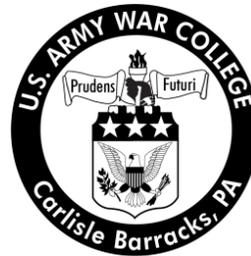


**Civilian Research Project
USAWC Fellow**

Strategies for Civilian-Military Communication

by

Colonel Tami Zalewski
United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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Abstract

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The military's relationship with the civilian world has progressed immeasurably in the last 4,000 years. The early use of military force demonstrated a violent application of one-way communication, with little concern for the civilian response. History has modified the relationship between the military and the civilian communities around them, both on and off the battlefield. In order to facilitate future communication between civilian and military (civ-mil) communities, interacting agencies must utilize the four phases of development of civ-mil communication to continuously and widely disseminate primers of understanding, along with prioritizing the continued maintenance of the "network of networks" of civ-mil relationships. This paper will present historical examples which characterize the evolution of civ-mil communication, discuss the four phases of communication development, and present categories of civ-mil interactions which will facilitate future relationships and lead to smoother interagency operations.

Strategies for Civilian-Military Communication

The military's relationship with the civilian world has progressed immeasurably in the last 4,000 years. The early use of military force demonstrated a violent application of one-way communication, with little concern for the civilian response. History has modified the relationship between the military and the civilian communities around them, both on and off the battlefield. Kinetic force is now just one technique to carry out a nation's security strategy, with more subtle, complex situations warranting a new set of skills for soldiers and their leaders. Updated, positive methods of communication between the military and civilian communities have exploded in the last decade, a necessary step toward developing resilience in conflict or disaster affected regions. As Dr. David Davis from George Mason University theorized at an interagency conference, "We are not in the same chain of command, but is there a higher calling? Is there a moral obligation to cooperate?"¹ In order to facilitate future communication between civilian and military (civ-mil) communities, interacting agencies must utilize the four phases of development of civ-mil communication to continuously and widely disseminate primers of understanding, along with prioritizing the continued maintenance of the "network of networks" of civ-mil relationships.

To better understand where we are today and the way ahead, we will first examine the evolution of the changing face of civ-mil relationships and communication. There exists evidence of violent warfare as early as 10,000 B.C.,² with the earliest documentation of a combined-arms force by Sargon the Great in 2334-2279 BC³, when the military started developing the most effective weapons of war for a brute force approach to communicating their presence and mission. Other than drawing upon various classes of civilians for manpower, there was little official dialogue between an

invading force and the civilian communities affected. Across history, there is no shortage of stories of armies invading a region by razing city walls, capturing the people and resources, if not destroying all evidence of a civilization therein.

From Alexander the Great to Napoleon, the stories of destruction continued with only occasional anecdotes of mercy, until the tender beginnings of warfare transformation with Henry Dunant's observations and action following the Battle of Solferino.⁴ After personally observing the aftermath of battle and volunteering to aid dying soldiers, Dunant introduced the concept of humane care of wounded soldiers, personalizing those involved in warfare. These times were the early beginnings of humanitarian action and response, along with awareness of the need for standardized laws of war. From the International Committee of the Red Cross to the Geneva Conventions and International Rule of Law, organizations and policies concerning aspects of warfare and humanitarian actions continue to develop to this day.

Since its earliest days, the United States has seen the struggles and maturing of the military within its own structure, as well as its relationships with non-military agencies. Alongside the continued development of kinetic warfare tactics and equipment, the military has continually learned about the necessity for strategic communications with those involved in their missions, sometimes learning the hard way. According to civil affairs historian, Dr. Stanley Sandler, the army of the new republic consisted of "occupiers, fighters, explorers, builders, diplomats," and their first experience in civil affairs and military government with the invasion of Canada in 1775 was "an unmitigated disaster."⁵ A century later toward the end of the Spanish-American War, military communication skills continued to be tried and tested when President

McKinley directed General Otis to “win the confidence, respect, and admiration of the inhabitants of the Philippines.”⁶ More often than not, these heartfelt policies, programs and actions among the civilians resulted in great frustration and little success. In fact, post-Philippines comments from military leaders observed that their aversion to use justifiable and necessary severity against insurgents prolonged the war. In 1900, MG Loyd Wheaton wrote, “You can’t put down a rebellion by throwing confetti and sprinkling perfumery.”⁷ Sandler and fellow military historian, Birtle, chronicled the U.S. Army in its civ-mil evolution, from the Continental Army’s poor interactions with Native Americans to the pain of the Vietnam era, highlighting similar successes, failures, and lessons learned. They and other authors documented the growing dichotomy of the U.S. military as a traditional kinetic force in warfare, along with serving at times as negotiators, “good cops,” or humanitarian rescuers when needed in post-conflict or disaster response missions. The challenge of the different skill sets required for these dichotomous missions was not new, but was evolving quickly.

