

Improving Interagency Coordination and Unity of Effort: An Organizational Analysis of the Contemporary Provincial Reconstruction Team

**A Monograph
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Abstract

IMPROVING INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND UNITY OF EFFORT: AN ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM by MAJ John H. Rogan, US Army, 50 pages.

This research seeks to answer one primary research question: What organizational and institutional factors are hindering effective interagency coordination and unity of effort within the contemporary Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)? To answer this question, this research conducts a comparative analysis between two case studies; a current operational-level PRT and a PRT-equivalent organization that operated during Vietnam. It logically-focuses and justifies analytical results based upon sound measures of effectiveness drawn from Mary Jo Hatch's *Organization Theory*. These measures of effectiveness focus on Hatch's organizational core concepts of *environment*, *social structure*, *technology*, *culture*, and *physical structure*. Applying these measures of effectiveness along with the application of the three perspectives of modernism, symbolic-interpretivism and postmodernism enables a complete examination of the contemporary and historical PRT organizations, identifying those factors that inhibit or promote effective interagency coordination and unity of effort.

This research demonstrates that while hierarchical control is certainly a critical organizational factor driving interagency coordination and unity of effort within the PRT, it is not the only factor. Analyzing both cases studies, this research reveals that other factors such as a favorable security environment, cross-cultural functional teaming, charismatic leadership that embraces cultural differences in pursuit of a PRT-wide identity, integrative technologies, and physical structure are also essential to producing a cohesive and optimal PRT system that maximizes interagency coordination and unity of effort. Finally, this research shows that there is a pressing need for interagency doctrine that drives institutional interagency training and leadership programs.

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Introduction

Politicians and scholars have historically identified improved interagency coordination as a political or theoretical panacea for effective civil-military unity of effort within counterinsurgency operations. During the Vietnam War, President John F. Kennedy espoused:

Pure military skill is not enough. A full spectrum of military, para-military and civil action must be blended to produce success. The enemy uses economic and political warfare, propaganda and naked military aggression in an endless combination to oppose a free choice of government, and suppress the rights of the individual by terror, by subversion and by force of arms. To win in this struggle, our officers and [service] men must understand and combine the political, economic and civil actions with skilled military efforts in the execution of the mission.¹

Within the current operational environment, both political and military leaders have espoused the need for effective military outreach to the interagency for optimal application of all instruments of national power within such places as Iraq or Afghanistan. On May 18th 2005, President George W. Bush stated that "We must . . . improve the responsiveness of our government to help nations emerging from tyranny and war. . . [O]ur government must be able to move quickly to provide needed assistance."² In addition to members of today's civil-military organizations such as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), this topic of research is of interest to the military, interagency, "think tanks," academia and organizational theorists.

The issues of civil-military operations and interagency coordination have produced contentious and long-standing debates. Compounded by cultural and organizational frictions, these debates oftentimes surround the central issue of civilian control of the military. This

¹ President John F. Kennedy, "Letter to the United States Army," April 11, 1962, quoted in Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. JCS, 20 March 2009), I-6, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1.pdf (accessed September 9, 2009).

² President George W. Bush, May 18, 2005, quoted in Joint Publication 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. JCS, 8 July 2008), IV-11, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_57.pdf (accessed March 3, 2010).

research recognizes these historical frictions as a starting point to identify any organizational and institutional factors that continue to hinder interagency coordination and unity of effort within the contemporary PRT at the operational level of war.

In the broader context of the problem, interagency coordination and unity of effort within the civil-military team is just as contentious an issue as any associated cultural and organizational frictions. At the extremes, some within the political arena believe that aggressive and effective interagency coordination is the solution for counterinsurgency success. Others believe that the military has historically led and is solely responsible for the implementation of all stability and civil support functions. While these political and cultural views represent the polar extremes of the problem, they also represent the widely differing perceptions of just what interagency coordination can accomplish. This research will show that the ultimate answer is certainly somewhere in the middle. These extremes in perceptions are also a good indicator of the frictions associated with the practice of civil-military operations. At one point, it is a political or cultural problem within the bureaucracy and at another, an organizational problem since history has demonstrated that different organizational structures have produced radically different results. Analyzing these cultural, organizational and institutional points of friction will enable a greater understanding of current PRT operations, which will ultimately pave the way for greater interagency coordination and unity of effort at the operational level of war.

In pursuit of such understanding, this research seeks to answer one primary research question: What organizational and institutional factors are hindering effective interagency coordination and unity of effort within the contemporary PRT? This research recognizes there have been many studies espousing the need for interagency outreach by the military within the current operational environment. However, there is scant scholarly work that has examined contemporary civil-military structures through the lens of history, or comparative analysis. This study fills that gap.

This research asserts that while there have been improvements to interagency coordination and unity of effort within today's operational-level PRT, it is still hampered by structural, organizational and institutional deficiencies. Contemporary political pundits extol the benefits of effective military outreach to the interagency to improve such coordination and effort. Others claim that many of the issues that have arisen within such places as Iraq and Afghanistan have resulted from ineffective outreach or the lack of interagency coordination, leading to decreased unity of effort throughout the civil-military team.

This research uses contemporary lessons-learned and organizational PRT structures as employed within the numerous regions and provinces throughout post-surge Iraq (2007 - present) as a current-day basis of analysis. This research utilizes one historically similar case study, which focuses on PRT-like organizations that operated at the end of the Vietnam War. These post-Tet organizations were arguably the most successful civil-military teams of the entire war, producing operational gains within a complex insurgency very similar to Iraq. Both of these contextual case studies fall within similar points within the counterinsurgency spectrum, when both had improved effects within the operational environment. These similarities should ensure a logical and comprehensive comparative analysis with limited analytical bias.

To accomplish such an analysis, this study compares a current operational-level PRT against a PRT-equivalent organization that operated during Vietnam in order to identify potential structural, organizational, institutional and resource improvements to enable greater interagency coordination and unity of effort. It will justify results based upon sound measures of effectiveness drawn from Mary Jo Hatch's *Organization Theory*. Finally, this research will answer the following questions: What causal factors are hindering effective interagency coordination and unity of effort within the contemporary PRT? What organizational shortfalls remain within the post-surge Iraq PRT? What organizational, institutional and resource requirements are still needed for optimal interagency coordination and unity of effort?

This research has five central terms and associated definitions. The first term is Unity of Effort and its relation to the concepts of unity of command and interagency coordination.

According to Joint Publication 1(JP 1), *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*,

During multinational operations and interagency coordination, unity of command may not be possible, but the requirement for unity of effort becomes paramount. Unity of effort — coordination through cooperation and common interests — is an essential complement to unity of command.³

More importantly, a comprehensive memorandum of agreement process can produce unity of effort within this situation. JP-1 continues, "Coordinating authority may be granted and modified through a memorandum of agreement to provide unity of command and unity of effort for operations involving, RC [Reserve Component], and AC [Active Duty Component] forces engaged in interagency activities."⁴

The second central term is Interagency Coordination. As per JP 1, interagency coordination is "the cooperation and communication that occurs between agencies of the USG, including the DOD, to accomplish an objective. Similarly, in the context of DOD involvement, IGO [international government agencies] and NGO [nongovernmental organizations] coordination refers to coordination between elements of DOD and IGOs or NGOs to achieve an objective."⁵

The third central term is the definition of a PRT. In accordance with JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, a PRT is a civil-military organization that:

helps stabilize the operational [level of war] environment in a province or locality through its combined diplomatic, informational, military, and economic capabilities. It combines representatives from interagency and international partners into a

³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. JCS, 20 March 2009), IV-1, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1.pdf (accessed September 9, 2009).

⁴ Ibid., IV-13.

⁵ Ibid., VII-1.

cohesive unit capable of independently conducting operations to stabilize the environment by enhancing the legitimacy and the effectiveness of the [host nation] HN government.⁶

The fourth central term is the definition of Comparative Analysis. For this research, comparative analysis examines and compares a single topic of interest, such as a PRT organization, at two different points in time to enable a qualitative case-study analysis, utilizing logical measures of effectiveness. Such analysis requires similar historical settings and organizations in order to minimize analytical and historical biases.

The fifth central term is Organization Theory. In her book *Organization Theory*, Mary Jo Hatch states that organization theory is actually a misnomer, as it is comprised of multiple theories developed by many theorists over an extensive period of time. According to Hatch, organization theory "always has and always will embrace multiple perspectives because it draws inspiration from a wide variety of other fields of study, and because organizations will remain too complex and malleable to ever be summed up by any single theory."⁷ From these multiple theories, Hatch offers five core organizational concepts of *environment*, *social structure*, *technology*, *culture* and *physical structure*, and three theoretical perspectives of modernism, symbolic-interpretivism and postmodernism, as a way to analyze organizations such as the PRT.

This research posits that organizational, institutional and resource improvements can maximize interagency coordination and unity of effort within the PRT. Further, the application of Hatch's five core concepts will lead to organizational improvements that truly transcend traditional cultural and bureaucratic stovepipes. Finally, dedicated interagency focus on comprehensive manning and training programs will generate institutional and resource improvements for the contemporary PRT.

⁶ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. JCS, 8 July 2008), xviii, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_57.pdf (accessed March 3, 2010).

⁷ Mary Jo Hatch, *Organization Theory*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

One key limitation to this study is the relatively narrow focus on operational-level PRT's within post-surge Iraq, leading to case selection biases. To mitigate such biases, this research will focus on the operational-level PRT, and not the tactical "embedded" PRTs that have different organizational structures and chains of command. Another limitation is the time period for each case study. The Vietnam and contemporary OIF case studies will focus on the post-Tet and post-surge offensive periods, respectively. Finally, this research is limited to unclassified data to ensure the broadest dissemination possible.

As far as contemporary significance, both political and military leaders assert the criticality of effective interagency coordination and unity of effort for optimal application of all instruments of national power within such places as Iraq or Afghanistan. By identifying key elements affecting PRT effectiveness, interagency coordination and unity of effort, this research will identify organizational and institutional improvements within the civil-military arena.

