Lessons for US Doctrine:

Challenges in Stabilization Operations

Graduate Policy Workshop Report

Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs

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Challenges in Stabilization Operations

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Photos in this report were sourced from the Flickr accounts of US AFRICOM, US CENTCOM, US PACOM, and JSOTF-P, as well as the personal photos of John Houston, Elizabeth Schultz, and Caitlin Tulloch.

About the WWS Graduate Policy Workshop

The Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University provides an opportunity for graduate students in the Master's in Public Affairs program to participate in a professional workshop during the second year of the degree. Led by Professor Ethan Kapstein and Professor Jacob Shapiro, eleven graduate students spent the fall semester of 2014 researching stabilization operations in a variety of contexts.

In addition to interacting with visiting speakers familiar with military stabilization operations, and economic and state development in fragile states, workshop members travelled to Djibouti, Germany, Kenya, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom. There, they conducted interviews with representatives from the militaries of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines, as well as government and non-government organizations in each of these locations. The purpose of field research was to understand the experiences of these organizations and individuals during recent stabilization operations, particularly in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, and Somalia. The workshop has collectively developed conclusions and recommendations based on our research, which are intended to inform civilian and military guidance for future stabilization operations. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the individuals or organizations who were interviewed, or the Woodrow Wilson School.

Executive Summary

In the past two decades, the armed forces of the United States have been increasingly given non-traditional mission sets, particularly in stabilization operations in fragile and conflict-affected states. From big footprint in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to smaller footprint operations in the Horn of Africa and the Philippines, these missions have necessitated that an organization designed primarily for projecting military force engage in nuanced operations with complex political goals. Moreover, they have at times resulted in military participation in traditionally development or humanitarian projects, whether directly or through partnership with government or non-governmental civilian agencies. The military is currently revising its Joint Publication 3-07, "Stabilization Operations," to include lessons from the experiences of the past decades.

In speaking with military personnel and civilians with on-the-ground experience, by far the greatest challenge in stabilization operations is the appropriate division of roles and responsibilities to achieve effective cooperation between military and civilian counterparts. Research suggests that the challenge of coordination manifests itself at many levels, from disagreements about the practicalities of a "whole of government approach" to redundant streams of funding which reduce the imperative for civil-military cooperation. Literature review and field visits to US forces in Djibouti, Germany, and the Philippines, as well as non-US stabilization teams in Kenya, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom, have yielded lessons on the key areas where difficulties arise and some potential structures and practices to mitigate these problems.

The key takeaway is that while coordination is crucial for making stabilization operations more effective, the theory of coordination is not being translated into practice, particularly in the design and planning phases of operations. While the military is the largest US government agency in conflict areas and often enjoys access to areas deemed unsafe for its civilian counterparts, military personnel lack the crucial contextual experience and technical knowledge to plan for the full set of stabilization activities. Moreover, large budgets and quick deployment times put military leadership in an agenda-setting position, and thus "coordination" with civilian counterparts often means either delegating activities to them or pursuing separate streams of work.

The military must be more strategic about how it coordinates with civilians to mitigate this problem, taking into account the resource and access constraints faced by government and non-government civilian actors. Civilian branches of the US government have well-known constraints on their resources and the timeline on which they can mobilize personnel and money. Forward planning while kinetic operations are still ongoing can enable civilian expertise and money to arrive when they are needed. Non-governmental civilian and humanitarian actors possess a number of unique strengths, but their goals often differ from those of the military even when some activities may appear the same. A better understanding of NGO actors can enable the military to find areas of common effort, particularly in the planning stages when civilian input is most useful.

In all of these efforts, a willingness to look beyond the type of coordination that the military prefers—rigid, hierarchical, personnel-intensive structures—to more flexible and relationship-based coordination can make it easier to engage with civilian counterparts. Particular attention should be paid to the assessment of the fundamental drivers of conflict. Performing needs analysis with key civilian partners can make the division of responsibilities and later coordination much simpler through the development of shared understanding.

The Whole of Government Approach

Stability operations are multi-faceted endeavors that require the application of a wide range of technical capabilities, from provision of citizen security to management of economic development projects. Successful US involvement must draw on skills and strengths from across the government's departments and agencies. Yet despite repeated efforts to formalize coordination mechanisms, interagency coordination is often vulnerable, especially in conflict- or crisis-affected areas where security concerns constrain civilian actors' mobility. The result—coordination that is restricted to higher, less operational levels—can cause inefficient and harmful lines of effort across agencies, in exactly the contexts where cooperation and unified US government interaction with the host nation is most needed.

Military and civilian guidance must strike a balance between describing ideal structures for civ-mil relationships and preparing commanders for the reality of interagency coordination. Practitioners often struggle to translate terms like "whole of government," "comprehensive approach," and "the 3Ds" into the specifics of planning and operations. This disconnect can lead commanders to be either overly dismissive or overly expectant of the benefits of a whole-of-government approach. While there are tensions between different models of coordination, trade-offs can be made to achieve more integrated action in stability operations and insecure environments.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Current definitions of whole-of-government and comprehensive approach allow for ambiguity of key terms, and effectively deprioritize unity of effort within the US government.

- Different departments and agencies of the US government are most comfortable with different types of coordination, which limits the success of some formal interagency coordination mechanisms.

- Highly insecure environments, where tours of duty are shortened and civilian mobility constrained, require greater attention and creativity to maintain interpersonal interagency coordination.

- Successful examples of coordination mechanisms take into account participants' constraints and make use of co-location or cross-embedding to provide stronger interpersonal relations that support formal coordination structures.

Key terms used to describe civilian and military interactions in stabilization operations are ambiguous, often hindering productive engagement between government actors.

In interviews, interagency stakeholders suggested that "whole-of-government" is too often used to mean "all of government, all of the time." Civilian agencies in particular, whose personnel are outnumbered by their military counterparts and struggling to meet the demand for personal engagement, acknowledged negative connotations of the term. Some also questioned the merit of including non-traditional foreign policy actors, rather than relying on the relevant technical experts within USAID.

The 3Ds may be a narrower alternative that speaks specifically to existing military concepts like coordination among the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic agencies of the US government (DIME). Unity of purpose and unity of effort across the US government are more natural corollaries to military concepts command and control, and they reinforce the underlying goal of maximizing all tools of national power.

Short of changing approaches, military doctrine should seek to better emphasize whole-of-government as a deliberate and targeted, but still constant and collaborative, engagement of the specific US government stakeholders in a given situation.

The "comprehensive approach" is much less clearly defined in both the existing doctrine and by various US government actors we interviewed. While few still view USAID as an NGO, as was reported in the early years of Iraq and Afghanistan, the tendency to approach US government and host nation civilian government employees as if they were non-governmental organizations remains.

As a comparison, UK doctrine advocates an "integrated approach," conceptually similar to US doctrine's comprehensive approach. Yet this integrated approach is described and promoted by the co-owned Stabilisation Unit (see more below) and acts as a single conceptual framework, rather than one of many.

Within the US government, the lack of clear advocate for a common definition hinders the ability to institutionalize a similar concept. Military doctrine should be more direct in outlining the difference between US government and non-US government stakeholders, differences that are discussed in greater depth below.

> *"A whole-of-government approach is an approach that integrates the collaborative efforts of the departments and agencies of the USG to achieve unity of effort toward a shared goal."*
> *JP 3-07, I-18*

> *"A comprehensive approach is an approach that integrates the cooperative efforts of the departments and agencies of the USG, and to the extent possible, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, multinational partners, and private sector entities to achieve unity of effort toward a shared goal….unlike a whole-of-government approach that aims for true interagency integration toward those ends, a comprehensive approach requires a more nuanced, cooperative effort."*   *JP 3-07, I-19/20*

Different departments and agencies of the US government are most comfortable with different types of coordination, limiting the success of some formal interagency coordination mechanisms.

Stabilization operations rely so heavily on successful interagency coordination, and civ-mil coordination more broadly, that we believe the framing deserves particularly careful treatment in formal doctrine. There are a number of existing tools, forums, and structures used for stabilization operations, yet each vary in terms of structure, flexibility, and preference of government actors.

