

Panel Executive Brief: Civil-Military Affairs and Expeditionary Diplomacy

Civil and military cooperation has always existed with varying degrees of success. But for an effective implementation of the SAR, healthy civil-military cooperation must become the norm. Effectual institutionalization of this mindset will take time, training, and sustained efforts from the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of State (DOS), and USAID. A major dividend of such cooperation for stabilization efforts will be better communication and a better understanding of problems on the ground. A contextualized understanding of the conflict-affected country, acquired by the military as well as civilian deployments, needs to be communicated back to DC and across different levels of policymaking.

Speakers

BG Kimberly Field (ret.) - *Director, CVE, Creative Associates International*

COL Tony Thacker - *Chief, USCENTCOM, Interagency Action Group, Civil Affairs Operations Division*

COL Charles Burnett - *95th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander, Fort Bragg*

Jason Ladnier - *Director, Office of Partnerships, Strategy, and Communications (DOS/CSO)*

Moderator: Kevin Melton - Senior Civil-Military Transition Advisor, (USAID/OTI), SAR Contributing Writer

Key Issues/Problems discussed:

- The “three Ds” do not have a common understanding of the problems faced during stabilization.
- There is disagreement on whether roles and responsibilities of agencies should be decided during the planning phase, or if policy should be flexible and shaped by facts on ground.
- Military actors do not communicate their concerns and ideas to other departments.
- Coordination between agencies slows down implementation. There is a trade-off between speed and deliberation.
- Civil-military cooperation is often dependent on personalities - some officers and diplomats are more cooperative than others, often causing a lack of sustained policy.
- Civilians, and not just the military, need to be on ground to understand the context. This will come through improved civilian co-deployment.
- Civilian co-deployment is limited by risk and physical security. The support of the military is necessary but attitudes to civilian deployment vary.

Key Recommendations:

- We need an integration of efforts in two ways. First, vertically across bureaucracies, from DC to the country level. Second, horizontally across the DOD, DOS, and USAID.
- Implementation needs more actors on the ground who understand the environment.
- For civilian co-deployment, we need to manage risk with the support of the military, rather than avoid it altogether.
- The evolution of civil-military cooperation will involve better communication and overall institutionalization of good relationships through education and training.
- It is important to recognize the respective strengths of civilian and military actors and incorporate them into planning.

Significance of SAR:

The SAR gives a “three D” view of stabilization by including the roles and responsibilities of the DOS, DOD, and USAID. The spirit of the document lies in the collaboration of these agencies. Thus, implementation of the SAR depends on effective communication between civilian and military actors, both on the ground and in DC. To operationalize this, the document recognizes the hurdles that need to be overcome for successful civilian co-deployment.