For Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)–82, assigned to Regional Command–East (RC–E) from June 2009 to June 2010, rotation 10 of Operation Enduring Freedom was a time of major transition for military operations in Afghanistan. Several changes were made in the way that U.S. forces approached engagement with the civilians and Afghan military forces during that timeframe. Among those changes were the expansion of the presence of U.S. Government civilian agencies in the country and the requirement to integrate representatives from those agencies with military organizations throughout the area of operations. This “civilian uplift” represented the largest deployment of U.S. agencies to a combat zone since the Vietnam War.¹

The CJTF–82/RC–E headquarters was organized around the headquarters, tactical operations centers, and the special troops battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg. These units consist solely of U.S. Army Active Component Soldiers. In June 2009, upon deployment and designation as a CJTF, the units were reorganized under a joint manning document that added positions for U.S. Army Reserve Component Soldiers, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, civilian personnel, and contractors. A limited number of government representatives

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were assigned to the CJTF headquarters and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), but not enough to meet mission requirements.

The civilian uplift began on September 1, 2009, with the arrival of eight representatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) at the Joint Operations Center at Bagram Airfield. By April 2010, the civilian platform grew to nearly 175 personnel primarily from the Department of State (including the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization [S/CRS]), USAID (including the Office of Transition Initiatives), and Department of Agriculture. While some remained at the CJTF headquarters at Bagram Airfield, the majority were pushed down to subordinate units throughout the area of operations.

Making Room for Stability Operations

The CJTF–82/RC–E campaign concept focused on four key lines of operation (LOOs): information, security, governance, and development. Each LOO was headed by a colonel; the Deputy Commanding General (DCG) for Operations oversaw the information and security LOOs, while the DCG for Support oversaw the governance and development LOOs. With the expansion of U.S. and coalition government civilian participation and the creation of “civilian platforms” at the regional commands, the U.S. Embassy converted the political advisor position to senior civilian representative (SCR) of the Ambassador in July 2009.

The CJTF–82/RC–E commander had been wrestling with how to “operationalize” governance and development since before the unit’s deployment to Afghanistan. During July and August of 2009, the governance and development LOO staffs provided a weekly drill-down briefing of a different district in the area of operations to the commander and primary staff. Realizing this was not enough to focus the governance and development efforts, the staff attempted to integrate discussion of stability policy and objectives into the biweekly Joint Network Targeting Board briefing, but this proved untenable in that it tended to disrupt the focus on security operations in a time-constrained session.

By mid-October, with the civilian staff arriving in greater numbers and organizing and integrating itself at several organizational levels, the commander designated a separate battle rhythm event in the week opposite the biweekly Joint Network Targeting Board briefing, which became known as the Interagency Stability Operations Review Board. This event put governance and development on an equal footing with security and information operations by offering the brigade commanders and their senior civilian counterparts an opportunity to review progress in those areas and to receive guidance directly from the commander and SCR.
Afghan girl holds lamb born from sheep studied by Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team II during parasite project in Khenj District.
On September 12, 2009, Dawn Liberi was appointed as the new SCR, and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry issued a letter outlining her role in coordinating and directing all civilian personnel and programs. In particular, she was “responsible for achieving the unity of civilian effort and effective implementation of an integrated civilian-military strategy essential to our success in Afghanistan.” As SCR, she would “coordinate and direct the work of all [U.S. Government] civilians under Chief of Mission authority,” “convene periodic meetings of Chief of Mission personnel,” and manage civilian assignments and other issues through lead civilians at subordinate organizations.

The Ambassador’s letter also directed the SCR to “serve as the U.S. civilian counterpart to the military commander in the Regional Command, to senior coalition civilians and to senior local Afghan officials. [She] will also provide foreign policy and area advice to the commander and receive security advice from the commander.” In this role, the SCR cosigned—with commanding general Major General Curtis Scaparrotti, USA—the CJTF–82/RC–E campaign plan for Operation Champion Sahar. The appointment also slightly altered the LOO concept as, in deference to the SCR as the acknowledged expert in governance and development, the DCG for Support moved into a secondary role with respect to these two areas. This was particularly crucial to the daily management of stability operations as, coincident with her arrival, the CJTF–82/RC–E began executing combined action, a paradigm in which the DCGs deployed from the Joint Operations Center with two division tactical operation centers (TACs) to live and work the majority of the week with the two Afghan National Army (ANA) corps whose operational areas comprised the RC–E area of operations and Kabul.

