Charting the Course for Civil Affairs in the New Normal

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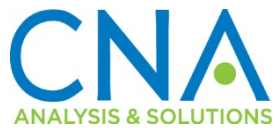
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Introduction

Civil affairs (CA) and civil-military operations (CMO) have been an important area of United States military operations for much of the nation's history. While the application and manifestation of CMO have changed over time, civil affairs personnel have always conducted activities aimed at coordinating integration between military and non-military instruments of power.[1] Such activities range from humanitarian assistance operations, to civil governance, to infrastructure improvements. U.S. joint doctrine defines CMO as follows:

> Civil Military Operations are the activities of a commander performed by designated civil affairs or other military forces that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relationships between military forces and indigenous populations and institutions (IPI), by directly supporting the attainment of objectives relating to the reestablishment or maintenance of stability within a region or host nation (HN).[2]

Civil-military operations are relevant at all levels—strategic, operational, and tactical—and across the range of military operations. CMO tasks include population and resource control, foreign humanitarian assistance, nation assistance, support to civil administration, and civil information management. Historically, members of the armed forces have taken on these and similar responsibilities with little to no training in CMO.[3] Today, the U.S. military maintains a cadre of forces dedicated to civil affairs. Those that are general purpose forces (GPF) reside primarily in the reserve component (RC) and can be found in largest numbers in the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps (USMC). However, the proponent for civil affairs is the United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM), and the Special

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[1] U.S. Joint Staff, *Civil Military Operations*, Joint Publication 3-57 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Staff, 2013), p. ix.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Kathleen Hicks and Christine Wormuth, *The Future of U.S. Civil Affairs Forces*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C., 2009), http://csis.org/files/publication/130409_Hicks_FutureCivilAffairs_Web.pdf, p. 2.

Operations Forces (SOF) community maintains an important and highly developed civil affairs capability, which primarily resides within the active component.

Civil affairs in U.S. history

Civil affairs has a long history in U.S. military operations. In early conflicts, such as the U.S.-Mexican War and American Civil War, military forces were at various points responsible for civil governance in areas over which they had gained control.[4] Military forces assumed similar responsibilities following the major conflicts of the 20th century (i.e., the two world wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts in Bosnia after Yugoslavia's dissolution, and Operation Desert Storm-Desert Shield). Other CA engagements in the Western Hemisphere, including those in Panama, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua, did not follow major combat operations, but instead were targeted at stabilizing populations, providing assistance, and deterring conflict.[5]

Nearly 15 years of experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) has further shaped civil affairs and CMO, expanding the responsibilities of CA personnel and the size of their force. For example, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) called for a 33 percent increase in size of civil affairs forces.[6] Their responsibilities in Iraq and Afghanistan included reconstruction efforts following major combat operations, helping reestablish rule of law in recently stabilized areas, and helping stand up civil governance. CA personnel worked with interagency partners to facilitate development projects and help build local governance to deliver essential services in preparation for handing full control back to the host nation government. Other independent civil affairs teams worked on similar projects, all aimed at the goal of bringing society back under the authority of civil leaders in a stable environment. All of these activities focused on stabilization and enabling civil authorities, or Phases 4 and 5 (respectively) of an operation.[7]

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] *Quadrennial Defense Review Report,* U.S. Department of Defense (Washington, D.C., 2006), http://www.defense.gov/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf, p. 5.

[7] The joint force uses a "joint phasing model" to describe the phases of an operation. These phases are as follows: Phase 0 – Shape; Phase 1 – Deter; Phase 2 – Seize Initiative; Phase 3 - Dominate; Phase 4 - Stabilize; Phase 5 – Enable Civil Authority. (U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Operations,* Joint Publication 3-0 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Staff, 2011), p. V-6.)

Civil affairs in the "New Normal"

Now that Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom have concluded, the United States is experiencing a significant shift in its role on the world stage. This shift will have important implications for civil affairs. As it emerges from these recent conflicts, the United States is looking toward a global environment that is very complex and characterized by persistent unrest, where conflict develops rapidly. Consequently, the United States' focus is shifting from large-scale combat and stability operations to low-level, persistent engagements aimed at deterring and managing this unrest.

