

The Requirement for a Civil Affairs Department

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The sooner I can get rid of the questions outside the military scope, the happier I will be!

Sometimes I think I live 10 years each week, of which at least 9 are absorbed in political...

-General Eisenhower

A war whose only valid objective is to gain the active support of the population or at least to control it can only be a political war - 20 percent military, 80 percent politics.

-Chiang Kai-shek

In January 1963 MajGen Victor H. Krulak wrote about problems relating to the balance of responsibility and authority among military and civilian organizations during the war in Vietnam. He stated: "...This is a novel problem for which the United States is only now becoming organized..."¹ However, recent experiences in Iraq show a different, disappointing, view. Military and civilian organizations still struggle to balance responsibility and authority during phase IV, post combat operations. In current and future military operations troubled relationships will be avoided by establishing a Civil Affairs Department (CAD) to reduce friction, integrate capabilities and maintain focus.

I. Current and future operations

A good example of current and future operations, relevant to this article, is the decision made by the Dutch Government to stay for another two years in Afghanistan, as the lead nation of Task Force Uruzgan (TFU). The core of TFU consists of provisional recovery teams (PRT's) on the battalion level, which includes military Civil Military Operation (CMO) personnel and personnel from the Dutch State Department.²

¹ Victor H. Krulak, "Counterinsurgency: Fighting the Abstract War", *Marine Corps Gazette*: Vol. 91 Number 10, October 2007, 14.

² State Department personnel consist of a civilian representative, a development cooperation expert, a political advisor, a tribal expert, and interpreters.

Military CMO specialists from the CIMIC Support Element (CSE) support the projects and activities of the PRT's. These specialists often include reservists with some kind of civilian expertise.³

The Dutch government believes other departments than the Department of Defense (DOD) and more civilian organisations⁴ should be involved.⁵ The government also specifically stated two points:

1. The efforts made by Afghan government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO(s)) needs to be more supported. Besides, the support and guidance to rebuild governance in the province needs to be intensified.
2. The training and guidance of all Afghan security forces will be intensified to allow the Afghan army and police forces to have effective control over the most important urban areas and connecting infrastructure.⁶

³ Until now, these reservists have been working on healthcare, water management, agriculture, cattle-breeding, infrastructure, and juridical matters.

⁴ Like EUPOL and Dutch civilian organisations like International Development of Entrepreneurial Activities (IDEA) and NGO(s).

⁵ The Department of Development for example signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Afghan Department of Education.

⁶ Quoted from the Dutch Government Art 100 letter reference the decision to remain in Uruzgan Afghanistan till 1 August 2010, 30 November 2007.

In the meantime, security needs to improve. The military must focus on providing security, including training and operating with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). When these forces take on more responsibility, the Dutch government wants to change the organization of the PRT's to include more civilian personnel. As soon as possible the PRT's will be lead by a civilian; however, the military commander of TFU will remain in overall command of the mission. Nevertheless, operations in Iraq indicate this might be easier said than done.

II. A troubled relationship between military and civilian organizations in Iraq

There are several examples of troubled relationships between military and civilian organizations in Iraq.

When the CPA under the command of L. Paul Bremer⁷ took over from OHRA⁸, two orders were issued which had a huge impact on the events in Iraq:

1. De-Baathification of Iraqi Society.⁹

⁷ Paul Bremer was Henry Kissinger's chief of staff, served as ambassador to the Netherlands and headed the State Department's office on counterterrorism. Most important, however, he was not an expert on the Middle East and during his years as a diplomat had never been posted in the region. Besides, he had never been involved in nation-building.

⁸ On January 9, only two months before the start of the war, LTGEN (RET) Jay Garner was asked to be in charge of the reconstruction phase. He created the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance.

2. The Dissolution of Entities.¹⁰

Military commanders did not agree with these decisions, because they were trying to improve the security and build up the country using the Iraqi people and the existing military forces. The relationship between the military and the CPA worsened even more because of CPA's poor state of preparations and inability to operate outside Baghdad.¹¹ The military kept waiting for "local governance teams" that never showed up.

The second example of a troubled relationship between military and civilian organizations concerns the relationship between the military and NGO(s) because roles and mandates are often confusing. NGO(s) want to maintain their neutrality and independency during or after the conflict. Therefore, they do not want to be seen as allies of the military. These different roles and mandates do not mean that both organizations cannot

⁹ The top four levels of the Baath Party were to be barred from government jobs.

¹⁰ This law left 400,000 Iraqi Army personnel without a livelihood.

