gender-related perspectives are missing?

Among other implications of the doctrinal update is the need for supported leadership of CA commands to know, understand and integrate the unique capacities of female personnel for maximum strategic and operational effect. Gender considerations and WPS principles must be integral to the decisionmaking, planning and coordination process. As the *UN Infantry Battalion Manual* logically stresses, capabilities for cultural understanding and engagement of the entire population require the proportionate participation of personnel who represent at least 50 percent of it.<sup>14</sup>

In a sense, this also invokes the warfighting axiom of “we train as we fight,” which has implications for the education and training of all military personnel on WPS and gender considerations, mainstreaming and engagement. To channel the previously-cited AUSA *Spotlight*, operationalizing gender considerations in CAO requires institutionalizing them. Beyond doctrinal changes, Colonel Pogge suggested, USAJFKSWCS also needs to integrate WPS and gender considerations in its CA education and training curriculum, for all CA personnel.

This would not only enable CA to maximize CAO, but would also help the rest of supported forces to integrate their operations. As the DoD’s primary force that is specifically trained and educated to understand, engage and influence the human geography and to provide expertise in civil considerations, CA professionals must include gender considerations. CA core competencies, whether in the current FM 3-57 or under consideration in the update, provide ample opportunity to incorporate WPS principles to win influence in competition.

In flow with greater awareness of CA’s comparative advantage in the diversity of its force, the group acknowledged that effective CAO and CE goes well beyond having women who can think and talk about gender or engaging with the female local populace. “It is not enough to say that because you interact with women in communities, or because you have women on your teams, that you have checked the box on WPS,” Colonel Gannon noted. Effective influence on cognitive aspects of operations entails inclusion and integration of gender considerations in all phases of planning and operations, as Ms. Conaty observed.

Gender mainstreaming also entails the criticality of a having a diversity of perspectives in political-military decisionmaking, as well as planning and execution, of influence operations in the information environment and human geography. CA in particular maintains a critical comparative advantage in its civilian-acquired skills, mainly from its reserve formations, but also given the recent youth movement in the CA Corps. The same must be true for ensuring similar proportions in staffing, as well as in the rank and file of CA as prescribed by the UN among its civil-military operators.

Advancing the U.S. strategy on WPS, Ms. Conaty added, also provides a unique engagement opportunity for the U.S. to strengthen relationships with allies and partners through collective efforts to reinforce women’s empowerment, meaningful participation in decisionmaking,

protection from violence and access to resources. Among all U.S. forces, CA is uniquely poised to advance this development along multinational lines that are increasingly integral to U.S. national security interests.

### **Panel III: Allied and Multinational Perspectives**

Wednesday, 7 October, opened up with two more panel webinars, the first on allied and multinational perspectives on civil-military engagement and influence. Updates during the well-attended discussion on similar civil-military force developments and initiatives—especially with regard to influence operations—came from the UN’s Office of Military Affairs (OMA), NATO CIMIC Center of Excellence (CCoE),<sup>15</sup> British Army Land Warfare Center<sup>16</sup> and Canadian Army Influence Activities Task Force.<sup>17</sup>

Facilitated by Distinguished Member of the CA Corps Christopher Holshek, Colonel, USA CA, Ret., the lineup included:

- Major General Hugh Van Roosen, Deputy Military Advisor, UN OMA;
- Lieutenant Colonel Stefan Muehlich, Branch Chief, Concepts, Interoperability and Capabilities Branch, NATO CCoE;
- Lieutenant Colonel Dave Allen, SO1 Stabilization, Warfare Branch, Land Warfare Center (U.K.);
- Lieutenant Colonel Carolyne Lamarre, Commanding Officer, Influence Activities Task Force, Department of National Defense, Government of Canada; and
- Major Charles Nadeau, Influence Activities Task Force, Department of National Defense, Government of Canada.

CA officer Major General Hugh Van Roosen, the second highest ranking UN military officer and highest-ranked U.S. officer in the UN military staff, briefed attendees on innovations in CIMIC and other engagement capabilities in UN peace operations. While the UN does not have a civil-military doctrine in the same sense that the U.S. and NATO do, it does have two complementary policies: one on “UN-CIMIC” for military peace operations forces; and well-developed and socialized guidelines on CIMIC in humanitarian assistance operations (UN-CMCoord).

For the first time in 10 years, OMA—after recently overhauling much of its military operations guidelines—is revising its *UN-CIMIC Policy*, to be completed in 2021. UN doctrine, as such, is moving to balance “CIMIC” as a staff function with that of “engagement” as an integral line of operation, already reflected in the January 2020 *UN Infantry Battalion Manual*. A critical new mission requirement in infantry battalions, which comprise 76 percent of deployed UN troops, is for an engagement platoon to be embedded in each battalion, which will consist of three to four engagement teams of four personnel. In addition to CE, the teams will also perform CR missions to improve UN “intelligence” on the “human terrain” and to integrate civil and military activities on the ground, as appropriate.

The watershed requirement, however, is for all engagement platoons and CIMIC staff to comprise at least 50 percent women, in support of the Secretary General’s gender mainstreaming strategy for implementation of WPS (discussed by the previous panel). In this respect, the UN is raising a high bar even higher for troop contributing countries, including the U.S. and other NATO countries (women, for example, represent about 20 percent of the U.S. CA force).

While the CIMIC doctrinal changes are still under deliberation at UN Headquarters in New York (where Major General Van Roosen retired in February 2021 after being posted there

for over two years), the resulting references should include a short, general document on UN-CIMIC policy and a manual on UN-CIMIC operations at operational and tactical levels. These should include tasks for evaluation of readiness for UN-CIMIC and the ability to support military IO and strategic communications, along with the UN military decisionmaking process. Also in progress is an engagement platoon handbook that will focus on techniques, tactics and procedures.

What the documents will also clarify is how UN-CIMIC will continue to contribute to wider UN field mission coordination, multi-component planning and transition management, particularly at the operational level of integrated missions, providing an interesting model of best practice of civil-military integration for U.S. interagency-led stabilization operations.

Lieutenant Colonel Muehlich, from the CCoE, then offered perspectives on the role of NATO CIMIC in information warfare (IW). Beginning at the policy level, he explained that the national constitutions and laws of many NATO sending states often restrict “peacetime” deployments of national military forces outside of crisis response. “The perception of threat and the motivation to share sensitive national information varies not only for geographical reasons,” he added. In addition, NATO’s cohesion is currently at stake, preventing quick and effective adaptations for deeper, interallied integration for IW to counter, for example, hybrid warfare in Eastern Europe. “Individual countries tend to mitigate this challenge with more intense bilateral cooperation,” he clarified.

At the doctrinal level, and from a CIMIC perspective, NATO is in the process of evolving its doctrine from a “pre-conflict/conflict/post-conflict in non-Article 5 crisis response operations” paradigm to a “hybrid competition continuum” below the threshold of a conventional armed conflict and collective deterrence and defense setting. Most current NATO doctrine applies to “conflict,” “operations” or “crisis response,” which limits the Alliance’s abilities to react and, even more, to take proactive steps in times judicially defined as “peace time.” NATO has recently issued an operational warfighting strategy and is currently developing a warfighting capstone concept. The latter is expected to be issued by the end of 2021 and may define NATO’s approach to warfare for the next 20 years.

The CCoE’s involvement in the development of these references is to ensure appropriate reflection of civil-military considerations, while also ensuring that the new strategies are reflected in doctrinal updates of the NATO CIMIC doctrine to implement Civil-Military Interaction (CMI) policy. NATO civil-military policy and doctrine updates currently underway include: MC 411/2, the NATO policy on CMI; the NATO CIMIC doctrine, Allied Joint Publication 3.19; and a *CIMIC Functional Planning Guide* (operational and divisional levels). Parallel to this are updates to the *CIMIC Tactical Planning Guide* (brigade and battalion levels), followed by *CIMIC Tactics, Techniques and Procedures* and *CIMIC Handbooks* (battalion and company levels). The CCoE also participates in SHAPE (Supreme HQ Allied Powers Europe) updates and related publications to ensure a reflection of the CMI and CIMIC aspects of joint operations, IW, strategic communications, etc. Finally, the CCoE is contributing to a NATO policy on baseline requirements for civilian resilience and civil preparedness in the first quarter of 2021 and a derived strategic directive by mid-2021.

From a NATO perspective, CIMIC aims not so much to be a sensor of threats to the civil domain as to exercise influence over populations, hence the emphasis of NATO CIMIC on civil analysis and cooperation, when possible, with civilian entities. For largely political reasons, CIMIC operations and activities cannot target their own or allied countries’ populations for influence purposes. The decisive contribution of CIMIC to influence in competition is to help



commanders and member states to gain awareness and understanding of the civil situation through its analysis and assessment.

Given the criticality of U.S.-European NATO cooperation and coordination to European security, the CCoE has initiated a “CIMIC-CA Synchronization Project” working title program along three lines of operation. First is co-education and training of CA and CIMIC personnel to understand respective policy mandates, authorities, capabilities and limitations, especially in support of vulnerable member states. This has included orientation for European-based or apportioned CA teams in Hungary, Norway and Estonia. After a pilot course in 2019, courses for Army and Marine CA elements were postponed from 2020 to the first half of 2021, to take place at least virtually, on leadership development and pre-deployment training. Second is harmonization between NATO and U.S. civil-military doctrines. The third is along institutional lines (e.g., with institutions that are connected to USAJFKSWCS, CA and CIMIC, such as the University of North Carolina, as well as the Civil Affairs Association) to increase intellectual capitalization and exchanges, especially among younger civil-military specialists. A first deliverable is a civil-military academic research book, planned to be released in 2021, with contributions from both sides of the Atlantic.

The CA-CIMIC initiative is discussed in detail in one of this year’s *Civil Affairs Issue Papers*; namely: “Civil Affairs and Civil-Military Cooperation: A Hybrid Solution to Defeat Hybrid Threats,” by Major Csaba Szabó and MSG Robert Nicholson.

Next came Lieutenant Colonel Allen’s update. “In an era of persistent competition,” he began, “the goal of our adversaries is to win without going to war: to achieve their objectives by breaking our willpower and impeding our decisionmaking, using attacks below the threshold that would prompt a war-fighting response whilst actively aiming to stay below the level of detection.” There are new tools, techniques and tactics to undermine political and social cohesion, and the means to make the connection to an audience ever more rapidly. “Information is now democratized,” he added. “It’s available for everyone.”

The current global pandemic has highlighted how the use of propaganda, data misuse, disinformation and strategic influence is presenting complex and rapidly-evolving challenges for researchers, civil society and of course for policymakers. “Our rivals and adversaries typically tailor their activities to remain below obvious detection and response thresholds, and they often rely on the speed, volume and ubiquity of digital technology that characterizes the present,” Lieutenant Colonel Allen said. “With an increased emphasis on creativity, ambiguity operating in this way seeks to amplify the cognitive elements of war, while dialing down the physical elements. This way of warfare is strategic; it is synchronized and systematic, and our response must be too.”

To respond, the British Army has launched the Integrated Operating Concept.<sup>18</sup> First, it recognizes a distinction between “operating” and “warfighting.” In an era of persistent competition, unconventional as well as conventional deterrent postures must be more dynamically managed and modulated to compete below the threshold of war in order to deter war and prevent adversaries from achieving their objectives.

Second, competition involves a campaigning posture of continuous operation on friendly terms and places of choosing. This requires a mindset that thinks in several dimensions to escalate and de-escalate up and down multiple ladders. There will be a constant balancing of activity and resources between: *protect*, *engage*, *constrain* and the timing of when to *fight*.

Third, this posture must also be forward-deployed—much more in engagement rather than as stand-off capabilities solely for contingencies—with training and exercising being delivered as operations. This involves partner capacity and relationship building and engagement in countries that need support. It could also include partnered operations against common threats, particularly violent extremism. Ultimately, it may involve partnered combat operations. Civil-military relations capabilities will have a key role in building understanding of contexts and situations to deal with ambiguity and ensure effective partnering with those with shared values and aspirations. “Big data analysis can help,” he noted, “but we also need deep understanding at the human level to build up thick data to build depth of understanding.” To that end, the Land Warfare Center is helping to form a global human engagement database.

Fourth, the posture must also place a premium on building alliances and improving interoperability to make things more “allied by design” and thus able to burden-share more productively. The role of civil-military interaction is essential to both building these links but most importantly in developing understanding of how adversaries can create and exploit fissures in society to build partner resilience and afford mutual protection.

“Finally,” he briefed, “we must be prepared to fight above our thresholds when required—to escalate, to de-escalate and to rapidly return to stability. Again, the need for engagement before, during and after the crisis of civil-military activities supported by the whole force is essential.”

An interesting presentation from the Government of Canada’s Influence Activities Task Force (IATF) closed out the session. It has concentrated much of its work on analysis of Canada’s remarkable work and DOTMLPF-P lessons integration in CIMIC-PSYOP operations, largely in Afghanistan, but also in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. It assessed joint CIMIC-PSYOP effects delivery through a collection of “vast amounts of information” to understand both institutional and operational needs and to plan, coordinate, execute and measure the effectiveness of response activities. In addition to its own lessons, the IATF has collected information and inputs from aid organizations, international organizations, NGOs, local and foreign governments and militaries, media and affected populations to assess effects delivery. Social media analyses are also in consideration.

CIMIC activities, especially in support of humanitarian assistance operations, include: information campaigns, such as force-to-force engagement, “radio-in-a-box,” loudspeakers and SMS (short message service) information texts over mobile phones; civil needs assessments; “communicating with communities” programs; civil-military liaison with the above-mentioned organizations; key leader engagement driven by influence mapping; support to “white picture” intelligence; and support to public affairs, including media and message analysis. Emphasis is also made on “Phase 0” CIMIC activities, including monitoring related portals and apps, “horizon scanning” and open-source data collection. Some of the major lessons that the IATF has drawn so far for future successful CIMIC employment in influence activities are:

- CIMIC-PSYOP employment will be modularized and needs-based;
- these activities will be integrated to joint effects and the larger military operational planning process;
- these activities will focus on identifying communication gaps and looking for ways to fill them; and
- these activities will be cognizant and heavily informed of the strategic and operational situation before the deployment of troops, hence the emphasis on data collection through robust lessons integration and Phase 0 web research monitoring activities.

## Panel IV: CA Industrial Base Development

One of the more important takeaways from last year's Symposium and Roundtable is how the expanded CA Corps must build an industrial base in applied social sciences and related technologies to maintain currency and competitiveness. To this end, the last panel, led by Association Vice President Lieutenant Colonel Arnel David, was "An Innovative Partnership with Hollywood and Valka-Mir on the Human Domain Matrix VR Simulation, Training Cross-Cultural Communications and Civil Engagement." This year's panelists included:

- Dr. Aleks Nestic, Visiting Professor at Joint Special Operations University;
- Brian "Mitch" Mitchell, Founder, CrisisCast;
- Francesca Hunt, Founder, CrisisCast; and
- Lieutenant Colonel Dave Allen, SO1 Stabilization, Warfare Branch, Land Warfare Center (U.K.).

This panel discussed their project with the British Army to build an innovative prototype to improve performance with human engagement. This work, in an area known as the "Human Domain Matrix (HDM),<sup>TM</sup>" provides a futuristic computer-generated imagery (CGI) platform to help Soldiers to understand different cultural and emotional references better, before deploying overseas. The producers, motion-capture (mocap) and technical leads for films such as *Lord of the Rings*, *Mad Max: Fury Road* and the new *Star Wars: The Mandalorian* have come on board in support of the project, which is part of a larger effort on gaming, known as "U.K. Fight Club," a special wargaming community that Lieutenant Colonel Allen started while posted there as an Army strategist over the past couple of years. Virtual reality headsets could provide realistic video-game style experiences, where troops could meet with, speak to and interact with civilians, military partners or community leaders from local indigenous environments.

Lieutenant Colonel David warned that "a failure to understand local psycho-social dynamics has been our Achilles heel for far too long. This new capability will enable a rapid understanding of local contexts to help our frontline military, diplomatic and humanitarian personnel operating overseas. The ultimate aim is to achieve a capability that can effectively enable operators to proact, react and intervene within human networks' emotional, cultural and physical spaces at a rate faster than any adversary."

Developing this prototype of the HDM simulation would be a first of its kind for training and education. Dr. Nestic summarized the project best by explaining "this is going beyond training the cognitive to introduce more emotionally-driven behavioral mechanics which are inherently complex to model and simulate. These simulations are intended to improve performance in human interaction and strategic competition."