Within 2 months of the CJTF deployment (July 2009), many on the primary staff saw the efficacy in consolidating the governance and development LOOs into a combined staff section that focused on stability operations along the lines of a Civil-Military Operations Center. Among the reasons for doing so were to create synergy among related functions on the CJTF staff and to replicate the functions and activities of staff counterparts organized under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Stability at the two headquarters above the CJTF. This initiative was further supported by the arrival of eight USAID civilians who were specialists in the areas of water, agriculture, governance, rule of law, program management, and economics—specialties that crossed between the governance and development LOOs.

The consolidation of functions required a new organizational structure. The initial organizational design planned by the governance and development LOO chiefs, in conjunction with three senior USAID representatives in early October 2009, retained a concept of provincial desk officers, each having general knowledge of the environment and activities in an assigned task force area of operations. Superimposed on these officers were crosscutting functional specialty teams that provided expertise in concepts and programs that applied to all geographic areas of operation.
within RC–E. The intent was for these teams to have linkages through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), ISAF Joint Command (IJC), USAID, and the Embassy to the various ministries of the government. Issues requiring Afghan government attention would be injected into various functional working groups that were just organizing themselves in Kabul in mid to late October 2009.

When presented to leadership, the SCR held that this organizational design did not adequately support the major elements of the campaign plan, which was under development at that time. She redirected the staff to organize in a way to support the CJTF's four major objective areas: development in three key provinces (Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman), support to four pilot districts (Baraki Barak in Logar Province, Sayed Abad in Wardak Province, Khogyani in Nangarhar Province, and Sarkani in Kunar Province), transition to lead security responsibility in two provinces, and stabilization throughout the area of operations. A new design was put in place by the end of October 2009.

This new organization represented a true melding of civilian and military capabilities to meet planning needs. It also represented the first step in unified action, which is the term used to describe the broad scope of activities that occur under the overall direction of a unified command or joint task force commander and includes “the synchronization and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental agencies . . . to achieve unity of effort in the operational area.” Over time, the stability operations section created and refined internal processes and connected to national level programs and processes in Kabul that allowed it to provide the support and representation needed by subordinate brigade task forces and PRTs to bring their issues to IJC, ISAF, USAID, and the U.S. Embassy, and vice versa.

**The Interagency Deputies**

The SCR had access to the staff through the chief of staff, an Army colonel who supported her as equally as he did the commanding general. Over time, she acquired a small personal staff consisting of a military aide (Army captain of the Air Defense Artillery branch), enlisted aide (Army civil affairs [CA] master sergeant), driver (Navy petty officer), and executive assistant (civilian hired as part of the uplift). Four positions were designated for senior members of State, USAID, Agriculture, and the Department of Defense (DOD) to serve as interagency deputies to the SCR. Their primary role was to “coordinate and direct the work of all [government] civilians under Chief of Mission authority within the region, ensure coherence of political direction and developmental efforts, and execute U.S. policy and guidance.” Only two of these positions were occupied in October 2009. All four positions were filled by April 2010.

**Teams under the Chief of Stability Operations**

**Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman Team**. This team was staffed with a diverse group of professionals that included lawyers, engineers, and experts in economics, agriculture,
governance, and rule of law from USAID, State, Agriculture, and DOD. It focused initially on assisting Task Force Mountain Warrior’s efforts to build and reinforce the competence, capability, and credibility of the Afghan government to protect the population, be relevant to the people, and lay the foundation for sustained economic growth.