The Department of Defense has termed these conditions the "New Normal." Strategists and practitioners alike characterize the New Normal as a period of instability, in which maintaining persistent engagement with partners and allies will be paramount in thwarting global, regional, and local conflicts, and in responding to crises as they arise. That means that the New Normal will require maintaining persistent presence in key countries and regions, which involves assuring friends and allies, investing in promising partnerships, appealing to "non-aligned" countries, and deterring adversaries in an effort to shape the global strategic environment.[8]

CA plays a role in conflict prevention and in addressing the root causes of conflict—both of which are key elements of U.S. foreign policy and of the *National Security Strategy*[9] that will be critical in the New Normal environment. As a community that is trained in understanding foreign cultures, socio-economic dynamics, and governance structures, CA forces are uniquely positioned to recognize and assess the "push" and "pull" factors[10] of violent conflict and instability. Further, CA forces deepen that

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[8] Eric Thompson, "Persistent Engagement for 21ˢᵗ Century Challenges," *War on the Rocks*, March 12, 2014.

[9] The 2015 *National Security Strategy* lists "Build Capacity to Prevent Conflict" as a key point in maintaining national security. It includes efforts to address the root causes of conflict, such as corruption, weak rule of law, and the lack of economic opportunity. (See *National Security Strategy,* Office of the President of the United States (Washington, D.C., 2015), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf, p. 10.)

[10] "Push" factors in violent extremism are socioeconomic, political, and cultural in nature. These include: a high level of social marginalization and fragmentation; poorly governed or ungoverned areas; government repression and human rights violations; cultural threat perceptions; and endemic corruption and elite impunity. "Pull" factors in violent extremism are factors that have direct influence on individual-level radicalization and recruitment. These are associated with the personal rewards which membership in a group or movement and participation in its activities may confer. Examples are access to material resources, social status, and the respect of peers; a sense of belonging; and the prospect of achieving fame. For

understanding by building and sustaining relationships with host nation and non-state partners, and proactively engaging in activities such as supporting local governance, education and employment programs, and elevating moderate voices in civil society through active engagement. Therefore, CA forces are uniquely positioned to help the U.S. military and civilian stakeholders prevent conflicts before they start.

Civil affairs is also relevant across Phases 2 and 3 of an operation. When conflicts do arise, CA forces blend with a crisis response or quick-reaction force (QRF) such as a SOF team or the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) special purpose Marine air-ground task force (SPMAGTF). CA forces can leverage the influence they have built in Phases 0 and 1 to help military forces seize the initiative and dominate, by coordinating efforts with local and national host nation personnel and authorities. CA forces are skilled in conducting these types of activities: often, they have developed critical networks within a host nation population, and thus have a wide reach that they can leverage in a crisis or contingency.

In responding to conflicts, the United States' preference will likely be to respond expeditiously, using a minimal footprint approach. The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance states, "Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low cost, and small footprint approaches to security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities."[11] A policy centered on a minimal footprint approach requires a judicious use of resources and the ability to maximize what is available in the absence of a robust forward-deployed presence.

As an economy of force, CA can implement the minimal footprint approach by deploying to semi- and non-permissive environments, and operating in places where traditional military and civilian agencies cannot.[12] As Christopher Holshek points out in the *Future of Civil Affairs Issue Papers,* civil affairs is a "low-tech solution to the low-tech problem" that "engages and collaborates with partners from all walks of life to prevent or mitigate large-scale deployments of general purpose forces for low or

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more information, see: U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice,* U.S. Agency for International Development Policy, September 2011, http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default /files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf.

[11] *Defense Strategic Guidance,* U.S. Department of Defense (Washington, D.C., 2012), http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf.

[12] Major Shafi Saiduddin, "Transforming CA into a Phase Zero Force," featured in the *2014-2015 Civil Affairs Issue Papers: The Future of Civil Affairs,* Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (U.S. Army War College Press, 2015).

high intensity combat operations."[13] By the very nature of working with the U.S. government (USG) interagency, host nations, and non-state partners, civil affairs forces can help strengthen interagency coordination when the threats and realities call for a minimal footprint operation.

The New Normal has already brought about notable changes in the DOD and its interagency partners as the USG develops a way forward in an uncertain environment. At the same time, civil affairs has been evolving as a capability that can address New Normal challenges more effectively. It will need to continue to evolve along with the increase in demand for Phase 0 operations with a minimal footprint. CA personnel have had valuable years of experience in counterinsurgencies, but now they must translate that expertise, which has been focused on Phases 4 and 5, to a new set of tasks aimed at maintaining influence and preventing conflict.