Finally, this research seeks to inform future PRT leaders and members from the Department of State (DOS), Department of Defense (DOD) and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. It focuses on the field of Military Arts and Sciences with emphasis on interagency coordination and unity of effort.

Interagency coordination is a subset of the broader civil-military field of study. This field gained scholarly traction with the publishing of such cornerstone works as Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. These works focus on the cultural and organizational frictions associated with the application of civilian and military operations.⁸ Ultimately, these frictions emanate from the broader issue of civilian control of the military, which has direct implications into this research

⁸ Peter D. Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control." *Armed Forces & Society* (Winter 1996): 5-8.

topic. Every contemporary PRT is civilian led and comprised of military and interagency team members.

While unity of effort is a goal of effective interagency coordination, it is still a challenging prospect. Military doctrine provides a basis for achieving such unity of effort. As stated previously, JP-1 contends that binding memorandum of agreements and other authorizing directives that meet “the objectives of all represented agencies in a cooperative and efficient manner”⁹ can produce unity of effort. Other doctrinal sources, such as JP 3-08, *Interagency Coordination during Joint Operations*, and JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, reinforce the benefits of interagency coordination and unity of effort within organizations such as the Civil Military Operations Center, especially at the operational level of war. These sources provide a comprehensive and substantial doctrinal basis for this research.

A review of scholarly works focused on PRT-like organizations that operated during Vietnam provides additional literary basis for potential organizational models that could be applied to the contemporary PRT. Within *Pacification The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds*, Richard Hunt examines the American role in pacification, which was largely one of providing advice and support for the South Vietnamese program. Hunt describes the political and military frictions that prevented the U.S. from fully embracing the "defensive strategy" of pacification until very late into the conflict. Finally, Hunt explains the many challenges associated with integrating the various military, civilian and intelligence agencies to achieve a common goal.¹⁰ Within *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, Thomas Scoville describes three key reorganizations that led to the establishment of an innovative U.S. civil-military organization, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support - CORDS,

⁹ Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, VII-7.

¹⁰ Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

which led U.S. advice and support to the South Vietnamese government's pacification program. Focusing on the years 1966 to 1968, Scoville describes the various political pressures that drove such radical reorganization. These pressures stem from the effects of the South's own various civil-military reorganizations, the growing commitment of American civilian resources that quickly outpaced the U.S. Embassy's span of control and political pressures from Washington to divert attention away from combat operations to the more positive program of pacification.¹¹ Finally, within *Why the North Won the Vietnam War*, Professor Marc Gilbert and eight notable scholars present an account of the war through the Vietnamese perspective. Through this perspective, Gilbert seeks to provide a more balanced historical view of the war and those factors leading to the North's success. He also identifies American shortcomings in areas such as the U.S. civil-military support to the South's pacification program.¹²

In their article, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future," Dale Andrade and James Willbanks assert that the use of the CORDS model effectively integrated civil and military representatives under a single chain of command. Within *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level; CORDS – a model for the Advanced Civil Team*, Ross Coffey points out that the CORDS model could be utilized within the contemporary PRT to improve unity of effort, although such an organization would require presidential or congressional approval.

Hatch's book, *Organization Theory*, provides the primary theoretical basis for this research. Hatch offers five core concepts of organizational theory that offer a sound basis for organizational research and analysis of such civil-military organizations as the PRT. These concepts, in addition to the three complimentary modernist, symbolic-interpretive, and

¹¹ Thomas W. Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Military History, United States Army, 1982), iii.

¹² Marc Jason Gilbert, ed., *Why the North Won the Vietnam War*, (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

postmodernist perspectives, offer a set of measures of effectiveness to determine both organizational and institutional ways to achieve greater interagency coordination and unity of effort within the PRT.

Organization Theory

This analysis uses three main perspectives and five core concepts of Hatch's *Organization Theory* to examine both the contemporary and historical civil-military team case studies. According to Hatch, "Organization theory always has and always will embrace multiple perspectives because it draws inspiration from a wide variety of other fields of study, and because organizations will remain too complex and malleable to ever be summed up by any single theory."¹³ The modernist perspective focuses on the organization as an independent object or entity. Modernists focus on how to increase efficiency, effectiveness and performance through the application structure and hierarchical control. Instead of treating organizations as objects like modernists, symbolic-interpretivists treat them as social constructions whose reality is based on the interpretations of its members. Meanwhile, postmodernists will generate healthy skepticism toward any dominant method or theory of organizational analysis, especially the modernist perspective. They perceive the modernist perspective as an attempt by an organization's leadership to dominate and control an organization, while denying any competing or alternative views and inputs by subordinates.

An understanding of these three perspectives allows for their application to Hatch's five organizational core concepts of *environment, social structure, technology, culture, and physical structure*. To enable a comprehensive understanding of the PRT organization, this research will apply each perspective against each core concept.

Organizational Environment - 1st Core Concept

Within the modernist perspective, the organization and its environment are separate entities with organizational boundary between them. Symbolic interpretivists, in contrast to modernists, view environments as social constructions. They believe that "organizational

¹³ Hatch, *Organization Theory*, 5.

members enact their environment by constructing the features they think are significant and need to be addressed."¹⁴ As such, different organizations may construct their environment in different ways depending on the interpretations of their leaders. Finally, postmodernists would critique modernist theories of organization-environment relations for being anti-environmental, "while silencing demands for environmentally and socially responsible action."¹⁵

Social Structure- 2nd Core Concept

Early sociologists such as Max Weber influenced modernist thought during the 1950's and 1960's, describing social structure along hierarchical and bureaucratic lines. Modernists focused on "identifying the organizational principles and structural elements that lead to optimal organizational performance in the belief that, once basic laws governing these relationships were discovered, the perfect organization could be designed."¹⁶ However, empirical studies also suggested that "both stable and unstable environments required a high degree of integration...in unstable environments [like those of post-Tet Vietnam and post-surge Iraq] there is a need to push decision making to lower levels in the hierarchy so that problems can be dealt with through direct communication with those possessing relevant knowledge."¹⁷

While modernists see social structures as things, entities, objects and elements, symbolic-interpretivists see them as comprised of the social patterns of people making up the organization. According to Hatch, social structures are "human creations, they are dynamic works-in-progress that emerge from social interaction and collective meaning-making."¹⁸

Postmodernists challenge modernist concepts of social structure and are critical of those who hold power over others. In Hatch's view, "Postmodernists are extremely skeptical of the

¹⁴ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 109.

¹⁷ Ibid., 113.

¹⁸ Ibid., 126.

principles of hierarchy, centralization, control and integration that are so dear to modernists, insisting that these are not real underlying orders but merely words used to legitimize those who hold power."¹⁹ They would argue that the modernist ideas of differentiation and integration are just means of maintaining control over subordinates.

Organizational Technology - 3rd Core Concept

Modernists believe that technology is the means to convert inputs to outputs. Other modernists would argue that new technologies have reduced the need for physical proximity and hierarchical controls, enabling the implementation of virtual organizations and teams. Such new technologies can also lead to greater access to information and "greater decentralization of decision making because data is more readily available and integration occurs through electronic linking, increased spans of control and decreased hierarchical levels as individuals deal with more information [within such organizations as the PRT]."²⁰

Unlike modernists, symbolic-interpretivists believe that like every other aspect of organizations, technology is socially constructed. "Symbolic-interpretivists study how technologies are themselves shaped by processes of social construction...technologies both shape and are shaped by cultural norms, power relations and aspects of the organization's physical structure."²¹ Within the PRT, this perspective would analyze how technology is influenced by the social interactions of the differing agencies and activities represented within the organization.

Postmodernists, on the other hand, believe that "technology's popularity with modernists derives from its ability to mask the ways employees are monitored and controlled by those in authority."²² To postmodernists, those in authority use technology as a power play to control

¹⁹ Ibid., 131.

²⁰ Ibid., 161.

²¹ Ibid., 141.

²² Ibid.

personnel. Within an organization such as the PRT, this perspective would analyze the extent of the use of technologies (such as email, VTC's, etc.) by leaders to control or monitor their subordinates.

Organizational Culture- 4th Core Concept

American social psychologist Edgar Schein is one of two leading modernist theorists whose influence helped establish organizational culture as a legitimate topic within organization theory. In Hatch's view, "According to Schein, the essence of [organizational] culture is its core of basic assumptions..., which members of a culture understand as their reality."²³ These assumptions are expressed within a given organizational culture as values, norms and artifacts.

Other Modernists (Irene Lurie and Norma Riccucci) applied Schein's framework to analyze the impact of welfare reform on the culture of Welfare Agencies within the United States. Based on their analysis, they concluded that if every member of the organization did not accept the assumptions or benefits driving welfare reform, or cultural change, then heavy resistance to change will result.²⁴ The lesson learned for organizations such as the PRT is that only when individual members can see some benefit in cultural change will such change occur, leading to a PRT-wide identity over any individual agency identity.

Some symbolic-interpretivists, on the other hand, focus on the use of narrative, or thick description, to study organizational culture. They found that a leader's personal narrative was critical to organizational culture. Those that could express their vision in a competent and persuasive manner promoted a successful organizational culture.²⁵ Applying this perspective to the PRT would suggest that effective and inspirational leadership matters. Furthermore, both the leader and members of the PRT can influence the dynamics of organizational culture through

²³ Ibid., 185.

²⁴ Ibid., 188.

²⁵ Ibid., 198.

their use of narrative, through such vehicles as vision statements, standard operating procedures, memoranda of agreement and other codified processes and procedures. A fully integrated narrative would be essential to an effective organizational culture that seeks optimal interagency coordination and unity of effort.