The struggle to learn and capture the value of civ-mil relationships has continued into current times. In the mid-nineties, lessons learned from *Operation Uphold Democracy* in Haiti in 1994 stated that “communication needs to be improved between the NGO and U.S. Government communities, especially with the military.”⁸ These deficiencies had been noted and stimulated action during an interagency workshop. An example of a resulting recommendation was for “an information system that is low-cost, user-friendly, responsive to the information needs of the Government and the NGO community.”⁹ Unfortunately, the pain of lessons learned had not had a widespread enough impact to sustain this and other recommendations as established priorities. In

fact, the 2010 *Operation Unified Response* mission in Haiti repeated most of the mistakes made during the first Haiti mission, but on an even larger scale. It was going to take a couple large-scale, enduring missions for the impact of civ-mil mistakes to be systemically absorbed and permanently alter the military's way of thinking.

Even after the U.S. military's experiences in Haiti, the learning curve remained steep for the U.S. military during its response to Hurricanes Katrina (and Rita), one of many disaster response deployments within its own borders. With a common language among established government agencies responsible for domestic response and their enormous resources, this mission should have been relatively easy compared to deployments in foreign lands. For Hurricane Katrina, the widespread effects of the disaster, the size and complexity of U.S. bureaucracy, along with communications and training deficiencies, affected all levels of responders. There are volumes of media commentaries and texts written by both government agencies and outside observers that critique and analyze all phases of the operations during this event. The good news is that some basic structure and training was in place, resulting in spots of mission success for military personnel.¹⁰ The commander (forward) of the 64th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services) had prior training in media relations, communication techniques and civil affairs. Along with thorough technical and field training, these "soft skills" aided in diffusing emotionally-charged situations with high-profile non-governmental organizations (e.g., PETA, Human Society of the United States) that were also present for the animal rescue mission. These military and non-military agencies communicated and worked together to reach common daily goals during the rescue mission, resulting in a spirit of ongoing cooperation and networking that exists to this

day.¹¹ Positive consequences have emerged from the deluge of Hurricane Katrina critiques: the seemingly infinite number of government agencies involved have actually taken action on the lessons learned for the next event.¹² From local to federal government agencies, priorities have been placed on updating and understanding operating procedures, coordinating and testing communications equipment, and, most importantly, interagency training to highlight deficiencies before an event. Defense Support to Civil Authorities (phases I and II) is just one example of critical interagency training that has evolved to prepare military personnel who may respond to disaster events in the U.S.¹³

The final chapter in this examination of historical evolution of civ-mil communication continues with *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and *Operation Enduring Freedom* (Afghanistan). To the confusion and frustration of those within the armed forces as well as alongside the military, the roles and responsibilities of the U.S. military appeared to shift following the events of 9/11. This perspective only reflected the lost lessons learned from history past. Junior tactical military leaders found themselves thrown into missions as part of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Mobile Development Teams, District Stabilization Teams, or Security Force Assistance Teams. While some of the missions for these teams were relatively straight-forward, technical, military-military interactions, other missions required the soft skills of listening, mediating and negotiating with non-military, host nation people and agencies, topics not high on the priority list of pre-deployment training. In these missions, counterinsurgency strategies necessitated civ-mil communication methods that were not new, but had not been studied for many years. This deficiency in preparation was noticed. According to USMC

Maj Ethan Harding, “The past ten years of war have seen a resurrection of dormant skills – those associated with techniques of pacification, military operations other than war, operations other than war, and other now defunct terms.”¹⁴ The U.S. has not been alone in making these observations; our many international allies who have also deployed in support of such missions are now wrestling with their own lessons learned.¹⁵

Critiques not only concentrated on the disjointed interagency coordination, but also the evolving military strategies and roles within civ-mil projects.¹⁶ Many observed the lack of continuity and sustainability in the military’s strategy for implementing these projects.¹⁷ Two in-depth studies have artfully dissected the military strategy of “winning hearts and minds” at the various phases of conflict. The resulting observations presented insightful critiques on the motivations and effectiveness of the military’s role in civ-mil projects in conflict and non-conflict situations. In their study on Kenya, Bradbury and Kleinman wrote that in the Combined Task Force – Horn of Africa’s mission of security, a survey of local populations indicated “they feel more insecure than before because of the US presence” due to unclear military roles and objectives.¹⁸ Fishstein and Wilder suggested that the military is addressing the wrong drivers of insecurity due to the complexities – cultural, religious, social, and political, within a given region. The U.S. military strategy intends that their aid projects as part of the “winning hearts and minds” effort will generate goodwill towards the U.S. and the U.S. military and reduce local support for terrorists and militant Islamist ideology. However, both studies suggest there is not consistent evidence that this is occurring; in fact, U.S. aid projects can cause suspicion or destabilization within a fragile locality. Current

questions on the military's use of humanitarian aid to further their mission is not unlike the critiques from over 100 years earlier in the Philippines. In these days of twenty-four hour omniscient (but not necessarily accurate) information flow, military actions and communications will only become more transparent and open for comment, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. These latest lessons learned have highlighted the need for strategic changes and training priorities within the military, as well as within civilian agencies. The military must understand the roles, responsibilities and authorities of civilian agencies, objectives of international actors, and attain deeper country and regional awareness. The military must also clearly define and convey its role at the various phases of operations, and must communicate its clear transition plan to host nation, governmental and non-governmental actors.