The panel concluded that the idea of an "industrial base" for CA is still very much in its infancy. That said, it deserves more institutional interest at service and joint levels.

## Civil Affairs Issue Papers

The Symposium finale was the presentation of the five papers selected for AUSA publication. Authors competed for best paper presentation cash prizes of \$1,000 (first); \$500 (second); and \$250 (third). The winners were, in order of award:

1. "Changing the Business Model III: Renewing Civil Affairs' Influence-Based Capabilities," by Robert Schafer and Lieutenant Colonel Shafi Saiduddin;

2. “A Gap in Thought and Deed: Civil-Military Relations and Civil-Military Operations,” by Master Sergeant Larry Lloyd;
3. “Civil Affairs and Civil-Military Cooperation: A Hybrid Solution to Defeat Hybrid Threats,” by Major Csaba Szabó and Master Sergeant Robert Nicholson;
4. “Civil Considerations in an Era of Great-Power Competition,” by Lieutenant Colonel Diana J. Parzik and Major Michael Schwille; and
5. “Into the Gray Zone: Integration of Civil Affairs and Information Operations with Embassies,” by Captain Scott Haviland, Major David Cook and Major Don Newberry.

The papers are all published here. Previous volumes as well as summaries of the current papers, along with Symposium and Roundtable reports, are available on the Association website. Videos from the entire Symposium discussed above are viewable on the Civil Affairs Association *Eunomia Journal* YouTube channel.

## Final Remarks

As the Symposium came to a close, (former) Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs (A/DASD SHA) Stephanie L. Hammond offered some remarks. She focuses on the management and oversight of humanitarian assistance and foreign disaster relief programs and CA, as well as on many other areas, including DoD’s cultural heritage protection (CHP) and WPS implementation within special operations and low-intensity conflict (SOLIC).

Her observations included:

- CA plays an important and strategic role across the competition continuum abroad; at home, the COVID-19 global pandemic has brought more attention to the civil-military integration value of CA;
- ASD(SOLIC) continues to advance CA within DoD and how it complements the *National Defense Strategy*, particularly the *Irregular Warfare Annex*, where “stabilizing a region or state with direct bearing on U.S. national interests” remains a wartime mission and stabilization remains one of three (along with offensive and defensive) operations as identified in JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*;
- The *Stabilization Assistance Review* and DoDD 3000.05 continue to guide stabilization policy, emphasizing a small DoD footprint, and working by, with and through local, legitimate indigenous partners, for which CA is a force of choice;
- DASD(SHA) appreciates all of the hard work that the CA community is doing on CHP efforts as it establishes the CHP network, works on the white paper and explores the best ways to gather data about CHP across DoD, for which CA again plays a critical role; and
- DASD(SHA) applauds the panel discussion on WPS and welcomes further insights from the CA on efforts across DoD on the integration of WPS.

Association President Colonel Joe Kirlin, USA, Ret., closed out the three-day forum, noting the “importance of continuity” in the Association’s priorities to help educate, advocate and motivate. This comes through platforms such as the Symposium, Roundtable, *Issue Papers*, *Eunomia Journal*, *OneCA Podcasts* and others that help the CA Corps to advocate through engagement of key civil and military institutional leadership on such things as the need for a full Army accession branch for CA and a “strong CA advanced school or university that

enables Army and Marines' CA as well as our allied brothers and sisters to make more strategic impact." The Association, he added, "will continue in its advocacy with the State and Defense Departments, USAID, NGOs, private businesses and international partners—and to motivate people and organizations to join us in this journey as a value-added leadership organization through its initiatives, programs and continued persistent engagement so that all of us can win in our missions, grow together and secure the victory of peace."

This, as retired Lieutenant General Hooper emphasized, will come mostly through CA's unique capacity and potential to "strengthen alliances and attract new partners," reinforced by the new administration's *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* that also draws in the *United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability*: "When we strengthen our alliances, we amplify our power and our ability to disrupt threats before they can reach our shores."<sup>19</sup>

To realize this, the extended CA Corps, in collaboration with its many partners, must focus its development on learning to be more of a force for influence and competition in convergent MDO/JADO. "In the 21st century," a NATO Innovation Hub study observed, "strategic advantage will come from how to engage with people, understand them, and access political, economic, cultural and social networks to achieve a position of relative advantage that complements the sole military force. These interactions are not reducible to the physical boundaries of land, air, sea, cyber and space, which tend to focus on geography and terrain characteristics. They represent a network of networks that define power and interests in a connected world. The actor that best understands local contexts and builds a network around relationships that harness local capabilities is more likely to win."<sup>20</sup>

That sounds a lot like CA; but it sounds like even more than that. New national leadership is looking for creative options to cooperate and compete through greater emphasis on leading global engagement, primarily through diplomacy and development rather than conventional military responses. As a result, CA and other information-related capabilities will gain even greater relevance among JIM enterprises that help secure favorable access and influence for the United States and its allies and partners.

From the speakers, workshops, panel discussions and *Issue Papers*, the Association and its sponsors will enable the CA Corps and its partners to continue the process of digesting the Symposium's findings to identify and prioritize actionable policy and institutional ways ahead at the Roundtable on 14 April.

For more information, and to stay updated, please visit the Civil Affairs Association website at: <https://www.civilaffairsassoc.org/>.



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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Civil Affairs Association website: <https://www.civilaffairsassoc.org/>.
- <sup>2</sup> Civil Affairs Issue Paper and Symposium and Roundtable Reports: <https://www.civilaffairsassoc.org/ca-issue-papers-reports>.
- <sup>3</sup> OneCA Podcasts: <https://www.civilaffairsassoc.org/podcast>.
- <sup>4</sup> Civil Affairs Association *Eunomia Journal*: <https://www.civilaffairsassoc.org/about-eunomia>.
- <sup>5</sup> Department of State, Department of Defense and U.S. Agency for International Development, *A Framework for Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Government Efforts to Stabilize Conflict-Affected Areas*, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/reports/stabilization-assistance-review-a-framework-for-maximizing-the-effectiveness-of-u-s-government-efforts-to-stabilize-conflict-affected-areas-2018/>.
- <sup>6</sup> U.S Department of State Global Engagement Center: <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-public-diplomacy-and-public-affairs/global-engagement-center/>.
- <sup>7</sup> Christopher Holshek, *Expanding Multi-Domain Operations to Win Moral Competition*, Association of the United States Army, 19 August 2020, <https://www.ausa.org/publications/expanding-multi-domain-operations-win-moral-competition>.
- <sup>8</sup> Holshek, *Expanding Multi-Domain Operations*.
- <sup>9</sup> Holshek, *Expanding Multi-Domain Operations*.
- <sup>10</sup> Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 2019).
- <sup>11</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 25 April 2018), GL-5.
- <sup>12</sup> Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Defense and Department of Treasury, *United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2020).
- <sup>13</sup> Department of Defense video, “U.S. strategy on women, peace, and security provides the Department of Defense long-term security,” 9 December 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV8B3byuVeE&feature=youtu.be>
- <sup>14</sup> Department of Peace Operations, United Nations, *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual* (New York: United Nations Department of Peace Operations and Department of Field Support, January 2020).
- <sup>15</sup> CIMIC Center of Excellence: <https://www.cimic-coe.org>.
- <sup>16</sup> British Army Land Warfare Center: [https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Warminster\\_Garrison#Land\\_Warfare\\_Centre](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Warminster_Garrison#Land_Warfare_Centre).
- <sup>17</sup> Canadian Army Influence Activities Task Force: [army.forces.gc.ca/en/5-canadian-division/influence-activities-task-force/index.page](http://army.forces.gc.ca/en/5-canadian-division/influence-activities-task-force/index.page).
- <sup>18</sup> U.K. Ministry of Defense, *Introducing the Integrated Operating Concept* (MoD Abbeywood South: Assets Publishing Services, 30 September 2020), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/922969/20200930\\_-\\_Introducing\\_the\\_Integrated\\_Operating\\_Concept.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/922969/20200930_-_Introducing_the_Integrated_Operating_Concept.pdf).
- <sup>19</sup> Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2021), 2.
- <sup>20</sup> Francois du Cluzel, *Cognitive Warfare* (Norfolk, VA: Allied Command Transformation Innovation Hub forum study, November 2020), 28.

# Changing the Business Model Part III: Renewing Civil Affairs' Influence-Based Capabilities

by Mr. Robert Schafer & Lieutenant Colonel Shafi Saiduddin, USA

## Introduction

Civil affairs (CA) wields a unique form of influence through long-term overt network engagements with indigenous populations. However, existing doctrine and joint force training concepts do not fully operationalize CA's strategic influence capabilities, and that needs to change. Without a concept to define, train and validate, this form of influence will remain underutilized. In an operating environment characterized by the fragmentation of traditional alliances and institutions,<sup>1</sup> the concept of nation-state-based public diplomacy and strategic influence is being challenged. Strategic influence must, like expeditionary diplomacy, include actions at local levels and must involve shaping the behaviors and decisions of a wide variety of nonstate actors.

The current doctrinal foundation based on information operations (IO) is focused on support to traditional warfare; the term "information" is nebulous, conflating message delivery platforms with network influencers. Current IO doctrine does not translate easily into strategic influence. It is oriented more toward the linear integration of messaging and does not provide a framework to incorporate the understanding of narratives that is crucial to shaping attitudes and behaviors. Similarly, joint force training exercises limit influence to the role of an enabler for maneuver capabilities. Army exercises, in a similar vein, are designed to validate commanders and their staffs on current warfighting functions. Because of these priorities, influence operations and engagements remain largely notional, relegating CA to other support functions within the exercise construct.

Organizational changes within CA and better integration with joint, interagency, inter-organizational and multinational (JIM) partners, while necessary, are not sufficient to operationalize influence in competition. In his analytical memoir, *The American Way of Irregular War*, Lieutenant General Charles Cleveland, USA, Ret., makes the point that America lacks "concepts, doctrine, and canon" for population-centric warfare.<sup>2</sup> The United States is currently facing overmatch by adversaries using irregular warfare in the competition phase. To prevail in competition, CA must define its network engagement capabilities in terms of strategic influence, expand special warfare doctrine to operationalize it and train and validate these concepts through appropriate warfighting functions.

That said, the overall purpose of this paper is to identify some institutional and operational gaps that hinder CA's effectiveness, while illuminating a pathway to renew and update historic concepts of strategic influence. Resilience, defined in the Resistance Operating Concept and discussed further on, will be utilized as a case study for the further development of CA influence capabilities that should be nested within an updated special warfare doctrine. Finally, changes will be recommended that will impact: Army (and Marine) CA doctrine; the manner in which its staff is employed; and how the joint force needs to adapt its training models to reflect the realities found within nonlinear competitive systems.

## Great-Power Competition and the Renewal of Military Capabilities

The term “great-power competition” has been bandied about in the national security circles in recent years, but it has often been misinterpreted to mean large-scale conventional warfare. Competition is not conflict; it does require an adversarial force but only in the context where two or more participants do not share the same interests. Competition is nonlinear, occurring across time and space and involving several state and non-state actors in such fields as diplomacy, foreign military sales, maritime commerce and international banking—and it is the core of any sports activities. In defining what competition means to the joint force, DoD recently released Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, *Competition Continuum*, which describes the current climate as one of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict and armed conflict.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it suggests that the world is neither at peace nor at war, but in a state of perpetual competition, where any action or inaction could escalate a situation from competition into armed conflict. The joint force, and, more narrowly, the Army (and Marines), must be ready to compete and win. To do so, they must look at current capabilities and reassess what has worked, what has not worked and what capabilities are required to compete and win in an irregular, competitive, international system.

The 2017 *National Security Strategy* states that the joint force strength remains a vital component to the competition for influence and to retain overmatch, which strengthens diplomacy, allowing the United States to shape the international environment and to protect its interests.<sup>4</sup> This requires the joint force to reassess and renew the capabilities required to achieve and maintain overmatch against revisionist and rogue state actors as well as regional, opportunistic and highly-violent non-state actors seeking to destabilize U.S. foreign policy. Further, the *Irregular Warfare Annex* to the 2018 *National Defense Strategy* illuminates how irregular warfare is a persistent and enduring operational reality that non-state actors and (increasingly) state actors employ in competition with the United States and its allies.<sup>5</sup> Thus, military leadership cannot dismiss the relationship between irregular warfare and competition in their interpretation of “great-power competition”—and, to achieve and retain irregular overmatch, these capabilities must be renewed.

The problem with renewing certain capabilities, such as defining influence and identifying influence-related capabilities, is the potential pushback from the institutions that are chartered to nurture and grow these requirements. The institutional barriers within the conventional force are likely too deeply rooted for it to embrace influence as a distinct warfighting capability in the foreseeable future. CA requires a forcing function; it does have a means of creating this through theory and doctrine. For example, both the United States Army Special Operations Command and the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) are nodes of influence that can advocate and advance it. Also, it is far more effective when its capabilities are spread across the Army warfighting functions; however, IO is not a warfighting function. Thus, the problem of leveraging influence to achieve non-kinetic effects will remain a shortfall for CA in the operational environment, and this requires advocacy.

Using influence as a tool for effective warfighting faces institutional and cultural barriers. As we have argued in previous issue papers, the joint force culture is deeply rooted in a kinetic concept of warfare that is based on firepower and maneuver stemming from World War II.<sup>6</sup> Author Sean McFate calls this “strategic atrophy” and posits that it usually takes a catastrophic defeat to change this paradigm.<sup>7</sup> The cultural barriers keep the military focused on the tactical and operational levels of conflict; they also shift the conceptualization of great-power competition toward large-scale combat operations (LSCO) rather than the political warfare that characterized most of great-power competition during the Cold War.



## Constraints on Influence in Great-Power Competition

IO is defined in terms of operations that “influence, disrupt, coerce or usurp the decision-making of adversaries,” making it decidedly adversary and tactically focused.<sup>8</sup> When IO doctrine does address the friendly and neutral elements of the civil component, it is oriented toward messaging and defers to civil military operations (CMO) rather than CA operations (CAO), again, not accounting for CA’s reconnaissance and engagement capabilities. It also ignores the two-way nature of influence in that enduring engagements are necessary to understanding narratives. While IO doctrine identifies beliefs as an aspect of target audiences, the concept of strategic narratives and their connection to identity is not addressed and is therefore lost to the practitioners.

American law and culture impose constraints on using influence offensively in the manner, for example, that Russia and China use it. Malign propaganda and disinformation often run into conflict with stated American values and considerations of human rights. Historically, this has limited the effectiveness of covert action and kept it as a narrow and highly-limited capability, with significant executive and legislative oversight. Adversaries can adapt and scale covert action in a way that American forces cannot. Further, opposition among DoD and civilian government agencies to terms such as “unconventional warfare” and “political warfare” makes even overt offensive influence problematic. There is simply not an appetite to go on the offensive with influence operations and narratives, strategic or otherwise.

Strategic influence will require a reexamination of IO. Ostensibly, it seeks to leverage influence by integrating capabilities. However, IO as such mixes human influence operational capabilities, such as CA and military information support operations (MISO) with technical delivery platforms—e.g., cyber and electromagnetic effects—under the label of “information-related capabilities.” This manifestation of IO muddies the waters and makes leveraging and emphasizing influence more difficult. Moreover, Special Forces is excluded as an information-related capability, even though its central purpose is to engage with and influence partner forces and populations. Throwing CAO and MISO into an information bin with cyber and electromagnetic effects reinforces the concept that these capabilities are one-way delivery mechanisms for messaging. The real value of CAO and MISO exists in the two-way exchange of communication with human networks. Lines of effort (LoEs) with CAO and MISO are intertwined and nonlinear as opposed to the recognizable straight and adjacent arrows in campaign plans, frustrating their inclusion in operational and strategic plans.

While the pathways for the strategic application of kinetic mechanisms are well developed, the means of using non-kinetic methods remain unclear. With little clarity on influence mechanisms and no conceptualization of narrative warfare, the bias remains toward one-way messaging. Neutral and friendly populations are more likely to be addressed in terms of noninterference or compliance, supporting the tactical requirements of maneuver commanders. Just as national security capabilities are imbalanced in terms of kinetic options, influence capabilities are imbalanced in terms of tactical and operational level messaging. This imbalance is largely a failure at the institutional level to identify these shortfalls or to define influence in information warfare doctrine writ large. Yet the special operations community is developing doctrine and structures that could give the concept of influence a new priority, particularly as the joint special operations community refocuses toward a “fourth age” of special operations forces.