Purpose and organization

In this occasional paper, we describe the current state of the CA community, with an emphasis on the Navy and the Marine Corps, and provide thoughts on how CA personnel within the joint force can successfully evolve their capabilities to be effective in the New Normal environment. In the next section, we take a closer look at the CA capability in the Navy and Marine Corps, based on two recent CNA studies that explored both services' roles in conducting CMO. We then explore challenges for the joint CA force in the New Normal environment, with an examination of new requirements that the CA community will need to operate going forward. These include maintaining persistent presence, strengthening CA SOF-GPF interaction and interagency coordination, and assessing the impact of civil military operations in the New Normal environment. Finally, we conclude with some thoughts on how the CA community can position itself for success in the New Normal.

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[13] Christopher Holshek, Executive Summary, *2014-2015 Civil Affairs Issue Papers: The Future of Civil Affairs,* Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (U.S. Army War College Press, 2015).

A Closer Look: Civil Affairs in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps

CNA has recently examined the state of the CA community in both the Navy and the Marine Corps.[14] As we will see, the community has a very different trajectory in each of these services.

Civil affairs in the U.S. Navy

Until recently, the U.S. Navy maintained a CA capability in its Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training (MCAST) command. Personnel in MCAST were responsible for engaging civil components in maritime environments, with specialty areas that included port operations, harbor and channel maintenance, fisheries, and marine resources. As of 2009, MCAST had approximately 300 personnel, divided pretty evenly between active and reserve members.[15]

In 2014, the Navy formally disestablished MCAST with an announcement from the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), in which he cited "the assumption of command mission by other Department of Defense agencies."[16] In the wake of that decision, the Navy asked CNA to examine the unique maritime CA capabilities that the Navy had, and to archive lessons learned and courses of action in order to reconstitute CA capability if and when required by the Navy. The study's recommendations include

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[14] Although we focus on the Navy and Marine Corps in this paper, the U.S. Army maintains the largest cadre of military CA personnel. Its CA reservists are organized under U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) (USACAPOC(A)), and active-duty CA soldiers make up the 85th Civil Affairs Brigade. The U.S. Air Force does not maintain a CA capability. The other large group of CA personnel falls under U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). The 95th Civil Affairs Brigade is a SOF unit conducting more advanced CMO around the world with highly trained personnel.

[15] Marc Gordnier, "Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command: On the Front Lines of Maritime Security and Stability," briefing from commanding officer, 2013.

[16] Chief of Naval Operations, 13 Dec 2013, OPNAV Notice 5400, Subject: Disestablishment of Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command and Detachment, Virginia Beach, VA.

maintaining several potential courses of action (COAs), and, when needed, reconstituting the maritime civil affairs capability. CNA will examine and further refine these COAs in a follow-on study.

Civil affairs in the U.S. Marine Corps

Earlier this year, CNA produced a second study on the topic of civil affairs, *A Framework to Enable Civil Affairs and Civil-Military Operations at MARFORSOUTH.*[17] This study took a close look at U.S. Marine Forces-Southern Command (MARFORSOUTH) and its CA capabilities, and offered recommendations on how to better enable those capabilities in an area of responsibility (AOR) that sees significant CA activity focused on Phase 0, or shaping operations. Here we provide a closer look at the results of that study, focusing on issues that affect the larger Marine Corps CA community as CA personnel shift from reconstruction and stabilization efforts to shaping an environment and maintaining presence as a deterrent against conflict.

Most recent Marine Corps experience in conducting civil affairs operations has focused on the post-combat phases of an operation, when CA personnel work to maintain stability, enable governance, and facilitate the return or restoration of civil authority. Marines garnered this experience in the counterinsurgency environments in Iraq and Afghanistan, investing significant time and resources in honing their CA capabilities. In the wake of Operation Enduring Freedom, the Marine Corps and its DOD partners are adjusting to the New Normal environment. As part of these shifts, the USMC CA community must adapt as well, since its goals now center on prepping an environment, setting conditions, and establishing relationships, rather than on rebuilding and restoring. This process is gradual, and in our study for MARFORSOUTH we identified several areas where changes will be required in order to take an experienced CA cadre and reorient it to a focus on shaping operations. Issues that we identified in the study include the challenges of adapting a service capability that was built to support operations in Phases 4 and 5, the difficulties sourcing reservists for Phase 0 CA missions, an underdeveloped CA planning capability, and training limitations for CA personnel.