Prior to 9/11, a segment of the Army that allotted valuable training time to develop these softer communication skills were the special operations forces (SOF) and civil affairs (CA) units. These personnel were trained to be aware of the roles of the military and civilian organizations and of the critical integration and prioritization of host nation personnel and agencies. After 9/11, missions requiring these softer skills became too large and enduring for SOF and CA forces to handle alone, and increasingly, such missions became the responsibility of conventional military forces. While there had been local success stories, as noted earlier, overall these conventional forces were not well-trained at the many levels required to work successfully in this realm. They did not understand the organizations that were responsible for oversight and efficiency of projects and actions across the theater; they did not understand host nation and/or NGO cultures and goals, sometimes creating hard feelings and inefficient actions on the

ground. Resulting criticisms both internally and external to the military have been warranted, from the team to strategic levels.¹⁹ In observations posted to the Brookings Up-Front Blog on November 4, 2010, Lawrence Vasquez, a former commander of a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Farah, Afghanistan, wrote,

Based on the recent reporting on the situation overall, and my own personal experience, the overall coordination of all PRTs in Afghanistan could be better aligned and (have) a more coherent development strategy communicated to all involved. More importantly, with USAID, PRT's and NGO's all seeking to assist in the R&D mission, one entity should be designated as being overall responsible for tracking and implementation of R&D efforts in their Area of Operations."

Complex, resource-intensive responses to world events force multiple agencies into the same battle or humanitarian space. They must now share space, information, resources, and access to host nation people and agencies. The mandate for interagency coordination has become more formalized, with presidential involvement promising to "integrate federal agencies and the military in stabilization and aid efforts."²⁰ So where do we possibly begin to apply all these historical observations and what is the smartest way possible to move forward?

Before continuing with recommendations for strategic civ-mil communication, this paper will first seek to clarify a source of many frustrations for communication practitioners: terminology. Below are key terms which will be used in the remainder of this paper:

Agency: The interagency communication concepts apply to all military and non-military agencies with whom each may interact, so the generic term "agency" will apply to military, U.S. government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Military: This includes all branches of the armed forces due to the prevalence of joint operations (i.e., Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard) of the U.S. and ideally, allied military forces.

NGO: This acronym signifies non-governmental organizations (e.g., Catholic Relief Services, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), World Vision).

USG: This acronym stands for United States government agencies (e.g., Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services).

Strategic communication: There are numerous publications defining this term, but within this context, strategic communication is the process by which an agency utilizes all available forums to network, educate and coordinate internally within their own agency along with relevant external agencies in order to further their long term strategic goals. NOTE: Communication (singular form) is the act or study of communicating, such as a Communication major at a university. Communications (with an “s”) consists of the technical methods used for communication, e.g., internet or phone lines.

Phases of Developing Civilian-Military Communication

All agencies involved in conflict, humanitarian or disaster response have a responsibility to prioritize their efforts toward developing and training on effective civ-mil communication BEFORE they respond to an event, a clear challenge when we can only theorize the vast uncertainties of the next scenario. Before going into detail regarding communication forums, there are four necessary phases for the implementation of successful civ-mil communication that must be presented, continuous in reality, but

separated for ease of discussion: (1) awareness, (2) learning, (3) analysis, (4) and dissemination.

(1) **Awareness.** This is an obvious but simple concept: people and agencies cannot speak with or understand one other until they are aware of each other's existence. Respective training programs must introduce external agency awareness early in career or new employee training programs, especially critical in agencies with high personnel turnover or rotations. This introduction does not have to be intensive or comprehensive at the early stages, just enough to plant the idea that there are many types of actors in a theater of operations with immediate, shared objectives, and dismiss notions of homogeneity. A basic primer with the names of the most likely agencies someone may encounter and that agency's main mission, institutional roles and authorities, should suffice for even the most junior of personnel. Early efforts have been made by some agencies to develop their versions of a primer, the Foreign Service Institute's online interagency introduction courses and U.S. Institute of Peace's *Guide to Participants in Peace, Stability and Relief Operations*, but these have not yet been disseminated widely across agencies as recognized primers.

(2) **Learning.** At the appropriate time in career development, the basic primer of awareness must advance to more comprehensive knowledge about relevant external agencies' missions. This additional knowledge involves detailing an agency's roles and responsibilities, capabilities and capacities, personnel names and responsibilities, and understanding and acknowledging the nuances and differing paradigms, language and terminology among agencies. For example, a U.S. soldier or government employee may not be familiar with or implicitly understand the NGO mission paradigm of

independence, neutrality and impartiality in a theater of operations. This was a critical enough issue that in March 2005, the heads of major U.S. humanitarian organizations, in coordination with U.S. government and military leaders, met at the U.S. Institute of Peace to develop the *Guidelines for Relations between U.S. Armed Forces and Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organizations in Hostile or Potentially Hostile Environments*.²¹ This guide was meant to be part of a primer of understanding outlining the military's versus an NGO's role in a theater of operations. Unfortunately, it was not as widely incorporated into agency training as it should have been.