The team was led by a USAID civilian program manager assisted by a CA officer. Among its many accomplishments by May of 2010 were the formation of an overall economic development strategy that identified existing efforts and lessons and recommended the overarching strategies to guide future activities, including plans to redirect hundreds of millions of dollars to power, roads, and watershed management; development of programs that allowed Afghan government capacity and businesses to grow at a sustainable pace; creation of a marble training and development institute in Jalalabad to provide training; and coordination of the first-ever East Region Economic Growth and Investment Promotion Conference in Jalalabad, attended by over 520 participants as well as 5 Afghan ministers and 2 provincial governors in March 2010.8

**Key Terrain District (KTD) Team.** Led by a USAID civilian development expert assisted by a CA officer, this team was initially organized as the Pilot District Team. Its original focus was to monitor and support the Afghan-led Pilot District Program, in which the districts listed previously would receive focused governance and development programming under the District Delivery Program (DDP), as coordinated by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance. In January 2010, with the publication of an IJC fragmentary order, KTDs emerged as the key organizing principle for application of the counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. The directorate moved rapidly to expand the national scope of the program from 6 pilot districts to, ultimately, 80 KTDs, 41 of which (with an estimated population of approximately 4 million) were located in RC–E.9

In February 2010, RC–E established a multifunctional KTD working group, cochaired by CJTF–82/RC–E’s Security Operations and CJS Future Plans sections, with representation across the staff, to coordinate and synchronize all cross-functional activities related to achieving objectives. Within the Stability Operations section, the team evolved into the KTD Team and took responsibility for managing, coordinating, monitoring, and reporting on governance, development, and stabilization programs. Ultimately, overall metrics of progress and success would be based on assessments of improved stability conducted under the District Stability Framework (DSF), public perceptions of support for and confidence in Afghan institutions (including the Afghan National Security Force and Afghan Uniformed Police), and governance and development metrics outlined in the IJC District Stability Assessment Tool.10

**Stabilization Team.** This team was designed to focus on key population centers and transportation corridors by coordinating and facilitating operational-level support to field-level efforts and to capture,
understand, and respond to trends and patterns in order to strengthen and extend stability into outlying areas. Led by a USAID civilian development specialist assisted by a CA officer, the team facilitated the coordination of resources for brigade and battalion task forces to develop and improve analytical assessments and measurements using the DSF, and coordinated with Afghan ministries to improve provincial budgeting and deal with other issues. The DSF was a planning methodology that helped practitioners to identify key sources of instability, develop and plan activities that mitigate these sources, monitor/evaluate the impact of locally applied stability assistance, and measure the progress of stabilization efforts.11

By design, the team supported the efforts of four brigade task forces with the same level of staffing as the objective teams that focused on single task force areas of operations. With the introduction of the KTDs, the Stabilization Team’s efforts became less geographically aligned and more focused on synchronizing the efforts of DSF implementation with the DDP roll-out schedule. While members of the team still supported and coordinated efforts with the major road activities, the primary mission became focused on the implementation of DSF training to the task forces, PRTs, and District Support Teams that contain KTDs. By May 2010, the team planned to reevaluate its activities to determine if the change in focus would allow for some of its mission to be incorporated into the missions of other objective teams or if a further change in its operations was warranted.12

**Provincial Recognition Status (PRS) Team.** This team had several name changes since it first formed as the Transfer of Lead Responsibility (TLR) Team. The TLR Team was tasked to address the initial objective of Operation Champion Sahar to nominate Bamyan and Panjshir provinces for transfer to the Afghan government by June 2010. From the start, the team realized that the term TLR, and its derivative TLSR (Transfer of Lead Security Responsibility), inaccurately described the intent of the operation since the Afghan government as a sovereign government already had responsibility for security, as well as governance and development in general. In Bamyan and Panjshir in particular—the two provinces considered as the lead candidates for TLR or TLSR—an international security presence was limited and the security/stability enjoyed in these provinces was due not to the efforts of the coalition forces, but to the ethnic makeup, geography, and history of the provinces themselves. Additionally, IJC and ISAF used at different times the TLR or TLSR terminology, but since the January 2010 London Conference, the term transition has been used.13