## Fourth Age of Special Operations Forces

Dr. Isaiah Wilson, President of the Joint Special Operations University, describes four “ages” of special operations forces to conceptualize the history and future evolution of special

operations forces.<sup>9</sup> The first age includes the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) roots of special operations forces in World War II. The second age encompasses the 1960s and 1970s. The third age was defined by the global war on terrorism. The fourth age is “a comprehensive combination of all the skills, techniques/technics, and operational methods of all three preceding ages, amplified by 21st century technological advancements.”<sup>10</sup> This combination is optimized to deal with compound security threats. Developing theory and doctrine for this fourth age of special operations forces can provide the CA corps with the opportunity to address ongoing gaps in both institutional and operational outcomes. Leveraging, optimizing and integrating CAO LoEs into the supported theater Army’s objectives, regardless of special operations or conventional forces, supports the combatant commander’s campaign plan in any region of the world.

The early development of special warfare in the 1950s at the Psychological Warfare Center (second age special operations forces), the forerunner of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), was grounded in the concept of strategic influence practiced through engagements while conducting unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense.<sup>11</sup> During the Vietnam War, the 5th Special Forces (SF) Group had an assigned duty position called “CA/PO” (Civil Affairs/Psychological Operations, also PSYOP) consisting of CA and PSYOP trained officers and NCOs deployed down to the “A” detachment level like small S9 sections, specializing in developing influence plans and advising hamlet and regional leadership on governance issues.<sup>12</sup>

This focus on influence and governance was lost as the Vietnam War progressed. The Army never embraced the influence side of special operations, instead encouraging the special reconnaissance and direct-action capabilities of SF. Since that time, unconventional warfare itself has languished as a capability that struggles to gain both understanding and acceptance within DoD and other agencies. Chalmers Archer, one of the original members of SF who served in Laos and Vietnam, believed that the structure of SF that was developed in the 1950s was intended only as a starting point for a larger capability that leveraged influence through indigenous populations; he believed that further specialization was required.<sup>13</sup> The recent expansion of CA reconnaissance and engagement capabilities is the natural evolution of early special warfare concepts and a return to the roots of Army special operations forces (SOF).

The third age of special operations forces saw significant growth and refinement for CA in terms of its reconnaissance and engagement capabilities, from the creation of Foreign Internal Defense/Unconventional Warfare (FID/UW) battalions in the 1990s<sup>14</sup> to the establishment of the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, as well as the implementation of the Civil-Military Engagement Program. However, while many new concepts were developed for CA over this period, as it draws to a close, it is clear that much of the institutional knowledge from the Vietnam-era CA and PSYOP positions and the FID/UW battalions has been lost. As the fourth age of SOF begins, CA still lacks a coherent theory, a clearly-defined identity and narrative and a means to train and validate its strategic influence capabilities. Restoring some of the original, but forgotten, concepts of special warfare will go a long way to restoring that identity and narrative.

For CA, fourth age SOF holds the promise of integrated campaigning in the human domain, in conjunction with other joint special operations forces and in coordination with conventional forces and the interagency. Significant developments in the Army SOF have occurred in recent years through new special warfare doctrine and the establishment of a single command, the 1st Special Forces Command, to house all the Army’s special warfare capabilities. These developments provide a platform for the CA Corps to shape the evolution of strategic influence capabilities for both SOF and joint forces.

## Wielding Influence through Strategic Engagement

Current confusion on how to define, organize for and train influence can be traced to the lack of a theory for influence. Such a theory would differ significantly from traditional military theory that focuses on the kinetic aspects of conflict, as influence transcends military concepts and engages civilian elements of national power. Traditional military theory is also focused on physical domains, and a theory of influence must move from *material* to *moral* concepts.<sup>15</sup>

A good starting point is examining current research toward a unified theory of special operations. One contributor to this body of research, Dr. Robert Rubright, makes the point that a theory of special operations must remain a separate concept from special operations forces.<sup>16</sup> This is particularly relevant to CA as it has a special operations joint proponent, yet it maintains much of its force structure in the conventional force.

A theory for influence should address the concept of influence through engagement. While CA, SF and PSYOP all wield different forms of influence, directed at different components of societies (governance, security, information), their commonality is that their influence is often personality-based and works with intangibles, such as legitimacy and fighting spirit, that characterize the moral dimension of conflict. Recent experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated that training, equipping and resourcing partner militaries for fire and maneuver are insufficient in the absence of legitimacy and will. For this reason, these types of engagements should be categorized as strategic engagements. Engagement could even be considered a form of maneuver.<sup>17</sup>

Central to strategic engagement is identifying and understanding narratives. Narratives are the strategic storylines that form collective identity. Subliminal and heavily contextual, these are triggered and operationalized by messaging—which means that narrative is not simply messaging. A strategic understanding of narrative warfare cannot be gained solely through limited transactional engagements or through remote research by analysts. It requires a deep understanding of culture, history and language.<sup>18</sup> Message creation and delivery can be trained, but influencers must be selected based on personal attributes, such as cultural understanding and strategic communication acumen. Historic examples of strategic engagement influencers include T. E. Lawrence during the Arab Revolt and Edward Lansdale during the Hukbalahap Insurgency in the Philippines. It is important to reemphasize here that in strategic influence within anarchic international systems, state and non-state actors share a common history, which imprints how historical events—in this case, cultural symbols—are interpreted.<sup>19</sup> This factor alone puts influence capabilities at odds with the conventional force paradigm of fielding mass-produced forces based on quantifiable metrics. It also presents challenges in how influence is measured, trained and validated.

### Case Study: *Resistance Operating Concept*

The *Resistance Operating Concept* is a comprehensive effort to study resistance and resilience and to provide a shared understanding for the United States and its allies. A collaborative effort through the USSOCOM–Europe and European partners, the *Resistance Operating Concept* explores the actions that a nation can take to prepare for and survive a loss of national sovereignty. It has its origins in the Resistance Seminar Series that started in 2014 and examined the concepts of resistance and resilience as a national defense strategy.<sup>20</sup>

It is based on a concept of total defense, or comprehensive defense. The central feature of this concept is that it consists of both civil resilience and military defense. “This defense concept includes not only governmental agencies and functions from national to municipal level,

but also private and commercial enterprises, voluntary organizations, and individuals.”<sup>21</sup> The idea of resistance as part of a partner-nation strategy prioritizes the legitimacy of resistance forces and mitigates one of the persistent issues in conducting unconventional warfare.<sup>22</sup>

The *Resistance Operating Concept* evolved within the context of actual threats that provide an organizing concept for exercising irregular capabilities. Resilience is significant in that it is the foundation of effective resistance and is highlighted as such within this document.<sup>23</sup> Its further significance for CA is that it illuminates a framework for influence through strategic engagement that can be exercised and validated within a larger joint force exercise.

It also provides a conceptual model for integrating many aspects of U.S. irregular warfare doctrine, including security cooperation and FID/UW. While these activities are delineated from resilience and resistance in terms of definitions, the actions that are taken by U.S. forces to support resilience and resistance do nest within these doctrinal foundations.

Within these U.S. Department of Defense definitions, the U.S. engages in Security Cooperation and Security Force Assistance when supporting the Partner Nation’s development of an organized resistance capability. If that Partner Nation loses full or partial sovereignty over its territory to a hostile actor, then the U.S. can engage in unconventional warfare to assist resistance forces. If that Partner Nation is under pre- or post-crisis threat from a foreign actor interfering in the Partner Nation domestically, then the U.S. engages in foreign internal defense to help free and protect the partner from foreign subversion or insurgency.<sup>24</sup>

Further, the *Resistance Operating Concept* is tied to strategy, and the persistent difficulty for the United States has always been leveraging irregular warfare at the strategic level.

While it is newly-published, the basic concepts are not new; they go back to the origins of Army SOF. As mentioned previously, special warfare has struggled for acceptance within the U.S. military. The *Resistance Operating Concept* has the potential to counteract U.S. military cultural biases. For example, foreign internal defense is often misunderstood and conflated with Security Force Assistance by focusing heavily on military training. In FID/UW doctrine, influence is critical, and foreign internal defense is a whole-of-government effort to support a host-nation internal defense and development program.<sup>25</sup> However, while influence is a key component of foreign internal defense, the means to achieving influence is not clearly defined. This lack of clarity has likely contributed to the misinterpretation of foreign internal defense as military training.

The *Resistance Operating Concept* defines resilience as “the will and ability to withstand external pressure and influences and/or recover from the effects of those pressures or influences.”<sup>26</sup> Foreign internal defense is defined as host-nation government activities to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, violent extremism, terrorism and other threats to its security.<sup>27</sup> While this definition focuses on external pressure and influences, it is equally applicable to internal threats; building resilience is the mechanism through which foreign internal defense is accomplished.

Resilience, as described in the *Resistance Operating Concept*, focuses heavily on intangible concepts, such as the will of the population. These intangible concepts are exactly the elements influenced by special operations strategic engagement. Further, the *Resistance Operating Concept* describes concepts, such as national identity, that are tied to narratives. This is the nonlinear complex system that CA is organized, trained and equipped to occupy. The

prerequisites to resistance include knowledge of vulnerabilities, vulnerability reduction and external threat identification, all of which are the doctrinal domain of CA.

Resilience also provides a mechanism to evaluate the preparation phase of unconventional warfare doctrine.<sup>28</sup> Preparation of the environment activities during the competition phase, including civil-military engagement, ostensibly perform this function; however, resilience illuminates the purpose of these activities and provides a basis to measure progress. The *Resistance Operating Concept* describes methods for assessing resilience and provides a sample foreign malign influence assessment chart and methodology.<sup>29</sup>

It holds promise as a conceptual model to train and validate CA engagement activities at the strategic and operational level. Resilience is a prerequisite to resistance. Designing an exercise around resistance necessitates developing scenarios for resilience, including methods of measuring resilience and incorporating it into plans. Incorporating nonlinear concepts into joint exercises has long been problematic. Stabilization has proven easy for the joint force to ignore since the effects of stabilization tend to be visible after LSCO end and exercise participants lose interest. By requiring resilience inputs to feed the main exercise scenario, resilience—and the engagement that develops it—will be highlighted to exercise participants.

## Reexamining Exercise Development

Exercising great-power competition will require the development of two-part overlapping exercises. One example would be a special operations forces-/interagency-focused portion that would start before the main exercise and overlap with an LSCO exercise. In this construct, the strategic influence scenario for an LSCO exercise would be developed while it is being trained and validated in the first portion. Failure of combatant commanders to exercise irregular capabilities in the first part of the exercise would place them at a disadvantage in the second part of the exercise. This would provide greater illumination of the effects generated by strategic engagement.

Current exercises at the joint level neither train nor validate strategic influence. Special operations forces conduct their own validation exercises, but they are generally not integrated with the larger joint force. This is a result of an absence of IO as a warfighting function with clear definitions of strategic influence and engagement. The idea of a special operations force focused on warfighting functions has been debated for several years without resolution. The initial idea evolved into a proposal for engagement warfighting functions that did not gain traction.<sup>30</sup> There are currently discussions on an information warfighting function. The lack of information-related warfighting functions is an institutional gap; however, this does not mean that if it is developed that CA should fall exclusively under it. That said, it is important to remember that CA is both an information- and influence-related capability.

The conceptual difficulty is that SOF capabilities work through all warfighting functions and do not fit neatly into a single category, such as engagement or information. As an example, strategic engagement produces input for intelligence, fires and maneuver, as well as information. The key points of engagement may vary based on timing and levels of engagement. Relegating CA to an IO warfighting function along with cyber and electromagnetic effects, limiting its focus to CMO versus CAO, prohibits the ability to leverage CA into having an impact at the operational and strategic levels. The solution is to develop better means for CA to integrate across the warfighting functions, for example, by using task-organized liaison elements instead of fixed S9/G9/J9 sections in conventional formations.<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The numerous gaps in influence theory and in CAO doctrine provide the CA Corps a blank slate to conceptualize, write doctrine, develop concepts and ultimately influence the joint force to expand its concepts of warfighting. While the greatest institutional gaps exist in conventional CA force doctrine and integration with information-related capabilities as well as conventional maneuver forces, greater integration alone with conventional maneuver forces, which are designed primarily for LCSO, reinforces the misperception of CA as merely a “combat multiplier.” Culturally, the Army conceptualizes great-power competition as LSCO. The deactivation of the 85th Civil Affairs Brigade, an active component conventional CA force, clearly illustrates this mindset.

The path forward for CA lies within the special operations community, particularly alongside SF and PSYOP, through developing theory and doctrine for strategic engagement and preparing the CA Corps for the fourth age of special operations forces. While CA has a significant part of its force designated as conventional, this should not be a barrier. Other services, such as the Air Force, maintain special operations capabilities, such as the Tactical Air Control Party, that exist in both SOF and conventional formations. A fourth age of SOF will require increased SOF-conventional forces integration, and CA is in a unique position to address this challenge, especially since Security Force Assistance Brigades have become regionally aligned and the integration there would be natural.

The first step for CA is to define strategic engagement within special warfare doctrine and to build on the foundations of Army Doctrine Publication 3-05.<sup>32</sup> This will involve expanding on the nonlethal actions and identifying building resilience as the mechanism for conducting foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare. Next, strategic engagement must be trained and validated within the construct of joint exercises. The *Resistance Operating Concept* provides a model that can create two-part joint exercises, along with a framework for assessing resilience. Finally, special warfare theory, doctrine and assessments from joint exercises must drive revisions of information operations doctrine that address influence at the operational and strategic levels.

The Office of Strategic Services, the model for the First Age of SOF, provided a comprehensive, integrated approach to strategic influence, intelligence, unconventional warfare and support to conventional forces during a very kinetic form of great-power competition. Since the deactivation of the OSS in 1945, the intelligence community and DoD, through USSOCOM, have worked to reconstitute a similar concept, though with capabilities scattered throughout multiple entities and bureaucracies.

A fourth age of SOF may provide the opportunity to renew and reintegrate many of the original concepts of the OSS and special warfare, while incorporating decades of lessons learned and innovation. For CA, this means recognizing the concept of strategic engagement as a mechanism for influence, updating doctrine to reflect it and incorporating it into joint warfighting through training and validation exercises. Strategic engagement by CA, in conjunction with other special operations forces and JIM partners, can address gaps in irregular warfare capacity that limit U.S., allied and partner effectiveness in great-power competition.

### *Recommendations*

**Doctrine.** “Influence” and “identify influence-related capabilities,” such as CA, MISO, security forces assistance brigades, foreign area officers, etc., must be defined. Relevant Army and joint force doctrine should be updated to illuminate this pathway for SOF and conventional forces.

**Organization.** CA should be organized into staff functions that correspond with Army war-fighting functions. Formalizing an S39/G39/J39 influence staff function across the Army, embedded within maneuver and communicating with operations functions such as intelligence, targeting, fires and force protection, would be optimal. The Civil Military Operations Directorate, often seen as an S9/G9/J9, should be assessed and needs to remain a non-doctrinal staff function. If not, it should be distinct from manning; if so, codify it into doctrine and allocate resources accordingly.

**Training.** More influence-related scenarios should be incorporated into joint military exercises that are more characteristic of competition and irregular warfare, where CAO can help to enable desirable nonlinear strategic outcomes.



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# A Gap in Thought and Deed: Civil-Military Relations and Civil-Military Operations

by Master Sergeant Larry Lloyd, USA

## Introduction

Consideration of the state of civil-military relations (CMR), within friend or foe, is not adequately addressed within civil affairs (CA) doctrine and activities. This gap limits CA's ability to be an effective tool for influence at the strategic level when in competition during irregular warfare (IW) against great-power competitors such as Russia and China. The few times CMR is mentioned in doctrine, the context is detached from the civilian/academic study of civil-military relations. The lack of CMR awareness in civil-military operations (CMO) and CA operations (CAO) doctrine and activities hinders the Army's ability to impact a partner or adversary military beyond its operational elements to its strategic culture. If we accept the definition of IW from the *Summary of the Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy*, namely "a struggle among state and non-state actors to influence populations and effect legitimacy,"<sup>1</sup> then addressing CMR is essential for CA to be an effective force in the competition phase, short of armed conflict.

## CMR in Competition

First, some background: I had no clue what was happening, but I was proud to be there. It was the culminating event of more than four months of work. The after-action review of *Operation Saber Guardian 2017*<sup>2</sup> CMO component was a chance for Hungarian Defense Force (HDF) leaders and planners to discuss items that could be sustained or improved during future operations. The achievement for CA Team–Hungary in 2017, of which I was a member, was following through on a U.S. embassy goal to integrate Hungarian mayors, security studies think tanks and the U.S. embassy itself into the post-operational review.