This more comprehensive interagency learning phase constitutes the creation of a “network of networks,” both at the personal and agency levels. A point of frustration as this network develops is that large agencies may not simply have one “belly button” with which to network. There may be numerous points of interaction depending upon the type of mission, an aggravation voiced by many smaller agencies trying to work with the military or personnel within other large U.S. government structures. Key personnel may be required to link themselves to multiple spheres of interest in this “network of networks” just to stay linked for their organization and mission. Similar communication and awareness challenges arise when training personnel within their own large, complex agency structures. For instance, personnel within the military or Department of State may not understand or be aware of the missions and activities of the various departments within their own massive organization.

The more challenging and difficult component of interagency learning is the ability of an agency to clearly convey its roles and responsibilities during the different types of missions and phases in which agencies may interact. It is not enough to say

that an agency may operate in different types of operations (e.g., conflict, humanitarian response, disaster response), but there are also various phases involved in each of these types of operations which may demand that an agency exercise a different role or provide specific expertise or resources (e.g., prepare/ planning, pre-conflict, post-conflict, disaster preparedness; agencies may use different terms for their phases). The transition between agency missions and phases is often affected by security, resource or logistical limitations. Thus, the details delineating roles, responsibilities and mission transitions must remain a critical topic of civ-mil discussions at the strategic, planning and tactical levels.

(3) **Analysis.** Closely related to the idea of an agency clearly relaying its roles and responsibilities during the learning phase, is the concept of an agency presenting and continually updating its true capabilities and capacities to external partners. An agency's capabilities and capacities may be downgraded before a mission due to budget constraints or change during a mission due to use of resources or resupply of critical personnel, equipment or supplies. This discussion must be ongoing among coordinating agencies so their planners can identify those critical gaps which could potentially haunt a response effort. It is the responsibility of each agency to continually analyze the relevance and capacity of its own and external agencies' missions, resources and contacts; this is especially critical during preparations for an imminent mission. Ensuring that this interagency information is current for personnel in the field will provide valuable reach-back resources and more efficient field support during a mission. Through various forums that will be highlighted shortly, it is important for agency personnel to identify and contact subject-matter experts to solidify and maintain

their “network of networks.” Contrary to the old saying, familiarization with other people and agencies breeds acceptance and improved communication, not contempt (unless you are in too small of a tent for too long of a mission). Building relationships with external agencies over a period of time, before critical events, increases efficiency in coordinated response and lowers the potential tensions of interagency communication.

(4) **Dissemination.** Who Else Needs to Know? Dissemination is the step most poorly implemented in civ-mil communication, sometimes due to valid security concerns, but more often due to lack of action. It is important that individuals are part of an active interagency network, but if they do not share the existence of this network and the activities or information generated from the interaction, both inside their own agency or with other potential agency partners, the relevancy of this network is limited. This sharing can be as informal as a quick email to a formal, published report, but should include the “who, what, where, when and so what” information generated from contact with another agency. Many military personnel rightfully cite their reluctance to share information because of the classification of data, even when they know much of the information is available on public networks. This is an operational point that needs to be addressed. In the environment of combined and joint agency responses, the military may need to be more selective with regard to what information it deems necessary to classify at restrictive levels. While it’s easier for the military in theater to automatically post information exclusively on their classified network, they reduce the communication required for multi-agency success. NGOs may also have a hesitancy to share information and assessments, as it may appear they are contributing to military planning and objectives, thus losing their impartiality in a region. There have been situations

where NGOs were able to discreetly share valuable assessments to gain better understanding of humanitarian risks and security. This sensitivity to information sharing is felt across all types of agencies and must be handled delicately, but agencies must be willing to try and understand where those possibilities may or may not exist.

Dissemination of interagency activities and communication helps prevent an age-old problem: depending upon individual relationships to maintain the “network of networks.” No matter how complex these nodes (i.e., agencies) in the “network of networks” become, in the end the network is largely based upon the communication and efforts of individuals. Many agency leaders admit that their interagency relationships are based upon ad hoc individual contacts, maintained in the past by a rolodex, a pile of business cards with notes on the back, or a black book. The challenge is documenting these contacts more formally for an agency’s continuity within their relevant networks. Formal networks must include the correct audience in the sphere of interest and must be maintained at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The critical step is that an individual must clearly document activities and continually highlight their membership in relevant networks, both internally and externally. With personnel turnover, this ensures institutional memory by ensuring contacts are maintained by successors.

Current Civilian-Military Forums of Interaction

Following the overview of important phases underpinning successful civ-mil communication, it is useful to present various categories of interagency communication and training methods. This is especially important for those personnel that may be new to civ-mil interactions and are unaware of all the forums that already exist to enhance civ-mil learning and cooperation. Civ-mil interactions have always existed, but with

rapidly changing technology and social networking, the dynamics and complexity of those interactions are also changing and developing. The following examples are diverse forums and programs that contribute to the training and maintenance of various civ-mil networks, from the individual to agency levels: (NOTES: Examples in the categories are not inclusive. In order to make the reader aware of the diversity of interactions, various categories of programs, agencies, forums and resources may not be exclusive of others and often intertwine).