Physical Structure of the Organization- 5th Core Concept

The focus of most modernist studies on physical structure has been on the relationship between the physical form of an organization and the resulting behavior of individuals within these spaces. "The basic idea is that, since humans cannot walk through walls or see through floors, their behavior is shaped by the geography and layout of the physical structures they occupy."²⁶ While advances in information technology have reduced some of the limitations imposed by physical structure, they have not eliminated the importance of face-to-face meetings, which are still considered to be the most critical of all interactions. The lesson that this modernist perspective provides with respect to PRT physical structure is that layout and proximity matters, especially given the prospect of integrating team members from disparate agencies and activities. "When locations are close and/or equipment is shared, relationships can form through interactions that occur spontaneously."²⁷

Unlike modernists, symbolic-interpretivists would call attention to the symbolic meaning of physical space such as completely open areas, noting that they symbolize open communications and lack of barriers between personnel. As such, symbolic interpretivists would emphasize "the importance of meanings associated with organizational symbolism and many aspects of an organization's physical structure serve in a symbolic capacity."²⁸ Applying this perspective to the PRT indicates that the physical shape, condition, and sense of physical barriers

²⁶ Ibid., 233.

²⁷ Ibid., 234.

²⁸ Ibid.

affect members' perceptions or beliefs about an organization; whether it is inclusive or exclusive, or suitable for social and team interactions.

Many postmodernists argue that the physical structure must be challenged to counter any perceived or real efforts at executive dominance and power. "They demand that we learn to control or resist the reproduction [of these structures to minimize] unwanted influence."²⁹ If applied to the PRT, this postmodernist perspective cautions leaders to understand the perceived controlling influence of certain physical structures.

This research will apply each of Hatch's core concepts and perspectives as measures of effectiveness to the historical and contemporary PRT case studies. These measures of effectiveness will be satisfied if there is evidence indicating the application of a core concept and perspective within a given case study. Their application will help determine whether the contemporary PRT organization is operating optimally, with improved interagency coordination and unity of effort.

²⁹ Ibid., 237.

Vietnam Case Study

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, U.S. involvement within Vietnam focused primarily on advice and support to the South Vietnamese government and military to prevent a North Vietnamese conventional attack. Very little of the U.S. military advice and financial support was focused on the South Vietnamese pacification program, which was combating a southern, self-sustaining insurgency. Washington based its policy of support upon the erroneous assumption that the Saigon government had sufficient forces to secure the South's rural enclaves and defeat the insurgents. Unfortunately, the South Vietnamese government did not have such forces available. From 1961 to 1964, the South reorganized their civil-military pacification program many times to achieve their pacification goal of providing security and economic and social reform to the rural areas of South Vietnam. Unfortunately, each program, from their Strategic Hamlet program, to Chien Thang and finally Hop Tac, failed to achieve sustainable pacification throughout the South.³⁰

Between 1964 and 1965, the security situation deteriorated amidst a build-up of conventional military forces within North Vietnam and continued pacification failures within South Vietnam, forcing a reevaluation of U.S. policy. During this time, American military strength in South Vietnam "grew from 20,000 to nine times that figure, and civilian representation increased correspondingly."³¹ Unfortunately, each U.S. civilian agency pursued their programs with little regard for any overall civil-military strategy. Furthermore, Hunt asserts that "despite the growing numbers, only a few [U.S.] advisors were assigned to pacification, a mere 100-150 of the 1820 in Vietnam at the end of June 1964."³² Commander of U.S. military forces, General William Westmoreland rejected the use of American forces to protect populated

³⁰ Hunt, *Pacification The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds*, 13-14.

³¹ Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 7.

³² Hunt, *Pacification The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds*, 18.

enclaves in support of the South's pacification program. He believed this "defensive strategy" was not a good use of American combat power that was better suited for an offensive "war of attrition" against conventional threats.³³ Thus, the majority of U.S. advice and support continued to focus on building up the South's conventional military forces in lieu of any improved U.S. civil-military effort focused on the South's pacification program. However, U.S. political pressures for such civil-military reorganization were growing as a result of the South's own civil-military reorganizations, the growing commitment of American resources and Washington's desire to divert U.S. popular attention away from combat operations and onto the more positive pacification process.³⁴

Focused on increasing U.S. support to pacification and improving civil-military integration, President Johnson appointed Robert Komer as his special assistant for "the other war," or pacification. At this time in 1966, a number of key studies influenced Komer and the future of U.S. civil-military organizational support to pacification. One such study, the "Program for the Pacification and Long-Term Development of Vietnam," or PROVN, declared that "there was 'no unified effective pattern' to American actions and called for a greater emphasis on pacification in the allied war effort."³⁵ In August 1966, Komer circulated another study, "Giving a New Thrust to Pacification: Analysis, Concept, and Management." Scoville asserts that "no other document so accurately forecast the future of the U.S. pacification advisory program."³⁶ The study divided pacification into three key objectives: achieving local security; breaking the hold of the Viet Cong insurgency over the South Vietnamese people; and instituting programs to win active popular support for the South Vietnamese government.

³³ Ibid., 33.

³⁴ Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 16.

³⁵ Jeffrey Woods, "Counterinsurgency, the Interagency Process, and Vietnam: The American Experience," *The US Army and the Interagency Process: Historical Perspectives* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 109.

³⁶ Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 31.

On 9 May 1967, National Security Action Memorandum 362, 'Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification (Revolutionary Development)', codified these three pacification objectives and established Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, or CORDS.³⁷ This new civil-military organization definitively placed the military and General Westmoreland in charge of pacification. Westmoreland would have three deputies, one of them a civilian with three-star-equivalent rank in charge of pacification. More importantly, there would be a single chain of command for this critical program seeking to wrest away the population's allegiance from the Viet Cong insurgents.

Komer assumed the pacification leadership role as Deputy of CORDS, which placed him alongside the Deputy MACV commander, General Creighton Abrams. For the first time, civilians led military personnel within a wartime command.³⁸ Finally, "CORDS encompassed all of the typical pacification activities: economic improvement, security, and political development, and its officers held both military and civilian ranks. Province and district level advisors were recruited from MACV, USAID, USIA, CIA, and the State Department, and CORDS acted as a liaison between those agencies."³⁹

Following the 1968 Tet offensive, General Westmoreland and U.S. Ambassador Bunker called on Komer to lead a nationwide recovery effort. As such, Komer and CORDS conceived, planned, and supported one of the largest South Vietnamese pacification efforts to exploit the insurgents' weakness stemming from losses in the offensive and two subsequent attacks.⁴⁰ Its efforts would lead to some of the most significant pacification successes of the entire conflict.

³⁷ U.S. President, National Security Action Memorandum NO. 362, "Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification (Revolutionary Development)," <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/nsams/nsam362-1.gif> (accessed April 20, 2010).

³⁸ Dale Andrade & James H. Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the future," *Military Review* (March-April 2006): 14.

³⁹ Woods, "Counterinsurgency, the Interagency Process, and Vietnam," 109.

⁴⁰ Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 79.

Organizational Environment - 1st Core Concept

As stated previously, the modernist perspective perceives the organization and its environment as being separate entities with an organizational boundary between them. Reinforcing this perspective, historian James McCollum asserts that the focus of the CORDS program and its support to pacification was on supporting the people within South Vietnam, the CORDS teams' external environment. McCollum states that "Komer was well aware that pacification had to be performed by the Vietnamese; therefore, CORDS at all levels interfaced with the Vietnamese. It stressed that the purpose of pacification was to make the Vietnamese programs effective."⁴¹ This holistic understanding of the importance of effective Vietnamese programs underscores the modernist perspective and the relative importance of the South Vietnamese people and agencies as external agents to the CORDS program.

However, Komer argues that environmental factors also impeded the success of CORDS, and pacification in general. Within "Clear, Hold and Rebuild," Komer asserts that the CORDS teams' Vietnamese partners were plagued by "administrative inefficiency and corruption, lack of training and motivation, high attrition rates in personnel, to name only a few of the problems."⁴² While this South Vietnamese bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption certainly had some effect on the overall effectiveness of the CORDS program, it did not defeat the overall effort. According to Coffey, "It was this combination [of civil-military integration within CORDS] that contributed to the defeat of the Viet Cong Insurgency and the removal of its popular support."⁴³

CORDS was not the only factor influencing pacification success. There were two other key environmental factors at play. First, the Tet Offensive of 1968 severely attrited the ranks of

⁴¹ James McCollum, "The CORDS Pacification Organization in Vietnam: A Civilian-Military Effort," *Armed Forces and Society* vol. 10, no. 1 (Fall 1983): 113.

⁴² Robert W. Komer, "Clear, Hold and Rebuild," *Army Magazine* (May 1970): 23.

⁴³ Ross M. Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level - CORDS - a model for the Advanced Civilian Team*, (SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2006), 34-35.

local communist guerillas. According to McCollum, "The decimation of the Vietcong in the Tet offensive opened the way for effective pacification."⁴⁴ Komer reinforces this notion, arguing that "the Tet offensive stimulated such strong anti-VC feeling in the cities that [South Vietnam's] President Thieu revived the old idea of organizing the people for the own defenseIn a real sense, Tet made 'Vietnamization' [or, pacification] both essential and feasible."⁴⁵ Komer again reinforces the modernist perspective that environmental factors (Tet Offensive) influenced CORDS and pacification effectiveness by stating that "My outstanding successor, Ambassador William Colby, has pointed out how radically improved security [post-Tet] in 1969 permitted much greater GVN emphasis on reviving local self-government," as well as increased development opportunities for CORDS.⁴⁶

Second, the South's creation of the Peoples Self Defense Force (PSDF) also increased pacification success. McCollum states that the PSDF "mobilized large numbers of South Vietnamese civilians to patrol their communities at night, preventing the Vietcong from operating undetected in or near any populated areas."⁴⁷ Reinforcing McCollum's view of the PSDF's utility, Raymond Davis, a former CORDS member, asserts that in addition to Vietnamese regular forces (ARVN) and National Police defenses, an organized PSDF of local inhabitants provides village and hamlet defense, a key CORDS role of population security and protection.⁴⁸

Transitioning from the modernist to the symbolic interpretivist perspective, which asserts that individual organizations construct or impact their environment, Davis argues that the overall effectiveness of the CORDS program may have been a factor for the Tet Offensive. He states that "CORDS, a thorn in the side of the Viet Cong (VC), has been frequently denounced by the VC.