The conference was conducted in Hungarian. Fortunately, the HDF joint force command head of CMO, i.e., the J-9, whispered highlights to me, while I interpreted the discussion from body language and the presentation slides. The friendly tone of the dialogue seemed to sour after a Hungarian mayor gave his presentation and highlighted areas that needed improvement. There was an agitated back-and-forth between the mayor, a couple of HDF civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) officers and one of the HDF SG17 planners. "Do you understand the issue?" the J-9 asked. "I can't say I do," I replied. "The mayor is upset that the Ministry of Defense [MoD] did not highlight and speak more about *Saber Guardian*'s importance." "Good, that is an important point," I answered. The J-9 replied, "Yes, well, the planner from the ministry says we all know why that was not possible and we should just move on."

We had lost the competition to Russian influence on the institution of the MoD. As a member of the NATO alliance, Hungary had a key role in SG17, with a significant portion of its geography, bases and forces impacted by the operation. Yet neither Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban nor the MoD mentioned the operation to the national media. Any public references were minimal and only in English. In the competition<sup>3</sup> for influence<sup>4</sup> of a strategic

indigenous population and institution (IPI)<sup>5</sup>—the Hungarian military institution of the MoD—we had left a strategic node of influence or subversion open to our adversary, the Russians. The avenues of civilian influence on the military IPI is something that CA forces had largely ignored, to their detriment.

Clearly, our adversaries are engaged in political warfare aimed at degrading our relationships with partners and allies and at shaping the competition environment to their advantage. Recent events in Hungary are not limited to the above example—Hungary is not alone in its vulnerability to malign influence activities aimed at subverting a NATO member’s military institution.<sup>6</sup>

## Minding the Gap between CMR and CMO

As a social science, CMR studies work at the intersection of political science, sociology and history. A growing body of literature in this field, such as Dima Adamsky’s *The Culture of Military Innovation*, holds that cultural attributes imprint and drive strategic security behavior. Each nation, Adamsky argues, has a “strategic culture.” This is “a set of shared formal and informal beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which influence and sometimes determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.”<sup>7</sup>

While there is no consensus on a grand theory of CMR writ large, it generally looks at two distinct elements of the triangular relationship between the state, society and the military that defines them. The dominant element of the study is “control.” Control focuses on the question of who guards the guardians—the belief of civilian control of the military in democracies. The other element, borrowing from Dr. Zoltan Barany’s book, *The Soldier and the Changing State*, addresses the main variables (conditions or policies) that encourage or impede the development of healthy, democratic CMR.<sup>8</sup> In this field of study, the elements of control and Dr. Barany’s variables (i.e., avenues of influence) are directed either at subverting the military institution as a whole or at a military-politics operating environment.

To explore the gap, it is helpful to review the definitions of CMO in joint doctrine and the role of CMO in Army doctrine (*italics added*):

Civil-Military Operations are the activities of a commander performed by designated military forces that establish, maintain, *influence* or exploit *relations* between military forces and indigenous populations and institutions by directly supporting the achievement of objectives relating to the reestablishment or maintenance of stability within a region or host nation.<sup>9</sup>

The role of CA is to understand, engage, and *influence* unified action partners and indigenous populations and institutions (IPI), conduct MGO [military government operations], enable CMO, and provide civil considerations expertise through the planning and execution of CAO.<sup>10</sup>

Simply put, CMO is a military operation that affects the civil society. Anyone in the military may do it. CA is the part of the Army that enables effective CMO, and when a CA force takes that enabling action, it is considered a CA operation. Where is the gap?

Joint Publication (JP) 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, is the military’s guidebook to CMO. The definition of CMO hinges on the term “relations.” Even so, CMR is explicitly mentioned in it only twice. The first is as a description of the nature of CMO (*italics added*):

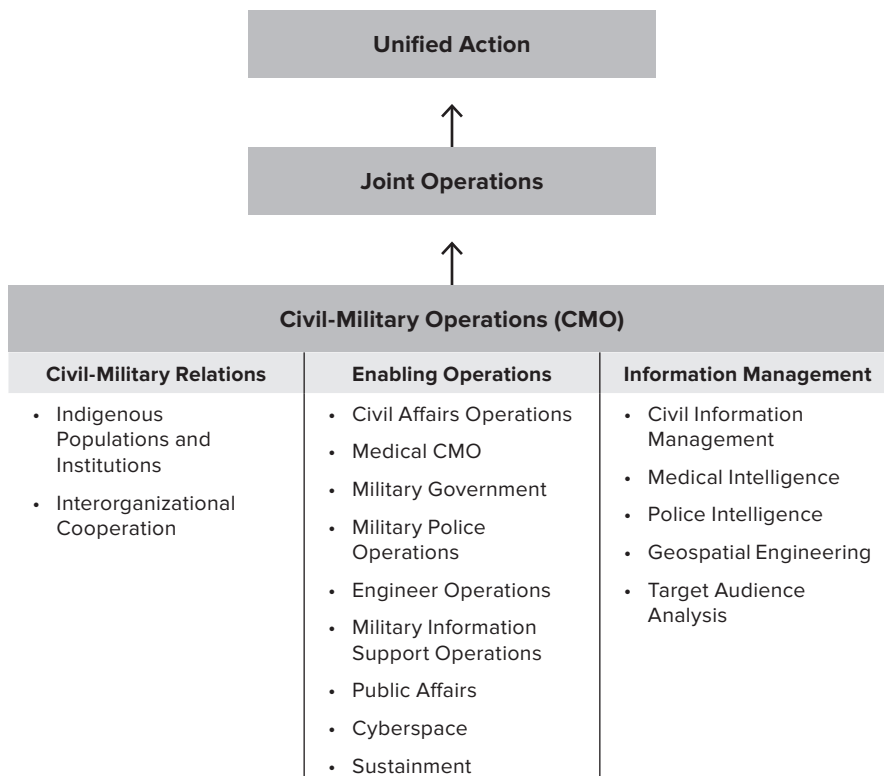
Joint forces may operate across a wide range of human habitation, from densely populated cities to sparsely populated rural areas. Every habitation poses a myriad of distinct and unique challenges. *Civil-military relations* should revolve around positive, often mutually-supportive, relationships with nonmilitary stakeholders.<sup>11</sup>

Then, further on in the publication, the joint doctrinal understanding of CMR is described as a state of being, not as something to be assessed and understood. “Civil-military relations is established, restored, or maintained by executing the CMO activities of interorganizational cooperation and IPI relationships.”<sup>12</sup> The two “activities” of CMR within the publication are called:

- (1) Interorganizational cooperation—a unity of effort activity with multiple USG (U.S. government) and other U.S. force elements.
- (2) IPI Cooperation—liaison work to ally and synchronize efforts with IPI.

## Civil-Military Operations Components & Functions

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These doctrinal descriptions cover what are essentially liaison activities and do not provide a useful definition of CMR to enable CMO or to develop civil consideration expertise.

*Civil Military Engagement (CME)*, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-57-80, is the other doctrinal publication to mention CMR. Cited in Appendix A, it states, “National Guard and Reserve forces may augment CME operations based on requirements by the GCC [Geographic Combatant Commander] when developing *civil-military relations*.” The reference also does not provide a useful definition of CMR for practitioners. Taken as a whole, the military

doctrinal references to CMR take away from and distract the military from the useful academic definition and social science work that would be helpful to those conducting CMO.

The doctrinal basis for CAO is Field Manual (FM) 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*. CA Soldiers are directed to provide civil considerations expertise, yet FM 3-57 does not specifically mention CMR. Does that matter? Consider the doctrinal definition of civil considerations: “The influence of manmade infrastructure, civilian institutions, and attitudes and activities of the civilian leaders, populations, and organizations within an area of operations on the conduct of military operations.”<sup>13</sup> What in the definition is lacking that an inclusion of the study of CMR would enhance? As the introductory story highlighted, in the realm of competition, civilian influence on the military institution, not just military operations, are the center of gravity of a nation’s will to win—or what Carl von Clausewitz calls the *schwerpunkt*.

In terms of CAO planning and doctrine, the military institution is addressed, albeit scantily. When developing CAO planning “products,” such as an area study or a running estimate, CA elements are required to develop an “understanding [of] the impacts of the civil component on military operations, the impacts of military operations on the civil component.”<sup>14</sup> However, in both, military operations are the focus to the exclusion of the military institution. For the area study—a pre-mission evaluation of a defined area—doctrine does require some information key to understanding the military institution and relevant to CMR study under the Governance-Public Administration section. These include:

- historical background;
- political control and effectiveness;
- general military policy;
- foreign influence;
- military establishment and the national economy; and
- quality and sources of manpower: recruitment, conscription and reserves.

However, none of the other sections (listed above) ask the CA Soldier to relate these items to the military institution or the military politics operating environment. This includes areas such as geography, history, people, culture and social structure, religion, governance, environmental management, public safety, rule of law, economic stability, food and agriculture, civilian supply, public health and welfare, cultural relations, infrastructure, public works and utilities, public communications, public education and information and civil information.

The CA planning team (CAPT) is tasked with integrating what are in effect CMR variables into the CA planning process when FM 3-57 directs the CAPT in “developing from civil information the strategic-level civil component factors that inform operational variables (political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment and time [PMESII-PT]) and incorporate into the MDMP (military decisionmaking process) or the joint planning process.”<sup>15</sup> However, without a clear yet broad enough definition of CMR, the understanding is largely left to the CA practitioner. All too often, that information is not integrated into CAO, to the degradation of U.S. forces’ ability to compete for influence.

Understanding and analyzing the civil component is a daunting task. As is habitually the case, CA personnel direct their activities toward civil component areas where they have the greatest real-world expertise—education, health care, public safety, the environment, etc. Developing a greater understanding of CMR influence on the military institution or military politics is too vital to be allowed to be left as an implied task. Not all elements of the civil

component (political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure and area structures capabilities organizations people and events [PMESII-ASCOPE]) hold equal weight. Those impacting the military IPI are of utmost importance to CA forces in a time of competition. Current CMO/CAO doctrine leaves the aperture too wide and leads to mission creep. The articulation of a CMR framework within CA activities and analysis is important to focusing the force on a unique component of the human domain that no one else (outside of academia) is addressing.

The CMO doctrine set—JP3-57 and FM 3-57, with the accompanying ATPs—remains overly focused on military operations during traditional armed conflict. These publications do not provide quality guidance on how CMO can be focused on the military institution during the competition phase. The guidelines of a healthy state of CMR, such as Dr. Zoltan Barany has described for building democratic armies in *The Soldier and the Changing State*, can be adapted to create generalized areas of assessment for a nation’s CMR. A holistic civil consideration expertise can then be turned into avenues of influence that will become levels of action in the political warfare part of competition. The subsequent development and utilization of friendly networks, as well as the identification and countering of enemy networks that can influence a nation’s CMR, will enhance CA’s role as a force to win in competition. Moreover, a stated goal of NATO members and CMO planning is to “encourage human rights, freedom, and democracy with U.S. national interests.”<sup>16</sup> Understanding CMR as Dr. Barany expertly lays it out is essential to countering Russian and Chinese aims to undermine liberal democracy.

## Creating a CMR Framework for CA Assessments

No grand theory or conceptual framework for CMR that is tailored to assist CA in political warfare exists. To fill that gap, CA practitioners will need to develop a useful and flexible model for CA forces to assess CMR and its impact on the military institution. A growing body of CMR academic literature is supportive of that task, and the CA proponent should utilize it. Dr. Barany’s exploration of the variables that encourage or hinder the development of democratic militaries is useful for examining the topic. It can be difficult for American military personnel to recognize that the principles ingrained in a U.S. national narrative of civilian control of the military may not be widely accepted. The idea that the military is to be strictly nonpartisan and apolitical, even in the United States, is not always realistic.

CMR, in this regard, exist in a military-political operating environment that can be understood as a triangle of state, society and military components. Within these areas, we can consider the structural, cultural and historical factors that affect the state of a nation’s CMR. CA practitioners should consider:

### State

- Political allegiance: Consider if civilians are reaching into the military institution, playing favorites, controlling decisionmaking or creating factions—ideological, political or ethnic. Consider the army of the French Third Republic as an example of a military reflecting internal political divisions, where elements aligned with the political left and right. Or, in Hungary, under Viktor Orban’s government, non-Fidesz aligned generals were reassigned to inconsequential positions.
- Ministry of Defense: Consider if the institution is thought of by the public and civil society leaders to be nonpartisan, apolitical and focused on military effectiveness.
- Legislature: Consider what is the role of legislative oversight and funding.

- Developing outside defense expertise: Consider a U.S. embassy–Hungary initiative to enhance the security think tank sectors relevant to the HDF, creating organizations such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies or RAND in the United States.
- Treaty obligations: Has the nation signed on to security relationships that invite foreign influence? Consider NATO or the Russian Collective Security Treaty Organization that Russia has used to limit the promotion of democracy.<sup>17</sup>

## *Society*

- Recruitment: Consider that conscription can be used as a democratizing tool by integrating a national force across socioeconomic backgrounds. Bolivia in the 1950s is an example of recruitment effort having dramatic CMR effects on the state. Conversely, an all-volunteer force can lead to a societal elite.
- Ethnic-religious divisions: Consider in the United States the ongoing CMR debate on naming U.S. Army bases after rebellious generals as a matter of civil political discussion. In Uganda, in contrast, officers with suboptimal performance or dubious human rights records receive promotions in the Ugandan Defense Forces, more because of tribal affiliations than national standards, with little civil-military discussion.
- The military as a social laboratory: Consider gender, sexual identity and racial integration in the United States or in Europe—whether brought about by democratic pressure or because it was the morally correct thing to do.
- The media: Consider how mass and social media are (or are not) given sufficient access to the military institution. This allows for a level of oversight—in Hungary during SG17, the U.S. Army insisted on access for Hungarian journalists and at times embedded them in the exercises to mitigate disinformation.
- Non-governmental organizations: Consider the existence of independent defense specialists who provide expertise or a sense of oversight. Consider in the United States veterans organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars or the Association of the United States Army, or the role of civil organizations such as the American Red Cross as a trusted source for emergency messages from civilian family members to U.S. military personnel.

## *Military*

- Missions/roles: Consider the missions and roles that the military is relied on to fulfill within the civil component—military participation in domestic programs such as rural development, policing and infrastructure building may bring the military into local political polarization due to the CMR factors listed here.
- Foreign actors: Consider foreign military and mercenary facilities and training programs or foreign investment in military-significant infrastructure and industry.<sup>18</sup>
- Military-industrial complex: Consider how the military is funded: are there overriding military-owned business interests, such as in Egypt?
- Military role in civil society’s ideological project: Consider what the military is taught about themselves. Consider Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 1-0, *The Army*, which “emphasizes the professional Soldier and the characteristics of the future force that will enable the Army to maintain its commitment to the Nation.”<sup>19</sup> What are the norms of

organizational culture that the military adheres to? Consider the U.S. military ban on servicemembers conducting political activities while in uniform.

## **CMR—An Avenue for Influence in Competition**

In recent years, the Army has been undergoing a profound doctrinal change, acknowledging the importance of the human domain, human terrain, the human dimension or human aspects of military operations. Moreover, the importance that documents such as the *National Defense Strategy* place on irregular warfare is a welcome development. Critical to understanding the importance of this change from a CMR and CMO standpoint is the *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (JCIC, published in March 2018). The intent of the JCIC is to provide an encompassing framework for military operations beyond the simple times of war and peace. It describes this as “competition below armed conflict.” The JCIC set forth several capabilities for the military in this new domain to which a more thorough understanding of civil-military relations would make a significant contribution:<sup>20</sup>

- the ability to describe the environment in terms of cooperation, competition below armed conflict and armed conflict, including relevant strategic actors and the relationships with and among them;
- the ability to forecast potential trends of the relationships between the United States and other strategic actors with respect to cooperation, competition below armed conflict and armed conflict;
- the ability to understand the current foreign assistance environment in a specified region;
- the ability to identify, understand and assess relevant legal authorities, constraints and limitations; and
- the ability to identify and evaluate the interests, intent, capability and capacity of relevant actors to support or adversely affect U.S. interests.

Interestingly, the JCIC also employs yet another term—civil-military dialogue. It defines an effective civil-military dialogue as one that occurs between civilian policy makers and the joint military force “within a continual round of engagement featuring discussion, feedback, adaptation, and refinement of policy and actions to achieve an evolving set of desired strategic outcomes.”<sup>21</sup> This definition is perhaps the only time within doctrine that the military refers to the CMR dynamic in a manner consistent with the wider academic literature, in particular the notion of control.