Academic programs:

(1) College/ University programs: (e.g., George Mason University, Peace Operations Policy Program; Georgetown University, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy; International Studies/ Relations or Global Health Policy degrees from numerous U.S. and overseas universities). These programs expose students, some with valuable international field projects, to the concepts and applications of interagency communication, a basic premise for their curriculum.

(2) Military education: (e.g., Arthur D. Simons Center for Interagency Cooperation at the Command and General Staff College; Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA); Civil Affairs (CA) Qualification Course at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School; Joint and Combined Warfighting School (JCWS) at National Defense University; service component War Colleges/ Senior Service Colleges; U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) at the U.S. Army War College). In the past, military educational programs did not directly focus on civ-mil concepts, but lessons learned drawn from civ-mil interactions have increased the necessity for these concepts

to be built into doctrine, field manuals and curriculums, if not lead to creating dedicated departments to train leaders on civ-mil operations at different phases of their careers.

The Simons Center was opened in 2010 and its mission is to enhance interagency education and scholarship at the Command and General Staff College and encourage advances in the practice of interagency cooperation.²² The USMA has also introduced a valuable program based on lessons learned to bring civ-mil operations theory to young cadets through their recently developed Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations.²³ The goal of this program is to prevent historically uncoordinated and ineffective results in future civ-mil operations which may be led by these young leaders.

The CA Qualification Course has adapted and been modified greatly over the last ten years and is now the military's uniquely focused, comprehensive program that trains Army officers on the ideal set of civ-mil skills. These skills include language study and preparation to collaborate with joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners.²⁴ The full course lasts about 46 weeks; although not feasible for incorporating into Army-wide training, participating in portions of the CA training may be beneficial for select military specialties.

The Joint and Combined Warfighting School produces graduates capable of creatively and effectively planning operational level warfighting for joint and combined military forces, while integrating the expected influence of the U.S. government, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. These skills ensure the success of combatant and joint task force commanders operating within an uncertain operating environment. The school offers numerous courses and fellowship programs to

accomplish this training mission.²⁵ A component of the various War Colleges includes interagency fellowships with government think tanks, U.S. government agencies and universities. These diverse locations provide unique and fresh perspectives for military leaders to bring to their future assignments. The PKSOI serves as the U.S. Army's "center of excellence" for stability and peace operations at the strategic and operational levels in order to improve military, civilian agency, international, and multinational capabilities and execution.

(3) U.S. Government: (e.g., Department of State Foreign Service Institute (FSI), Senior Executive Service (SES) training, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy, U.S. Institute of Peace's Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding). Some examples of U.S. government programs include the FSI, which prepares American diplomats and other professionals to advance U.S. foreign affairs interests overseas and in Washington.²⁶ One requirement of SES training is a four month fellowship with another government agency to gain necessary, expanded perspective for senior civilian leaders.²⁷ The FBI's National Academy trains leaders and managers of state and local police, sheriffs' departments, military police organizations, and federal law enforcement agencies, invaluable interagency awareness and learning for domestic response.²⁸ The U.S. Institute of Peace's Academy presents incredibly diverse in-house and online forums to teach and discuss approaches to the many complex issues associated with conflict.

(4) Non-Governmental Organizations training programs: (e.g., International NGO Training and Research Centre, Peace Operations Training Institute, United Nations (UN), training programs of individual NGOs). The first two NGOs are specifically

focused on training, consulting or research services for agencies involved in humanitarian response missions. The UN, through its Institute for Training and Research, aims to strengthen capacity of diplomats and other personnel working in multilateral environments.

(5) Private/ commercial industry programs: (e.g., International Studies Abroad).²⁹

ISA provides international education, internships or service-learning opportunities to American and Canadian students looking to expand their knowledge of global culture and language.

After Action Review/ Reports (AARs): Although originating as a military term, AARs can be utilized by every type of agency to internally reflect upon issues, needs for improvement, proposed measures to remedy concerns, and capture lessons learned; from a small project to a major military mission. One of the first known examples of an AAR is Julius Caesar's "Commentaries on the Gallic War."³⁰ Other professions and countries also see the benefit of AARs, including the nursing profession in the UK.³¹ A more current example of an AAR was written by the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division (IRONHORSE), where they discuss their "relationship with coalition 'teammates'."³² The challenge is how to store, use and share these with the appropriate audience within their organizations, along with select external partners, in order to maximize their learning content.

Communication training/ courses: Along with technical and leadership or management skills, all levels of agency personnel can benefit from learning "soft skills" such as perceptive communication,³³ mediation, negotiation, and media training. There is an incredible number of training courses on various aspects of communication offered by

private consulting companies, U.S. government agencies or academic institutions. In December, 2012, the U.S. Institute of Peace's Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding conducted training for the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division before their deployment to Afghanistan on "Local Assessment and the Rule of Law," "Negotiation and Facilitation," and "Engaging Differences through Reconciliation," training topics not historically studied by the infantry.³⁴ While these skills are the most difficult to learn and practice, if they are applied well, they can result in smoother operations and successes in low-trust, high-risk environments.