¹¹ Under the military, the CPA became known as "Cannot Produce Anything."

work together.¹² Most of the time they have common objectives and are closely related to each other.¹³

The third example deals with two incidents involving the civilian security contractor Blackwater.¹⁴ The first happened during the morning of March 31, 2004, when four Blackwater employees were killed and hung on a bridge. As a direct result the First Marine Expeditionary Force started Operation Vigilant Resolve to seize Fallujah. However, the Marines did not agree with this operation because they felt that they ought to let the situation settle down before they appeared to be attacking out of revenge.¹⁵ The second event occurred on Sunday 16 September 2007, when 28 civilians died in a shooting incident involving members of Blackwater who started shooting after a roadside bomb went off at Mansour. The incident showed the lack of legal status of civilian contractors: Because they

¹² Coordination between the efforts of military forces and NGO(s) is essential but can not be formalised. An alternative is to make use of HANDCON. An informal relationship based on a handshake, introduced by General USMC Zinni (RET).

¹³ If the essential services line of operation calls for providing food, water, and basic medical supplies/care to the people in a certain province, and some NGO(s) are already planning to work on that task. The military should explore how it can support them (without compromising NGO neutrality).

¹⁴ Its founder Erik Prince started to build his firm in 1995, which resulted in the creation of a 7,000-acre facility in Moyock, North Carolina known as Blackwater Lodge and Training Centre. Many US and international law enforcement agencies make use of their training. In addition, the company received a 109 billion dollar contract from the State Department to secure its personnel.

¹⁵ Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The rise of the world's most powerful mercenary army* (New York: Nations Books, 2007), 114.

were not combatants they could not be prosecuted according to the law of war and the American military law. Besides, the CPA had issued Order 17 in June 2004. This order stated that civilian contractors received immunity, which prevented them for being prosecuted under Iraqi law. Basically the contractors operated in an area without any specific legal accountability.¹⁶ The Iraqi people did not understand the difference between U.S. civilians and the military, so these incidents again influenced the operations of the military and particularly impeded the military objective to win popular support. The question is how the relationship between military and civilian organisations can be fixed.

III. CAD capabilities

The U.S. needs the intervention of a third party to achieve the desired coordination and to balance authority and integrate capabilities. This agency can take the Goldwater Nichols Act one step further and force all involved government agencies to work together.¹⁷ A good example is the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), used

¹⁶ The FBI is still running an investigation but faces many challenges. Involved Blackwater personnel presented their statements to the Department of State under the condition that these would not be used for investigations currently conducted by the FBI.

¹⁷ The Coldwater Nichols Act of 1986 defined a new structure for the DOD and mandated a joint effort among the services.

in Vietnam.¹⁸ CORDS used Provincial Senior Advisers (PSA's) and fully integrated military and civilian agencies in each province of Vietnam. Throughout the hierarchy, civilian advisers had military deputies and vice versa.¹⁹

Another example was the Chinese ability during the spring of 1949, to recruit and train more than 50,000 students whose mission was to follow the Army and assist it by taking over "army servicing, the publicity war, education, and mobilization of the masses."²⁰ The CAD could be able to do something similar: Train military and nonmilitary members following an interagency education program. Instead of 50,000 Chinese students, the Peace Corps could fill a similar role for example.

According to Joint Vision 2020, "The primary challenge of interagency operations is to achieve unity of effort despite the diverse cultures, competing interests, and differing priorities of participating organizations."²¹ Unity of command is one of the most important principles in the military. The military uses commander's intent to make sure all orders are nested within higher's intent. Military and civilian

¹⁸ This agency was created in May 1967 by President Lyndon Johnson after civilian and military agencies failed to cooperate in Vietnam.

¹⁹ Unfortunately, CORDS was instituted too late and could not change the outcome of the war.

²⁰ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (London: Praeger Security International, 1964), 62.

²¹ Department of Defense, *Joint Vision 2020* (2000), 26.

organizations should also have one (civilian) commander whose intent is to synchronize all activities of the military and (non)governmental agencies to fully exploit the capabilities of the joint force and to accomplish the mission.²² The CAD is the agency that could take on this challenge.

"Train as you fight" is the best way to prepare the military for operations. In the current operating environment, military and civilian organizations are operating side by side. This means those organizations should train side by side as well, before they leave for operations.²³ Together they should conduct tactical decision games like the wargame Desert Crossing, developed by General Zinni.²⁴

If military and civilian organizations start training together, they also start to understand each other's capabilities. They need to accept that they all have their own roles, but that they all depend on each other. This approach would also help to create the correct non-offensive mindset.