CMO doctrine is also transforming. The conversation this paper hopes to contribute to started with the November 2018 “Civil Affairs: 2025 and Beyond” white paper. The CMO doctrinal set of JP 3-57 (published July 2018) and FM 3-57 (published April 2019), cited earlier, flowed out of that conversation. Yet, if CA forces are to be “DoD’s primary force specifically trained and educated to understand and shape the foreign political-military environments” per the white paper, then the gap in the understanding and ability to assess CMR must be closed. If it is, CA can fulfill its critical role in influencing the military IPIs during the competition phase.

We know from the study of military history, and analysis of recent hybrid warfare activities, that military institutions are susceptible to foreign influence. During the Russian seizure of Crimea, we learned that “at the time, Moscow and its allies in Crimea exploited weaknesses within Kiev’s military to undermine its ability to put up a fight, according to interviews

conducted by *Reuters* with about a dozen people on both sides of the conflict.”<sup>22</sup> While conducting CMO in Hungary, the U.S. CA team (CAT) experienced Russian influence operations that accused NATO of wanting pensioners to go hungry so that the HDF could buy more military equipment and be used as pawns in a war with Russia. Democratic military effectiveness rests not so much on the quality of equipment or training as on the national will to win when conflict emerges. Strengthening the will to win, and thereby enhancing deterrence in the competition phase, should be a principal mission of CA.

Whether as a CAT or a CAPT, CA forces can affect a nation’s CMR at the strategic level. Indeed, they are the only U.S. government entity with a mission focus that allows for an assessment of the state of CMR. Subsequently, CA activities can be used to develop friendly networks that will strengthen a partner nation’s will to win and guard against malign foreign influence on the military establishment’s key IPis. Nevertheless, without GCC buy-in to support the effort, Department of State (DoS) assistance through the embassy’s political-military officers to shape the effort and an expanded rotational timeline to allow for the effort, CA’s ability to develop healthy CMR will remain limited.

## **Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities and Policy (DOTMLPF-P) Recommendations for the CA Proponent**

For greater inclusion of CMR into CMO and thereby development of CA into an effective force for influence during irregular warfare competition, the CA proponent should consider:

- **Doctrine:** As part of the upcoming revisions to FM 3-57 in 2021, the CA community could consider the addition of more specific references to CMR. These could include:
  - “future CA forces support[ing] partner nation forces in overcoming challenges to civil-military coordination *and civil-military relations* in their own efforts, systems, and networks.”<sup>23</sup> Ideally, this would be matched to a definition of CMR in a future revision to JP 3-57.
  - Revision of CA branch characteristics and principles could include more CMR variables, and designate them as being priorities of assessments and activities. Also, ensure that those listed are inclusive of the military institutions as well as military operations, and equally consider civilian influence of the military-politics operating environment, as it does have a military impact on the civil component.
  - Revisions to ATP 3-57.60 CAO planning could include additions to the area study that incorporate CMR considerations. The running estimate could add a point under Paragraph 5 (Civil Considerations) for *State of Civil Military Relations* and include a version of Dr. Barany’s general guidelines for assessing CMR in democracies. This would enable a more thorough understanding of CMR as part of the CA planning process.
  - Develop a graphic training aid (GTA) that discusses areas that should be assessed to evaluate healthy CMR while also modifying existing GTAs.
- **Organization:** A CA force’s liaison for CMR activities should be placed within the U.S. embassy’s Office of Defense Cooperation. Integration of CA assets within security force assistance brigades (SFABs) can develop holistic problem statements on the state of CMR in the nations in which SFABs operate. Also, consider an expanded role for CA in SFABs in general, focused on developing a healthy state of CMR in particular partner nations.



- **Training:** Training on CA activities needs a paradigm shift that focuses efforts not simply on civilian influence on military operations but on the military institution as well as on how the military institution impacts civil society.
- **Leadership and Education:** The most neglected area of study within CMR is that of civil society. The Civil Affairs Association should pursue opportunities to engage with CMR subject matter experts, such as the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS-AFS), in order to enhance situational understanding. For CA, it would enable a deeper understanding of CMR factors, and for IUS-AFS, it would allow for better understanding of the influence versus control factors within CMR.
- **Policy:** CA forces at the strategic level should work to integrate a cooperative partnership with the U.S. embassy on political-military analysis. A review of current DoD directives and instructions will be needed to ensure theater-level CAPTs can coordinate with DoS regional bureaus. This is essential in developing a whole-of-government approach, which is the only way to properly engage in political warfare and defeat.

## Conclusion

Integrating CMR studies into CMO/CAO doctrine and developing a CMR framework into CAO activities is an essential approach to competition. CA forces that possess an understanding of CMR can generate a rigorous analysis of the critical vulnerabilities of a military institution, which would be a uniquely valuable product for political and military leaders alike during the competition phase. In turn, they could then develop networks to defend or attack a military's IPIs, creating a resilient will to win, or undermining it. The areas of a nation's CMR are nodes of influence that can become levers of action in competition.

Russian influence on the Hungarian military institution limited the effectiveness of *Saber Guardian*. Yet, for CA Team–Hungary in 2017, it was the beginning of the competition for influence of the HDF. Our recruitment of Hungarian mayors willing to carry our narrative to their communities, as well as the integration of Hungarian media and security think tanks into the exercise, created a foundation of a friendly network with varied avenues of influence that was able to push back against Russian malign influence activities. Integrating CMR into CMO is a potential CA core competency worth further examination in a world of competition.

CA forces and CMO activities focus too much effort on viewing civil society as something separate from the military and not enough time on identifying civil influences on our partner and adversary militaries. Partly, this is due to the absence of a robust understanding of CMR in our doctrine and activities. Integrating the social science of CMR will sharpen CA capabilities and enhance our relevance to U.S. partners.



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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Department of Defense, *Summary of the Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy*, 2020, 2.
- <sup>2</sup> During *Operation Saber Guardian* (SG17), my civil affairs team was tasked to coordinate strategic messaging with our Hungarian Defense Forces civil-military cooperation partners to mitigate operational impacts throughout Hungary.
- <sup>3</sup> “Competition is the condition when two or more actors in the international system have incompatible interest but neither seeks to escalate to open conflict in pursuit of those interests.” Department of the Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2018), GL-2.
- <sup>4</sup> “Influence is the means to alter the opinions, attitudes, and ultimately the behavior of foreign-friendly, neutral, adversary, and the enemy audiences through messages, presence, and actions.” Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publications (ADP) 3-0, *Operations*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 2019), 2–5.
- <sup>5</sup> Indigenous populations and institutions are “the societal framework of an operational environment including citizens, legal and illegal immigrants, dislocated civilians, and governmental, tribal, ethnic, religious, commercial, and private organizations and entities.” Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 17 April 2019), Glossary-5.
- <sup>6</sup> Lili Bayer, “Hungary defends decision to allow transit of Russian military shipment,” *Politico*, 31 July 2019; Kamil Klysinski and Piotr Zochowski, *The End of the Myth of a Brotherly Belarus? Russian Soft Power in Belarus after 2014: The Background and Its Manifestations* (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2016); and Mihail Naydenov, “The subversion of the Bulgarian defence system—the Russian Way,” *Defense & Security Analysis* 34 no. 1 (2018): 93–112, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2018.1421408>.
- <sup>7</sup> Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 8.
- <sup>8</sup> Zoltan Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 6.
- <sup>9</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), vii.
- <sup>10</sup> FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 1–2.
- <sup>11</sup> JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, I-6.
- <sup>12</sup> JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, II-2 and II-3.
- <sup>13</sup> FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, Glossary-3.
- <sup>14</sup> FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 2-3.
- <sup>15</sup> FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 3-7.
- <sup>16</sup> JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, xi.
- <sup>17</sup> Mira Rapp-Hooper, *Shields of the Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 135.
- <sup>18</sup> Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Eric Schmitt, “Russia Exerts Growing Influence in Africa, Worrying Many in the West,” *New York Times*, 28 January 2020.
- <sup>19</sup> Department of the Army, ADP 1-0, *The Army*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 2019), iii.
- <sup>20</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 16 March 2018), 29.
- <sup>21</sup> *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning*, 13.
- <sup>22</sup> Pavel Polityuk and Anton Zverev, “Why Ukrainian forces gave up Crimea without a fight—and NATO is alert,” *Reuters*, 24 July 2017.
- <sup>23</sup> “Civil Affairs Operations: 2025 and Beyond,” white paper, version 1.0, U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence, October 2018, 1.

# Civil Affairs and Civil-Military Cooperation: A Hybrid Solution to Defeat Hybrid Threats

by Major Csaba Szabó, Hungarian Army, & Master Sergeant Robert Nicholson, USA

## Introduction

United States Army civil affairs (CA) and NATO civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) forces are key to countering or minimizing threats that hybrid warfare imposes, especially within the battle of influence to control the narrative. Among the issues hindering this contribution is the disparity between CA and CIMIC doctrines. Deployed and deployable U.S. troop formations, including CA, have a deficit of knowledge about the NATO Civil-Military Interaction (CMI) concept, CIMIC mandates to implement CMI, capabilities, and modus operandi in European NATO nations. Conversely, CIMIC staffs within NATO Force Structure and Command Structure also have a deficit of knowledge about U.S. CA policy, mandates, capabilities and modus operandi. The knowledge gap creates misunderstandings and stokes misconceptions between these two communities, hindering NATO unified action. There is a significant doctrinal and conceptual gap (i.e., mutual non-recognition) between CIMIC and CA. Discussion of their relevance to each other is not at all reflected within their highest doctrinal references, despite the overlaps in missions, capabilities and practical approaches—and their exceptional importance as forces of influence in great-power competition.

A synchronization project proposed by the NATO CIMIC Center of Excellence (CCoE) would serve as a way to improve collaboration between CA and CIMIC by developing a shared understanding of doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to better contribute to the NATO Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area concept. CA and CIMIC are required to perform this synchronization (or at least strive for it) when CA personnel arrive in the NATO area of responsibility (AoR). By that point, however, they have already lost precious time. During pre-mission training and mission preparation, in addition to just getting to know each other, CA and CIMIC should be sharing reports, contacts, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and mission and area analyses for the benefit of a collective wider perspective. It takes time to establish and build relationships and learn how best to collaborate, placing these forces at a considerable disadvantage when competing for influence. Having a common knowledge base of respective CA and CIMIC capabilities is paramount to strengthening NATO, improving the abilities to deter especially hybrid threat threats, achieve mission success and minimize duplication of efforts. Relationships and networks being critical, if not decisive, strategic and operational capital in competition, greater institutional and operational CA and CIMIC synchronization makes more sense than ever.

## Background

In order to bring in perspectives from both sides of the Atlantic, a seasoned Hungarian Army CIMIC officer, currently serving at the NATO CCoE and a senior CA NCO from the 21st Theater Sustainment Command Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS), G9, have authored this paper.

The initiator of the project is the NATO CCoE in The Hague, the Netherlands. The CCoE provides CIMIC with subject matter expertise to support both the transformational process and

operational requests of NATO as its main objectives. As a NATO-accredited CoE, it supports its seven sponsoring nations,<sup>1</sup> plus numerous contributing partners, NATO allies and customers, as directed by the CCoE coordinating committee. The CCoE establishes and sustains relationships and networks with civilian and military organizations to establish lines of consultation and cooperation. Meanwhile, it is nested in a wide-ranging comprehensive network that helps it to further develop and improve overall NATO CIMIC capability. It is also the custodian for NATO CIMIC doctrine and the department head for the training and education of NATO CIMIC. Given these roles, the CCoE places interoperability between CA and CIMIC high on its priority list. It has realized that CA and CIMIC collaboration is a vital component of long-term success in identifying and deterring malign influence and hybrid threats to NATO; it plans to ensure alignment of CA and CIMIC, capitalizing on existing synergies within them, led by the coauthor as the CCoE project officer.

The project officer is supported by a Soldier who serves at the 21st Theater Sustainment Command (TSC), a U.S. two-star logistics command based in Kaiserslautern, Germany. As the only division-level U.S. Army headquarters there, its several down-trace units include the 7th Mission Support Command (MSC). A U.S. Army Reserve one-star command, the 7th MSC has the 361st CA Brigade, with one CA battalion—the 457th. This forward-stationed CA capability exists outside of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), or USACAPOC(A), and is made up of CA officers and NCOs who live and work in multiple countries within Europe and elsewhere outside the continental U.S. (CONUS). One of the main missions for the 21st TSC is to “set the theater” to bring over CONUS-based units in support of exercises and operations in order to deter aggression against NATO. The 21st TSC G9 has been active across the U.S. European Command AoR in building and maintaining relationships with NATO allies and partners. CA teams (CATs) in support of *Operation Atlantic Resolve*, for instance, are utilized by the 21st TSC to achieve objectives by working closely with the host-nation CIMIC. This relationship has been extremely effective in building capacity and in demonstrating how CA and CIMIC can work in greater unison to achieve mission success.

CA and CIMIC have been working together; but, as with any relationship where cultures and norms are different or not fully understood, stereotypes and misinformation exist. Fortunately, there is a long history of cooperation between U.S. and NATO civil-military activities, not only in Europe, but also in Iraq, Afghanistan, the African continent and elsewhere. This shared history forms the basis of a better common understanding.

## **Rationale of the Synchronization Project**

In principle, NATO policy and doctrine serve as foundational references for allied interoperability within NATO. However, the military strength of nations within NATO is not equal. For example, the United States provides approximately 70 percent of NATO force capacities and capabilities. This means that U.S. forces in Europe would be the decisive combat power in defense against direct attack under Article 5. The geographic distance from Europe and competing U.S. commitments to non-NATO regional security interests, however, also results in less U.S. concern about aligning its national military policy and doctrine to that of NATO. This phenomenon occurs with other NATO Allies as well, but to a far lesser extent, as NATO doctrines are usually foundational for many of their own—including and especially CIMIC. This is particularly true for some newer NATO members, former Warsaw Pact countries that have rebuilt their military forces for conventional threats and are now facing hybrid warfare.

Because of this, the interoperability of U.S. forces with other allies matters, whether that means communications capabilities, fitting Lithuanian fuel nozzles onto an M1 Abrams tank,

and anything in between, such as understanding the differences and similarities between U.S. and NATO doctrine. When it comes to CA and CIMIC, doctrinal differences are significant, even though their civil considerations are practically the same.

While NATO doctrine comes secondary to the doctrines of individual allied nation's militaries, most do directly cite NATO CIMIC doctrine. U.S. CA is the one outlier. That said, CA and CIMIC are very similar in some ways, including that they provide commanders a better understanding of the civil component of the operational environment, allowing commanders to address civil factors that enable achievement of military objectives. Supporting this impetus, last year's *Civil Affairs Issue Papers* advised: "Fostering a learning organization both within and beyond military command structures and the CA Corps, including allies and counterpart civil-military organizations and JIM [joint, interorganizational and multinational] partners, must be a major CA force development goal."<sup>2</sup>

## Historical and Strategic Framing

As a reminder, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, as the cornerstone of NATO, states that an attack on one member of NATO is an attack on all its members. NATO has only invoked Article 5 once in its history—in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, to support the United States in defending its airspace. Between 1990 and 2014, NATO was focused mainly on non-Article 5 crisis response operations. At the same time, the civil defense capabilities of European NATO nations significantly deteriorated, military forces were restructured, funding was reallocated, defense plans lost validity and larger field exercises stopped taking place. Meanwhile, mission experience demonstrated the significant differences between CA and CIMIC lines of effort (LoEs), even while they were operating under the same command structures. A significant commonality was how both operated in failing or failed states outside of the NATO area, with non-existent or non-functional governments.

Since 2014, developments in the Euro-Atlantic security environment, especially the Russian annexation of Crimea that year, caused a sharp focus shift back to deterrence and defense. This included reexamining defense funding by European nations and increased deployments of U.S. forces on European territory. Newly-drafted Deterrence and Defense Plans have included measures like NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the Baltics and reinitiating large-scale field exercises, which means that U.S. forces—including CA—are interacting and cooperating again with European NATO countries with greater regularity, as during the Cold War. However, these partner countries are not failed or fragile states. U.S. forces have had to face some growing pains relearning this "new-old norm." The U.S. military, along with many allies and partners, has frequently served in conflict-torn regions, where it has easily dominated the battlespace. This is not the case now, as current allied military forces are operating in realms where they have functional authority and capability; U.S. planners have had to relearn, for example, how to obtain host-nation authorizations for movements under stringent Status of Forces Agreements rather than operating with relative independence.