Cultural training and education: (e.g., academic programs, Department of State Foreign Service Institute, regional studies courses, Army unit-level cultural programs, commercial training); This type of training, along with language skills, is critical to sustaining smooth, professional relationships across international agencies.

Consequences for lack of this training can, at best, create unintentional disrespectful or insulting situations, or at worst, lethal outcomes.³⁵ The FSI curriculum contains imperative cultural training and many academic programs already mentioned include geographically-specific regional studies courses. Reacting to a critical requirement upon their arrival, Army units in Iraq had developed their own ad hoc, but somewhat effective, cultural training programs.³⁶ Since then, more formal, standardized programs have been developed for military units before they deploy, but given time constraints, most are very basic cultural introductions. This is a beneficial program to spread general awareness among junior troops, but it may not be comprehensive enough for personnel to be effective in their engagements with host nation agencies in a country.

Glossaries: (e.g., *JP 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Relief Web's *Glossary of Humanitarian Terms*, The United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s *Glossary of Humanitarian Terms*, in relation to the protection of civilians in armed conflict). These are good references for personnel introduced to civ-mil operations. The challenge for them is to understand that different agencies use similar terminology in different ways, a source of frustrating confusion for those new to these operations.

Government agencies: (e.g., Department of State (DoS)-Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations; DoS-Office of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights; DoS-U.S. Agency for International Development; U.S. Department of Agriculture-Office of Capacity Building and Development; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)-Office of Global Affairs; HHS-Office of Preparedness and Emergency Operations). Large governmental organizations possess interagency communication mechanisms inherent to many of their operations, with some departments more directly involved in civ-mil contacts than others.

Interagency exchange programs: (e.g., military tours, career assignments, liaison officers, education exchange programs, fellowships). Fortunately, there is a long list of interagency programs where the individual benefits in the near term from the experience, and both the losing and gaining agencies benefit in the long term from the diversified perspectives and knowledge shared by these personnel. The challenge is to resource and manage these personnel so the benefits to both agencies are fully realized and the individual is a true conduit for information. The feedback from externally assigned individuals can range from information in short email summaries to

formal significant action reports, situation reports, or research papers. These feedback requirements are necessary and should be clarified early in the program for a truly successful exchange.

Interagency working groups: (e.g., Civilian Military Working Group (CMWG), Integrated Education and Training Working Group (IETWG)). These U.S. Institute of Peace facilitated groups meet monthly at the Institute to focus specifically on maintaining civ-mil networks at the strategic and operational levels and advancing education and training objectives. Other interagency working groups may focus on a specific project that brings civ-mil agencies together, but may not necessarily study the civ-mil interaction itself.

The CMWG facilitates regular contact among major U.S. humanitarian assistance agencies, including NGOs, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of the Secretary of Defense, joint staff, combatant commanders and other interested agencies. The group negotiates and oversees humanitarian guidelines and civ-mil doctrine to coordinate relations and combined efforts of the military, civilian agencies and humanitarian NGOs in peace and stability operations.

The IETWG includes Department of Defense, U.S. government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations, and it analyzes civ-mil training and education needs. The group leverages resources to advance joint skills and knowledge building on conflict prevention, conflict response, and humanitarian assistance or disaster response.

Language schools: (e.g., Defense Language Institute, Department of State Foreign Service Institute, academic institutions, commercial programs). Like cultural training, language skills are critical to opening doors in global situations and creating effective, professional, working relationships with host nation people.

Lessons Learned/ best practices: (e.g., Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis “study of studies,”³⁷ inclusive web sites with links to a variety of agencies’ lessons learned,³⁸ and web sites for individual agencies). Similar to AARs, these are only valuable if actually reviewed and shared, both internally and externally and integrated into future training and educational efforts.

Military organizations: (e.g., Civil-Military Support Element (CMSE), National Guard Bureau; Joint Staff Directorate for Strategic Plans & Policy (J-5); Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) - Assistant Secretary of Defense Special Operations/ Low Intensity Conflict; U.S. Army Africa; U.S. Military Observer Group – Washington). The military’s enormous structure operates at the tactical, operational and strategic levels, often appearing to overlie multiple departments in their interagency outreach. Shifting strategies and reduced funding in the near future may force the military to streamline the focus and activities of many of its components.

The National Guard Bureau/ State Partnership program supports U.S. national interests and security cooperation goals by engaging partner nations via military, socio-political and economic conduits at the local, state and national level.³⁹

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) deploys civil-military support elements (CMSE), or “Special Operations Civil Affairs teams who plan, coordinate, facilitate, manage and lead programs and projects that support U.S. and

host-nation objectives” under the Civil-Military Engagement Program.”⁴⁰ This is one type of operational assignment for those that have attended the Civil Military Qualification Course, referenced previously under military training. Civ-mil interactions are a key operational objective of the CMSE and an ideal core upon which the military can rely for successful civ-mil involvement in a theater of operations.