Service capabilities and structure

Over the past 15 years, the Marine Corps has built its CA structure around the need for a reconstruction and stability capability once major combat operations have

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[17] Vera Zakem and Emily Mushen, *A Framework for Improving Civil Affairs Operations at MARFORSOUTH*, Center for Naval Analyses, DRM-2015-U-009687-2Rev, March 2015.

ceased. The primary Marine Corps CA unit (where most CA personnel reside) is the Civil Affairs Group (CAG), and it comprises reservists. The number of CAGs increased from two to four over the course of OIF and OEF in order to meet the demand for CMO in those environments, but their focus remained on post-combat responsibilities. The Marine Corps also stood up and now maintains a small cadre of CA personnel in the active component (AC). They serve as the immediate CA capability for the Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) and can be deployed more quickly than their reservist partners. Reservists can then augment their ranks as required. The AC Marines are organized into civil affairs detachments that are attached to the MEFs.

The Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan (MCSCP) identifies the need to build experience in the CA community in pre-conflict or shaping operations, stating that the Marine Corps "must seek opportunities to integrate CA into SC [Security Cooperation] and other Phase 0 (Shape) and Phase 1 (Deter) activities across the ROMO [range of military operations]."[18] The policy document goes on to stress the importance of involving CA planners in planning activities and incorporating CA considerations in deliberate and crisis action planning processes.

As reservists, CAG personnel are not assigned to AC operational units; rather, they seek to establish habitual relationships with operational commands and regional areas in order to build tailored capabilities and expertise within the CAGs. As it stands today, the CAGs are informally aligned with the MEFs, which in turn are aligned with the geographic combatant commands. However, since these relationships are still developing, CA Marines have not yet had a real opportunity to build regional expertise and are often sent to disparate parts of the world on episodic missions.

Reserve issues

Most Marine Corps CA capability (over 75 percent) resides in the reserve component.[19] Therefore, institutional issues affecting the USMC reserves have a notable impact on civil affairs in the Marine Corps. Here we consider two primary issue areas: volunteerism among reservists, and timely sourcing of reservists for operations in Phase 0.

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[18] *U.S. Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan 2014-2022,* Annex G (DRAFT), p. 11.

[19] The active component of USMC CA maintains 202 billets, while the reserve component maintains 716 billets. (See Headquarters Marine Corps, "Civil Affairs Update brief," November 25, 2014.)

There are three primary authorities under Title X of the U.S. Code that allow for the activation of Marine Corps reservists. Marines activated for service in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom received their orders in accordance with Section 12301, which provides for the ordering of reservists to active duty in times of war or national emergency.[20] This activation is involuntary, and it is the type of activation to which most reservists have been accustomed for the past 14 years. However, as funding for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) has diminished, the Marine Corps has begun to activate reservists under Section 12302, which allows for the mobilization—in many cases, voluntary—of individuals (rather than units).[21] Volunteers for missions that focus on Phase 0 can be difficult to generate, since many CA Marines are fatigued after having completed multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, while others are meeting resistance from their employers in allowing them to participate in a voluntary mission.

Even after volunteers are secured, the Marine Corps has met subsequent challenges in getting those volunteers through the sourcing process in a timely manner. The delays can be especially problematic for shaping operations, because these CA Marines may not be integrated into planning for these operations until late in the pre-deployment workup cycle. Reservists have less time to integrate into the unit and to build a comprehensive and inclusive plan for conducting CA operations. Instead, they tend to be "tacked on" to a mission late in the planning process, with little structure in place to integrate them effectively.

Planning

The draft MCSCP Annex G states that "Marine Components and Operating Forces (OpFor) will include CA subject matter experts [SMEs] when planning for all military engagement missions."[22] Many individuals in the USMC civil affairs community have pointed to the advantages these SMEs afford in conducting CMO, including continuity from one mission to the next (particularly important when trying to maintain persistent presence), resident civil affairs expertise and advocacy within the

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[20] 10 U.S. Code Section 12301 – Reserve Components Generally, http://www.law.cornell.edu/ uscode/text/10/12301. Last accessed January 5, 2015.

[21] 10 U.S. Code Section 12302 – Ready Reserve, http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode /text/10/12302. Last accessed January 5, 2015.