These are constraints that European-based CA especially understands. Other than building relationships that can be quickly leveraged in crisis and competition, this kind of inside knowledge is among the many values-added of in-theater CA forces. Many attendees at the 2020 Civil Affairs Roundtable thought that U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) should reconsider its recent decision to disband the 361st CA Brigade—an Army Reserve CA command with longstanding experience and solid working relations with NATO CIMIC forces that also forms a sizeable portion of NATO's ready civil-military capability in-theater.<sup>3</sup>

CIMIC forces, of course, understand this as well; they operate almost entirely under NATO direction, even out-of-area. Like CA, they have limited authority to operate within their own home borders. Instead, civilian government organizations work with the civilian population while military has limited or non-existent authorities to operate in their own national territories, as in the United States. Under this paradigm, the military can assist only in support of specifically military exercises. Some of this is changing closer to the frontline with CA and CIMIC collaboration through joint public information operations, in coordination with civilian governments; similarly, this was done during the Cold War to inform the population of exercise impacts and to assist with messaging in support of NATO interests and objectives.

## **Hybrid Threats and Hybrid Warfare**

Starting in 2014, NATO has had to redirect focus on countering hybrid warfare in its own AoR rather than “out-of-area.” Hybrid warfare, although not new, works below the threshold of conventional war.<sup>4</sup> It is complex, and adaptive to culture, historical legacies, geography and available political, economic, informational and military means.<sup>5</sup> There is increasing evidence that “hybrid warriors” are waging war via the internet against civil society in the Western world, sowing societal divisions and promoting hyper-polarized politics.<sup>6</sup> The major lesson of warfare from the past two decades is that hybrid warfare focuses on population centers.<sup>7</sup> Its center of gravity are target civil societies. Ideal in countering this, CA and CIMIC are two very similar capabilities that operate within human domain, where they must assess and engage the same members of civil societies and establish robust and complex liaison networks. It is paramount, then, that CA and CIMIC synchronize operations so as not to risk what could be called “engagement fratricide.”

By 2020, NATO’s understanding of hybrid warfare became much richer. While these threats continue to evolve (for example, becoming more interconnected with illicit threats such as international criminal networks and working in gray areas within and between national societies), so too must NATO political-military, civil-military and information and influence capabilities. On a human level, CA and CIMIC enable improved navigation through the “fog of hybrid warfare” in efforts across the globe. As unique influence capabilities operating within these spaces, CA and CIMIC could help the alliance more effectively counter these near-existential challenges through more collaborative operations and employed narratives.

There exists an opportunity to create momentum through a robust synchronization at conceptual (policy and doctrine), training and education and academic levels. This institutional impetus should stimulate—or at least enable—the parallel synchronization of comparative CA-CIMIC advantages, building networked human capital and interorganizational learning and then sharing information to facilitate friendly dominance in influence. NATO can little afford to waste further resources; this could help tip the scales back in its favor.

## **The CCoE Takes the Initiative**

The CCoE has taken a mostly bottom-up approach in its U.S. CA and NATO CIMIC synchronization project; top-down procedures result in a long and arduous process. Given the realities of the emerging security environment and its impact on civil-military enterprises, the CCoE established a framework for CA and CIMIC capabilities to explore cooperation. In 2018, the CCoE Concepts, Interoperability and Capability (CIC) Branch initiated the CIMIC and CA synchronization project, which focuses on respective CA-CIMIC cross-familiarization to identify the similarities within the capabilities and exploit existing professional crosswalks in order

to enhance interoperability and civil-military mission effectiveness on the ground. Within the project frame, the CCoE has utilized a threefold approach to the conceptual, educational and academic LoEs assigned and pursued since then.

In the past, the lack of official institutional champions has impeded such a synchronization project at the strategic level on both sides of the Atlantic (specifically, at NATO/SHAPE J9 and the Civil Affairs Proponent at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, or USAJFKSWCS). The CCoE performance statement utilizes the NATO CIMIC familiarization course (NCFC) for identified NATO internal (e.g., U.S. CA) and external (partner nation) stakeholders, which in turn would lead to the development of a NATO requirement for synchronization. As a result of this request, the synchronization project would officially fall under the purview of the NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) J9 CIMIC Baseline Activities and Current Operations, nested in the synchronized approach with strategic partners in terms of interoperability. This would provide a champion on the NATO side. The hope is that this would prompt reciprocal movement at USAJFKSWCS to complement the CCoE's efforts in, for example, a CIMIC familiarization course for CA.

## **CA-CIMIC Collaborative Experience**

In recent decades, CIMIC has worked with CA on several NATO operations where civil-military activities overlapped, despite their differences in operational approaches or deployments schemes. These operations included time in Bosnia and Herzegovina (NATO Implementation and Stabilization Forces), Kosovo, Iraq (NATO Training Mission in Iraq) and Afghanistan.

A recent example of uncoordinated civil-military activities can be found in the ISAF Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Baghlan Province, Afghanistan. Among many issues, activities from this team resulted in a wasteful and counterproductive duplication of civil-military efforts. In the Hungarian PRT, a U.S. CA team (CAT) was under tactical control of the S-9 (CIMIC and PSYOPS, i.e., psychological operations). The CAT was actively involved in the S-9 CIMIC daily line of work and took part in planning and operations. The S-9 had knowledge of and effected some coordination of CA and CIMIC LoEs elements in Baghlan, which, from an interoperability perspective, was considered very progressive.

However, the CAT possessed a separate and independent operations budget, with no requirement to coordinate its activities with CIMIC partners. Compared with the rest of the PRT, this resource asymmetry proved problematic. Development of targeted civil-military projects in Baghlan was at first not at all coordinated, and only PRT-embedded CAT activities were eventually coordinated with PRT main LOEs, while those of other U.S. CA forces usually were not until after project implementation. This created issues in managing the perceptions and attitudes of the local population, resulting in overall operational effects that confused rather than positively influenced the same communities they worked in—i.e., “engagement fratricide.”

With the emerging hybrid threats in the Euro-Atlantic Area from Russia and their impact especially on eastern flank NATO Allies, NATO deployed battalion-sized eFP battle groups—with troop formations from Germany to Lithuania, from Canada to Latvia and from Great Britain to Estonia—to instill confidence among these frontier states as well as deter further Russian aggression. The United States also increased troop presence across Eastern European countries, from Poland to Bulgaria. In several locations, CATs operate mainly around areas where U.S. forces are based, transiting or exercising in order to mitigate issues that arise from military operations and so ensure minimal impacts on both the local population and on military requirements. In most of these countries, CA is operating by, with and through host-nation

CIMIC counterparts. This is the flashpoint for the necessity of training for each element, so that shared understanding can assist in pursuing common goals and achieving unified action.

These CATs have been actively establishing their civil-military networks; in most of the cases, their first point of entry has been respective national CIMIC units. CA support of exercises and military activities has stretched the scope of NATO military authorities in several countries, as host nations realize how CIMIC is important in presenting a positive image of their own military forces. CATs are active in exercise support as well as in training and education activities that are conducted with CIMIC units and in conjunction with the U.S. embassies within the countries. The USAREUR summer of 2019 series of exercises involving CA served as an example of how these exercises could serve as a solid baseline for deeper CA-CIMIC interaction in Europe than what previously occurred in NATO missions outside of Europe. While the initiative and its existing level of cooperation are promising, U.S.-NATO civil-military forces collaboration is not formally institutionalized; CA-CIMIC interoperability is not exploited to the level that it should be. Huge institutional and operational cooperation and coordination gaps still need bridging.

## How Do We Get There from Here?

U.S. CA is by far the largest civil-military cooperation capability in NATO. CA deploys globally to support a wide array of missions. An important part of those missions is within the European AoR, where CA is a vital contributor and an unavoidable actor when it comes to civil-military operations. These missions provide the opportunity for CA units to cooperate and collaborate with CIMIC operators mostly on a tactical level, but not exclusively. CA within U.S. Army doctrine structure is referred to as “the capability which operates within the human domain.” NATO CIMIC also claims to cover this domain. Some national CIMIC doctrines have even tried to look at adding CA doctrinal constructs within their CIMIC framework. Wording may differ between the doctrines, but many concepts are similar enough to require only a “translation” to enable greater interoperability.

If deploying CA forces can better understand what CIMIC is, and how they pursue similar objectives, this will go far to prevent duplicative, disjointed, and counterproductive efforts. By more conscientiously leveraging and synergizing their respective comparative advantages, they will produce more operationally and strategically impactful outcomes. CA, with its extensive institutional training capacities and vast deployment experience, can share best practices and assist in building partner CIMIC capacities, given uneven training and deployment experience among allied civil-military forces. The cross-pollination of institutional and operational capacities in both directions would be significantly mutually beneficial.

## Synchronization of Lines of Effort

**Concept Development.** NATO’s *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation*, AJP-3.19 (Edition A, Version 1. Nov 2018) does not at all mention CA.<sup>8</sup> Neither does U.S. Army Field Manual 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations* mention NATO CIMIC as a related capability or function.<sup>9</sup> Cross-referencing of the two capabilities does however exist in the tactical-level *CCoE CIMIC Handbook*; an entire chapter is dedicated to a discussion of CA.<sup>10</sup>

**Training and Education.** From 2016 to 2019, the CCoE CIC branch delegated a CIMIC subject matter expert (SME) and supported ten iterations of *Operation Sluss-Tiller*—the CA culmination exercise at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The CIC staff member was involved as an enhancement coach and observer, and moreover was the first international instructor to ever



assist within the CA Qualification Course. The NATO CIMIC training package developed by the CCoE Training and Education (T&E) and CIC branches were shared with USMC CA representatives in Iraq during the 2018 *Mosul Storm* operation to facilitate Iraqi Force CIMIC capacity building. The T&E branch conducted remote indirect support without overseeing the process. From 15–17 November 2019—based on the lessons identified, learned, collected and assessed by the CCoE Lessons Learned and Analysis branch and the official request from the 457th CA Battalion (U.S. Army Reserve)—a CCoE mobile training team conducted a pilot NATO CIMIC familiarization course (NCFC) in Grafenwöhr, Germany, for U.S. CA officers and NCOs. Its success sparked a demand for further refinement.

**Academics.** Another priority is having cooperative relationships with civil and military institutions for institutional capitalization, including professional associations, CCoE CIC members have previously provided lectures about NATO CIMIC and taken part as panelists during Civil Affairs Association events, providing a special NATO/European perspective for the primarily U.S. CA stakeholders. On 7 April 2020, for the first time, the CCoE presented the CCoE and CIMIC-CA Synchronization Project at the virtual Association Roundtable. The CCoE Director presented the CCoE, its main objectives and its LoEs. He also discussed how interoperability and mission effectiveness benefit from an enhanced level of academic cooperation among major CA and CIMIC institutions and associated organizations.

## The Way Ahead

The CCoE strives for efficient and effective enhanced cooperation platforms. Next to the permanent exchange of subject matter expertise, mutual and continual participation in CA and CIMIC key events could contribute to promoting the synchronization project. For 2021, the NATO CIMIC Key Leader Conference (NCKLC) and Community of Interest Workshop (COIWS), planned to be held in Budapest, are the main venues for enhanced cooperation. Along with prospective key leader engagements at the NCKLC, a dedicated stand-alone syndicate is planned regarding U.S. CA NATO CIMIC synchronization.

Furthermore, two iterations of the enhanced NCFC are planned for execution in the United States in 2021. This will hopefully contribute to paving the path for increased levels of cooperation and collaboration. This continued execution and refinement of the course could institutionalize it as a standardized and accredited NCFC. Also, in 2021, the CCoE CIC branch plans to initiate a new edition of an academic book dedicated to the interoperability topic; it will include a robust discussion of CA-CIMIC synchronization.

## DOTMLPF-P Recommendations

Implementation of a robust synchronized civil-military capability would require several changes across doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and policy (DOTMLPF-P) spectrums. The areas most affected would be doctrine, organization and training; how do they need to change in both CIMIC and CA?

**Doctrine.** The two governing doctrines for CIMIC and CA do not cross-reference each another. Without synchronization on this level within the NATO structure, capabilities cannot be fully exercised. Rather, in pursuing different LOEs, their outcomes are at best discordant and at worst cancel each other out. The recommendation is therefore for existing doctrines to be aligned. Mutual doctrinal recognition at a minimum is paramount; the upcoming 2021 NCKLC and COIWS could be the platform to start the process. This is key to success going forward.

**Organization.** Together, the CCoE and the Civil Affairs Association are in a unique position to be main drivers behind synchronization; as facilitating partners, they are the logical choice to coordinate workshops, finance intellectual capitalization projects and develop relevant courses. The logical U.S. military institutional partner would be the CA proponent at USAJFKSWCS. Appropriate alignment of these entities could power the synchronization effort, eventually leading to enhanced interoperability. The U.S., however, is currently not among the CCoE sponsoring nations, and there is no U.S. representation within the CCoE staff. The CA Corps needs to address this.

**Training.** U.S. CA has been, and continues to be, the biggest partner and contributor to the CCoE when it comes to providing instructors (as well as students) either for courses in-house or at satellite course iterations. The unfettered continuation of instructor and student exchange would contribute to institutional and even operational synchronization, but incoherently and at an unnecessarily lower return on investment. Existing CCoE courses, the CA Qualification course at Fort Bragg and the USMC CMO course could all be co-leveraged more conscientiously. Curriculum sharing needs to be discussed, determined and programmed, as does the sharing of best practices such as analysis and assessment procedures, TTPs, engagement with civilian actors, etc.

Without commonly accessible training and education solutions to utilize and build on the synchronized doctrine background, the existing gap between the two civil-military enterprises cannot be bridged. Coordinated and synchronized training and education solutions could contribute to a better understanding of respective capabilities and comparative advantages from the very beginning—before a deployment begins. And, once in the area of operations, CA and CIMIC units could execute their civil-military activities more cohesively to stay ahead of adversaries.

As mentioned, several iterations of the NCFC are planned for execution in the United States in 2021. Based on lessons learned and recommended adjustments, a standardized and NATO-accredited NCFC or NATO CIMIC awareness course should be built into the curriculum. Development of a familiarization course should assist CIMIC professionals with the same understanding of CA. Understanding current doctrine and working to combine elements is what will build the foundation for better overall mission success. The planned CCoE CA-CIMIC courses for 2021 form a promising start, but more is needed.

**Leadership.** The CCoE director is engaging with key leaders of CA institutions in order to reenergize instructor exchanges such as the addition of a CA officer and a senior NCO to the full-time staff at the CCoE. This process could provide regular institutional dialogue, resulting in a more cohesive operational partnering.

**Policy.** Having official champions of a synchronization project on a strategic level is imperative. Without the NATO/SHAPE ACOS J9—which is the requirement authority in the field of NATO CIMIC—and the CA proponent and T&E elements at USAJFKSWCS and Special Operations Center of Excellence, this project cannot gain needed traction. The CCoE CIC branch bottom-up approach has been successful enough to prompt considerable CA interest at unit levels, but not yet enough for institutional buy-in.

## Conclusion

Having a robustly synchronized civil-military enterprise for NATO that contains interoperable elements from CIMIC and CA at institutional levels will produce more adaptable and

effective civil-military capabilities for battles for influence in hybrid warfare, adaptable to every type of operation that NATO might face in the future. These collaborative capabilities would enable great success for NATO in its competition with adversaries and in its crisis response operation to be far more able to see, understand, engage and influence the main center of gravity of competition between the alliance and its adversaries, as well as for crisis response operations. Especially in engaging non-military actors in a more coordinated manner, better adjusted to host-nation constraints and situational demands, NATO-U.S. collaboration of civil-military activities on the ground would also help to enhance host-nation government responses and civilian resilience and preparedness in the face of hybrid and other threats. In these battles for influence, this would help provide consolidated and harmonized narratives in support of overall Alliance strategic communication activities as well as host-nation needs.

In the end, these synchronized assets should be able to provide an established, credible, standardized civil-military capability, instilling confidence and stability among friends with increased coherence and effectiveness—not only during NATO exercises, but during operational deployments as well. This is the right moment to pursue interoperability, to exploit synergies and to make these two vital transatlantic civil-military and information-related capabilities more relevant, visible and impactful. A hybrid solution to answer hybrid threats presents challenges in development, but, more than the rich legacy of interoperability that helped the NATO alliance to win the Cold War, it can revive NATO’s generationally-forged community of democratic values.