USASOC leadership has recently placed an even higher priority on ensuring that their CA personnel remain networked doctrinally and institutionally, not via ad hoc relationships, so have recommended a formal “Civil Military Advisory Group.” While the concept is currently in draft stages of development, by utilizing lessons learned from historical civ-mil interactions, the USASOC leadership understands the critical necessity of ensuring continuity of civ-mil networking to best support combatant commanders across all geographic regions, as well as serve as a resource to Chiefs of Mission and their country teams in U.S. embassies.

Non-Governmental Organizations: (e.g., Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps, Plan International, United Nations, World Vision). While most humanitarian NGOs have a technical field specialty or focus in the areas of post-conflict support, humanitarian or disaster response, some “umbrella” NGOs such as Interaction or Alliance for Peacebuilding are focused specifically on their role in the networking and advocacy of collaborative partner NGOs. NGOs can range from very small, local organizations in a host nation to massive international organizations with a long-term presence in many worldwide locations. The United Nations is a unique international organization with many subsidiary organizations carrying out missions such as promoting and facilitating cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, social

progress, human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, political freedoms, democracy. The main mission for the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to bring together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies, so it is possible for civilian and military personnel to be brought together in these types of missions.

Private/ commercial industry: (e.g., Booze, Allen Hamilton; IAP Worldwide Services; KBR). These industries may be involved with various commercial, military and humanitarian aid customers around the globe to support complex operations with various technical services.

Private Organizations - military and government related: (e.g., Association of the United States Army, Defense Education Forum (DEF) of the Reserve Officers Association, Spirit of America (SoA)). The first two organizations have missions which directly support military and government agencies by providing continuity and preventing complacency and isolationism, especially common during post-conflict periods. While non-governmental by definition, they do not function as a typical field NGO. These agencies hold numerous conferences and forums for valuable interagency discussions and learning. SoA is a unique NGO; it is donor-funded, but fills in gaps in civ-mil missions via direct collaboration with military units.

Publications:

(1) U.S. government: (e.g., National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44),” USAID’s *Civilian-Military Operations Guide*, Department of Defense’s *3D Planning Guide: Diplomacy, Development, Defense*, USIP’s “Special Reports,” “Peaceworks,” or “Peace Briefs”).

(2) Military regulations and publications: (e.g., *Department of Defense Instruction 3000.05 Stability Operations, FM 3-07 Stability Operations and Support Operations, Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.3 Peace Operations, JP 3-08 Interorganizational Coordination During Joint Operations, JP 3-29 Foreign Humanitarian Assistance, JP 3-57 Civil Military Operations, JP 5-0 Joint Operation Planning*).

(3) NGO publications: (e.g., The Sphere Project's *The Sphere Handbook*, InterAction's *Foreign Assistance Briefing Book 2013*, International Alert's (ed. Damian Lilly) *The Peacebuilding Dimension of Civil-Military Relations in Complex Emergencies: A Briefing Paper*, United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – numerous publications). *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response* is an internationally recognized set of common principles and universal minimum standards in life-saving areas of humanitarian response. OCHA has a website with numerous publications dedicated to humanitarian civ-mil coordination: <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/UN-CMCoord/publications>.

Research: This can appear as a seemingly infinite source of information by topic and be interagency-collaborated and intra-agency developed. Users need only “Google” their topic or go to a public or private library, and they will be immediately overwhelmed with information.

Open-net databases/ portals/ networks: (e.g., World Bank's HIVE, DoD's Combatting Terrorism Technical Support Office (CTTSO) SUNnet system). Both of these systems have recognized the challenge of independent response agencies trying to connect with their relevant “network of networks.” These types of systems endeavor to use web-

based technology to connect agencies via accessible communication and information sharing.

Think tanks: (e.g., Brookings Institution, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI)). The UK-based HPG maintains a Humanitarian Practice Network, which posts an online magazine called the Humanitarian Exchange Magazine. The January 2013 issue focused purely on civ-mil coordination topics:

<http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-56/civil-military-coordination>.

Training Exercises: (e.g., table top discussions, virtual scenarios, joint exercises such as Vibrant Response, Austere Challenge, Cobra Gold; combined arms exercises at the U.S. Army Combat Training Centers (e.g., National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, Indiana)). Training exercises cover a wide type of experiential training that may involve a single unit/ team conducting field training and testing at the level of individual skills, or as large as multi-agency, multi-country response exercises with comprehensive AARs that may lead to policy and operational procedure modifications. The previously mentioned IETWG (under Interagency Working Groups) has an exercise support group which is focused on prioritizing training exercises to secure inputs from civilians early in the learning objectives and maximize meaningful interagency and NGO participation.