Under the leadership of a USAID civilian program manager assisted by a CA officer, the PRS Team developed PRS as a broader concept and changed its name to reflect the desire to stay away from politically charged terms. PRS was designed to make stability a desirable goal and to fit the reality of RC–E. The team eventually defined the concept as “a province which demonstrates a sustainable, [Afghan]-led stability, governance and
economic development future will gain Provincial Recognition Status and will be offered the accompanying Provincial Recognition Package." The package was the incentive that made PRS something to aspire to. Although undefined at the time, the package would ideally support the province with budget funds for further development of the province. Four basic metrics—stability, public perception, quality of life, and the PRT’s rating of the province—measured performance and served as a way to demonstrate to other provinces where improvements were needed.¹⁴

**Teams under the Chief of Stability Integration**

**Operations Section.** The Operations section was organized around the 82ᵈ Airborne Division’s organic G9 (Civil-Military Operations) cell, which consisted of one CA lieutenant colonel and one CA major. The section was represented in the CJ35 Future Operations section by an experienced CA major provided by the attached battalion headquarters (minus¹⁵) and in the CJ35 Plans section by an experienced civilian planner provided by S/CRS. As the Stability Operations organization matured, it secured space in the central Joint Operations Center control room and assigned one engineer lieutenant and one U.S. Marine Corps CA staff sergeant to monitor and integrate stability operations equities into daily briefings and operations tracking. A senior noncommissioned officer representing the Agribusiness Development Teams, as well as liaison officers from France, Poland, Korea, and other coalition forces sent to work with the section, were assigned to the Operations section.
This section was designed to be the primary point of integration with the daily operations of the staff. As such, it was the entry point for external taskings to and requests for assistance from the Stability Operations section. It was tasked to provide an accurate common operational picture that allowed the commander and SCR to make decisions affecting stability operations. To support that task, it defined host nation information requirements that supported the campaign plan and developed procedures to track and report effects.

Early in the rotation, the governance and development LOOs relied on the CJ35 Assessments Team for analytical and assessment support. When an Army civilian arrived in August 2009 to augment the team, he was assigned to the development LOO to provide direct support. He was joined 1 month later by a military operations research/system analyst who was assigned to the governance LOO. With the establishment of the Stability Operations section in October 2009, they partnered as the Analysis and Assessment Team under the Support section and migrated to the Operations section as the organizational structure matured. Together, they established comprehensive processes and metrics to help the brigade task forces assess and track the progress of governance and development in emerging districts throughout the area of operations. Later, as IJC developed its own process to assess the progress of governance, development, and security in the KTDs, the two analysts developed the District Stability Assessment Tool, which was translated into Dari and Pashtu for use by the Afghan National Army and ultimately became a standard for IJC to use throughout Afghanistan.16

Special Issues Team. This team was organized to monitor, coordinate, and support certain issues that needed special attention, such as border crossings, major road structures damaged by natural disasters and insurgents, women’s issues, municipal pay, land registration, reintegration, and others. It was led by a CA officer and included CA and civilian specialists from across the Stability Operations section who worked these issues in addition to their primary duty assignments. Because of this “additional duty” nature, the team was more of an ad hoc organization that responded to tasks and requests for assistance or information as the issues gained or lessened in prominence compared to more routine and consistent focus areas.

Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) Team. This team tracked CERP expenditures and project nominations from subordinate units to ensure they stayed within the commanding general’s guidance. The number of active CERP projects in RC–E had become excessive during the previous two rotations. Earlier focus on executing high commitment and obligation rates for transportation infrastructure and other projects resulted in approximately 1,700 active CERP projects at the beginning of rotation 10. In many cases, units could not conduct adequate quality assurance/quality control checks on the projects in their areas of operations. The team had already begun taking steps to reduce the number of projects to a more manageable level that supported counterinsurgency objectives when congressional interest and U.S.
Central Command guidance eventually made it mandatory to do so.