Military actors have a preference for command and control when coordinating with interagency partners –i.e. a formal structure with a rigid process. However, civilian agencies are often unable to participate in every stage from early planning to execution of stability operations due to the resource constraints and preferences described above. As a result, DoD often dominates the definition of the desired end state from the outset, especially in highly structured processes, even when they are formally participants in interagency mechanisms.
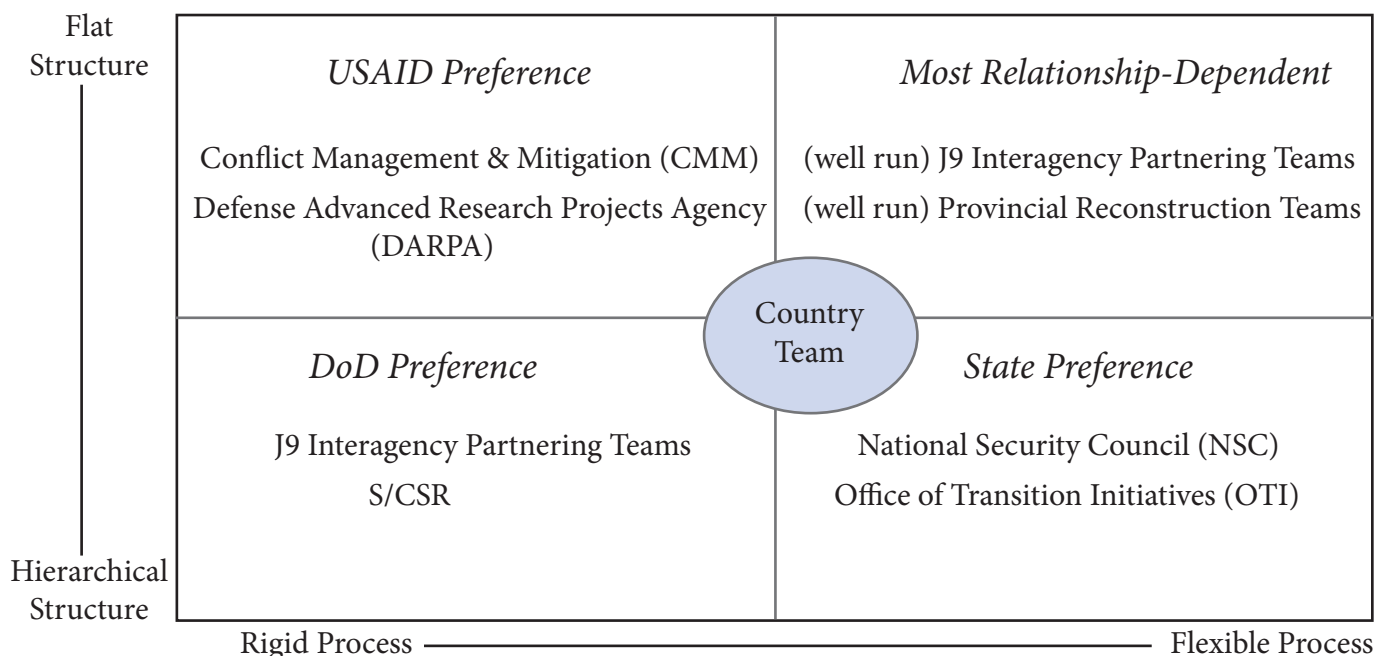
Recent attempts to provide better interagency coordination mechanisms, like the ICAF for assessment from CSO (formerly S/CRS), have met with varying degrees of acceptance—in part due to conflicting expectations for coordination. However, individuals across the agencies we interviewed agreed the Country Team most often serves as the de facto functional interagency coordination gateway. The Country Team is the main point of operational decision making for State and USAID, and is generally recognized as such by the range of US government personnel who were interviewed.

Other offices designed to facilitate faster interagency coordination (e.g. the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) at USAID) or more permanent points of contact (e.g. the J9 interagency partnering element at Combatant Commands (COCOMS) and Civil-Military Cooperation (CMC) at USAID) have enjoyed somewhat greater acceptance. However, it remains to be seen if they will retain buy-in following the current de-emphasis on large stabilization operations.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq and Afghanistan are a mixed example, both in the variety of structural arrangements used and the degree to

Figure 1. Preferred Type of Coordination Mechanism for US Government Actors

	Flat Structure		
	USAID Preference		*Most Relationship-Dependent*
	Conflict Management & Mitigation (CMM)		(well run) J9 Interagency Partnering Teams
	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)		(well run) Provincial Reconstruction Teams
Rigid Process	*DoD Preference*	Country Team	*State Preference*	Flexible Process
	J9 Interagency Partnering Teams		National Security Council (NSC)
	S/CSR		Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)
	Hierarchical Structure		

which flexible processes were allowed across different teams. Both military and civilian staff with extensive experience with PRTs emphasized their usefulness only when a high level of interpersonal cooperation between all interagency members existed. PRTs were thus a structure that could enable, but did not guarantee, successful US government coordination.

Current military doctrine emphasizes the top right corner of the matrix—interpersonal relationships—as a tool for overcoming practical coordination challenges during stabilization operations. However, interviewees throughout the US government emphasized again and again the need to initiate these relationships, even before more formal coordination and the start of operations.

Doctrine should frame successful, positive working relationships with the interagency as the ideal, rather than the fall back, with formal mechanisms of coordination as necessary but insufficient. In particular, military doctrine (and DoD in general) should be wary of demanding time-intensive, highly structured forms of coordination as the preferred method, especially if not otherwise mandated. Moreover, greater emphasis should be placed on the need to engage with civilian agencies in a strategic manner, at specific points in the planning cycle, in specific offices, and in less personnel-intensive formats.

Insecure environments require greater attention and creativity to maintain interpersonal interagency coordination, because they reduce tours of duty and constrain civilian mobility.

Especially in a post-Benghazi world, civilian diplomatic and development officers are restricted in their ability to access many physical areas essential to stabilization tasks. In addition, short tours for US government personnel limit the impact of interpersonal coordination even when done well. Both military and civilian officers face quick rotation into and out of hardship posts (six months in the case of Special Forces and an equally limiting one year for Foreign Service Officers).

Officers who are able to build quality formal and informal coordination with their counterparts still face unpredictable relationships with the next counterpart, in addition to challenges in handing over productive relationships to their own replacements. However, commanders should not be resigned to the absence of co-located, real-time civilian input in insecure areas and can overcome political restraints creatively. Current military doctrine recognizes the challenges of working with different levels of access in conflict environments, but could better harmonize requirements to coordinate by inserting extensive caveats in operational sections. It should place greater emphasis on overcoming restrictions to achieve civilian access and input. Further, doctrine should emphasize information and intelligence sharing, especially for civilian-led conflict analysis.

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Successful coordination mechanisms make use of co-location or cross-embedding to provide stronger interpersonal relations that support formal coordination structures.

The Country Team can be a gateway for the whole-of-government approach, especially in stabilization activities. The Country Team is a promising hub of interagency cooperation: as the default unit of operational planning for State and USAID, it provides a more even playing field between departments than a military-convened coordination body. The Country Team is already tasked with coordination of unity of effort, tasks, roles and responsibilities through existing mechanisms, staff, and relationships with the COCOMs. However, doctrine could more clearly emphasize the Country Team as the key nexus for joint State, DoD, and USAID planning and implementation during all phases.

Co-location and cross-embedding of personnel can also help facilitate US government interagency coordination and information sharing. Keeping in mind staffing restraints, existing areas of co-location (such as the Embassy, USAID/CMC, State/Foreign Policy Advisors (POLADs), and COCOMs) should be leveraged and built upon first and foremost. Such mechanisms allow for a better interagency understanding of organizations and cultures, translating to more realistic expectations among agencies that are expected to coordinate their planning and activities. Co-location and cross-embedding of personnel also help to mitigate the detrimental effects of limited civilian mobility in highly insecure environments and allow military personnel to more efficiently share information with their civilian counterparts.

MINDANAO WORKING GROUP - PHILIPPINES

The Mindanao Working Group (MWG) is an interagency body that plans, coordinates, monitors and assesses US engagement in Mindanao, Philippines, established under the leadership of former Ambassador Harry K. Thomas. It is composed of representatives across the US Mission, including State, USAID and DoD, and operates through the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P).

Co-location and cross-embedding have helped the MWG improve whole-of-government coordination. For example, the JSOTF-P deputy commander and J9 work in the US Embassy in Manila with MWG principals. Further, a JSOTF-P civil affairs officer permanently serves as a liaison to USAID. JSOTF-P personnel in Manila are co-located with representatives of the State, Department of Justice (DoJ), and Treasury, while members of the DoJ's International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) are co-located with JSOTF-P forces in several areas in Mindanao.

The MWG is also applying the whole of government approach through collaborative coordination and communication among the different agencies within the US Mission. As an example, JSOTF-P principals have weekly meetings with the ambassador and other senior US Mission officials. Consequently, members of the MWG across all levels meet weekly, updating and coordinating their respective tasks as they relate to common objectives.

UNITED KINGDOM'S STABILISATION UNIT

The UK's Stabilisation Unit is a possible model for coordination of roles and civil-military cooperation in stabilization operations. It is a unit co-owned by the UK Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Department for International Development.

The Stabilisation Unit functions as a broker between the three ministries to facilitate coordinated operational delivery in conflict-affected areas. It also manages a Civilian Stabilisation Group consisting of relevant experts who can be rapidly deployed to the field. Moreover, the Stabilisation Unit is charged with coordinating an "integrated approach" from the planning stages of activities, serving as the implementer and advocate of a unified theoretical approach.

The unit draws its staff from and reports to all three ministries, allowing for cross-pollination and the development of institutional memory of inter-ministry coordination. It is organized into four groups: 1) the capacity group, which assesses and develops civilian capacity requirements; 2) the lessons and planning group; 3) the operations group, which selects and deploys civilian experts; and 4) the security and justice group, which runs security and justice sector capacity building programs.