[22] *U.S. Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan 2014-2022,* Annex G (DRAFT), p. 8.

command, and a point person for the integration of civil affairs with other information-related capabilities (IRCs).[23]

In its description of CMO in shaping operations, the draft Annex G identifies CA planners as "resident staff experts [who] must ensure [that] their input into the planning process supports the JFC's intent and operational concept." It continues, "[CA] planners should understand the national objectives of the operation and provide input into the planning process that supports the supported commander's intent and operational concept."[24] Unfortunately, resourcing constraints and lack of personnel often preclude the dedication of a full-time CA planner at many units and commands that engage in military engagement missions.

As described above, civil affairs is often represented and incorporated later in the planning process. Often this delay results from a tendency to treat civil affairs as an "a la carte" resource that is added to a mission selectively and without consistency. The impact of this inconsistency on shaping operations is especially significant because those operations are often well underway before a cohesive civil affairs component is identified and integrated into the planning process. Not only does that deprive the planning staff of civil affairs inputs, it also deprives CA personnel of the opportunity to build their knowledge and understanding of CMO as it is applied in shaping efforts.

Training

Formal civil affairs training in the Marine Corps is still a developing capability. The Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School (MCCMOS) was established in 2009, representing a significant step in building civil affairs capabilities for Marine Corps operations.[25] MCCMOS currently maintains three distinct programs of instruction (POIs): the CA Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) course,[26] the CMO Planners course, and the G-9 Staff course.[27] This progress is promising; however, the school is

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[23] Authors' telephone interview with Commanding General, MARFORRES/FHG, November 2014; authors' interviews with SWC/IWID and MCIOC, Quantico, VA, November 2014, and with MARFORSOUTH Plans and MARFORSOUTH CA Planner, Doral, FL, December 2014.

[24] *U.S. Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan 2014-2022,* Annex G (DRAFT), p. 12.

[25] Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School, "MCCMOS and USMC Civil Affairs Overview brief," October 2014.

[26] This course produces the officer 0530 and enlisted 0531 MOS. In the Marine Corps, Civil Affairs is a secondary MOS, making career progression in Civil Affairs difficult.

[27] Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School, "MCCMOS and USMC Civil Affairs Overview brief," October 2014.

still relatively new and it lacks advanced CA training. Most of the students completing courses at MCCMOS are from the active component. These active-duty Marines tend to be very junior; thus, it is difficult to build the capability to conduct advanced CMO.[28] With such a small cadre of active-duty civil affairs Marines, functional specialization is also challenging. Joint doctrine identifies six functional specialty areas for civil affairs: rule of law, economic stability, governance, public health and welfare, infrastructure, and public education and information.[29] However, active-duty Marines with a civil affairs MOS do not have the opportunity to specialize, because there are few of them and training opportunities are limited.[30] In the reserve component, Marine Corps doctrine identifies two functional specialty areas that civil affairs Marines should address: public health and welfare, and rule of law.[31] However, the Marine Corps typically does not train to these specialties; instead, it tries to recruit individuals who already have the necessary skill sets.

Many civil affairs stakeholders have emphasized the need for better cross-training between Marine Corps and Special Operations components as well.[32] As the proponent for civil affairs in the DOD, SOCOM maintains a great deal of experience and expertise in planning and conducting CMO, including operations in Phase 0. According to a SOF CA leader, giving Marines the opportunity to train with SOF civil affairs personnel is an important first step in enabling better coordination between SOF and GPF both in general and during a deployment.[33] It also affords civil affairs Marines the opportunity to benefit from training with CA personnel who have supported missions and matured capabilities related to conducting CMO in Phase 0.

IRC integration

Information-related capabilities (IRCs) are those "tools, techniques or activities that affect...the information environment."[34] They include civil affairs, military

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[28] Authors' interviews with MCCMOS and SWC/IWID, Quantico, VA, November 2014.

[29] JP 3-57, p. I-18.

[30] Ibid.

[31] U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Civil-Military Operations*, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.1 (Washington, D.C., 2003), p. 1-4.

[32] Authors' interviews with SWC/IWID, MCCMOS and MCIOC, Quantico, VA, November 2014; and MARFORSOUTH Public Affairs and Information Operations planners, Doral, FL, December 2014. Authors' telephone interview with 98th CA Battalion, November 2014.

[33] Authors' telephone interview with 98th CA Battalion, November 2014.