⁴⁴ McCollum, "The CORDS Pacification Organization in Vietnam," 117.

⁴⁵ Komer, "Clear, Hold and Rebuild," 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁷ McCollum, "The CORDS Pacification Organization in Vietnam," 117.

⁴⁸ Raymond Davis, "CORDS: Key to Vietnamization," *Soldiers Magazine* (July 1971): 34.

Some officials in Saigon believe the program's progress since 1967 may have been a factor in North Vietnam's decision to launch major military offensives in 1968."⁴⁹ Thus, Davis asserts that CORDS influenced the actions of environmental actors, such as the VC and North Vietnamese, an indicator of the overall influence and scope of the CORDS program.

Finally, research into the postmodernist perspective, which would critique modernist theories of organization-environment relations, has resulted in no persuasive historical evidence that refutes the criticality of environmental factors such as the Vietnamese population, the Tet Offensive, or the establishment of regional defense forces (PSDF) in promotion of pacification and CORDS success.

Social Structure- 2nd Core Concept

Within Hatch's second core concept of *social structure*, modernists define social structure along hierarchical and bureaucratic lines. Given this perspective, this research has determined five key organizational efficiencies within the CORDS program, leading to improved interagency coordination and unity of effort. First, CORDS created a unified military and civilian hierarchical command structure. Andrade and Willbanks argue that "Key to the entire [pacification] strategy is the integration of all efforts toward a single goal. . . . In this respect, the development of the CORDS program during the Vietnam War offers a good example of how to establish a chain of command incorporating civilian and military agencies into a focused effort."⁵⁰ Andrade and Willbanks further argue that "unity of effort is imperative; there must be a unified structure that combines military and pacification efforts. The pacification program in Vietnam did not make

⁴⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁰ Andrade & Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the future," 11.

any headway until the different agencies involved were brought together under a single manager within the military C2 architecture."⁵¹

Komer provides his rationale for unifying the CORDS hierarchy, stating that "...let's face another fact: the military are far better able to organize, manage, and execute major field programs under chaotic wartime conditions than are civilian agencies, by and large."⁵² Furthermore, Komer argues that "pacification is as much a military as a civilian process, because there can be no civil progress without constant real security."⁵³ Moreover, Komer reinforces his support for CORDS by stating that "In my judgment, this marriage of U.S. civilian and military personnel and resources was one of the managerial keys to such success as we had in pacification - an imaginative response to the atypical nature of the Vietnam war."⁵⁴ Hierarchical control was clearly a key component to achieving unity of effort within the CORDS organization.

Similarly, Coffey argues that CORDS strengthened two historical weaknesses within the civil-military dynamic. He points out that "This arrangement...addressed the impediments to integrated interagency action present in both the 1960s and the 2000s, lack of unity of effort and resource asymmetry."⁵⁵ By strengthening these two pervasive weaknesses, Coffey suggests that "The integration of the two programs [civilian and military] under a single director ultimately resulted in success."⁵⁶

Second, the CORDS organization provided for greater command and control over the disparate civilian agency representatives. Prior to CORDS, these representatives focused on their own internal interests and missions to the detriment of the civil-military unity of effort. William

⁵¹ Ibid., 22.

⁵² Komer, "Clear, Hold and Rebuild," 19.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level*, 19.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 24-25.

Colby, Komer's successor and future CIA Director, saw this command and control improvement as being critical to Komer's overall success. He asserts that Komer "did not pass up the opportunity to 'apply the appropriate tongue-lashing to the . . . the offending [civilian] entity' within a given CORDS team."⁵⁷ This newfound control allowed a single-mission focus of all civilian agents within each CORDS team, in addition to their military team members.

Third, as a fully integrated team, each CORDS team lobbied for and received additional resources and support. McCollum asserts that "It was an organization which could bid for personnel, material, and funds. The subordinate agencies were assigned to it, not attached. Prior to CORDS, many agencies had small roles in the overall task, but no one agency had overall responsibility. Afterward, there was a single organization to credit or blame for pacification results."⁵⁸ The integrated CORDS team proved to be more effective than its individual agency representative parts. This integration not only improved the team's prospects for resources, but also produced improved interagency coordination and unity of effort.

Fourth, and most importantly, the CORDS program spanned every level of government throughout South Vietnam to include regional, provincial and district levels. Komer explains that "To achieve unity of effort throughout Vietnam, CORDS also created unified civilian-military advisory teams down to district level. Eventually CORDS created teams in all 250 districts and 44 provinces in South Vietnam."⁵⁹ McCollum argues that "It was at the province and district [levels] that the [integrated CORDS] concept was fully realized" with the implementation of the province senior advisors (PSA's).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ William E. Colby, *Lost Victory: A firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), 206.

⁵⁸ McCollum, "The CORDS Pacification Organization in Vietnam: A Civilian," 114.

⁵⁹ Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in Vietnam* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986), 115.

⁶⁰ James McCollum, "CORDS: Matrix for Peace In Vietnam," *Army Magazine* (July 1982): 51.

Military officers or civilian foreign service officers led the PSA teams. Each PSA had similar capabilities within each province of South Vietnam, providing national police, regional and popular force advisors. Each PSA also provided economic development, intelligence, information, and refugee and war victims assistance.⁶¹ According to Andrade and Willbanks, each PSA team "had a staff of about eight members. . . .They worked closely with the [South Vietnamese] province chief and his staff, providing advice and assistance, and coordinating U.S. support."⁶²

Fifth, the CORDS program provides an organizational model for PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan. McCollum suggests that "Perhaps the chief organizational lesson that can be learned from Vietnam is the limited capacity of conventional government machinery...for coping flexibly with unconventional insurgency problems. Unified management of political, military, and economic conflict will produce the best results, both where policy is made and in the field."⁶³ The CORDS model provides just such a unified management organization.

Examining the CORDS program through a symbolic-interpretivist perspective, McCollum offers three insights. First, McCollum points out that social dynamics and interactions created within the CORDS program produced opportunities for fused or holistic civil-military planning and operations. He suggests that "Where before military or security issues were assessed without taking into account the economic, political or other conditions in an area, under CORDS all conditions were addressed locally" between each member of the CORDS team.⁶⁴

Second, the CORDS program was a matrix organization. McCollum asserts that at every level, the civilian and military personnel were "integrated into a matrix organization. This meant

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Andrade & Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the future," 16.

⁶³ McCollum, "The CORDS Pacification Organization in Vietnam," 119.

⁶⁴ McCollum, "CORDS: Matrix for Peace In Vietnam," 52.

that the separate agencies at national level - the embassy, USAID, JUSPAO, Office of Special Assistant and MACV, only had assignment and administrative authority over their people. Operational control went to the CORDS chief at each location."⁶⁵ McCollum concludes that "The matrix organization's results were greatly superior to outcomes attained by military services and civilian agencies acting separately."⁶⁶

Third, the CORDS matrix organization maximized functional teaming. McCollum states:

Just as ground force commanders organize for combat to take objectives by cross-assigning infantry, armor, artillery, engineer and other support units...for maximum effectiveness, so managers of the Civil Operations, Revolutionary Development Support organization (CORDS) cross-assigned military and civilian experts in pacification efforts in Vietnam.⁶⁷

The PSA team assigned to Quang Tin Province provides one example of functional teaming. Davis explains that "Advisory Team 16 integrates both military and civilian efforts through its command group, civilian administrative section, security, psychological operations, support and development branches."⁶⁸ Developing functional teams increased organizational efficiencies, interagency coordination and unity of effort.

Ian Beckett challenges the symbolic-interpretive view that social interaction produces an effective organization. Beckett argues that strong hierarchical control is necessary for increased PSA team efficiency. He points out that:

At the outset of the Vietnam War, the government attempted to resolve the situation in Vietnam through its normal institutions and processes. The typical response was characterized by decentralized decision-making and delegation of authority to each individual agency with little accountability for results. . . . To complicate matters, the USMACV nominally controlled civilian agencies, but, in reality, civilian agencies reported either

⁶⁵ Ibid., 51.

⁶⁶ McCollum, "The CORDS Pacification Organization in Vietnam," 105-106.

⁶⁷ McCollum, "CORDS: Matrix for Peace In Vietnam," 48.

⁶⁸ Davis, "CORDS: Key to Vietnamization," 33.

directly to their superiors in Washington, D.C., or to the ambassador.⁶⁹

John Nagl highlights the dysfunctional nature of the civil-military relationship in the early years of Vietnam. He points out that "In the early 1960's, no one agency in the government possessed the capability to address the entire, multi-pillared mission."⁷⁰

Beckett and Nagl argue for hierarchical control to improve efficiency. Likewise, they challenge the effectiveness of decentralized control. Similarly, Alan Krepinevich argues that a hierarchical frame must preserve social identity and interactions. Krepinevich points out that:

The structural 'takeover' of the pacification effort by the U.S. military had little effect on civilian agencies' individual identities or any real control over civilian programs. Aggressive civilian leadership, bureaucratic skill, and presidential interest ensured that the disparate U.S. civilian foreign policy agencies could achieve a remarkable degree of harmony.⁷¹

Examining CORDS through a postmodernist perspective reveals three arguments. First, Andrade and Willbanks indicate that the CORDS hierarchy did not solve every issue of interagency coordination and unity of effort. They suggest that:

The new organization did not solve all problems immediately, and it was not always smooth sailing. At first Komer attempted to gather as much power as possible within his office, but Westmoreland made it clear that his military deputies were more powerful and performed a broad range of duties, while Komer had authority only over pacification.⁷²

The postmodernist views such power grabs as typical in hierarchical organizations.

⁶⁹ Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies: Guerillas and their opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, 2001), 194.

⁷⁰ John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to eat soup with a knife* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated, 2002), 20-21.

⁷¹ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 217.