Objectives, Timelines, & Transitions

As mentioned above, stabilization operations require cooperation between US government military and civilian actors to a greater degree than many other types of operations. These actors bring with them different approaches to conflict and unique comparative advantages in promoting stability, which are important to understand to create effective coordination mechanisms.

Military and civilian actors generally have different objectives in a conflict zones, and have different end states as their goal. Moreover, military and civilian actors tend to operate on different timelines, and may have different entry and exit points in mind. Given these differences, sequencing lines of effort that include both military and civilian is a key area of friction, especially in contexts that require both civilian and military participation but that have limited unity of command.

We describe key tensions in these areas, then highlights lessons learned from recent conflicts that can guide better civil-military collaboration despite the inherent differences.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Defining objectives is unusually difficult in stabilization operations due to the variety of actors involved and the potential for trade-offs between short- and long-term goals.

- Civilian and military components of the US government are likely to have very different timelines for their own activities and for the achievement of their objectives, leading to friction in planning and executing joint lines of effort.

- Even after military objectives are achieved, the ability to transition to purely civilian lines of effort will depend on the capacity of the host nation and the status of civilian activities.

- The same types of mechanisms that enable coordination in the execution of operations can be used to promote a common understanding in defining objectives, setting realistic shared timelines, and facilitating transitions.

Defining objectives is unusually difficult in stabilization operations due to the variety of actors involved and the potential for trade-offs between short- and long-term goals.

In stabilization operations, where many actors are involved and many potentially competing objectives are put forward, it can be easy to lose sight of the military's primary goals and contributions. As the Joint Publication on Stabilization Operations states, "the elements of operational art are essential to identifying tasks and objectives that tie stability missions to achieving the desired end state." Effort expended on secondary objectives can hinder commanders' ability to achieve primary end-states.

The Department of Defense's Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO) in Afghanistan illustrates this tradeoff. TFBSO spent approximately $800 million across Afghanistan on development activities that the Government Accountability Office says are "often similar in nature to State and USAID efforts" and that the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) described as having "accomplished nothing." In order to survey and develop carbonite resources in Helmand, one of Afghanistan's most violent provinces, surveyors required a resource-intensive military escort for security, redirecting resources for citizen security.

Given that these secondary objectives yielded little benefit to core DoD objectives—based on appraisals by SIGAR and the Government Accountability Office—expenditure on this sort of development activity seems primarily to have been a distraction from core DoD objectives and lines of effort.

Military doctrine may wish to acknowledge that some objectives and end-states may simply not be achievable given the constraints of time, funding, and cooperation with other US government actors with different objectives. In cases where a more ambitious goal is desirable but probably unachievable, it is even more important to be clear about the military's objectives and priority lines of effort. Providing guidance on when a military objective should be changed, how to do so, and how to communicate that change to civilian agencies would be a useful area for further development in military and civilian guidance.

Objectives, timelines, and desired end-states may differ significantly between the United States and the host nation. These differences may be irreconcilable and may inhibit coordination between the United States and the host nation. Although our research did not yield any best practices for overcoming this specific challenge, recognizing that this inherent tension exists can still help commanders at all levels to prioritize across lines of effort.

Objectives of Stability Operation: *To achieve and maintain a workable political settlement among the elements of the HN society: competing elites, the various communities that make up the HN population, and HN government institutions*

End States: *The set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives*

Timelines: *The schedule by which actors within the theater plan to complete specific objectives or achieve set end-states*

Sequencing: *The order in which activities must be completed to achieve a given objective or end-state (e.g., shape-clear-hold-build)*

Transition: *An ongoing process—not simply a specific hand-off point—that shifts primary responsibility for a line of effort from military to civilian or host nation lead. Military action is instrumental to the ultimate goal of restoring control to civilian leaders of the host nation.*

Civilian and military components of the US government are likely to have very different timelines for their respective activities and for the achievement of objectives, leading to friction in planning and executing joint lines of effort.

While current military doctrine emphasizes the desirability of coordination between civilian and military actors in planning, design, and implementation of stabilization operations, differences in timelines can make this very difficult to achieve in practice. Civilian sequencing is often conceptualized as a cyclical and iterative process, compared to the military concept of linear phases, and may not move cleanly from one stage to the next. Economic development, for example, can often progress unevenly as growth is determined by a host of exogenous factors.

It is essential, therefore, to identify what objectives each stakeholder is capable of achieving, its plan to accomplish them, and what its timeline is. Based on that understanding, the Joint Forces Command (JFC) and staff, including a well-integrated J9 component in consultation with the Country Team, should deconflict and synchronize the military's lines of effort with the activities of other stakeholders.

Military and civilian efforts to improve the capacity of the Kandahar Power Utility exemplify how different timelines and failed sequence synchronization between DoD and civilian agencies leading to a suboptimal outcome. While the military stepped in quickly to provide diesel generators to provide power in Kanda-

har as a short-term solution, the longer-term solution was to increase the power generation capability of the Kandahar Power Utility through a series of USAID-led projects. The USAID projects to date have failed to deliver reliable energy production, however, creating continued reliance on diesel power generation and no plan for transitioning to a new power source when the diesel generators fail. When considering other actors' intentions and objectives, it is essential to consider when they plan to complete their objectives, and what external factors are likely to intervene and impede these timelines.

It is also worth noting that, while civilian development organizations may choose to synchronize some of their activities in support of the military commander's timeline, they also may choose to pursue their own objectives on their own schedule. From their perspective, the imperative of internal considerations can override the benefits of coordinating with the military. Recognizing where the military can work on a shared timescale with civilian development organizations toward common objectives, and when such coordination is simply unworkable, should be a focus of interagency and intergovernmental coordination and planning activities.

Even after military objectives are achieved, the ability to transition to purely civilian lines of effort will depend on the capacity of the host nation and the status of civilian activities.

In stability operations, two main transitions often take place: First, if military-led violence reduction efforts are effective, US civilian agencies step in to implement longer-term development activities. Second, power shifts from the US government as a whole to the host nation. The US government must achieve certain end states before US military forces can return to steady-state operations.

Typically, the end state of stability operations includes achieving sustainable host nation governance. Reaching this point, however, requires the US government to enable host nation capacity even in areas where the US is comparatively much more capable. This should be the case even where DoD has greater capability than both civilian agencies and host nation counterparts. Thus, the US government faces the daunting task of simultaneously empowering the host nation, completing operational objectives, and avoiding host nation dependency.

The experience of the Government of the Philippines in addressing the transition of a region under rebellion into one with a large measure of autonomy is illustrative of how challenging this balance can be, even when led by a sovereign nation inside its own territory. Southeastern Mindanao received a degree of autonomy from the Philippine government via plebiscite as part of the 1996 agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, however, was unable to maintain a level of governance satisfactory to its constituents because of weak regional institutions and because its leadership was experienced in fighting, not governing. As a result, a splinter rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) continued to fight against government control for nearly two decades, significantly delaying the effective transition from military control to civilian, autonomous rule.

Transitions do not represent a single point in time, but a process that must be engaged in at every stage of a stability operation. Ineffective or overly hasty transitions threaten to undermine long-term capacity-building efforts as well as the host nation's legitimacy if US or coalition forces must return to unilateral action after a failed transition. However, timing of transition is typically dictated by political factors outside the control of the military commander. Military doctrine could address this by emphasizing the importance of working closely with host nation actors at every stage of stability operations.

US participation in stability operations in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia provides a counterexample where more clearly defined objectives, roles, and missions created the conditions for relatively successful transition when compared to Afghanistan or Iraq. A recent USIP review of US, UN, and NATO operations in Kosovo since 1999 concluded that post-war transition there has been relatively more successful compared to Iraq and Afghanistan due to three factors:

1. Civilian authorities had primacy, with the military serving as enablers.

2. All stakeholders calibrated goals and objectives toward sustainability rather than short-term "success."

3. Military and civilian officials managed transitions at a careful, deliberate pace.

However, this example also illustrates that the timescale for successful stability operations may extend to 15 years or more.

Table 1. Key Tensions Between Short- and Long-Term Strengths and Weaknesses

	Short Term	Long Term
Department of Defense	**STRENGTHS** • Access to non-secured environments • Deterring and thwarting aggression • Contingency response **WEAKNESSES** • Lack of development expertise	**STRENGTHS** • Contingency planning • Infrastructure construction (Army Corps of Engineers) **WEAKNESSES** • Lack of development expertise • Perception of being an occupying force
Civilian Agencies	**STRENGTHS** • Development projects • Humanitarian assistance **WEAKNESSES** • Access to non-secured environments	**STRENGTHS** • Development expertise • Understanding of diplomatic and political conditions • Negotiating political settlements • Personal relationships with host nation officials **WEAKNESSES** • Access to non-secured environments • Contingency planning

The same types of mechanisms that enable coordination in the execution of operations can promote a common understanding in defining objectives, setting realistic shared timelines, and facilitating transitions.

Extensive Country Team Coordination: The US Embassy Country Team should serve as the locus of coordination for US government actors in the theater. Identifying entry points for coordination with other stakeholders outside the US government (e.g. U.N. NGOs, multilateral partners) will require additional time and effort. The effectiveness of informal coordination with these actors will be based on willingness to build personal relationships with members of the organizations.