The Way Ahead

Along with continually prioritizing the maintenance of currently existing civ-mil relationships, there are additional considerations that will enhance those of the future. Similar to the intent of the U.S. Military Academy's Civil-Military Operations Center, all agencies must introduce their junior personnel to civ-mil concepts early in their careers—before they must lead an operation or run into another agency for the first time in the middle of a mission. It is important to introduce increasingly complex civ-mil operations at all points of career progression, especially in the face of shifting military strategies.⁴¹

Similar to the “Humanitarian Guidelines” developed by military and non-military agencies, a standardized, interagency primer should be developed for personnel new to civ-mil interactions and dispersed across agencies. Current primers by FSI or USIP previously mentioned could serve this purpose if marketed and widely accepted and utilized. Although the information is readily available in numerous doctrine and policy documents, new personnel can quickly become overwhelmed. This primer would summarize commonly used terms in the operational environment, highlight the different uses and interpretation of terminology, and introduce policy and cultural differences among agencies. Senior personnel who have repeatedly watched the frustrations or missteps of junior personnel in their early interagency operations would be ideal advisors to help develop this primer. This research paper, with the civ-mil examples and endnote references could serve as the basis for a more detailed primer for those studying the civ-mil process.

Agency leaders must clearly convey their roles for the benefit of all involved and train their personnel on transition plans. Understanding these roles can be challenging,

especially when the branches of the military themselves are currently modifying their future civ-mil strategies. In support operations, the military should only fill operational and logistical gaps in high threat environments until essential services can be transitioned to an agency with the appropriate expertise, many times to the host nation or long-term NGOs. The military need not dedicate valuable training and equipment resources to develop expertise in technical areas that already have subject matter experts within other agencies. This is consistent with the imperatives in the United Nation's *Guidelines on The Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets To Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies*, where they state "Military assets should be requested only where there is no comparable civilian alternative and only the use of military assets can meet a critical humanitarian need." The military asset must therefore be unique in capability and availability."⁴² Future joint missions or those missions requiring interagency communication must handle this discussion on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all agencies involved continually communicate their roles and responsibilities across the various phases of operations.

Knowledge management is a realm and discussion all its own and will be an ongoing challenge for all agencies. With the changes in technology and increasingly easy access to data sources, information overload is now part of our daily environment. We must also be careful of "information pathology" with the abundance of incomplete, inaccurate, biased and blatantly deceiving information. Civ-mil agencies must prioritize communication and operational information as those most appropriate and with the highest integrity, at the same time developing effective methods to share AARs, lessons learned and current information with their internal and external audiences. As part of

this prioritization of information, an agency must continually monitor and evaluate important relationships with and information from external agencies, requiring almost full time attention to do so.

As the military continues to work in a highly visible environment with instant Twitter comments and critiques, they must work to communicate and share information at the appropriate levels. It is easy to have a military unit conduct all their communications on a classified computer in a theater of operations, but it does not help the allied forces, partner U.S. government agencies or NGOs in their battle space. They must develop procedures to better classify military information to breed a culture of cooperative transparency and information sharing, maintaining only the most truly sensitive data on classified systems.

A valuable method by which one can learn about another agency is to spend time within their walls and “walk the walk” from their perspective. Increasing interagency exchange programs can be feasible, especially if both agencies benefit from the exchange, as discussed previously. These types of exchanges should not be viewed as a career detriment for individuals or an exclusionary experience for non-achievers, but should become part of agency doctrine for successful career development. These programs may also be a feasible *quid pro quo* exchange during a time of limited resources, with more efficient information exchange while maintaining important interagency awareness.

Throughout this discussion, we have observed the progression and maturing of civ-mil relations and the diverse methods of interaction for civ-mil agencies. Perpetual information generated and instantly spread across the global network brings us

awareness of every minor and complex humanitarian event, conflict or disaster. Limited financial resources across all types of agencies have forced them to prioritize efficient and smooth civ-mil communication and information sharing, not something to muddle through ad hoc, mission by mission. Introducing the awareness of the concept and value of civ-mil communication and relationships early in career development will breed knowledgeable and well-connected leaders. Leaders at every level must maintain their civ-mil “network of networks” to have in place for the benefit of future missions. Building relationships with external agencies over a period of time, before critical events, increases efficiency in coordinated response and lowers the potential tensions of interagency communication.

Endnotes

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(2) An Iraqi doctor was hired and assigned to a Multifunctional Medical Battalion (MMB) as an advisor for military-Iraqi medical projects. The MMB's Chief, Force Health Protection thought it was unacceptable that junior soldiers who never leave the forward operating bases (FOB) would never interact with or learn from the Iraqis while living in their country. The Chief and Iraqi doctor developed a four hour introduction to Iraqi culture which they attempted to make available to as many soldiers as possible across 28 locations. The course topics included history, geography, country statistics, and basic Arabic (greetings, numbers, alphabet, and writing practice); the participants discussed the names and traditions for Arabic headgear, along with learning the proper wear. There was also a question and answer session between the military personnel and the Iraqi doctor. This training paid unknown dividends when soldiers were able to greet and comfortably interact with new Iraqi workers in their building, developing friendships and sharing Iraqi meals during their deployment. The long term effects of deeper understanding and acceptance may be the more important result. Author's deployment notes, Iraq, 2006-2007.

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