⁷² Andrade & Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the future," 14.

Second, the postmodernist challenges the view that hierarchical control alone achieves unified action. Woods points out that:

As much as some would have liked it to, CORDS could not replace the existing advisory agencies in Vietnam. The best it could offer was a bureaucratic overlay that facilitated better communication. Personnel from USAID, USIA, CIA and State, and MACV seconded to CORDS experienced generally improved coordination, but the different agency cultures, their varied means of fighting the Communists, still remained a barrier to unified action."⁷³

Woods' example suggests that CORDS failed to achieve unified action.

Third, hierarchical control has limited effectiveness when imposed on a previously-established organization. Woods points out that "A formal structure to better coordinate the activities of the various agencies implemented in 1967 [with the CORDS program], helped to unify the message, but by that point the rifts were already entrenched and the opportunity for a war changing unified effort had past."⁷⁴ While this historical anecdote is indicative of the postmodernist perspective, it also reflects the modernist perspective within Hatch's fourth core concept of organizational culture. That is, positive cultural change only happens once each team member identifies an individual benefit within the overall mission.

Organizational Technology - 3rd Core Concept

There is limited evidence to suggest the CORDS teams benefited from organizational technology. Examining the modernist perspective reveals one example of technical training within the CORDS program. David Passage recalls that every civilian member received technical training.⁷⁵ He states that each member had "at least a limited degree of proficiency in using, the

⁷³ Woods, "Counterinsurgency, the Interagency Process, and Vietnam," 110.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 105.

⁷⁵ David Passage is a former Foreign Service Officer who served within the CORDS program in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970.

weaponry and communications equipment available to the combined military-civilian CORDS teams at district, province and corps levels."⁷⁶

Organizational Culture- 4th Core Concept

Examining the organizational culture of the CORDS program through a modernist perspective reveals the importance of creating a team identity over agency self-interest. Some PSA teams failed to achieve such an identity without hierarchical control. Coffey asserts that "Each agency - in theory - should have worked towards a common goal. . . .However, each agency supported the others only when advantageous for itself, requiring the eventual unification of command to achieve unity of effort."⁷⁷ In like manner, this anecdote reinforces the modernist perspective within Hatch's second core concept, *social structure*, that some hierarchy is needed to create a common cultural identity that can then produce improved interagency coordination and unity of effort. However, postmodernists caution that an immediate move to more hierarchy is a move to deny freedom of thought and action, as well as stymie emergent debate and learning.

Despite improved integration within the CORDS program, competing organizational and bureaucratic cultures hampered optimal interagency coordination and unity of effort. Woods points out that "CORDS offered many solutions, but it was never the panacea its supporters had hoped it would be. First, the organizational cultures of the military and civilian agencies continued to cut divergent paths in the Vietnamese political landscape."⁷⁸ Second, Woods states that "Though they all shared the common goal of defeating the Communist insurgents and building a viable non-Communist South Vietnamese government, the bureaucratic cultures of the

⁷⁶ David Passage, "Caution: Iraq Is Not Vietnam, Speaking Out," *Foreign Service Journal* (November 2007), 14, http://www.fsjournal.org/nov07/speaking_out.pdf (accessed February 16, 2010).

⁷⁷ Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level*, 34.

⁷⁸ Woods, "Counterinsurgency, the Interagency Process, and Vietnam," 110.

agencies they served and the varied tactics they employed translated into fundamental, even irreconcilable political differences when applied in country."⁷⁹

The contemporary PRT faces the same organizational challenges as the PSA. Different organizational cultures prevent organizational efficiency and team integration. Conversely, different cultural norms and perspectives are essential to creating complex adaptive and emergent organizational systems. Ronald Heifetz suggests that "The ability to adapt requires the productive interaction of different values through which each member or faction in a society sees reality and its challenges."⁸⁰ Heifetz identifies the potential for creating emergent learning through competing ideas and perspectives. As such, PRT leaders need to embrace this potential to generate adaptive and emergent learning organizations.

The symbolic-interpretivist suggests that effective and inspirational leadership improves organizational efficiency. That is, a charismatic leader, who possesses a comprehensive leader's narrative that fully encompasses each interagency member's aims, is required for organizational success. Charismatic leadership is especially important during the initial start-up of an organization. Heifetz offers that "At the beginning of an organization's life, the authority's job of directing, protecting, orienting, resolving conflicts, and establishing norms becomes paramount. . . .As the founding father, he is likely to be invested with charisma by those around him."⁸¹ He explains that charismatic leadership strengthens each team member's insecurities within a novel organization. Heifetz asserts that "We attribute charisma to people who voice our pains and provide us with promise. . . .We do not realize that the source of their charisma is our own yearning."⁸² Charismatic leaders develop narratives essential to creating a unified PSA identity

⁷⁹ Ibid., 112.

⁸⁰ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 33.

⁸¹ Ibid., 64-65.

⁸² Ibid., 66.

with fully integrated cultural norms and values. Charismatic leaders are critical to increasing effective interagency coordination and unity of effort.

Charismatic leaders require complimentary predeployment training programs, processes, resources and capabilities to drive team integration and unity of effort. Passage points out that "To prepare personnel for service with CORDS, the Foreign Service Institute established a Vietnam Training Center" with six weeks of instruction on the cultures, civilizations and economies of Vietnam. Language and in-country training then followed this instruction. Passage asserts that "The upshot was a truly comprehensive training regimen lasting four to six months, and sometimes longer if advanced language was involved."⁸³

Examining the postmodernist perspective of *organizational culture* reveals the difficulty in embracing differing organizational cultures. Woods cautions that "For all its potential, CORDS could not completely erase pre-existing agency rivalries...."⁸⁴ The key point is that perceived and real animosities between PSA or PRT members need to be addressed openly and early, before any irreparable damage is done to the interagency team.

Physical Structure of the Organization- 5th Core Concept

The modernist perspective indicates that physical layout and proximity matters within an organization, especially given the prospect of integrating team members from disparate agencies and activities. Woods suggests that "the great lessons of CORDS was that it was not just the different colors of your clothes but where you sat that made a difference in your attitudes."⁸⁵ Unfortunately, this research has not found any compelling evidence of the other symbolic-interpretive and postmodernist perspectives, which would caution organizational leaders about how perceptions of physical space limitations can influence team member's attitudes toward the

⁸³ Passage, "Caution: Iraq Is Not Vietnam, Speaking Out," 15.

⁸⁴ Woods, "Counterinsurgency, the Interagency Process, and Vietnam," 113.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 110.

team. This does not suggest that these perceptions did not exist. This research just cannot prove or disprove this in any definitive or empirical way.

Contemporary PRT Case Study

In November 2005, the Bush Administration announced the “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq.” The new “Clear, Hold, and Build” strategy emphasized and expanded security throughout key areas of Iraq. From August through October 2006, MNF-I launched Operation Together Forward (I and II) to implement this strategy. A key component of the strategy relied on the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a concept widely used in Afghanistan and similar to the PSAs in Vietnam. Kenneth Katzman, a specialist in Middle East affairs, points out that “each PRT in Iraq is civilian led, composed of about 100 U.S. State Department and USAID officials and contract personnel, to assist local Iraqi governing institutions, such as the provincial councils, representatives of the Iraqi provincial governors, and local ministry representatives.”⁸⁶ The U.S. employed seven PRTs in the key operational areas of Mosul, Kirkuk, Hilla, Baghdad, Anbar Province, Baquba and Salah ad-Din Province

Dissatisfied with the limited success of this new strategy, the U.S. Administration announced a renewed focus on the capital city of Baghdad and its nascent seat of government and national legitimacy. On January 10, 2007, the President announced his Baghdad security initiative “New Way Forward,” or Operation *Fardh Al Qanoon*. Katzman suggests that this operation would “create conditions under which Iraq’s communities and political leaders can reconcile.”⁸⁷ In conjunction with a troop surge of 28,500 U.S. military and other coalition and Iraqi security forces, six additional PRTs were formed within the critical city of Baghdad, reinforced with greater resources and capabilities to provide improved assistance to governance, economic development and reconstruction programs. By June 2008, MNF-I employed 30 PRTs in Iraq.

⁸⁶ Kenneth Katzman, “Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security,” *CRS Report for Congress* (Updated: July 21, 2008): CRS-39, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA484765&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2010).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Similar to the post-Tet offensive, successful U.S. and coalition military operations dramatically improved the post-surge Iraq security environment. The improved security environment allowed greater PRT penetration and effectiveness throughout Baghdad and the other Iraqi provinces. Katzman reports that, "According to the April 2008 testimony [of General David Petraeus, former military commander in Iraq], the June 2008 Measuring Stability report, and press reports . . . the surge has: Reduced all major violence indicators (numbers of attacks, Iraqi civilian deaths, and other indicators) by 40% - 80%, to the levels of early 2004."⁸⁸ General Raymond Odierno reported in October 2009 that:

By capitalizing on the security gains made possible by the surge of forces in 2007 and 2008, we continue to move forward by transitioning security responsibilities to increasingly capable Iraqi security forces (ISF). Progress has continued at a heartening pace, with the ISF now responsible for security in Iraq's cities. Partnered with the U.S. Embassy-Baghdad (USEMB- B), international organizations and the government of Iraq, MNF-I continues to support a whole-of-government approach - improving security, training an effective ISF, supporting civil capacity and building rule of law - to assist Iraq's development as a long-term strategic partner that will contribute to regional peace and security.⁸⁹

Organizational Environment - 1st Core Concept

Examining the contemporary PRT through a modernist perspective reveals three insights concerning the PRT and its environment. First, the PRT Playbook suggests that "PRTs must focus on supporting the host nation's government (local and national) and the populace across the stabilization and reconstruction sectors. This support requires balancing the measured use of force with an emphasis on nonmilitary programs."⁹⁰ Reinforcing this viewpoint, General Odierno provides states that "Together, PRTs and MNF-I [personnel] have worked with provincial leaders

⁸⁸ Ibid., CRS-41.