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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Sponsoring nations in NATO’s CCoE in 2020 are Denmark, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia. In 2021, Italy is becoming a sponsoring nation, while Denmark and Slovenia are ceasing sponsorship.
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- <sup>8</sup> NATO Allied Joint Publication 3.19, *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation*, ed. A, ver. 1. (NATO Standardization Office, 9 November 2018),
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# Civil Considerations in an Era of Great-Power Competition

by Lieutenant Colonel Diana J. Parzik, USA, & Major Michael Schwille, USA

In July 1983, the New Delhi-based *Patriot* newspaper ran an article: “AIDS may invade India: Mystery Disease Caused by U.S. Experiments.” According to the publication, U.S. scientists based out of Fort Detrick, Maryland, had weaponized a virus to kill African Americans and gay people.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, the story gained traction throughout Africa, and two East German biologists published scientific research proving that AIDS was developed in the United States. By 1987, U.S. news reporter Dan Rather featured the story on *CBS News*, reaching millions of American viewers. All of these stories were, in fact, the result of a years-long Russian disinformation campaign, popularly known as *Operation Infektion*; it was the first of its kind conducted at such a global scale.<sup>2</sup>

Through advancements in technology and wide-scale access to the internet and social media, the United States is significantly more vulnerable to foreign interference in the informational environment (IE) today than it was in 1987. The COVID-19 outbreak has only underscored the growing concerns of coordinated inauthentic activities in the IE and how great-power competitors are exploiting this space. China has been increasingly active in influence operations, adopting and updating Russia’s playbook.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps even more concerning is the possibility that both Russia and China are combining efforts in a coordinated systematic approach in an effort to erode democracies.<sup>4</sup> These predatory practices ultimately undermine U.S. global leadership and aim to reshape global world order.

While democratic backsliding and increased malign engagement in the IE is not exclusively a DoD problem to solve, civil affairs (CA) forces do have a role to play. There are three ways that the CA Corps can contribute. First, it must be prepared to expand its traditional capabilities and embrace a more complicated and contested IE. Second, it must aggressively advocate for a whole-of-society and whole-of-government process that leverages all elements of national power, to include information. Third, CA has a critical role in advancing the internal narrative as it relates to concept and doctrine development. The CA Corps needs to adapt to the information age to remain relevant. Without effectively moving into the information space, it risks further force structure and funding reductions as other, more information-focused capabilities emerge. As part of this third contribution, it needs to take a critical look at itself to determine how it can support a whole-of-government approach to counter foreign influence operations and to help maneuver commanders to compete in this space.

## The Informational Environment in Context

To put the IE in context, it is important to understand the scale of foreign influence operations; online manipulation is not limited to great-power competitors such as China, Russia and Iran. Additionally, India, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (among others) have co-opted sophisticated tactics to conduct foreign interference operations. Sovereign nations have increasingly engaged in this space on their own domestic audiences. Evidence of organized social media manipulation campaigns has been observed in at least 70 countries, with indicators that at least one political party or government agency has used social media to coerce public perceptions domestically.<sup>5</sup>

Online media manipulation has been a particularly attractive and enabling tool for oppressive regimes, giving rise to the “digital dictator.” The low barrier for entry into social media and internet platforms, which showed early promises during the Arab Spring revolution, is now being weaponized against citizens.<sup>6</sup> Authoritarian governments use computational propaganda as a tool to suppress fundamental human rights and control domestic civic spaces.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, China and Russia are leading the effort in exporting digital disinformation tools and technologies aimed at censorship and surveillance, making them the buyer of choice for authoritarian regimes.<sup>8</sup> This was highlighted in 2017 by Chinese president Xi Jinping, when he announced his desire to become a global “cyber superpower,” offering up China’s model of internet governance to foreign nations.<sup>9</sup>

Overall, freedom on the internet is in a state of global decline. Internet shutdowns are being used as a blunt instrument by regimes to interrupt the spread of disinformation online.<sup>10</sup> Restrictions to internet access are simultaneously used to quell dissent and voices of opposition. According to the nonprofit organization Access Now, in 2019 alone, there were 213 internet shutdowns across 33 countries globally. Disruptions to connectivity are continuing on a negative trend, with outages lasting for longer periods and targeting vulnerable populations.<sup>11</sup>

These exploitive practices are only the symptoms of a much graver problem. Information space cannot be viewed as distinct from its impact on global democracy. For the first time since 2001, there are more autocracies in the world than democratic nations, affecting over 35 percent of the world’s population.<sup>12</sup> Democratic backsliding has only been further exacerbated during COVID-19; in 89 countries, media freedom has come under attack.<sup>13</sup>

## **A Capabilities-Based Approach to Achieving Effects in the IE**

Through its proponent and major commands, the CA Corps needs to define required specific capabilities to operate more effectively in the IE. While the DoD is laser-focused on great-power competition, civil affairs must recognize that *strategic advantage over adversaries in the IE comes from democratic values and a continued advocacy for a free and open internet, freedom of speech, human rights and freedom of the press*. Increasingly, the U.S. military is likely to find itself in situations in which the cognitive “war” has already been won by its adversaries—before the United States even realizes that there is a conflict. Millions have either become the victims of oppressive regimes through Chinese exported technology or are manipulated by targeted state and foreign inauthentic coordinated activities. Consequently, CA must continually emphasize that democratic norms must remain fundamental to the DoD’s approach. As the U.S. military remains fixed on countering narratives, CA should be charged to effectively convey how the IE impacts civil societies, which it can draw from its wider interorganizational learning networks.

The CA Corps must improve its ability to collect, process and analyze information that represents civil components. It needs a better way to integrate civil considerations into operations and intelligence processes, and it must understand how to transfer that information to staffs and commanders in a way that ensures that those considerations are concretely represented. There are tools, databases and frameworks that can help the CA Corps to develop these new capabilities.

Some of these aids to development include advancing civil information management (CIM) capabilities to adopt a social network analysis approach that can identify key influencers in the IE. CA must also ensure that technology solutions are universal across the U.S. military and are able to interface with other existing relevant defense and interagency technology, such

as command and control of the IE (C2IE) and the GEC-Insights Quantified (GEC-IQ) data analytics platforms. In addition to enhancing CIM capabilities, CA should also consider how to be more impactful in on-the-ground civil-military engagements within the operations in the IE (OIE) missions set. For example, IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board) offers a “Learn 2 Discern Curriculum,” and Stonybrook offers a News Literacy Course pack, both aimed to improve media literacy. Could the CA Corps use these tools to overlay English-language training with aspects of media literacy? If the cultural thinking is shifted in these terms, the opportunities for CA are endless.

To close the knowledge gap, the CA Corps needs to improve its familiarization with current research and databases as they relate to civil considerations in the IE. For starters, the RAND Corporation has done a significant amount of work in identifying resources and tools that it can adopt to better assess the civil component as it relates to the IE.<sup>14</sup> Freedom House also provides an assessment of the level of internet freedom in 65 countries around the world. Through its annual “Freedom on the Net” report, it provides a comprehensive assessment of connectivity, blocking, filtering and users’ risk of incarceration or reprisal for online activity.<sup>15</sup> The Global Disinformation Index is in the process of developing a real-time database that identifies the probability of disinformation on specific media outlets.<sup>16</sup> In a more focused area, AidData tracks Chinese Confucius Institutes and media exchanges, and the Lowy Institute provides a Pacific Aid Map that captures information on Chinese communications projects in the Pacific region.<sup>17</sup>

Although the indicators are nascent, there has also been some work done in disinformation resilience. Such work has been done by the Eurasian States in Transition Research Center, which has developed a Disinformation Resilience Index that aims to assess vulnerabilities and preparedness to counter foreign disinformation across Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>18</sup> The resources are numerous. CA simply needs to find ways to invest in the research and adopt these tools into training and education programs.

In addition to assessing available tools and databases that can offer a more informed common operating picture of the IE as it relates to civil considerations, a CA approach to the preparation of the IE may also require reevaluating existing models to ensure that the correct tools are employed. Some examples are the area, structures, capabilities, organization, people, events-political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure (ASCOPE/PMESII) framework. ASCOPE/PMESII version 2.0 should not only dive much deeper into assessing what the information landscape looks like with a full media ecology; it should also be able to communicate how the adversaries are competing and influencing in both the IE and in other sectors relevant to civil society.

## **Connectivity with Interagency in the IE**

If the U.S. military ultimately decides that informational power is the key to leveraging OIE, then it must emphasize that the *I* (informational) in DIME is not exclusively a military operation; while military leaders might see the combination of diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME) capabilities as their particular instruments of national power, the information component must be shared. A “whole-of-society” or “whole-of-government” approach needs to be adopted. DoD cannot forget its interagency partners, or that CA has gained a wealth of knowledge over the last two decades both through experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and through lessons learned working in stability operations with interagency colleagues.

To gain a better understanding of interagency relationships in OIE, the DoD should draw upon its experiences drafting the 2018 *Stabilization Assistance Review* (SAR)—it is one of

the more ingenious interagency coordination efforts in recent times. Not only does the SAR provide a much-needed interagency definition for stabilization across three U.S. government agencies—DoD, the Department of State (DoS) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—but it also unequivocally outlines the roles and responsibilities for each of these entities as it relates to stabilization.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, by the time of the SAR’s inception, divergent concepts within DoD had already gained traction, initially directed by the 2005 DoD Instruction (DoDI) 3000.05, *Stability Operations*.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the SAR’s greatest obstacle in implementation has been breaking through well-established paradigms rooted in years of practice in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 13 previous years.

Unfortunately, the threats posed in the IE are imminent. To best achieve consolidated gains, such as stabilization, the DoD must also tackle OIE from a whole-of-government approach. That said, the strategic focus on great-power competition and divergence from stabilization has correlated with a shift away from interagency coordination; however, OIE by no means requires *less* attention to the interagency space. If anything, it requires more. There is a tremendous gap in the collective understanding of *how* and *who* within the U.S. government is currently working in the IE and *what* the interagency organizational framework should look like at various echelons within the military force structure.

The 2018 *National Defense Authorization Act* states that the purpose of the DoS Global Engagement Center (GEC) is to “direct, lead, synchronize, integrate, and coordinate efforts of the Federal Government to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts,” yet it remains up to the U.S. military to decide how to integrate interagency coordination efforts within the force. Furthermore, while the GEC may be technically in the lead in countering disinformation and propaganda, that does not preclude the U.S. military from engaging in this space. Rather, CA can and should build the relationships and connective tissue required to work with other governmental agencies, partners, allies and civil society.

Building upon lessons learned from stabilization operations and work at the interagency level, the CA Corps has much to offer as part of force modernization efforts to update internal force structure. It should also conduct a stakeholder analysis to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the breadth of interagency participants that are actively engaged in this space and could be better integrated into organizational structures. This includes the U.S. Agency for Global Media and the Department of Homeland Security, both of which are actively engaged in this space and could be better integrated with military organizational structures. In addition to the GEC, the Corps needs to gain a better understanding of interagency capabilities and needs to forge new relationships within the respective offices of DoS and USAID programming in this space; these offices could include the Bureau for Global Public Affairs within the DoS and the Center for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in USAID. The Corps should also set the foundation to drive the interagency language and promulgate cross-talk among various U.S. government agencies. Additionally, it should identify and leverage relevant government and collaboration platforms, such as Protected Internet Exchange, the GEC’s “Disinfocloud,” and the GEC-IQ, which was intentionally designed as a hub for interagency and international coordination.

## **Civilian Considerations in Concept and Doctrine Development**

CA must also champion the use of information in military plans, operations and activities. The DoD needs to get smarter about how it uses information to counter adversaries. Current



strategic guidance underscores that the civilian component should be fundamental to any understanding of the IE. The U.S. military is initially charged with making this direct correlation based on the direction provided by the 2017 *National Security Strategy*. Particularly relevant to CA are Pillar III, *Preserving Peace through Strength*, and Pillar IV, *Advancing American Influence*, which broadly outline how the U.S. government will address challenges posed in the IE.<sup>21</sup> Pillar III identifies “information statecraft” as a tool used by malign actors to exploit free societies and to intentionally target individuals through the use of disinformation and propaganda. It further states that “local voices are most compelling and effective in ideological competitions.” Under Pillar IV, the strategy advocates for the protection of a free and open internet that would enable interoperable communications to advance American influence globally.<sup>22</sup> The 2018 *U.S. National Cyber Strategy* further elaborates on a civil society–centric approach to countering malign foreign influence operations, emphasizing that the U.S. government must work with civil society to address authoritarianism censorship practices and to promote internet freedom.<sup>23</sup>

While engaging civil society is a core aspect of U.S. strategy, it has not been a focal point for the U.S. military in practice or concept. A considerable amount of energy has been devoted to the narratives that adversaries are propagating without enough attention being paid to better understanding how those narratives are affecting individuals and populations. This gap is easily apparent in current doctrine and concepts. For example, commonly used language such as “information warfare,” “informational power” and “informational dominance” are suggestive that OIE is only a military great-power competition endeavor. To highlight this, look at mandated Secretary of Defense operational security (OPSEC) training, in which journalists and protesters were, until recently, referred to as “adversaries.”<sup>24</sup> Noting that OPSEC is considered an information-related capability (IRC) only emphasizes how pervasive the misunderstanding has become.

OIE needs to consider civil society because it matters to military operations, and because it plays to one of CA’s core strengths—namely, that open access to information, rule of law, freedom of the press and other democratic values promote the American narrative and so counter authoritarian narratives. CA has a role to play because it can enable a shared understanding, particularly as it aims to be better integrated across all IRCs, to include psychological operations and public affairs. CA must recognize that the civil domain cannot be divorced from the IE. Manipulation and polarization of civil societies online can quickly move into the physical environment, leading to civil unrest and even violence.

Examples of this can be observed throughout 2019, which has widely been hailed as the “year of the street protester.” Hundreds of thousands of people participated globally in demonstrations, with social media serving as both a conduit for mobilization and a tool for suppression, such as happened in Hong Kong.<sup>25</sup> Myanmar’s military systematic use of Facebook in 2018 offers another case study in which the military exercised explicit intent to incite widespread murder, rape and forced migration of the Muslim Rohingya minority group.<sup>26</sup>

The CA Corps is well positioned to advocate for mainstreaming civil considerations and to advance the institutional thinking around the subject, especially as the U.S. Army builds upon the tenets of the MDO concept. This includes participation with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command’s Combined Arms Center, with the Centers of Excellence and with Army Futures Command throughout the concept development and doctrine updates. To start this process, the CA Corps must first examine itself and decide how it can best contribute to these efforts.

This includes posing a series of challenging questions aimed at better defining its role in the IE. Among others, these questions are:

- In an information-centric era, is “by, with and through” obsolete?
- How does CA work with non-governmental organizations in this space?
- What are the risk factors that make societies more or less susceptible to disinformation?
- What is the relationship between inauthentic social media campaigns and conflict? How are foreign online actors weaponizing ethnic grievances and hate speech?
- What do measures of effectiveness look like in the cognitive space?
- What concrete capabilities does CA uniquely bring to all of these questions?

Additionally, the CA Corps needs to advocate for the adoption of a vernacular that is inclusive of civil considerations, a vocabulary that not only accurately depicts what, for example, a “journalist” is or is not, but also one that acknowledges language such as “media integrity” and “internet freedom.”

Finally, while CA may be well placed to address civil considerations in the IE, there is still room for improvement. CA should aggressively explore additional training opportunities. Possibilities include using annual training to train-with-industry and conducting visits or leveraging virtual platforms to engage non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector—particularly NGOs and private sector organizations that are working in this space and encouraging participation in career broadening training, such as the Institute for Defense Business’s program in information operations (IO).<sup>27</sup> CA leaders should also consider having more of their personnel become IO-qualified and should support training opportunities provided by the 1st IO Command, through the Joint IO Planners Course (JIOPC) and by participation in information-focused table-top exercises or experiments.

CA should also advocate for the establishment of an IE consortium that fuses civil and military thought leadership. This consortium should draw on expertise not only from civil society, but also from like-minded allied partners, academia, the private sector and NGOs currently working in this space who can consequently better inform U.S. military research and leadership in this regard. CA should also broaden the pool from which it recruits, to include Silicon Valley and NGOs working the same spaces. Lastly, CA should set rank aside, drawing from and leveraging its tech-savvy junior reserve Soldiers who are currently operating in the private sector; CA needs to remind itself that this expertise does not currently exist anywhere else in the U.S. military.