Well-Ingegrated J-9 Staff Element: Within the joint force commander's staff, the J9 should serve as the central coordinating element for interagency activity. It is essential that the J9 include staff with extensive interagency experience, including dedicated representatives from as many relevant US government and non-US government organizations as possible. Ideally, these relationships will have already been developed at the Combatant Command level well in advance of the need to plan or execute a stability operation.

Fusion Cells or Interagency Hives: In the field at levels subordinate to the joint force command, a fusion cell or hive approach to interagency coordination may significantly improve coordination. The "interagency hive" approach, for example, has shown promise in the context of the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. In that instance, the key to successful coordination is staff co-location and robust communications architecture with all stakeholders. However, the inclusion of organizations outside the US government in a hive model may face hurdles due to a variety of philosophical misalignments (e.g. concerns over a loss of autonomy on the part of humanitarian relief organizations) and logistical concerns (e.g. security concerns related to co-location with non-US government actors).

Humanitarian & Development Groups

The desire for coordination with groups outside of the US government recognizes that humanitarian and development groups are key actors in conflict areas, and they can contribute to the "build" portion of the "clear, hold, build" paradigm. The magnitude of operations that such groups undertake clearly cannot be dismissed—in 2013, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) spent roughly US $100 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, employing thousands of staff in areas only minimally touched by government presence. But although these groups work in similar areas and undertake similar activities they often have fundamentally different goals than military stabilization actors.

These distinct goals drive many of their organizational features, including their priorities, timelines, and decision-making structures. Military doctrine should emphasize that differences in practices among humanitarian and development groups are not indicative of a failure to be as goal-oriented as the military, but stem from these organizations' legitimate need to focus on their core competencies and maintain their reputations for independence in conflict zones. This recognition will allow for more realistic assessment of whether coordination between military and humanitarian or development actors is likely to be successful or infeasible.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Humanitarian organizations are used to acting quickly and have greater rapid-reaction logistical capacity than many other civilian groups. However, their need for flexibility, adherence to their core mission, and political independence constrains their ability to partner closely with the military.

- Development organizations focus on changing a country's long-term economic and political trajectory, which predisposes them to operate on longer time frames and prioritize lines of effort that may not achieve concrete outcomes for many years.

- In engaging humanitarian and development actors, commanders should seek to understand why these actors choose to pursue activities that overlap with stabilization. Where it is not possible to find a humanitarian or development partner with compatible goals, the military should be extremely cautious about implementing these kinds of activities on its own.

- While it is always valuable for US military actors to pursue cooperation and coordination with humanitarian and development organizations, this coordination should be directed by the host nation government, in concert with civilian US government agencies.

Humanitarian organizations are used to acting quickly and have greater rapidly deployable logistical capacity than many other civilian groups, but their need for political independence and the primacy of meeting population needs above all other goals constrains their ability to partner closely with the military.

Humanitarian organizations focus on meeting immediate needs of populations affected by natural disasters or conflicts and might seem like natural partners for the military in stabilization operations. However, interviews suggested that both military and humanitarian actors have been frustrated by recent efforts to work together. This is because, while their activities might overlap, the objectives that motivate these activities may be quite different.

MSF, for example, states that its mission is "to provide assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict. Members undertake to respect their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic or religious powers." The mission statement itself references political independence as an organizational value, because the organization's mandate is to provide care to all people. Cooperation with government civilian or military actors could compromise their ability to deliver services in certain areas, undercutting their primary mission.

Independence is also a practical imperative for humanitarian organizations. To gain access to conflict zones that may be controlled by armed groups they must maintain their status as non-parties to the conflict (which provides them with "humanitarian space"). Even if work with the military might allow them to serve vulnerable populations in the short term, many of these organizations work in conflict-prone countries for decades and have a longer-term reputation to maintain than military forces.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), for instance, has been working in Afghanistan since the 1990s, and had to consider the cost to its long-term position in host communities when deciding whether to cooperate with US or Afghan government forces since the invasion. The IRC ultimately decided to partner with the Afghan government as an implementer of the National Solidarity Program, but an interviewee recounted that in the wake of this decision they became increasingly identified as agents of the government and attacks on IRC staff members increased dramatically. Many organizations we spoke with noted persistent debate regarding "shrinking humanitarian space" as the military undertakes relief activities in conflict zones.

Another result of focusing on immediate population needs as the overriding goal is that humanitarian organizations tend to be specialized in delivering one kind of service, and that they decentralize decisions about how to provide that service in each context.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, for instance, states that its mission is "to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering." It has a core competency, but national programs often have the freedom to determine what specific activities should be prioritized and how to manage those activities locally. This can also present problems for interactions with the military, which is accustomed to hierarchical decision-making bodies that can order subordinate groups to pursue certain goals, as discussed above.

Development organizations focus on changing a country's long-term economic and political trajectory, which predisposes them to operate on longer time frames and prioritize lines of effort that may not achieve concrete outcomes for many years.

Development assistance refers to programs focused on longer-term changes in the economic and political situation of a country or region. Oxfam, for example, states that its work is "rooted in a vision of a world where men and women are valued and treated equally, able to influence the decisions that affect their lives and meet their responsibilities as full citizens. Oxfam's 6 goals put local communities and the voices of poor people at the centre of change—our best hope for ending the injustice of poverty." Rather than simply focusing on meeting immediate needs such as food or medical care, development organizations seek to address the root causes that drive deprivation and conflict.

Because of this focus, development actors may actually know better than military actors what kinds of programs engender long-term stability in an area, a fact that could be better underscored in guidance for stabilization operations. Beyond simply emphasizing general cooperation with development actors, doctrine could place greater emphasis on incorporating their expertise while determining lines of effort. This may be especially important because of the short-term/long-term trade offs that many development activities present.

Commanders should be aware that many seemingly short-term or one-off projects permanently reassign the flow of resources to particular groups or individuals, undermining long-term economic gains. For example, building a road that leads to a large power broker's farm, rather than to a village with a larger number of small-scale farmers, could reinforce and perpetuate economic inequalities that drive conflict. Commanders should seek to leverage development actors' expertise in the planning stage, rather than asking them to coordinate only in the execution of military-determined activities that may or may not actually support long-term stability.

In many cases, the activities of development agencies might seem almost identical to lines of effort in a stabilization operation, but the different goals that the military and development groups hold for these activities can change the way that they execute these activities and create friction between potential partners. In Iraq, for example, commanders often spent Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funding to build local schools, an activity that development organizations also engage in. For military commanders, the goal of building schools was often to spend money to support local economies in the short term and address grievances of potential militants, thereby creating stability.

Development organizations, on the other hand, support school-building projects because educated populations are able to be more productive, improving prosperity when the current generation of students grows up, and hopefully reducing their incentives to fight in an insurgency. This subtle difference in goals can mean very different priorities in practice: the military may focus on maximizing outlays quickly, while a development organization may focus on the process

of creating an education system with local buy-in, an approach that will take much longer.

Non-governmental development organizations are also heavily shaped by their dependence on donor funds, for which they must compete with other development actors. Competition for a finite pool of funding means that development organizations have to continually justify the value of their activities in the face of proposed alternatives, and they face enormous incentives not to admit weaknesses or risks of pro-

posed activities. This can be especially problematic in a sector like stabilization, where there is relatively little rigorous evidence to suggest what kinds of development projects are more or less effective at reducing violence.

The imperative of seeking funding also means that the priorities of development organizations are at least partly defined by donor preferences, which may or may not correspond to what is needed in stabilization operations.

Table 2. Broad Differences Between Humanitarian & Development Organizations

	Humanitarian Organizations	**Development Organizations**
Command	Flat, ad-hoc, focused on core competencies (e.g. health, food aid)	More hierarchical, with more enduring organizational structures
Funding	Often funded by private donors, in response to publicized disasters or crises	Must engage in fundraising and "selling projects" to achieve funding
Timelines	Shorter timeline responding to crises and emergencies	Longer time-horizon and more forward looking concerning objectives
Coordination with Military	More likely in cases of natural disasters, less likely in conflict zones	Increasingly views military as a partner in stabilization operations

In engaging humanitarian and development actors, commanders should seek to understand why these actors choose to pursue activities that happen to overlap with stabilization. Where it is not possible to find a partner, the military should be extremely cautious about implementing these kinds of activities on its own.

There are also significant differences within the pool of humanitarian, or development, organizations, and in how these organizations will behave in different contexts. For example, some humanitarian groups may be willing to sacrifice perfect neutrality in order to gain access to the military's informational or logistical support, while other development organizations may emphasize shorter timelines than we have described here.

For instance, MSF recently decided to work with the US military in responding to the West African Ebola

crisis, because the crisis is not political and collaborating with the US military cannot be construed as violating political independence. Understanding the goals of counterpart NGOs, in addition to their lines of effort, should be included in assessments of the operational environment and will provide a means of identifying areas of potential overlap and collaboration.

In speaking to humanitarian and development organizations, we attempted to identify areas where they felt more or less amenable to coordinating with the

US military. Humanitarian organizations were particularly sensitive about timing their activities based on the rhythms of military operations (i.e. arriving in a village that the military had just pacified) due to the potential that the people they serve perceive them as subordinates to the military.