[34] U.S. Joint Staff, *Information Operations*, Joint Publication 3-13 (U.S. Joint Staff: Washington, D.C., 2014), p. x.

information support operations (MISO), military deception (MILDEC), and electronic warfare (EW). The integration of these capabilities is important in any operation, but especially in Phase 0 since many of the objectives in shaping operations depend on the effective use of IRCs. There is a general model for IRC integration that has proven effective in many operations. This model typically involves an established working group at a unit, command, or MAGTF that has an information operations (IO) planner (or potentially a CA planner) in the lead and includes representatives from the other IRCs. The working group serves as a planning function, working concurrently with the MAGTF planning staff and providing inputs as necessary.[35] Because of the inherent flexibility of the model, a working group can have a CA or an IO lead and can include as many participants as the commander and working group desire.[36]

Despite its advantages, the model's flexibility can also be a hindrance, since currently there is no institutional forcing function compelling IRC representatives to meet and coordinate. Instead, many CA or IO personnel are motivated to coordinate based on external factors, such as the advantages associated with resource sharing, rather than a recognized need for integration for its own sake. A lack of cross training can also hinder effective IRC integration if planners do not have a developed understanding of what each capability brings to an operation.

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[35] U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Civil-Military Operations*, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.1, UNDATED DRAFT UPDATE, p. 89.

[36] Ibid.

Challenges for Joint CA in the New Normal Environment

The issues identified in the Marine Corps CA community reflect broader challenges among civil affairs personnel across the U.S. military. The New Normal requires the employment of CA forces in different ways and in disparate locations. Missions have shifted from major combat operations to low-level, minimal footprint engagements designed to establish and maintain influence. The role of CA in these environments is both challenging and important. In Iraq and Afghanistan, CA personnel developed skills in helping a population reestablish an effective civil system. Now, translating those skills to the skills needed to help a population maintain pre-conflict stability will be challenging—but there is great opportunity for CA to develop into an essential New Normal capability.

New requirements for CA in the New Normal

Persistent presence

Civil affairs is an important component of U.S. efforts to establish persistent presence in key areas around the world. As a "strategic economy of force capability," CA has the potential to be instrumental in establishing influence to help prevent or deter conflict, and to do so at a comparably low cost.[37] However, there are challenges in achieving persistent presence: the ad hoc relationships between various CA players (USMC, USA, and SOF), the episodic nature of engagements in shaping operations, and the players' general lack of experience in conducting CMO in those types of operations.[38] Because missions depend on funding being available and because of the difficulties associated with sourcing reservists discussed above, it is

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[37] Hicks and Wormuth, *Future of U.S. Civil Affairs Forces*, p. x.

[38] Authors' interviews with MARFORSOUTH staff, Doral, FL, December 2014; analysis and review of briefings and after-action reports on MARFORSOUTH CA missions in Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala in 2013-2014.

difficult to predict when and where CA forces may need to be deployed. Civil affairs teams often do not return to the same areas and, if they do, they often do not engage the same partner nation military forces and civilian personnel. Additionally, the deploying CA personnel may not be familiar with previous efforts in their area of operations and often lack experience in conducting shaping operations. All of these factors, along with a number of challenges internal to the partner nations themselves (such as a lack of PN capability and capacity to conduct CMO),[39] make it difficult to establish persistent presence.

Strengthening CA SOF-GPF interaction

To facilitate CA engagement in the New Normal, CA GPF and SOF forces will need to enhance a climate of cooperation that is based on an agreed-upon understanding of command relationships, increased interaction through joint planning, information and intelligence sharing, training, pre-deployment exercises, and joint operations in theater. As the proponent for civil affairs, USSOCOM houses a great deal of expertise on CA, and the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) typically retains the lead in coordinating, planning, and executing CMO in a particular AO. To date, there have been limited examples of effective cooperation between SOF and GPF CA forces. In the New Normal, this coordination will be essential in developing a comprehensive strategy for shaping an environment. While the GPF and SOF perspectives and experiences may differ, their component commands should coordinate early in the planning process in order to seamlessly execute CMO in theater. Increased synchronization and joint planning working groups can facilitate this process.