⁸⁹ Raymond Odierno, "Historic Milestones Towards a Sovereign, Stable And Self-Reliant Iraq." *Army Magazine* (October 1, 2009): 110.

⁹⁰ Center for Army Lessons Learned, "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," (Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 2007): 10, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/docs/07-34/07-34.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2010).

across Iraq to budget, develop and prioritize targeted commander's emergency response program projects. Given Iraqi budget shortfalls resulting from declining oil prices, these projects are proving essential to our overall sustainability efforts throughout Iraq.⁹¹

Second, the external environment influences current PRT operational effectiveness. General Odierno states that "Given the changing environmental dynamics, we are increasingly shifting our focus to stability operations, with supporting offensive and defensive operations outside the cities."⁹² Irbil PRT member Jonathan Cebra asserts that "my predecessor warned me that one of the factors limiting his ability to function here was the security restrictions under which we operate."⁹³

Third, the external environment will affect future PRT operational mission focus. Cebra offers that "As the security situation stabilizes and as the military draws down throughout Iraq, the responsibility for interaction with the local population will fall more on civilians."⁹⁴ Katzman, states that "Some remain pessimistic about the effects of the surge, believing that, because Iraq's major communities are not yet reconciled, insurgent activity will increase as the surge troops are drawn down."⁹⁵ However, Katzman points out that "The Administration counter-argument is that there has been sufficient local reconciliation that average Iraqis will cooperate to prevent insurgents from returning to thwarting reconstruction and normal life."⁹⁶ General Odierno agrees with this assessment. He foresees Advisory and Assistance Brigades "tailored by a significant change in mindset and operational structure to coordinate and achieve unity of effort across the

⁹¹ Odierno, "Historic Milestones Towards a Sovereign, Stable And Self-Reliant Iraq." 112.

⁹² Ibid., 111.

⁹³ Jonathon Cebra, "Working and Living in Iraq," *Foreign Service Journal* (March 2008): 36-37, <http://www.fsjournal.org/mar08/workingLiving.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2010).

⁹⁴ Cebra, "Working and Living in Iraq," 37.

⁹⁵ Katzman, "Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security," CRS-41.

⁹⁶ Ibid., CRS-42.

range of security and civil support required in their areas of operations. In effect, PRTs will be the supported elements, with AABs in a supporting role."⁹⁷

The symbolic interpretivist perspective, in contrast to the modernist view, asserts that the PRT can shape and influence its external environment. The PRT Playbook states that "Because the goal of the PRT is to achieve stability, the team must create an environment where an authority is both legitimate and effective in the use of force. The PRT works with all available stakeholders and resources to bring stability to a population by enabling the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance and government institutions."⁹⁸ PRT member Jesse Pruett reinforces this perspective. He argues that PRTs must affect the environment quickly and "establish bona fides . . . , stake a claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the populace, and prove they are trustworthy interlocutors to the Iraqi leadership."⁹⁹ Finally, General Odierno states that "Empowering national, provincial and local governmental ability to provide good governance and essential services for the Iraqi people, 23 U.S. State Department-led provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) operate across Iraq with the support of MNF-I troops, embodying effective interagency cooperation."¹⁰⁰

Social Structure- 2nd Core Concept

Examining the contemporary PRT through a modernist perspective reveals three insights. First, hierarchy defines PRT social structure. Similar to the PSAs, Pruett states that PRTs are "largely stand-alone entities, with robust manning structures . . . Their mandate includes government engagement at the provincial level."¹⁰¹ Similarly, General Odierno states that

⁹⁷ Odierno, "Historic Milestones Towards a Sovereign, Stable And Self-Reliant Iraq." 114.

⁹⁸ "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 32.

⁹⁹ Jesse Pruett, "The Interagency Future Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Task Force Marne," *Military Review* (Sep/Oct 2009; 89, 5; Military Module): 56.

¹⁰⁰ Odierno, "Historic Milestones Towards a Sovereign, Stable And Self-Reliant Iraq." 112.

¹⁰¹ Pruett, "The Interagency Future Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Task Force Marne," 55.

"Staffed by more than 500 personnel from the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as State, Defense, Justice and Agriculture Departments, PRTs have emphasized building provincial governmental capacity, developing economic projects such as microfinancing, and spurring agricultural development."¹⁰²

Second, team integration is critical to PRT effectiveness and unity of effort. The PRT Playbook suggests, "The provincial reconstruction team (PRT) concept envisions an integrated civil-military organization expanding the reach of the U.S. government (USG) and the wider international community assistance efforts from the environs of the capitol to the provincial level to the local community."¹⁰³ Similarly, FM 3-24 offers that "The integration of civilian and military efforts is crucial to successful COIN operations. All efforts focus on supporting the local populace and HN government. Political, social, and economic programs are usually more valuable than conventional military operations. . . ."¹⁰⁴

While levels of integration vary within each PRT, the PRT Playbook suggests that "at a minimum, each PRT should seek to achieve unity of effort. Unity of effort can be advanced through the creation of an integrated command group or executive team. This group is composed of the senior member of each agency or nation participating in the PRT."¹⁰⁵ Prior to the surge, Coffey argued that a lack of unity of effort was a key impediment to effective PRT interagency coordination. Coffey asserted that "Because of the agencies' different backgrounds, values, and agendas, unifying command appears to be the only approach at the operational level. . . . More so than the wide-ranging backgrounds of interagency entities, lack of unity of command at the operational level is the most significant factor in failing to achieve unity of effort."¹⁰⁶ However,

¹⁰² Odierno, "Historic Milestones Towards a Sovereign, Stable And Self-Reliant Iraq." 112.

¹⁰³ "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 3.

¹⁰⁴ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 2-1.

¹⁰⁵ "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 24.

¹⁰⁶ Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level*, 11.

post-surge operational success suggests the contemporary PRT organization now has a much more effective hierarchical structure, reinforced by binding authorities.

Third, several key authorizing documents have established clear accountability and authority within the contemporary PRT. The Department of Defense (DOD) / DOS Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Iraq PRTs, the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 36 and subsequent applicable MOA's¹⁰⁷ have established the DOS as the executive agent for PRTs. These documents also define the PRT's organizational structure, resource and partner requirements. The DOD/DOS MOA states that "The purpose of this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to specify operational requirements, authorities, and responsibilities shared between the U.S. Mission-Iraq (USM-I) and the Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) or successor organizations for Provincial Reconstruction Teams ("PRTs") in Iraq. . . . Each [partner] agency agrees to support the program to the maximum extent provided for in this MOA."¹⁰⁸ This MOA establishes the PRT's hierarchical structure and acts as a binding contract between the executive agency (DOS) and its integrated partners (DOD and other agency members). FM 3-24 offers:

The relationships and authorities between military and nonmilitary U.S. Government agencies are usually given in the [MOA] document directing an agency to support the operation. Commanders exercise only the authority those documents allow; however, the terms in those documents may form the basis for establishing some form of relationship between commanders and agency chiefs.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ The DOD/DOS MOA on Iraq PRTs contains the following applicable MOA references: Memorandum of Agreement between Department of State and Department of Defense for Support Services in Iraq, dated June 10, 2004; Memorandum of Agreement between Department of State and Department of Defense Regarding Physical Security, Equipment and Personal Protective Services, dated June 10, 2004; Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Commander, U.S. Central Command, and Chief of Mission, U.S. Mission Iraq Regarding Security Responsibility, dated June 28, 2004; and Supplemental Agreement to the Memorandum of Agreement between Commander, Multinational Force-Iraq, and Chief of Mission, U.S. Mission Iraq Regarding Security Responsibility on PRT Security Responsibilities and Requirements, dated November 9, 2006. Source: "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 63.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁰⁹ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 2-3.

Figure 1 shows the hierarchal organization of the contemporary PRT, with lines of authority and coordination clearly established.

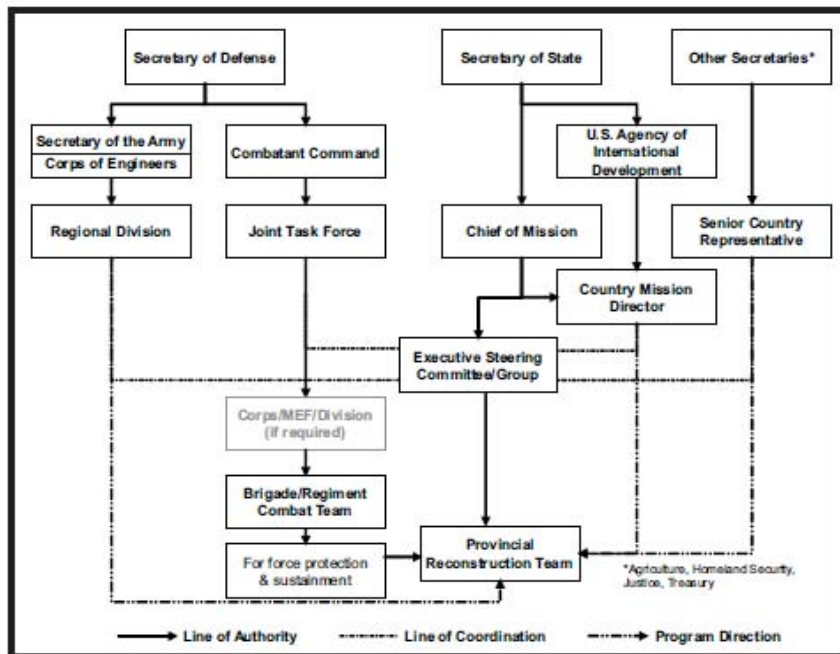


Figure 1. Contemporary PRT Hierarchical Organization

Source: "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," *Center for Army Lessons Learned* (September 2007): 24. <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/docs/07-34/07-34.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2010).

While different from the CORDS model, the contemporary PRT's hierarchical organization satisfies Coffey's following recommendation. He recommends that "The solution to the problem, then, must propose an organizational model to achieve effective interagency integration by 'putting someone in charge'. . . ." ¹¹⁰ The contemporary PRT hierarchical organization achieves such integration and accountability.