Such groups also expressed concerns that pursuing even their core activities under contract for the military or other US government agencies might force them to take political positions and prioritize certain areas or populations on the basis of expediency rather than need. There is significant distress at the overall loss of "humanitarian space," with aid workers targeted in conflicts regardless of their actual affiliation or proximity to military forces.

On the other hand, humanitarian and development actors were less averse to using military resources that would not visibly compromise their independence, such as supply chains or intelligence. Sharing of intelligence is one area where the military could cooperate more with humanitarian and development groups, learning from their knowledge of local context and

experience with promising approaches to support stability operations. Informal mechanisms for cooperation could allow these organizations to strengthen their ability to deliver the services they prioritize, without violating their core principles.

Finally, where it is not possible to find a humanitarian or development partner, the military should be extremely cautious about its own ability to implement development-type activities in conflict zones. While it is tempting to take on short-term "build" activities when non-military actors are unable or unwilling to do so, this can undermine future efforts to generate sustainable economic development.

Non-military interviewees reported that military projects, with incentives to spend large budgets in a short period of time, skewed expectations for longer-term development projects. For example, in a community where the military had distributed farming equipment without requiring a plan for its use, community leaders refused to participate in development projects that would require a wider participatory planning process.

While it is valuable for US military actors to pursue cooperation and coordination with NGOs, this coordination should ideally be directed by the host nation government, in concert with civilian US government agencies.

In stabilization operations that require a light external footprint, the host nation ideally would be the body responsible for coordinating activities, including defining cooperation between the US military and NGOs. The government of a sovereign nation should be the planner and arbiter of the activities conducted in its territory, not least because it should be preparing for this role when stabilization operations end (see *Objectives, Timelines, and Transitions*).

The Philippines Development Forum, for example, serves as an important mechanism for coordination between government actors and donors from a variety of governments and organizations. At meetings, government officials present their policies and projects, while donors learn, engage in discussions, and can choose to support programs that align with their priorities. Specific topics are covered in greater

depth in working groups that mirror the "clusters" in the President's cabinet. Donors are also permitted to engage directly in their own programmatic work, but participation in the Forum provides the opportunity to support government priorities. With the signing of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, a peace treaty that affects a large area of conflict in the south of the country, donors and the government participate in a working group specifically dedicated to the region.

However, the US is likely to become involved in stabilization operations with much weaker governments, including those incapable of planning and coordinating assistance. In these cases, there is a significant risk of permanent dependence on the part of the host nation government. Many interviewees told stories of host nation actors who were supposed to be full partners in coordinating stabilization operations,

but because of the ready availability of US resources and expertise they never fully took charge. To take full advantage of US government knowledge of the host nation's capabilities and interests, US efforts on humanitarian and development projects should be coordinated at the Country Team level. The Country Team should work together to gather input from external actors and, where possible, collaborate on lines of effort. US activities should also be directed towards building host nation capacity to assume the lead in humanitarian and development activities within its borders.

Funding Authorities & Resources
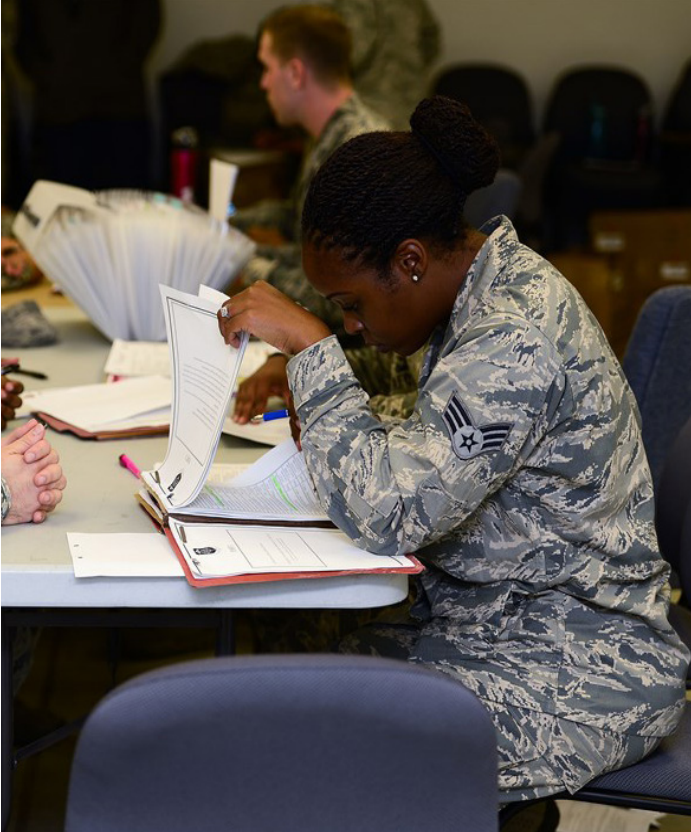
The complex problems found in fragile or conflict-affected states require comprehensive solutions that leverage the capabilities of a range of actors to achieve the desired end states. However, mismatched timelines, competing objectives, and differing assumptions about the drivers of conflict can complicate coordination between civilian and military US government actors. In addition to differences in access to conflict areas and development expertise, the comparative advantage of each actor is shaped by its agency's legal authorities and the timeline on which funds can be appropriated, obligated, and disbursed.

Planning and coordination must take into account both civilian and military agencies' funding and implementation timelines to allow for timely execution of stabilization and development activities. While it can be challenging, the advantages of coordination with civilians from day one are manifold: coordination mitigates the potential distortions from the military's short-term orientation and ensures that civilian expertise in development practice and local politics are used to the fullest extent possible.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- In the past ten years the US military has outnumbered and outspent civilian actors in stabilization efforts, giving them the de facto lead even in areas traditionally controlled by the Department of State or USAID.

- Because the military has acquired large funding authorities that parallel those under the State Department, the military has less incentive to coordinate with civilians in stabilization operations. This reduces unity of effort at both the planning and operational levels.

- Civilian agencies can best influence the implementation of stabilization activities if they are brought in early and given sufficient lead time to mobilize resources on their agencies' timeline.

- Given civilian expertise and comparative advantages for stabilization in the US government, it is preferable to focus on improving coordination capacity rather than attempting to build parallel development and humanitarian expertise within the military.

- Ideally, Congress would reform funding to correct for the imbalance in authorities, but in the absence of such changes military doctrine should clearly outline how the current funding structure can hamper unity of effort and reinforce the importance of working with civilians.

In the past ten years, the US military has outnumbered and outspent civilian actors in stabilization efforts, giving them the de facto lead even in areas traditionally controlled by the Department of State or USAID.

There are more than 3 million DoD employees, compared to just over 20,000 at State and USAID. In 2013, DoD spent 17.7 percent of total US government spending, as compared with 1.6 percent spent by State and USAID. After 2001, the size and number of US security assistance programs grew and authorities over these new funds changed DoD's share of overall US overseas development assistance, which rose from 3.5 percent in 1998 to almost 22 percent in 2005. Most of the new programs fall under DoD authorities, giving DoD the ability to implement programs that also fall under State's purview.

To a large extent, these new programs parallel and complicate existing authorities, muddling the roles and responsibilities of DoD, State, and USAID in stabilization operations without regard to the core competencies of each. For instance, Section 1206 gives DoD authority over money for train and equip programs in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is traditionally the State Department's role, while the CERP gives DoD authorities that traditionally fall under USAID's purview.

Table 3. New DoD Security Cooperation Programs, and State/USAID Parallels

Program	FY 2002-2008 DoD Total (in billions)	Parallel Traditional Programs
Train and Equip Funds for Afghan and Iraqi Forces	$28.8	FMF, IMET
Global Train and Equip: Section 1206 Authority	$0.5	FMF, IMET, PKO
Coalition Support Funds (reimbursements to coalition partners)	$6.6	FMF, IMET, PKO
Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP)	$3.7	USAID-OTI/OFDA and State MRA
Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP)	$0.1	IMET

(Source: Williams and Adam. "Strengthening Statecraft and Security: Reforming US Planning and Resource Allocation." MIT Security Studies Program, Occasional Paper. June 2008.)

Because the military has acquired large funding authorities that parallel those under the State Department, the military has less incentive to coordinate with civilians in stabilization operations, reducing unity of effort at both the planning and implementation levels.

The recent expansion of DoD funding authorities has dramatically increased military influence over the stabilization agenda. In some cases, this compromises real cooperation in stabilization. As one government official said in an interview: "In the absence of coherent planning, the biggest player dominates. The CIA and the military—their resources make them the frontrunners." In reference to interagency planning for crises, other civilian government employees have said, "The military is always there first with the options," and "they totally outnumber us." Once the military puts forward its plans, civilians must respond to an already-established agenda.