Midway through the rotation, RC–E was allocated $450 million for the fiscal year 2010 CERP budget. The staff looked for areas where its resources could best be applied to produce strategic effects across the battlespace. The Stability Operations section, led by the USAID water and energy advisor and military reconstruction chief, developed a plan that would extend electric power to the provincial centers of Panjshir, Parwan, Bamyan, Kapisa, Logar, Wardak, Ghazni, and Paktiya. This significant concept was developed in coordination with the Afghanistan Engineer District and USAID. The intent was for these organizations to execute and oversee the power projects through a transfer of CERP funds and the Economy Act Order, respectively. The RC–E commander approved the concept, and the staff forwarded 10 projects to U.S. Forces Afghanistan on the same date.17

Stability Operations Information Cell (SOIC). This cell had its origins in the concept of the civil information management cell of a CA battalion headquarters. Since the global force management process had eliminated this original cell and additional elements that supported it, the Stability Operations section created this capability out of hide. A team of contract civilians formed the nucleus of the SOIC. In order to serve as the unclassified information collection, production, analysis, and dissemination adjunct to the RC–E Fusion Center’s classified activities, it needed additional resources.

An attempt by Stability Operations leadership in November 2009 to obtain or share analysts from the CJ2 section to focus on civil or host nation information requirements was unsuccessful. At the same time, however, ISAF’s senior intelligence officer, Major General Michael Flynn, was looking for ways to bring the Intelligence Community’s understanding of the political, economic, and cultural environment on par with its understanding of the enemy in Afghanistan. General Flynn incorporated CJTF–82’s fledgling SOIC concept into his “Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan,”18 began sending capabilities to SOIC–East to flesh out the organization, and provided guidance for synthesizing information into district narrative assessments and integrating current information about Afghan government and population-centric issues into the RC–E Fusion Center. The Human Terrain Analysis Team, which had long been associated with the CJ9, then the Stability Operations section, was brought under the auspices of the SOIC.

Ultimately, after some trial and error in its forming stage, the SOIC developed a plan that would make it the hub of an integrated civil information network in RC–E that would tap into existing elements and subject matter experts, at every command level, including the Stability Operations section, which routinely interacted with government officials and the populace. The SOIC would provide relevant and current information about government and population-centric issues to decisionmakers so they could effectively allocate resources for the advancement of governance and development.
Information storage and exchange would be made possible by tying into existing and future knowledge acquisition and management systems, using both theater- and U.S.-based reachback resources, that facilitate sharing and dissemination of information among coalition forces and interagency, international, and nongovernmental organizations. This plan was never fully implemented due to the inevitable end of the CJTF–82 tour and the different perspective brought by the leadership of the follow-on headquarters, CJTF–101.

Civil Affairs Teams at TACs 1 and 2

In October 2009, CJTF–82 deployed two divisional tactical operations centers (TACs) to execute combined action with the two Afghan National Army corps whose geographic areas of responsibility encompassed the terrain associated with RC–E. Initially, each TAC consisted of representatives from every major staff element except for the Stability Operations section. As issues presented themselves at each of the ANA corps headquarters that clearly required CA expertise, the DCG for Operations directed the Stability Operations section to send CA personnel to the TACs for the express purpose of partnering with equivalent staff to teach them how to work through Afghan systems and the international community to provide support to the populace. With the advice and assistance of the commander of the CA battalion headquarters (minus) attached to the CJTF, four individuals were redirected from the Stability Operations section and CA teams across RC–E to form two two-man teams in December 2009. Their mission consisted of the following tasks, in order of priority: execute combined action with ANA civil-military staff section; train staff on CA and civil-military operations; provide a CA linkage to Task Force S9s, PRTs, and Agribusiness Development Teams in each of the two corps areas of operation; determine and provide civil-military operations reporting from the TAC to CJTF–82; assist with acquisition of CERP and privately donated class X and humanitarian assistance supplies as needed, and coordinate the use of CERP funds with the task forces as required.