## Conclusion

In a post-truth era, fighting a proclaimed “disinfodemic” in the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the future looks fairly unsettling as it relates to the IE. The advancements in technology and speed of communications far outpace the ability to effectively reorganize against them, both cognitively and physically, or to develop the necessary capabilities to effectively respond. CA must adapt to this new environment to maintain relevancy. It must develop new capabilities and embrace a more complicated world. It must also advocate for the use of informational power in a way that has yet to be used by DoD, while also pushing for a better defined and implemented whole-of-government effort to counter adversarial influence operations. To accomplish this, the CA Corps must lead efforts to update doctrine and press for concepts to better articulate how civil considerations impact the information environment. Addressing these concerns will help to align CA with the reality that the industrial age has transitioned to the information age.



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# Into the Gray Zone: Integration of Civil Affairs and Information Operations with Embassies

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## Introduction

As United States agencies transition to accomplish objectives set in the *National Security Strategy* (NSS), the Marine Corps has to adapt within joint, interorganizational and multinational (JIM) spheres to influence and accomplish objectives within the NSS and the *National Defense Strategy* (NDS). Information operations (IO) is one specific capability within the Marine Corps that has the potential to integrate with JIM aspects in support of the NSS and NDS. Joint Publication 3-12, *Cyberspace Operations*, states that “IO is not about ownership of individual capabilities but rather the use of those capabilities as force multipliers to create a desired effect.”<sup>1</sup> As an auxiliary function, the use of civil affairs (CA) creates myriad effects through joint interagency coordination, civil-military operations and key leader engagements. The question then becomes: How can IO planners integrate CA into JIM operations to create interoperability and U.S./partner nation (PN) advancement in gray zones? This paper introduces a conceptual framework to better posture the Marine Corps in these critical areas by leveraging largely extant capabilities and personnel.

Gray zones exist where there is persistent unrest and instability but an absence of a state of war; they pose a unique security conundrum to the United States and its allies and partners. Within these gray zones, JIM partnerships are the key to influencing the vote and setting the stage for long-term strategies. Sun Tzu states that “to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill,”<sup>2</sup> which holds true in the case of gray zones. This belief introduces an opportunity for IO and CA to take a lead role. Integration of Marine Corps IO and CA into U.S. embassies will facilitate sequestering U.S. partners from great-power competitors. Incorporating a hardened structure through the use of both Marine Corps active component (AC) and reserve component (RC) IO and CA Marines allows the Marine Corps to integrate into JIM operations. It simultaneously meets the objectives of the Commandant of the Marine Corps: to integrate RC units into the AC force. A well-integrated team of IO and CA at embassies paves the way for integration with multinational civil authorities. This provides a much-needed closure in the gap between the Marine Corps and JIM partners, further allowing the United States to deter antagonism and gain access to areas not otherwise obtainable.

## Operating in the Gray Zone: Ukraine and the Baltics

The operating environment faced by modern CA Marines rarely resembles conventional warfare. Instead, many of the most critical security challenges lie in the gray zone. Perhaps no contemporary security challenge better illustrates the concept of a gray zone than Vladimir Putin’s revanchist foreign policy on the eastern flank of NATO. The resurgence of Russian aggression since Putin came to power at the turn of the 21st century has represented a significant threat to the West. In an effort to increase Russian influence globally, Putin aims to create a safe

“buffer zone” of aligned or annexed nations around the homeland, establish a viable economic union as an alternative to the European Union (EU) and preserve traditional values from what he views as degenerate Western culture.<sup>3</sup>

Although Russia has seen significant economic and military growth since 2000, the nation is still neither prepared nor inclined to wage a conventional war with the West. Instead, Russia has pursued an aggressive agenda through an asymmetric approach that calls on the classic Soviet doctrine of *strategicheskoi maskirovka i dezinformatsiya* (strategic camouflage and disinformation), often abbreviated in the modern context as simply *maskirovka*.<sup>4</sup> Ever cautious to avoid a major conflict with Western powers, Putin’s *maskirovka* takes aim at Russia’s neighbors, such as Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine’s Donbas region, with a mix of deceptive political, military and economic actions. These actions are difficult for the United States and its allies to combat: their origin and nature are masked through deception; their intensity remains below the threshold required to galvanize Western political will to intervene decisively; and they take place in physical and cultural space historically dominated by Russian influence.

Examples of Russia’s multifaceted asymmetric approach in Ukraine include allusions to the Novorossiia ethnic and cultural ties between Russia and Ukraine.<sup>5</sup> This includes manipulation of energy resources such as electricity and natural gas, subsidization of pro-Russian media outlets, tampering with political processes to ensure the success of anti-EU politicians like Viktor Yanukovich and, finally, taking physical military action with “Little Green Men.” The Green Men—in truth Russian forces with identifying insignia removed—represented classic Russian disinformation; the ruse was eventually uncovered, but the initial ambiguity bought enough time and space by preventing decisive action by the West.

Russian efforts in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania bear resemblance to many of the cognitive and informational actions of the Ukraine conflict, but they stop just short of decisive physical engagement. Perhaps the most significant aggression was the April 2007 cyberattacks against Estonia. Stemming from a disagreement over the relocation of a Soviet-era grave marker, the Russian cyberattack crippled the websites of the Estonian president and parliament, numerous government agencies, three of the country’s six major news outlets and two of the largest banks.<sup>6</sup> The latent IO campaign against the Baltic states has been ongoing for years—it centers on the sizable ethnic Russian diaspora present in those three countries. Mostly remnants of the Soviet Union’s historical efforts to encourage ethnic Russian settlement in satellite states, today, the diaspora provides a continued pretense for Russian meddling in Baltic affairs. Whether viewed as impetus for closer Russo-Baltic relations or justification for Russian aggression, the existence of the diaspora nonetheless ensures Putin’s continued involvement in the cognitive makeup of the region.<sup>7</sup> Still, the admission of all three nations to both NATO and the EU in 2004 sent a clear message: the Baltic states are looking westward for their future economic and security needs.

In summary, Russia’s strategy of exploiting this gray zone has succeeded by reserving blunt military action as the tool of last resort in favor of operating nimbly in the information environment. Despite its critical role, CA is not the singular solution to this problem—nor is the U.S. military or the U.S. government. This complex transnational threat can only be met with a sophisticated JIM response. To be sure, development of the strategic approach to combating Russian aggression and similar threats elsewhere lies well above the level of CA planners. Still, CA Marines must recognize the reality of the complex information terrain they are operating in and organize themselves accordingly.

## Marine Corps Civil Affairs “Hits the JIM”

Marine Corps CA groups (CAGs) have a proven record of success supporting Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) operations. This success at the tactical level must continue going forward, but it will not be enough to keep pace with emerging threats. In order to compete in gray zones such as Ukraine and the Baltics, it is imperative that Marine Corps CA further develop the capacity to integrate in JIM settings. It does not have to reinvent the wheel to accomplish this. There are ready-made task-organized centers that excel at synchronizing joint and interagency efforts as well as coordinating U.S. efforts with international partners: U.S. embassies. Embassies can leverage their physical proximity to gray zones in a way that conventional military forces cannot.

A successful model for embassy integration and associated force structure exists in the U.S. Army. The Army’s civil-military support elements (CMSEs) are

“SOF CA teams who plan, coordinate, facilitate, manage and lead programs and projects that support U.S. and host-nation objectives under the Civil-Military Engagement Program.” This program allows global combatant commanders to deploy, with the approval and endorsement of U.S. Ambassadors, small SOF CA teams to U.S. Embassies to conduct operations that are concurrently beneficial to U.S. defense, diplomacy and development objectives.<sup>8</sup>

These CMSEs are ideally placed to “more directly support . . . a broader host-nation internal defense and development strategy through its support of the American Embassy, country team.”<sup>9</sup> CMSEs are staffed by active duty forces belonging to the special operations forces (SOF) community who specialize in conducting operations in denied and politically sensitive environments.<sup>10</sup> The majority of Army and Marine CA forces, however, are reserve personnel who primarily support conventional operations. The Army psychological operations (PSYOP) community is similarly aligned with active duty SOF personnel supporting special operations and embassy country teams through their military information support team (MIST) with a cadre of reservists in support of conventional operations.<sup>11</sup>

A side-by-side comparison of Army and Marine CA forces reveals a major gap: the Army’s reserve CA force, which supports conventional forces, is directly analogous to the Marine Corps’ CA force in that both are composed of reservists and serve in support of conventional forces. It follows, then, that the Army’s CMSE does not have a Marine Corps counterpart. This introduces an opportunity for Marine CA to create a similar team to operate in gray zones. The Marine Corps has neither the manpower nor the established SOF infrastructure to provide a robust team to every gray zone embassy in the world. Furthermore, the established CMSEs may rightly perceive such an effort as encroachment. Still, the Marine Corps cannot afford to completely cede this critical placement and access at the country team level. In order to properly represent Marine Corps equities and to offer valuable expeditionary resources to the country team, the Marine Corps CA community should seek to staff critical embassies with at least two officers who possess MAGTF experience and a CA background.

Providing this expertise to critical embassies, particularly in an active duty capacity, may pose a challenge for the three reserve CAGs, which are already heavily tasked and engaged. In order to address this gap and further integrate CA into broader Marine Corps operations in the information environment (OIE), the deputy commandant for information should consider directing the Marine Corps Information Operations Center (MCIOC) to educate and better integrate deployable officers with CA units in order to fill key embassy billets. As the three Marine

expeditionary force information groups continue to develop organic capacity to support their own tactical operations with OIE planners and PSYOP Marines, MCIOC has the opportunity to assume a more strategic role by deploying officers with CA and other information-related capability (IRC) knowledge to country teams. Similarly, reserve CAG officers with a desire to mobilize and broaden their OIE skillset should be encouraged to integrate with MCIOC for OIE training and experience in order to fill these critical billets.

By offering qualified OIE officers with knowledge of CA to select country teams, the Marine Corps can retain its capable tactical CA forces while leveraging a combination of active duty and reserve expertise to support broader U.S. efforts at joint, interorganizational and multinational levels.

## **Multinational Access through Conversations and Relationships**

Employing CA teams in embassies as part of the country team will create opportunities and build networks at the multinational level with host-nation governments, regional and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and many other key stakeholders. These CA teams would be read into the integrated country strategy (ICS) and lines of effort (LoEs) of the embassy they serve to ensure that they have immediate context.

There are numerous examples of Marine CA forces that deploy to an area and depart three to nine months later without having had a long-term impact at the operational level. Community relations events and humanitarian assistance projects may have left a positive long-term impression of the U.S. military on a group of citizens in a local area, but these are tactical-level wins that will not pierce the veil into operational impacts, which are critical when trying to get buy-in at the multinational level.

These actions are not focused on strategic implications during the planning phase. The common tasking from major commands and major subordinate commands to the tactical level is rarely specific enough to have operational- or strategic-level impacts. “Do great things and help people” or “counter Chinese/Russian influence” is not specific enough for these teams to make an impact. These taskings need to nest into a higher-level plan. Civil-military operations (CMO) can create natural opportunities for operational- or strategic-level discussions at the multinational level in gray zones and build from tactical effects to operational strategic effects.

In gray zones, deliberate planning and the utilization of CA forces can grant access to incorporate anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) through a network of approved helicopter landing zones or a ground logistics hub in a gray zone for future U.S. operations. CA Marines can begin the conversations to achieve these effects to support the geographic combatant commander (GCC) during the planning process. One such Marine Corps entity that could benefit from gray zone CMO is the Marine littoral regiment (MLR). The MLR can integrate into gray zones and execute expeditionary advanced base operations (EABO), thus creating an avenue for A2/AD.

CA and IO require synchronized efforts to ensure tactical-level tasks are nested with the ICS and LoEs from the embassy and match the GCC’s intent. The inverse is also true: for CA to be as relevant to a GCC, CA planners must ensure that their actions nest into the larger IO/joint all-domain operations (JADO) plan. CMO that is led by Marines who are integrated into a larger IO/JADO plan will naturally fit into more operations; it will be given more opportunities to execute a commander’s intent and have operational and strategic impact. Having a nested CA team at gray zone embassies is a primary solution to achieve this.



This is the core competency of IO planners—syncing IRC efforts to achieve effects that go beyond the tactical level. The solution is not as simple as putting a Marine and Army CA planner in the same room as the combatant commander’s IO officer, but neither is it far off from that. The day-to-day mechanics of CMO need not change much, but the direction of those operations could be clearer. A synchronization matrix that nests into strategic goals of the United States and other allied nations would ensure that CA Marines are doing the right thing at the right time with the right audience, thus creating effects that have long-term impacts at multinational levels.

## **Integration Priorities**

Working with JIM partners should not be the sole priority but rather a sequential element toward improved coordination between joint, interagency and intragovernmental actors. It is a prerequisite to better multinational results. Creating a single voice throughout the joint and interagency space provides a coordinated message with intergovernmental partners, thus leading to a synchronized message to multinational partners. To ensure CA unity and economy of effort in support of larger JIM-level influence operations, GCCs, with input from the embassies, can determine whether Army CMSEs or Marine IO and CA teams (or a mixture of both) are most appropriate to post with U.S. country teams in gray zones.

In today’s information environment, there is a deficiency in U.S. efforts in gray zones to achieve desired effects. The use of MCIOC to deploy CA and other IRC Marines to embassy country teams further allows the integration of Marine CA into JIM and creates a setting where coordination can occur at the joint and interagency level. Coordination with other services and other U.S. government agencies provide CA with the ability to plan execution of strategic objectives internally before working with intragovernmental and multinational partners.

Furthermore, the utilization of key locations in gray zones establishes a foothold for follow-on operations in a specific area of responsibility. For instance, the use of CA and other IRCs at the embassy in the Philippines or Vietnam would allow for coordination with intergovernmental agencies and multinational partners. This type of coordination would provide a direct effect with partner nations to provide access to the Marine Corps that would not otherwise be accessible. One of Marine CA’s objectives is to conduct CMO that includes communicating with the civil aspect of an OIE, such as coordination with local authorities who provide access to Marine Corps units.

Working within internal joint, interagency and intergovernmental frameworks requires unity of effort. Marine CA provides the conduit to plan within embassies and to execute with multinational partners, providing a holistic approach for Marine Corps integration in JIM. IO plays an integral role in providing desired effects through the use of IRCs, specifically CA.

## **Conclusion**

Integrating Marine Corps IO and CA into embassy teams to execute CMO in gray zones will ensure follow-on operations, which deter threats and prepare allies for further confrontation in the gray zones. Not only will this type of integration benefit the Marine Corps through increased JIM access, but it will likewise enhance JIM reach by incorporating a unique and capable service. Furthermore, the goal of establishing embassy integration is an eminently achievable one; at the same time, the Marine Corps need not recreate the wheel to achieve major progress in this area.

In terms of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and policy (DOTMLPF-P) solutions, the critical elements of training, education and personnel for CA, IO and international affairs programs already exist. With some creative solutions that bridge the active and reserve components of the Marine Corps, the service could achieve much greater impact in the JIM and therefore in gray zones.



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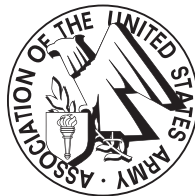
## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 27 November 2012).
- <sup>2</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Samuel B Griffith (trans.) (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 77.
- <sup>3</sup> Julian Lindley-French, “NATO: Countering Strategic Maskirovka,” *Canadian Defense and Foreign Affairs Institute*, May 2015.
- <sup>4</sup> Barton Whaley, *Stratagem: Deception and Surprise in War* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1969), 253.
- <sup>5</sup> “Lithuania Fears Russian Propaganda Is Prelude to Eventual Invasion,” derived from Czech Republic Open-Source Bulletin, 4 April 2017.
- <sup>6</sup> Ian Traynor, “Russia Accused of Unleashing Cyberwar to Disable Estonia,” *The Guardian*, 16 May 2007.
- <sup>7</sup> Traynor, “Russia Accused.”
- <sup>8</sup> Major Jeffrey S. Han and Major Brion D. Youtz, “Grains of Truth,” quoting Admiral Eric T. Olson statement, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, July–Sep 2012, <https://www.soc.mil/SWCS/SWmag/archive/SW2503/SW2503GrainsOfTruth.html>.
- <sup>9</sup> Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 17 April 2019), 2–30.
- <sup>10</sup> FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 2–30.
- <sup>11</sup> Andre J. Bibb, “Civil Reconnaissance Teams: The Expeditionary Arm of the Civil Affairs Forces,” *Small Wars Journal*, 3 October 2019.



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