Examining the symbolic-interpretivist perspective of *social structure* reveals three findings. First, social interactions and professional relationships within the PRT maximize limited resources and capability. A DOS PRT member, Linda Specht, recalls that:

The State Department people on PRTs had no access to real resources, but you could make things happen. If you're

¹¹⁰ Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level*, 18-19.

bureaucratically effective and well linked up with both the military and the civilian side, you can shed light and bring people with resources into an area where most people were afraid to work.¹¹¹

Second, the PRT's matrix organization produces effective IA coordination and unity of effort, like the PSAs. The PRT Playbook suggests that "Unity of effort in an operation occurs vertically and horizontally for all involved chains of command. Its source is the nation's will, and it flows to individuals at the point of activity."¹¹² The contemporary PRT matrix organization exemplifies such vertical and horizontal social interaction.

Third, the contemporary PRT employs functional teams like those in Vietnam. The PRT Playbook states that the PRT "staff ensures all activities within the team are synchronized across functions, as well as with those organizations operating in tandem with the PRT within their AOR."¹¹³ The Playbook offers that "In its most evolved and successful state, a PRT is an integrated civil-military team possessing well organized and coordinated capabilities and [cross] functions."¹¹⁴ Figure 2 represents the cross-functional contemporary PRT organization:

¹¹¹ Combat Studies Institute, "Interview with Ms. Linda Specht, 4 February 2008" (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 2008), 9, <http://comarms.ipac.dynixasp.com/ipac20/ipac.jsp?term=interview+with+linda+specht&index=.GW#focus> (accessed February 10, 2010).

¹¹² "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 10.

¹¹³ Ibid., 27.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 46.

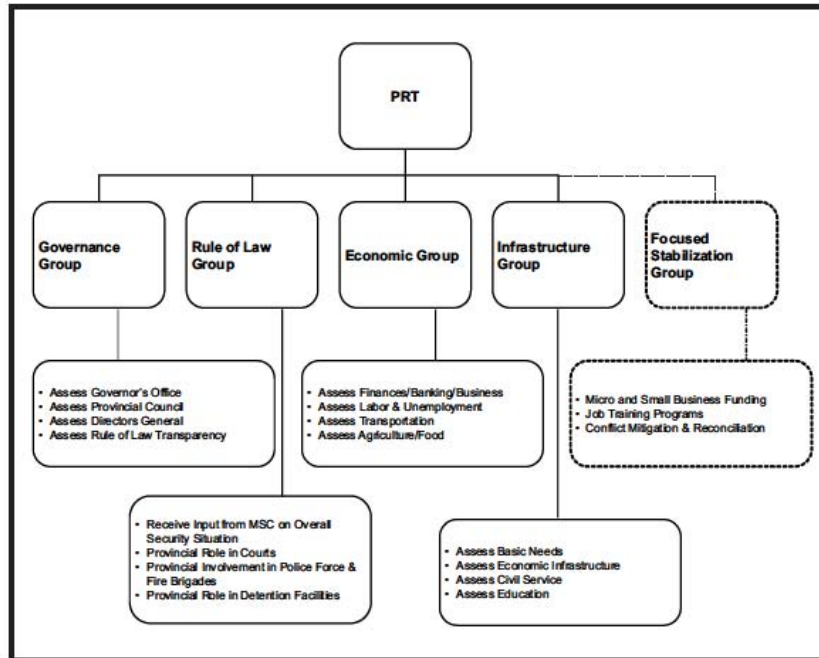


Figure 2. Cross-functional, Matrix-type Contemporary PRT Organizational Structure
 Source: "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," *Center for Army Lessons Learned* (September 2007): 69, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/docs/07-34/07-34.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2010).

Examining the postmodernist perspective of *social structure* reveals one key point. Hierarchical control without functional teaming limits PRT emergent learning, interagency coordination and unity of effort. Antoine Bousquet states that "Evolution thrives in systems with a bottom-up organization, which gives rise to flexibility. But at the same time, evolution has to channel the bottom-up approach in a way that doesn't destroy the organization. There has to be [some] hierarchy of control - with information flowing from the bottom up as well as from the top down."¹¹⁵ That is, adaptive learning organizations need both hierarchical and decentralized processes, with decentralized processes being primary.

Organizational Technology - 3rd Core Concept

Examining the modernist perspective of *organizational technology* reveals that the contemporary PRT has overcome many historical deficiencies such as inadequate access to

¹¹⁵ Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 180.

technical systems. Prior to the surge, Lawrence Yates lamented that "Because of concerns about [operational security] OPSEC violations, the process has often excluded personnel, both military and civilian, involved in planning . . . operations. This has generally ensured that the support . . . from military and civilian sources has lagged far behind what has been required at critical phases of an operation."¹¹⁶ After the surge, however, access to such systems dramatically improved.

Cebra recalls that:

Many of the challenges faced by earlier colleagues, primarily isolation and lack of support, were largely absent. I have access to a full range of communication technology, both classified and unclassified. . . Three computers give me access to high-speed commercial Internet, the military's unclassified NIPRNET and the classified SIPRNET. Additionally, we have the APO for reliable and quick two-way mail.¹¹⁷

Such improved access assisted team integration, virtual teaming and increased situational awareness and understanding.

Unlike the modernist, the symbolic-interpretivist reinforces the power of social interaction and functional teaming to enhance the technological benefits within the PRT. The PRT Playbook suggests that such functional teams as the PRT's Communications and Information Technology sections reduce resource asymmetry through support agreements with the supporting military unit or host nation. These sections support PRT resource requirements, enabling improved interagency coordination and unity of effort.¹¹⁸

Organizational Culture- 4th Core Concept

Examining the modernist perspective reveals that PRTs must integrate cross-cultural issues, aims and agendas early in the PRT process to enable effective interagency coordination and unity of effort. The PRT "initial assessment" and "implementation plan" provides an

¹¹⁶ Lawrence A. Yates, "The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations, 1789-2005," *Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 15* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2006): 25.

¹¹⁷ Cebra, "Working and Living in Iraq," 36.

¹¹⁸ "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 28.

organizational process to integrate cross-cultural concerns into PRT-wide objectives. The PRT Playbook states that "This process ensures that the civil-military team achieves a common operating picture of the AOR and a common vision on how to affect the environment, which in turn provides for unity of effort within the PRT."¹¹⁹ Similarly, FM 3-24 suggests that "A shared understanding of the operation's purpose provides a unifying theme for COIN efforts . . . that promotes effective collaboration and coordination among all agencies and the affected populace."¹²⁰ FM 3-24 further offers that:

Interagency partners, NGOs, and private organizations have many interests and agendas that military forces cannot control [and should not try to control in many cases]. Nevertheless, military leaders should make every effort to ensure that COIN actions are as well integrated as possible.¹²¹

Within the post-surge environment, the contemporary PRT obtained cross-cultural integration. Recalling the importance of longstanding agency representation, Cebra states that "Our relationships are strong across the board, whether with the provincial government, a prominent sheik, the American regimental commander or [other local groups] . . . My experience with everyone here has been one of mutual respect."¹²² Shared hardships within the PRT also increased cross-cultural integration. Alyce Abdalla, a DOS PRT member, recalls that:

I felt a sense of responsibility to my colleagues in Iraq, who were all under relentless pressure, far from their families and working ridiculous hours. That knowledge outstripped any sense of urgency toward the queries from the National Security Council or the calls from people claiming they were about to brief the Secretary of Defense on whatever economic issue was the crisis of the day.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid., " 5.

¹²⁰ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 2-3 - 2-4.

¹²¹ Ibid., 2-4.

¹²² Cebra, "Working and Living in Iraq," 36.

¹²³ Alyce Abdalla, "Working and Living in Iraq," *Foreign Service Journal* (March 2008): 37, <http://www.fsjournal.org/mar08/workingLiving.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2010).

Unlike modernists, symbolic-interpretivists believe that charismatic leaders can influence organizational culture through their use of narrative. Such leaders employ a fully integrated narrative, reinforced by effective training programs, resources and capabilities, to create a PRT-wide identity that seeks optimal unity of effort. The PRT Playbook states that "Effective PRT leaders understand the interdependent relationship of all participants, military and civilian. PRT leaders must orchestrate their efforts to achieve unity of effort and coherent results."¹²⁴ Similarly, FM 3-24 suggests that "Active leadership . . . is imperative to effect coordination, establish liaison (formal and informal), and share information. Influencing and persuading groups outside [one's] . . . authority requires skill and often subtlety."¹²⁵

Likewise, Brian Polley states that "One of the most challenging aspects of coordinating interagency efforts in these [COIN] operations is the leadership, that is, how men and women direct others effectively in post-conflict environments."¹²⁶ Polley recognizes that the U.S. needs to focus on establishing more IA training and selection processes to produce such leadership and proficiency. He contends that the U.S. needs:

a set of standard, coherent leadership training programs to equip interagency officials with the tools necessary to function in complex, dangerous environments in which a number of different organizations are represented and have a stake in the outcome. . . ; the U.S. Government should make interagency teamwork part of its preparation for post-conflict reconstruction and peacekeeping.¹²⁷

Like Polley, Passage believes there needs to be more interagency training, especially as compared to the extensive civilian training prior to service in Vietnam. He argues that:

¹²⁴ "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 10.

¹²⁵ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 2-4.

¹²⁶ Brian Polley, "Leadership Education and Training for the Interagency," Chapter 14 of *The Interagency and Counterinsurgency Warfare: Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Roles* (Strategic Studies Institute, Editors: Joseph R. Cerami and Jay W. Boggs, December 2007): 424, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB828.pdf> (accessed February 6, 2010).

¹²⁷ Polley, "Leadership Education and Training for the Interagency," 425.