District Support Teams

The District Support Team (DST) was an important, innovative development during rotation 10 of Operation Enduring Freedom. In April 2009, the U.S. Embassy proposed this new platform for integrating the civil-military effort at the district level to support the Afghan effort to build subnational capacity and implement the President’s strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. DSTs were to be staffed with a minimum of three civilians each, employing tailored expertise—such as agriculture, urban planning, and rule of law—to maximize the civilian contribution to the integrated effort. A key feature that distinguished a DST from the already well-known and established PRT was that in a DST, civilian capabilities were integrated into a maneuver battalion or company to form a collective capability rather than a new, stand-alone organization.19

The first three DSTs were launched in September 2009 to the pilot districts of Baraki Barak, Khogyani, and Surobi. By April 2010, civilians were fielded to 20 different DST locations, with more continuing to arrive on a monthly basis. In May 2010, however, there
remained significant challenges. Of the 20 DST locations, only 7 had the full basic staff of representatives from each of the 3 agencies due to the challenges of identifying, training, and deploying individuals (as opposed to existing units) for assignment to these austere locations. Another challenge was the identification of future DST locations, which must consider the priority among competing districts, the resources available at existing military facilities to support civilian staff, and the security situation in the district.

**Conclusion**

The ability of CJTF–82/RC–E to reorient and reorganize itself for a noncombat mission while engaged in combat operations is a testimony to the professionalism of the soldiers and civilians. During a private conversation with the author in early May 2010, one senior military leader, reflecting on the unique experience and challenges of stability operations and unified action over the past 11 months, stated, “We have never done this before.” He was not accustomed to working in an environment where all the resources of national power—particularly those of the diplomatic and economic variety—came together at the operational/tactical level under a single organization to achieve a common goal to the extent we did in Afghanistan. It did not have to be that way. U.S. policy and military doctrine pertaining to stability operations and unified action had evolved greatly during the last decade, but few resources had actually been allocated to support those policy and doctrine changes.

The civilian uplift in Afghanistan forced military and civilian leaders at all levels to learn to integrate large numbers of civilian specialists into established military organizations in the midst of ongoing combat operations. Though unprepared to operate in this manner prior to the deployment, military and civilian leaders at every echelon fell back on what they learned through personal experience and limited, disconnected training in civil-military operations. Those with a CA background drew upon its doctrine and specialized training in techniques to integrate civil considerations and civilian personnel into military plans and operations, but many of their solutions were met with strong institutional resistance or were short-lived. Ultimately, several of the structures and processes put in place by CJTF–82 were modified or reversed by the next rotational unit, demonstrating the fragility of concepts that were not as developed or institutionalized as the more traditional methodologies of military operations.

Operations have ended in Iraq and are winding down in Afghanistan, but government policy and military doctrine continue to promote integrated, whole-of-government solutions to stability operations. Future named operations will require unified response by multiple U.S. agencies. The cost to agencies in terms of personnel, training, equipment, and the associated funding may be a limiting factor in preparing for those operations. The departments and agencies of the U.S. Government must review the lessons of rotation 10 of Operation Enduring Freedom to institutionalize unified action and place a higher priority on developing relationships and competencies through experiments, training exercises, and operations. The challenges will be to maintain interest, prioritize, and work together during the intervening years so that the next experience does not require learning under fire.
Notes


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Joint Publication (JP) 3–08, Interorganizational Coordination During Joint Operations (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, June 24, 2011), recognizes the Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) as a “focal point for operational- and tactical-level coordination with civilian agencies.” The name Stability Operations was chosen to eliminate confusion between the Joint Operations Center and CMOC, as well as to align the section with its counterpart at higher headquarters. However, the intent was for the Stability Operations section to perform the function of a CMOC.


7 Cable, U.S. Embassy Kabul, Subject: Creation of Senior Civilian Representatives in Afghanistan—Responsibilities and Authorities, July 29, 2009.


9 Condensed from input to the Stability Operations AAR provided by Peter Riley, USAID, Key Terrain District team leader, CJTF–82/RC–E, April 2010.

10 Ibid.


12 Ibid.


14 Ibid. As a result of the tremendous efforts initiated by the PRS team, Bamyan and Panjshir provinces began the transition to full recognition status in July 2011.

15 The term minus indicates that an organization is incomplete or missing major elements.


CAHILL


20 Ibid.