Even when coordination is legally required between two agencies, the disparity of resources between State and DoD can still result in greater influence on the part of the DoD. Disbursements under the Section 1206 train and equip DoD program, for instance, must be jointly approved by State and DoD. However, coordination of Section 1206 project approvals did not appear to take place consistently. Similarly, though the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) falls under State's authority, DoD may have greater influence over disbursement of those funds because it contributes the majority of GSCF funds. The authority through which DoD transfers its funds from one activity to another requires that the funds be transferred to a higher priority activity; activities that are high priority for the military may not be high priority for State.

Civilian agencies can influence the implementation of stabilization activities only if they are brought in at the right moments, and given sufficient lead time to mobilize resources on their agencies' timeline.

Lessons from civil-military dynamics within Afghanistan's Provincial Reconstruction Teams point to the ways in which capacity imbalance and the timeline of funding and authorities can affect coordination efforts. An Overseas Development Institute report has suggested that "civilians within PRTs had limited ability to influence military strategy; rather, they were more or less expected simply to implement it."

There are a number of reasons why civilian presence did not enable smooth coordination. First, the quality and number of civilians on PRTs often paled in comparison to the number of military personnel. US-led PRTs were largely military outfits; one estimate puts the average number of civilians at five to ten percent of PRT personnel. When PRTs were first set up, many civilian slots could not be filled and many only had one civilian representative.

In this context, USAID's funding decisions were constrained by congressional authorities and USAID contracting mechanisms. When opportunities to coordinate with the military emerged at the PRT level, USAID officers did not have authority to release funds immediately, and instead had to seek approval from decision-makers in Kabul. Military participants, in contrast, had significant discretion in funding decisions under CERP and could disburse funds immediately. The result was the pervasive military view that civilians were moving too slowly to be of value. The outnumbering of USAID representatives is not unique to the PRT structure: for instance, each CO-COM, with its several hundred military personnel, is generally tasked with no more than two USAID civilian advisors.

US-trained AMISOM forces in Somalia are now facing a similar conundrum. As the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops clear Somali territory of al-Shabaab, they begin to need civilian counterparts who can restore services and maintain order. However, because civilian contributors, both in civil-military cooperation components of troop contributing country armies and within the US government, were not mobilizing on-the-ground resources as offensives were underway, they have been unable to fill the gaps in a timely manner.

Given the presence of civilian expertise and resources for stabilization in the US government, it is preferable to focus on improving coordination capacity rather than attempting to build parallel development and humanitarian expertise within the military.

Coordination is crucial for improving the effectiveness of military stabilization operations, ensuring that civilians are ready throughout the operation, and ensuring that military projects minimally distort long-term development objectives. As the table illustrates, each of these US government agencies brings significant resources to stabilization operations. However, they do operate under different funding authorities and require different lengths of time to obligate resources and get people or projects on the ground.

Involving civilian agencies early in the planning process will ensure that subsequent congressional budget requests include resources sufficient to address the task, and that agencies are able to leverage the tools they possess to get resources available in a timely manner. For OTI, this may mean requesting external funds up to nine months before they expect to be needed on the ground. For the State Department, it may mean applying for Section 1207 funding early enough that it comes through in time to be useful. Anecdotes sug-

gest that the military is consistently quicker in mobilizing and disbursing funds—and implementing projects—than civilian agencies. However, we have found no empirical evidence that quantifies how much faster they move, and what, if any, temporal differences may exist within civilian USG agencies.

Table 4. Comparative Strengths, Weaknesses, and Resource Timelines for Stabilization Actors

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Funding & Staffing Timeline
US Military (DoD)	• Large human and financial resources • Quick mobilization • Ability to operate in insecure environments • Establish and enforce security • Building host-nation security forces • Works regionally	• Rapid staff turnover • Short-term time horizon • Limited development and local expertise • Authorities often limited to security sector reform, but are changing • Typically prohibited from providing assistance to internal security forces	• Annual appropriations under NDAA • Quick spending from commander's O&M budget • Quick, flexible spending from CERP, Section 1206 and GSCF, among other special annually renewable authorities
Dept. of State	• Focus on long-term strategic relationships and US national interests • Long-term relationships with host nation enable political engagement, knowledge of context • Lead agency for setting SSR policy under FAA and AECA • Title 22 Peacekeeping Operations Funds, with range of uses	• Small staff in country team, policy planning, and specialized bureaus • Security concerns—especially post-Benghazi—limits access to insecure areas • Annual appropriations cycle limits ability to respond to rapidly changing situations • Bilateral focus may impede regional coordination, response	• Annual appropriations • May receive DoD transfers under GSCF • Transfers to DoD under a number of FAA and AECA programs may be too slow to respond to immediate security concerns • CSO's Civilian Response Corps can deploy in 30 – 60 days
USAID	• Significant development expertise • Focus on large scale long-term impact • Long-term funding provides stability in project implementation • Projects are relatively insulated from political shifts in priorities • Long-time presence, relations with host nation, local knowledge	• Limited access in unstable environments • Budgeting, procurement and contracting may be too slow to respond to stabilization needs • Long-term focus may conflict with short-term stabilization needs	• Limited access in unstable environments • Budgeting, procurement and contracting may be too slow to respond to stabilization needs • Long-term focus may conflict with short-term stabilization needs • Programs are long-term, limiting scope for mid-course corrections • Planning is generally slow • Contracting and procurement may take up to 9 months

Ideally, Congress would reform funding to correct for the imbalance in authorities, but in the absence of such changes military doctrine should outline how the current funding structure can hamper unity of effort and reinforce the importance of working with civilians.

The current Joint Publication on Stabilization Operations describes coordination as a whole-of-government or comprehensive approach and notes differences in the capabilities and funding structures of some actors. However, it frames these differences as problems to be overcome through military solutions rather than challenges to address constructively alongside civilians. For instance, doctrine seems to over-emphasize the use of emergency military funds as a solution to any potential funding gaps that may arise as a result of differences in capabilities and funding structures. Additionally, guidelines for planning could better emphasize the value of civilian input in the planning stage, despite their funding and resource constraints, and provide concrete recommendations on when to involve them. This would be a departure from the current tone that emphasizes the lack of civilian capacity.

It is also ultimately in the military's interest to emphasize the importance of building up civilian capacity in stabilization operations so that civilians can serve as effective partners for the military. We suggest that mainstreaming consideration of the varying authorities, timelines, and capabilities of actors with whom it is imperative to partner may result in a more useful document that improves coordination for more effective stability operations and greater chance of success.

When discussing planning, doctrine could reflect the importance of giving civilian actors sufficient lead time to mobilize their own resources by recommending their inclusion in stability operations well in advance of when they would be expected to implement programs. The assessment stage could serve as a key entry point for civilian actors (see *Assessment and Evaluation*).

When discussing operations, military doctrine is quite nuanced in its recognition of the tensions that lie between the short-term stabilization objectives of the military and the long-term development objectives of civilians. It also urges implementers to be aware that the misuse of military development funds carries the risk of undermining long-term development objectives. However, the doctrine largely focuses on bringing many development activities in-house as a solution rather than leveraging existing civilian expertise. When civilian capacities are unable to meet the military's demand at both the planning and operational stages, funding authorities under Section 1207 could be used to bolster civilian presence and capacity.

If CERP-like funding is to be used in the future, we recommend a dual-key setup requiring joint approval from DoD and State. This is frequently used for deciding which programs to fund at the federal level, and can and should be replicated for use at the operational level to ensure that civilians maintain oversight and provide expert input on development projects in stabilization operations. This sort of civilian check is not unprecedented; in spring 2005, when Major General Jason Kamiya assumed command of combined Joint Task Force 76, he temporarily restricted the PRT commanders' authority to allocate CERP funds, requiring them to coordinate funding proposals with civilians.

This was seen as a change that "forced" coordination. of host nation actors who were supposed to be full partners in coordinating stabilization operations, but because of the ready availability of US resources and expertise they never fully took charge. To take full advantage of US government knowledge of the host nation's capabilities and interests, US efforts on humanitarian and development projects should be coordinated at the Country Team level. The Country Team should work together to gather input from external actors and, where possible, collaborate on lines of effort. US activities should also be directed towards building host nation capacity to assume the lead in humanitarian and development activities within its borders.

Evaluation & Assessment

As shown above, military and civilian actors face multiple misalignments that can constrain their ability to work together effectively in stabilization operations. Evaluation and assessment are functions that are important to institutional learning, but are often subordinated to more immediate concerns in an unstable environment. These functions may provide an important, early entry point for cooperation between military and civilian actors, both of whom can contribute to and benefit from assessment and evaluation.

Stabilization operations are designed and planned based on assumptions about the drivers of conflict, and the means of addressing those factors, but intuition often turns out to be flawed and monitoring and assessment fail to support necessary adjustments as events unfold. Without evidence of the drivers of conflict and the mechanisms through which stability can be achieved, it is difficult to reconcile the actors' different approaches.

To promote better understanding of the drivers and mitigators of conflict, doctrine should include more detailed information about theory of change frameworks and logic models, emphasize the benefits of well-planned, strategically timed, and collaborative assessment and data collection, and provide strategies for meeting the need for specialized evaluation expertise.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The actors involved in stabilization operations often have different assumptions about what drives conflict in the context in which they are working, and therefore about what activities should be prioritized.