Command relationships

Command relationships between the GPF and SOF CA communities can be contentious (as they are across the broader GPF and SOF communities). During operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, CA Marines coordinated and interacted with SOF based on an agreed-upon understanding of command relationships. However, these forces often do not reach a similar level of coordination in Phase 0 operations. Issues such as establishing who maintains operational control (OPCON) and tactical control (TACON) of CA forces conducting CMO are often highly debated in these environments. Disagreements on command relationships can stem from professional disagreements or from conflicting guidance among the various commands involved (or both). Personalities certainly play a role in establishing positive professional

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[39] Authors' interview with SOCSOUTH CA Branch. Homestead, FL, December 2014. In an interview with the SOCSOUTH CA branch chief, we learned that U.S. CA forces sent to train PN CA forces ended up training secretarial staff members, who were the only PN forces available to be trained in the AOR.

relationships between the SOF and GPF units and commands involved, and if joint or component commands issue conflicting guidance, the issue becomes even more complicated. For example, the Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 2000.13 on Civil Affairs states that USSOCOM "acts as the joint proponent for civil affairs with coordinating authority" and has the responsibility "to coordinate with Military Services and Combatant Commands in conducting CA operations."[40] However, there is debate over what "coordinating authority" actually means in practice and how much power it affords SOCOM over GPF CA personnel and activities. This lack of clarity can be especially detrimental in preparing for and executing Phase 0 operations, because it hinders the growth of a holistic shaping effort and instead can result in simultaneous efforts working toward different—and potentially conflicting—goals.

The joint task force example

Integrating CA SOF and GPF into a joint task force can be beneficial in enhancing a climate of cooperation and interaction, and can help these forces achieve CMO objectives. For example, in the 2014 Balikatan exercise,[41] CA Marines and III MEF integrated with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) 97th CA Battalion to form a combined joint civil military operations task force (CJCMOTF) in order to conduct CMO and train the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The CJCMOTF featured a fully integrated model between the services and CA SOF and GPF. The commanding officer was selected from the USMC's 3rd CAG, and elements of III MEF and the 97th CA Battalion were embedded into the CJCMOTF structure. This type of model greatly facilitated and increased CA SOF-GPF interaction, and complemented individual unique capabilities to conduct CMO. It may be difficult to emulate this level of cooperation in areas where SOF-GPF coordination is less common or where other hindrances exist. However, it is important to note lessons learned from integrated models such as the CJCMOTF for future operations, as these forces will likely interact frequently in the New Normal operating environment.

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[40] U.S. Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 2000.13 on Civil Affairs, March 11, 2014, http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/200013_2014_correction_b.pdf, last accessed January 12, 2015.

[41] Balikatan is an annual exercise involving the United States and its Philippine partners, which "increases regional militaries' ability to respond quickly and work together efficiently to provide relief and assistance in the event of natural disasters and other crises that threaten public safety and health." (U.S. Marine Forces, Pacific website, http://www.marforpac .marines.mil/Exercises/Balikatan.aspx.)

Interagency coordination

In order to prevent conflicts and address the root causes of instability in the New Normal, CA stakeholders will need to enhance and increase coordination with the U.S. government (USG) interagency. In particular, given CA's role in preventing conflict, building partner capacity, and conducting shaping operations, the coordination of CMO with agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Department of State (DoS) is paramount, both at service headquarters and in theater. Examples of this coordination already exist, especially where there is overlap in mission and program priorities. For example, the USAID Office of Civil Military Cooperation (CMC) hosts Army CA and USSOCOM officers to serve as part of a Special Operations Support Team (SOST) to enhance collaboration, coordination, and information sharing between the SOF CA community and USAID.[42] Through this liaison program, USSOCOM and Army CA personnel ensure that CMO efforts are contributing to conflict prevention. These activities will have an increasing role in the New Normal environment and will continue to be part of Phase 0 operations. However, institutionalized coordination between general purpose force CA personnel and civilian agencies such as USAID and DoS, which lead the USG interagency effort in conflict prevention, does not exist. Rather, coordination occurs primarily through the U.S. embassy's country team in theater when planning and conducting CMO in a particular area.

Assessing the impact and success of CMO in the New Normal

As the United States employs CA forces in the New Normal environment, it will be especially important—and especially challenging—to assess[43] the impact of CMO in a given area. Determining whether forces are succeeding has been particularly difficult in the irregular operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. A similar effort in the New Normal will likely be at least as challenging. Not only do the U.S. armed forces not have the same level of institutional experience with the New Normal environment, but also it is notoriously difficult to assess prevention and deterrence efforts. There will also be a large number of players involved in shaping operations, which will complicate assessment further. However, to demonstrate the value of civil affairs as

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[42] Authors' interview with USAID / CMC representative, 20 May 2015.

[43] The DoD uses the word "assess" when discussing the topic of examining progress on the ground. Other agencies, including the Department of State and USAID, use the term "evaluate." The two terms are essentially synonymous in this context.

a capability for the New Normal environment, it will be important to document and assess the impact of civil-military operations.