In contrast [to the four to six months of civilian training prior to Vietnam service], the department's [DOS] training program for those headed to Provincial Reconstruction Teams is limited and superficial. So a key issue today is the extent to which the State Department is prepared to provide appropriate training for Foreign Service personnel if it intends to continue to assign them to war zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq.¹²⁸

Abdalla suggests that "If State employees are going to be in war zones, . . . our institution should learn from the military's experience in supporting and preparing its staff for work in dangerous environments."¹²⁹ Pruettt laments that civilian "team personnel usually arrive at a disadvantage when compared to their combatant counterparts."¹³⁰ He adds that these personnel are by-products of "scant training, an unpredictable manning process, and an unfortunate misunderstanding of their mandate. . . ."¹³¹

Polley asserts that differing selection criteria and terminology exacerbates the issue of inadequate civilian training. He contends that different agencies "all have their own protocol for finding and training those men and women within their ranks who have the most leadership potential."¹³² He cautions that "the lack of a common lexicon hampers communication in theater and in coordination of training efforts."¹³³

The DOS has recognized this dearth in interagency doctrine. Published in November 2009, the "Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction" (S&R) manual represents "the first strategic "doctrine" ever produced for civilians engaged in peace building missions."¹³⁴

¹²⁸ Passage, "Caution: Iraq Is Not Vietnam, Speaking Out," 15.

¹²⁹ Abdalla, "Working and Living in Iraq," 38.

¹³⁰ Pruettt, "The Interagency Future Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Task Force Marne," 56.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Polley, "Leadership Education and Training for the Interagency," 438.

¹³³ Ibid., 441.

¹³⁴ United States Institute of Peace, online introduction of "Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction," <http://www.usip.org/resources/guiding-principles-stabilization-and-reconstruction> (accessed March 21, 2010).

While these Guiding Principles have not been officially adopted by the USG, the manual "seeks to present strategic principles for all major activities in S&R missions in one place. It seeks to provide a foundation for decision makers, planners, and practitioners—both international and host nation—to construct priorities for specific missions."¹³⁵ More importantly, the manual draws from a comprehensive list of military sources, such as FM 3-07: *Stability Operations*, the PRT Playbook and FM 3-0: *Full Spectrum Operations*, in addition to other USG, nongovernmental and international sources. More importantly, the manual promotes a common doctrinal lexicon that can be the basis for more effective institutional interagency training programs.

Physical Structure of the Organization- 5th Core Concept

Reinforcing the modernist perspective, the PRT Handbook argues that:

Better integration can be achieved when everyone works in the same building. Integration can also be fostered at a deeper level when all groups are task organized by function instead of by agency. . . As a result of tight integration or even just having members share workspace, functional sections are more effective and communications are improved. . . It may take time to reach this level of integration, but a PRT is significantly more productive in an integrated environment within the same building.¹³⁶

This research has found no evidence reinforcing either the symbolic-interpretive or postmodernist perspectives. These perspectives suggest that physical space limitations can influence a team member's attitude toward the team.

¹³⁵ United States Institute of Peace and United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, "Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction," (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), I-3, http://www.usip.org/files/resources/guiding_principles_full.pdf (accessed March 21, 2010).

¹³⁶ "PRT Playbook - Handbook 07-34," 47.

Findings

Increasing the effectiveness of the contemporary PRT requires the application of Mary Jo Hatch's five organizational core concepts; *environment, social structure, technology, culture* and *physical structure*. Examining *organizational environment*, both case studies reinforce the criticality of a stable security environment in enabling effective civil-military operations. Both McCollum and Komer assert that the improved post-Tet security environment was vital to CORDS success. Moreover, Komer's successor, William Colby, also supports this view and the increased development opportunities that stemmed from such a security environment.

Like the post-Tet environment, Iraq's dramatically improved post-surge environment also played an important role in the PRT program's overall effectiveness at providing increased developmental support throughout Iraq. Generals Petraeus and Odierno point out the increased opportunities for economic and political development that came with the improved security environment. PRT members, such as Jonathon Cebra, also attribute PRT effectiveness to a secure and stable environment.

Hatch's second core concept of *social structure* reinforces two key points. First, hierarchy promotes a unified civil-military team. The PSA teams within the CORDS program exemplify such hierarchy. For the first time, these civil-military teams had a clear chain of command that enabled a unified mission focus throughout Vietnam. The contemporary PRT has a similar hierarchy. Reinforced by Presidential, DOD, DOS, ambassadorial and military command authorizing directives and agreements, the contemporary PRT has a hierarchical structure established in accordance with the *unity of command* and *unity of effort* doctrinal precepts of JP-1. As such, the contemporary PRT has a clear line of authority, ensuring team integration, accountability and unity of effort.

Second, the PRT's cross-functional matrix-type organization produces effective interagency coordination and unity of effort. Such cross-cultural functional teams are evident within both Vietnam and contemporary case studies. The CORDS matrix organization

exemplifies such functional teaming. Supporting such teaming, McCollum and Davis recall the emergent potential gained by "cross-pollinating" interagency capabilities into reinforced sub-elements within each PSA. Similar to the CORDS organizations, the contemporary PRT also has a cross-functional, matrix-type structure. This structure allows for both vertical and horizontal integration throughout the civil-military team, promoting interagency coordination and unity of effort.

Examining Hatch's third core concept reveals a relative dearth of evidence supporting or refuting the use *organizational technology* to produce a more effective civil-military organization. However, Cebra's recent post-surge PRT experience indicates unprecedented access and network capability has replaced historic deficiencies in these areas. If retained, such access and capability will ensure that interagency coordination is not only feasible, but also easily executed through integrated, seamless information technology systems.

Hatch's fourth core concept of *culture* reinforces two salient points. First, cross-cultural integration is required to produce effective interagency coordination and unity of effort. While Yates recalls the challenges of such cross-cultural teaming, Cebra reinforces its inherent organizational power. Similarly, Bousquet asserts that "Decentralized self-organizing systems are also better equipped than centralized systems to deal with limited predictability and contingency."¹³⁷ The contemporary PRT employs such cross-cultural teaming to produce an emergent, learning organization that can rapidly adapt within complex environments like Iraq.

Second, charismatic leadership is perhaps the most crucial element in promoting cross-cultural PRT effectiveness, interagency coordination and unity of effort. Such leadership establishes the required balance between hierarchical control and decentralized cross-functional teaming, which Bousquet claims is critical "for the bottom-up emergence and evolution of

¹³⁷ Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare*, 182.

complex systems."¹³⁸ Polley asserts that such charismatic leaders would apply both transactional and transformational leadership to resolve any individual interpersonal conflicts in pursuit of a greater PRT-wide leadership narrative, mission, and identity.

However, the current lack of any institutional interagency training and education program prevents the development of such charismatic leaders. Polley suggests that the U.S. "needs a set of standard, coherent leadership training programs to equip interagency officials with the tools necessary to function in complex, dangerous environments in which a number of different organizations are represented and have a stake in the outcome."¹³⁹ The four to six month training program used in support of the CORDS program is a model for any contemporary interagency program of instruction. Finally, this program could easily draw from the recently published "Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction," as well as other military doctrinal sources, to produce a comprehensive interagency leadership development course.

Like Hatch's third core concept of *organizational technology*, this research has found minimal empirical evidence reinforcing her fifth core concept of *physical structure* in creating an effective PRT organization. However, this should not prevent future PRT leaders from consciously evaluating the physical layout of the PRT to determine any perceived or actual hindrances to organizational integration. It is easy to understand the benefits to interagency coordination and unity of effort by arranging functional teams within the same structural space. Conversely, it is also easy to understand the pitfalls that result from separate, confined and closed office spaces.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 183.

¹³⁹ Polley, "Leadership Education and Training for the Interagency," 425.

Conclusions

This research has found that the application of every one of Hatch's five core concepts is required to produce an effective civil-military organization that optimizes interagency coordination and unity of effort. As measures of effectiveness, the application of these core concepts reveals an overall effective contemporary PRT organization. The contemporary PRT maximizes the use of three concepts; *environment*, *social structure* and *culture* in pursuit of a fully integrated civil-military team. Such a team understands the linkage between the PRT mission and its external environment. It also employs minimal hierarchical control and maximum decentralized functional and cross-cultural teaming within a matrix-type organization. However, this research found little evidence to suggest that the contemporary PRT focused on Hatch's two other concepts of *technology* and *physical structure*. Greater focus on these two core concepts would improve PRT effectiveness by promoting greater technological and structural improvements.

Finally, this research demonstrates that there is a pressing need for institutional interagency training and education programs. In pursuit of such programs, the DOS must resolve three key deficiencies. First, any comprehensive interagency training program must draw from established interagency doctrine. Such a program could easily draw from the recently published "Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction," as well as current military doctrinal sources such as the military's capstone publication, JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*. These and other doctrinal sources, such as JP 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations*; JP 3-57, *Civil Military Operations*; JP 3-24: *Counterinsurgency Operations*; FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*; FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* and the PRT Playbook would be excellent foundational sources of any holistic and comprehensive IA training program.

Second, an effective IA training program must standardize selection criteria for PRT service along lines that are similar to those of the military. Currently, each agency employs a

differing set of selection criteria for its own representatives. According to Pruett, each agency representative "must receive notice similar to the brigade's warning order from their national-level leaders so that they too may develop their support plans" at an early enough date to complete much more effective pre-mission training in coordination with the DOS, as PRT executive agent, and DOD, as a point of additional pre-mission training and preparation.¹⁴⁰

Third, an effective IA training program must integrate agency partners with military members through predeployment training at such venues as the Joint Readiness Training Center. According to Pruett, such integration would "better enable winning the Nation's wars by fighting within an interdependent joint team."¹⁴¹ Ideally, such integration would be the culminating event of a comprehensive program modeled after the CORDS training model. It would span multiple months and provide historical, cultural, doctrinal and language training to every future PRT member. Such a program of instruction would maximize individual interagency proficiency, enabling greater future PRT effectiveness.

¹⁴⁰ Pruett, "The Interagency Future Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Task Force Marne," 60.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

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