- Evaluation and assessment are most helpful when they are used to test the "theory of change" or "logic model" of a particular program or activity.

- Obtaining quality information is especially difficult in conflict-affected or fragile states, and getting unbiased information is often particularly difficult for military personnel.

- There is relatively little rigorous evidence about whether programs such as job creation initiatives or community-driven development are actually effective at promoting stability and reducing conflict.

- Assessment is only as good at the decision-making it enables, so recommendations about assessment should explicitly support strategic data collection and continual re-examination of assumptions and best practices.

Needs Assessment identifies the nature and scope of a problem, including the people affected, and determines what outcomes a program should aim to achieve.

Process Evaluation, also called implementation assessment, analyzes the effectiveness of program implementation and service delivery. Process evaluations determine how effectively a program uses inputs to achieve desired outputs.

Impact Evaluation analyzes a program's effectiveness at achieving its target outcomes, and determines how large the impact of a program is relative to a situation where the program is not implemented. Rigorous impact evaluation should be used selectively because it can be costly and often requires expertise to be done well.

Cost-Benefit and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis use information from process and impact evaluations to quantify the costs and benefits of a program, and puts them into a format that allows comparison between different programs.

Evaluation and assessment are most helpful when they are used to test the "theory of change" or "logic model" that links a particular program or activity to reductions in poverty and violence.

A theory of change displays how program components like inputs, program activities, outputs and outcomes connect to each other, and can highlight the assumptions being made and external risk factors that could threaten the jump from one component level to the next. Below is a theory of change model for a community-driven development (CDD) program.

As the model shows, there are two main inputs to CDD programs—meetings to facilitate community decision-making, and funding for reconstruction projects that are directed by this community process. Together, these two inputs are expected to force communities to work through disagreements nonviolently, and to make reconstruction spending more responsive to the needs of the whole community, reducing poverty among marginalized social or ethnic groups.

Outlining a specific theory of change for stabilization-related activities can help military and civilian actors to articulate and refine their shared vision for a program, including the resources necessary, the probable time frames, and the risks at each stage. Failure to achieve the program's desired results could be due to a breakdown of assumptions at one or at several places along the theory of change. The part of the causal chain most difficult to identify is often the link between outputs to outcomes. This step is fraught with many assumptions that must be carefully followed up on after program implementation to see if the desired effect was in fact achieved. Civilian development experts can often contribute knowledge about the links between outputs from specific types of programs to the outcomes that lines of effort are trying to achieve.

Articulating the exact spots where breakdowns in the logic model might happen will help program administrators and policy makers tweak, change, or abandon programs depending on exactly what is not working. Military doctrine could more explicitly mention theory of change frameworks as best practices, including a description of how to use them to guide assessment priorities and evaluate underlying assumptions and operational success. We also recommend that the relevant Joint Publication highlight the benefits of collaborating with actors, particularly across the US government, with agencies that have the necessary development or sectoral experience to develop theories of change that are based on sound assumptions.

Figure 2. Theory of Change (Log Frame) Diagram for Community-Driven Development Programs
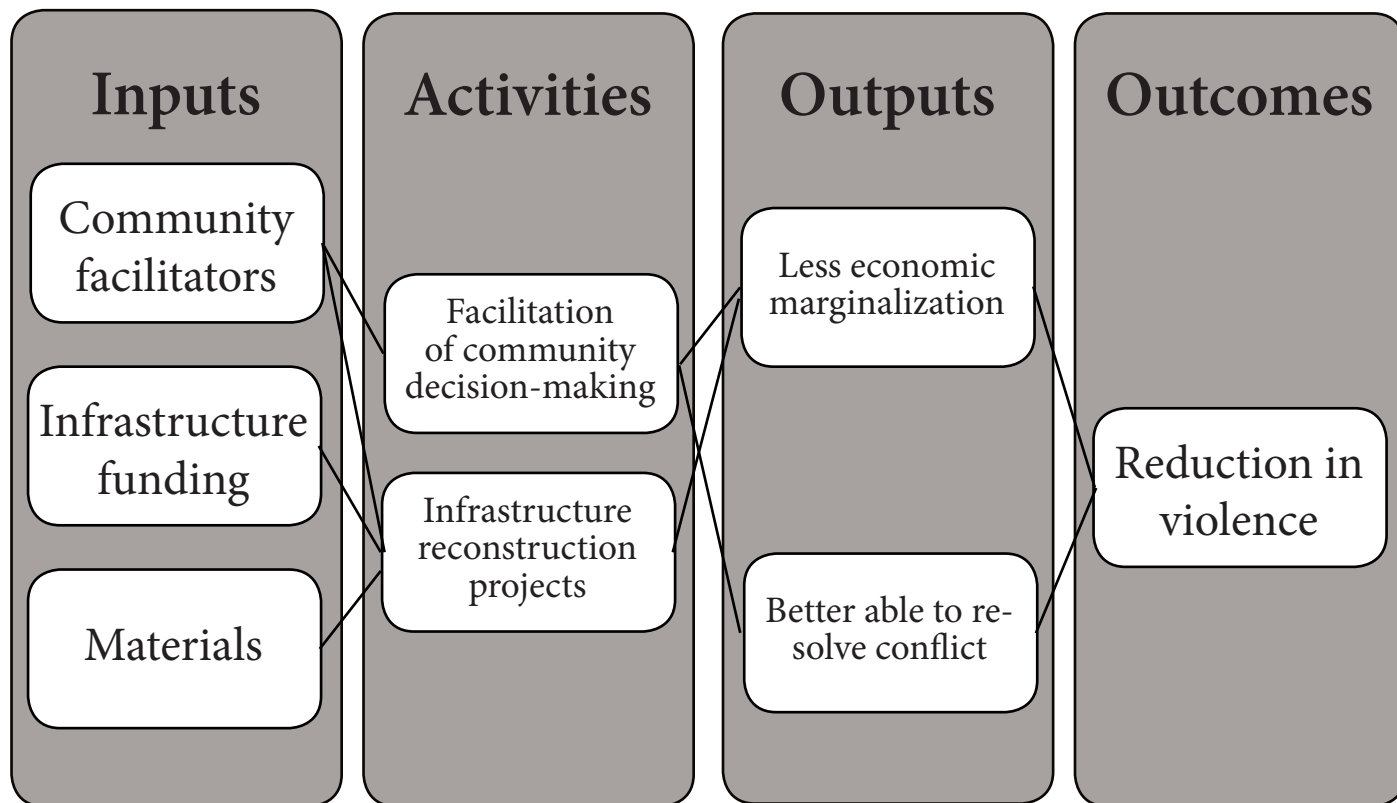
The actors involved in stabilization operations often have different assumptions about what drives conflict in the context in which they are working, and therefore about what activities should be prioritized.

Stability operations necessitate coordination between the US military, State Department, USAID, multilateral institutions, and NGOs. These actors have very different beliefs about the fundamental causes of conflict, and may prioritize different outcomes and end states, as discussed above. As a result, they may come to different conclusions about what lines of effort should be prioritized and how they should be executed.

Some of this tension can be resolved, or at least better understood, if actors begin coordination during needs assessment, rather than conducting their own assessment and coordinating only in the planning phase. Coordination during assessment ensures that all actors are basing their conclusions on the same data, and that they work off of common assumptions.

Even where actors do not reach the same conclusions, they will better understand each other's motivations. For instance, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa embeds foreign liaison officers from partner militaries directly in their Fusion Action Cells, which are the teams responsible for monitoring activities and nominating missions within focus countries. Incorporating liaison officers from the assessment stage ensures that the information and assumptions used in its analyses are consistent with those of its military partners in the region. While the FAC Hive model is still being tested, it provides an example of how mechanisms could be designed to increase coordination in the area of assessment, and facilitate smoother coordination in subsequent planning and execution of operations.

Obtaining quality information is especially difficult in conflict-affected or fragile states, and getting unbiased information is often particularly difficult for military personnel.

Collecting good data requires both expertise in data collection methods and access to the population. In many stability operations, no one actor is well positioned to conduct data collection. Military actors often have the best access to conflict-affected areas, but civilian agencies may have more experience with surveys or analyzing development problems. Military staff may also face particular challenges collecting survey data, because respondents are less open with military personnel and tell them only what they think soldiers want to hear.

British forces in Helmand, Afghanistan experienced this firsthand during the short time they used the Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework (TCAF) to assess local needs that could be addressed in order to improve stability. The TCAF required soldiers to survey people they met while on patrol about their communities' needs. However, in rural areas soldiers had to approach strangers in unfamiliar territory to conduct enough interviews to enable quantitative analysis, putting their security at risk. In addition, there was significant variation in how the interviews were conducted, and respondents sometimes just said what they thought the soldiers wanted to hear, rather than giving honest answers. As a result, the TCAF did not obtain reliable information about community needs and was eventually discarded.

The British military's experience with the TCAF illustrates that good data collection requires specialized skills. The military can access these skills by partnering with civilian actors, contracting with data collection and evaluation specialists, or by deliberately developing in-house capacity. Developing in-house capacity is most feasible for activities that are less technical and are done on a regular basis, such as monitoring.