In order to ensure the successful assessment of CMO in the New Normal environment, CA personnel will need to incorporate assessment early and throughout the planning of CMO activities in a particular area of operations. After all, an assessment is only as useful as the plan it assesses. To facilitate this process, planners will need to be sure that the planning objectives for a particular CMO activity are actionable, clear, and assessable,[44] and are linked to the intermediate military objectives (IMOs) of a regional theater campaign plan, and broader U.S. foreign policy objectives as outlined by the DoS and USAID. CMO planners should ensure that the plan links specific tasks and activities to the desired objectives and end states. In addition, CMO planners must consider the evolving operating environment, the threat landscape, partner nation capabilities and authorities, and internal resources and capabilities.[45]

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[44] MORS Special Meeting: "Assessment of Multinational Operations: From Analysis to Doctrine and Policy," held 5-8 Nov. 2012, MacDill AFB, Florida. (See *Report on Proceedings,* p. 19.)

[45] Ralph Espach and Vera Zakem, *Guidelines for Conducting Military Assessments for U.S. Forces Southern Command,* Center for Naval Analyses, DQR-2014-U-007852-Final, June 2014.

Conclusion and Way Ahead

A great opportunity exists for U.S. military civil affairs capabilities to have an impact in the New Normal environment. As focus shifts from major combat operations to limited operations with a much smaller footprint, civil affairs must shift as well. Following years of extensive work in reconstruction, stabilization, and enabling of civil governance in the wake of high-intensity combat, CA personnel must work to translate that experience to a new environment in which their activities will help shape conditions to establish and maintain influence and deter conflict. This shift will involve taking on several challenges, including maintaining continuity in what are often episodic engagements, facilitating interaction between SOF and GPF CA forces, coordinating with interagency partners, and developing a process for assessing the impact of CMO in the New Normal.

For the thousands of Marines and soldiers who have spent years and gained significant experience in reconstruction and stabilization operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, conducting CMO in the New Normal necessitates a shift in mindset. Changes to training and education in the CA community and structural changes for CA forces can help facilitate this shift and grow an understanding of how to apply CA capabilities effectively in shaping, or Phase 0, operations. Activities such as theater security cooperation, building partner capacity, and, in some cases, even humanitarian assistance require a different application of current skills, while other activities require new skill sets altogether. Current training in GPF CA units still focuses on stabilization operations, although that model is changing. The SOF community, in contrast, has training in place that has a more highly developed focus on shaping operations. Therefore, drawing on or emulating elements of SOF training may provide a useful way forward to CA training among general purpose forces.

Like CA training, the structural organization of CA forces often reflects how those forces were employed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since most CA personnel were deploying to one (or both) of those theaters, there was less need to build expertise in other areas of the world. Today, we are seeing a shift in mission that may require a concurrent shift in how CA forces are focused and organized. Structuring the force in such a way that allows CA personnel to develop expertise in a geographic area may facilitate CA employment in the New Normal. Given the episodic nature of many shaping engagements, it will be challenging to build a working knowledge of local and regional dynamics in a particular area. Assigning CA forces to study and deploy to specific areas may help mitigate this obstacle. If individuals deploy to the same

areas repeatedly and are surrounded by others doing the same, there will be increased opportunity for knowledge building and sharing in the unit.

This shift in mindset extends to how the CA community interacts with its SOF and interagency partners as well. In order to achieve persistent presence with limited resources, the U.S. will need to effectively coordinate among all players involved in an area of operations. Robust mechanisms to enable such coordination are not yet in place, and issues such as disagreements over command relationships can hinder interaction as well. As institutional changes occur in order to enable the joint and interagency force to meet the challenges of the New Normal, CA personnel and their partners will also need to adapt the way they think about their roles in working together to achieve new objectives.

The New Normal brings significant challenges and promising opportunities to the civil affairs community within the U.S. armed forces. These service members and their partners across the USG will be on the front lines in extending and maintaining U.S. influence in key areas around the globe. With this responsibility comes a need for change and growth in the CA community, but also for an institutionalization of lessons learned in past experience. CA personnel have developed tremendous skills and knowledge in areas that will be vital in a rapidly evolving security environment. The ability to apply these skills toward new goals in concert with their partners will require significant change. But if they are successful at making these changes, CA forces will be able to continue supporting the sustainment of U.S. leadership and the achievement of U.S. objectives around the world.

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