IV. The advantages of a CAD

²² United States Marine Corps, *MCDP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations* (2001), 1-11.

²³ Late 2005, a COIN academy was established at the U.S. military base at Taji, just north of Baghdad. Attending this course was mandatory for all unit commanders in Iraq. Evaluations from the students show they would have preferred to join this school six months before leaving the U.S., so they would have time to train their troops.

²⁴ He organized this wargame to integrate the civilian agencies, from the Agency for International Development to the Treasury Department, to govern the country.

The biggest advantage of a CAD is its ability to reduce friction (as described in paragraph two). A CAD must be able to open up civilian and military organizations to exploit each other's capabilities.

The second advantage is the ability of a CAD to direct all instruments of national power. The CAD must integrate all capabilities and take the lead in training and creating regional interagency teams (RIAT), led by senior civilian executives who have the authority and organizational flexibility to task-organize and direct all the instruments of national power in their region, including the military.²⁵

Finally, task specialization and clear task descriptions are necessary to ensure all involved organizations focus on their primary reason for existence. This reduces the confusion about roles and mandates that exists between military and civilian organizations. Eventually this will save the U.S. taxpayer money. The military needs to focus on providing security in order to prevent situations such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq in which NGO(s) and other civil organizations became targets of violence. The challenges the Marines faced after the ambush on the Blackwater personnel in Fallujah and the problem of immunity would not exist if military personnel would conduct the force protection tasking.

²⁵ Quoted from Douglas J. Scott, *Organizing for Interagency Success at the Regional Level*, 10 May 2007. <<http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA470793>>, accessed on 02 November 2007.

V. Counterargument

After the open-ended peacekeeping operations and the nation-building efforts in Kosovo many Americans argued the US should not commit itself to anymore nation building because the lack of an endstate results in the commitment of military forces for interminable periods. This opposition, emanated largely from the State Department which lacked the capability to support the nation building efforts.²⁶ Also several hundred diplomats of the State Department did not want to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan. They reacted negatively to the announcement in October 2007 that the State Department adopted a policy which could force them to serve in those countries. Many diplomats pointed out the dangers of a war zone, lack of security, and regular attacks on U.S. personnel as reasons for their opposition.

Task specialization is the answer to the security concern expressed by US State Department diplomats. When these diplomats focus on the development of local civilian organizations, the military can focus on providing security.

²⁶ At a hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in early February 2007, Rice said that more than 40 percent of nearly 300 State Department positions to be added in Iraq as part of the President's latest strategy could not be filled and must therefore be filled by the DoD. "Frankly, the agencies of the U.S. Government cannot fill that many posts of those kinds of specialties" as quickly as necessary, Rice said. "And so, our agreement with the DoD was that for a period of time we would actually use reservists to fill those positions because the military does have a reserve corps that has many of those specialties." Quoted from MAJ. Tenne, Timothy T. "Why the military can't do it all. Where are the other instruments of power?" *Armed Forces Journal*. April 2007, 42-43.

The stovepipes must be broken down by all the involved agencies working closely together.

In addition, the military need to change their focus. They still do not take nation-building seriously enough. Most of the time, artillery personnel, not civil affairs (CA) professionals, are tasked with conducting CA. The disadvantage is that those units will be rotated and replaced with the next artillery unit at the expense of continuity and relationship building.

Many military personnel and diplomats also believe a CA-billet will adversely affect their careers. Till now there has been no general or high ranking diplomat with a CA background. Consequently most training of US military personnel is still conducted with an offensive mindset. Rebuilding countries asks for a different mindset, more like that of Major Joppolo in *A Bell for Adano*. Divesting themselves of this offensive mindset is one of the challenges the military face.

This mindset of diplomats and military personnel must change in the future. If these agencies like it or not, nation-building is the key to success necessary not only to win the war, but also to win the peace.

VI. Conclusion

Military forces have to conduct tasks they have been training for, such as providing security. Rebuilding

governments and providing essential services need to be done by civilian experts.²⁷ To do this effectively, all involved agencies need to breakdown stovepipes and "train as they fight." Therefore, a CAD is required. Geographic combatant CAD commands can be transformed into truly interagency organizations under civilian leadership and prepared to conduct the full spectrum of operations using all elements of national power within their assigned region. Through interagency cooperation, the U.S. can indeed state "United we stand!"

Word count: 1843

²⁷ Besides the rebuilding efforts by civilian experts, rebuilding needs to be supported and/or conducted by the local population.

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