Military doctrine should emphasize that data collection should be strategic, with more resources allocated to obtaining the data that is most crucial for understanding the drivers of conflict and for testing assumptions about what will work to promote stability in a particular operating environment. Evaluations, and the data collection required to complete them,

should be planned from the beginning, using program theory evaluation as a guide to identify the key assumptions that are most critical to program success.

Guidance should suggest workarounds for the unique challenge of data collection in conflict environments. For instance, where data are limited or poor quality, evaluators can use multiple data sources to "triangulate" in order to get a more complete picture. Actors can also coordinate to share data and data analysis expertise with more experienced actors. Pooling data from different sources allows for a more complete picture. Agencies such as State or USAID who are familiar with development and local culture (and who often have longer tours in country) can provide analytical assistance and technical assistance with data collection to military actors, who often have better access to data sources.

There is relatively little rigorous evidence about whether programs such as job creation initiatives or community-driven development actually work to promote stability and reduce conflict.

Rigorous studies of development programs in fragile states are scarce. Working through contractors and partners adds unknowns; it is more difficult to figure out what went wrong or why if a program does not succeed. For instance, the community-driven development approach described above is extremely popular in fragile and post-conflict environments, but evaluations of such programs in conflict areas have revealed very mixed effects.

In post-war Sierra Leone, an intensive CDD program that provided nearly six months of facilitated community meetings had no impact on local decision-making practices or governance quality. Villages that participated in this program had higher-quality reconstruction projects, such as functioning primary schools or communal grain-drying areas.

But the assumption that facilitated group decision-making would lead to permanent changes in social dynamics was not borne out by the data: following the program, assessments showed that women were no more likely to voice an opinion in community meetings in CDD villages and community councils were no more successful at raising money.

Such uncertainty about what activities will effectively reduce conflict in a particular area can be mitigated by approaching programming with humility and a willingness to try different things to identify what works. There is often political pressure to roll out a large program quickly in order to achieve quick results, but this approach creates the risk for big failures. Starting small, evaluating, and changing the approach if necessary before scaling up can help ensure that stability operations are well-designed and avoid wasting large amounts of resources.

Good monitoring, where an independent supervisor tracks steps in program implementation, is essential in contexts where implementation is challenging and involves many partners. If a program does not appear to be getting results, it is important to know whether there is a problem with the program logic, or whether the program simply isn't being delivered as planned.

In addition to providing information about program implementation, thorough monitoring often provides an incentive for partners to meet their obligations. This is one clear area where the military's comparative advantages, including access to insecure environments, give it an important role in the evaluation process.

Actors should coordinate to improve the body of knowledge about what activities have or have not successfully reduced conflict, in order to improve future stability operations and avoid repeating past mistakes. Resources are available from the Innovations for Poverty Action Post-Conflict Recovery & Fragile States Initiative, USAID's Conflict Mitigation and Management office, and the Empirical Studies of Conflict program.

More generally, findings from monitoring reports and evaluations should be shared with partner military and civilian agencies and retained so that they can inform future operations. Stability and development is also a growing area of academic research. Allowing private researchers access to agency program data or working with researchers to evaluate projects could encourage a broader literature on lessons learned from stability operations to inform future policy decisions.

Figure 3. Example of A Theory of Change Diagram
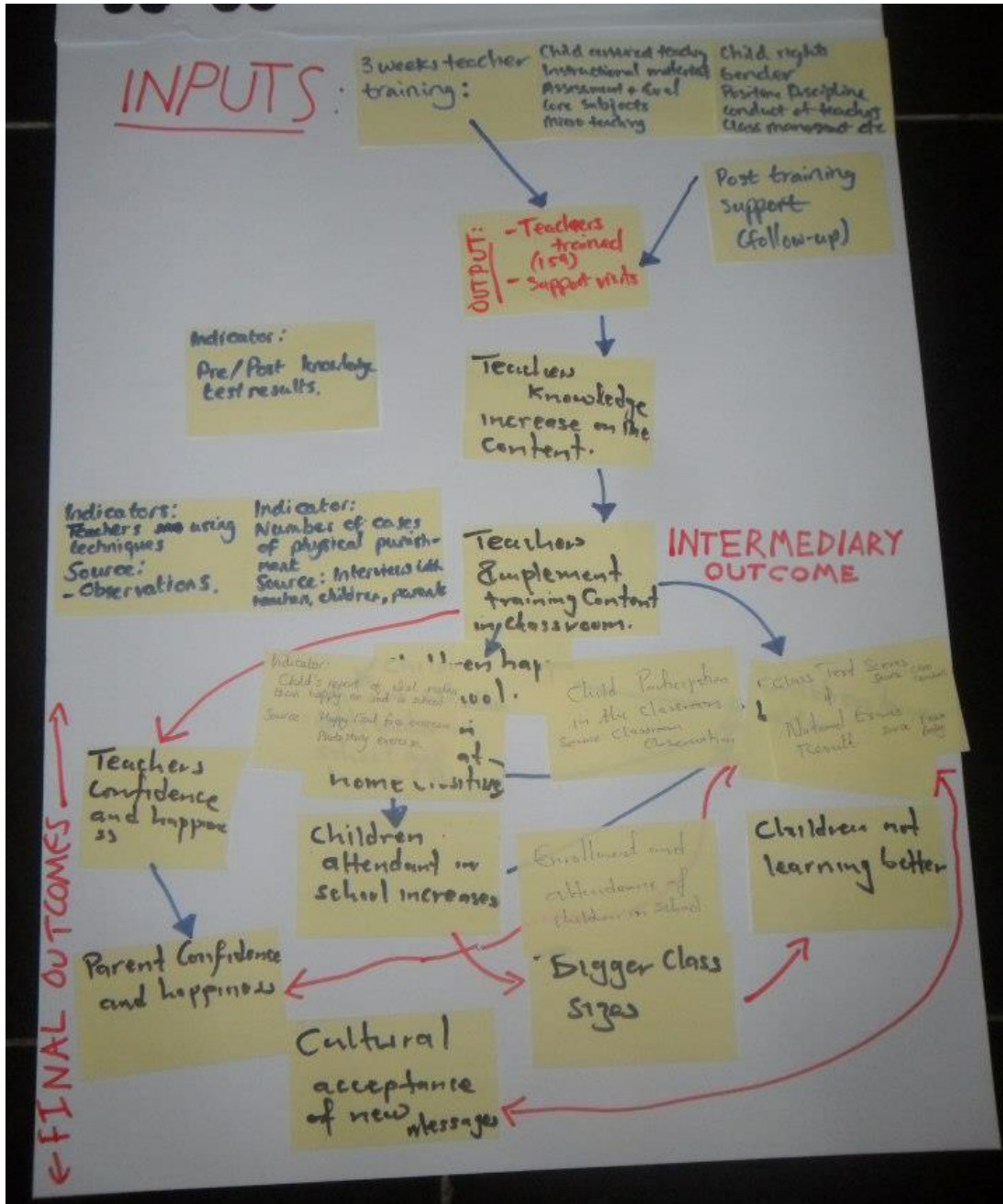
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In addition to the written materials consulted, workshop members conducted in-person and phone interviews with numerous individuals who generously gave their time to speak with us.

Bantay-Bayanihan	Philippines
EUCAP-NESTOR	Djibouti
Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)	Philippines
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Philippines
National Economic Development Authority (NEDA)	Philippines
Overseas Development Institute (ODI)	United Kingdom
Safer World	United States
Safer World	United Kingdom
Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR)	United States
The Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Philippines
The Financial Governance Committee (FGC)	Kenya
The International Labor Organization (ILO)	Kenya
The International Rescue Committee (IRC)	United States
The Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance	United States
The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)	Philippines
The World Bank	Philippines
The World Bank Fragile States Group (FSG)	Kenya
UK Department for International Development (DFID)	United Kingdom
UK Stabilisation Unit	United Kingdom
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	Djibouti
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)	Kenya
US Africa Command (AFRICOM)	Germany
US Agency for International Development, Center of Excellence (DCHA)	United States
US Agency for International Development, Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation (CMC)	United States
US Agency for International Development, Office of Conflict Management & Mitigation (CMM)	United States
US Agency for International Development, Office of Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL)	United States
US Agency for International Development, Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)	United States
US Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)	Djibouti
US Department of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO)	United States
US Department of State, Embassy	Djibouti
US Department of State, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD)	United States
US European Command (EUCOM)	Germany
US Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P)	Philippines
US Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAF)	Germany
US Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR)	Germany

Acronym Glossary

3D	Defense, Diplomacy and Development
AECA	Arms Export Control Act
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
CDD	Community-Driven Development
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
CMC	Civil-Military Cooperation
COCOM	Combatant Command
CSO	Conflict Stabilization Office
DIME	Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic agencies of the US government
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
FAC	Fusion Action Cell
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
GSCF	Global Security Contingency Fund
HN	Host Nation
ICAF	Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JFC	Joint Force Commander
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MRA	Migration and Refugee Assistance
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MWG	Mindanao Working Group
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
POLAD	Foreign Policy Advisor Program
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TCAF	Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework
TFBSO	Task Force for Business and Stability Operations
UN	United Nations

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