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Improving Military Stability Operations
The Case for a Stabilization Command

LCDR Todd Moulton, USN

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Foreword

The Kenney Papers series from Air University Press provides a forum for topics related to the Indo-Pacific region, which covers everything from the western shores of the Americas to the eastern coast of Africa and from Antarctica to the Arctic. Named for General George Churchill Kenney, Allied air commander in the Southwest Pacific during World War II and subsequently commander of Strategic Air Command and then Air University, this series seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the region, the geopolitics and geoeconomics that shape the theater, and the roles played by the US military in providing for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

DR. ERNEST GUNASEKARA-ROCKWELL
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About the Author

LCDR Todd Moulton, USN

LCDR Moulton is the officer in charge at the Joint Reserve Intelligence Center in Detroit, Michigan. He is also an Information Warfare (IW) Warfare Tactics Instructor (WTI). He is a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College OLMP, National Intelligence University, Seton Hall University, and University of Michigan.

Abstract

The United States military has executed 33 stability operations as opposed to 16 combat operations since 1898. The stabilization activities were frequently ineffective and regularly left occupied countries in a worse condition after US forces left than prior to arrival. Several underlying problems evident during each of these stability actions denote the reasons why the US military does not conduct effective stabilization activities. The US military habitually sent combat-trained and -equipped personnel into situations where these individuals encountered environments requiring service members with civil administration, law enforcement, and engineering backgrounds. The US military established initiatives throughout this period that created short-term stability at the regional level. However, these enterprises never engendered long-term national stability, and the US military ended these programs as the United States refocused away from nation-building and toward conflict with China and Russia. Although US policy and international law mandate the US military participate in stability operations, the US military has no force dedicated to stabilization activities. Without any US military entities focused on stability operations, the military will repeat the mistakes of the past with the lives of the country's sons and daughters and at the expense of the nation's coffers.

This paper analyzes past US military stability operations and the armed forces' attempts to improve the effectiveness of stabilization actions. The publication aims to justify the need for a functional combatant command centered on ensuring military members engaged in stability operations receive clear direction, proper training and equipment, and support from other US governmental agencies. The number of fragile or failing nation-states is not decreasing, indicating that the world will likely require the United States to lead or participate in stability operations by the end of this decade.

Introduction

For the past 125 years, dating back to the turn of the twentieth century, the history of the US military has exhibited a significant operational tendency focused on conducting stability operations.[1] The US Armed Forces' execution of stability operations outnumbered combat operations nearly two-to-one during this period. Additionally, international law mandates that the United States must conduct stabilization actions in areas where the military assumes control.[2] Yet the United States has never created a force, or designated a service component, devoted to stabilization activities.[3] The United States' avoidance of establishing a peacekeeping organization or directing the armed forces to plan, train, and equip defense personnel for stability tasks regularly resulted in disastrous postconflict campaigns. The United States frequently gave the armed forces multiple daunting noncombat assignments in the aftermath of several large and small US conflicts.[4] The United States' recurring assignment of stability tasks to US military personnel who were not familiar with stability operations caused service members to hastily plan for operations they had never participated in before. The planning included command-and-control (C2) constructs usually based on conventional military thinking, which were not generally dynamic enough to respond to the constantly changing environment on the ground. The combination of inadequate planning and rigid C2 led to the poor implementation of stability actions, which took the US military months or years to refine and overcome.[5]

The US military never made a concerted effort to compile productive and unproductive stability-related methods that the services employed during stabilization actions until Operation Iraqi Freedom.[6] The lack of any formal handbook on stability operations regularly culminated in the armed forces relearning many of the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) their predecessors had already endured in previous stabilization activities. The US military's need for reeducation on these TTPs elongated the time required for the armed

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1. Jennifer Kavanagh et al., *The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Ground Interventions: Identifying Trends, Characteristics, and Signposts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), 7–48.
2. Linda Robinson et al., *Finding the Right Balance: Department of Defense Roles in Stabilization* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), 14.
3. Robinson et al., *Finding the Right Balance*.
4. James Jay Carafano, *Waltzing Into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002); and Kavanagh et al., *The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Ground Interventions*, 7–48.
5. US Army, American Military Government of Occupied Germany, *1918–1920: Report of the Office in Charge of Civil Affairs, Third Army and American Forces in Germany* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1924), 77; and James Jay Carafano, "Principles for Stability Operations and State-Building" (lecture, Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC, 13 February 2008).
6. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publication (JP) 3-07, *Stability*, 3 August 2016, 21–160.

forces to reconstitute basic needs to the occupied population. The armed forces' inability to quickly restore electricity, sanitation, water, and basic services to the local people typically shifted the people's sentiment against US stability operations.[7] Over time, the US military formulated stability frameworks, which helped to establish and grow societal, economic, and political stability and codified the military's experiences into Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability*.[8] Furthermore, the United States raised stability operations to a core mission alongside combat operations in 2009.[9]

However, the US Department of Defense (DOD) recently relegated stabilization activities back to a secondary mission set behind combat operations.[10] Although the DOD made progress in maturing the department's stability TTPs and capabilities over the previous 18 years, the DOD's reallocation of resources toward the great-power competition with China and Russia has the potential of allowing the organization's institutional knowledge on stability operations to diminish.[11] The DOD's shift toward great-power competition comes as scholarly articles, think tanks, and US government agencies emphasize the high likelihood of US military stability operations in such as places Venezuela.[12] This paper will review prior stability operations and the US military's and interagency's attempts to refine them. It will then answer a question: How could a stability operations functional combatant command improve military effectivenessThe paper aims to offer US government officials and academia a perspective on historical stability operations and their successes and failures. Additionally, it will educate these groups on past efforts to remedy stability actions' inadequacies and demonstrate the requirement for a stabilization command to increase the effectiveness of US military stability operations.

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7. Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability*, 49, 84.

8. Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability*.

9. Brian Tempest, "Stability Operations Challenges" (master's thesis, United States Army War College, 2011), 15.

10. Tempest, "Stability Operations Challenges," 6–7; Jason A. Lacroix, "Challenges & Concerns—Phase IV Stability Operations" (master's thesis, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College), 10.

11. Nick Simeone, "Hagel Outlines Budget Reducing Troop Strength, Force Structure," Defense.gov, 24 February 2014, https://www.af.mil/; and Idress Ali, "U.S. military puts 'great power competition' at heart of strategy: Mattis," *Reuters*, 19 January 2018, https://www.reuters.com/.

12. Jose L. Delgado, "Venezuela, A "Black Swan" Hot Spot: Is a Potential Operation in Venezuela Comparable to Operation Just Cause in Panama?," *Military Review* (January–February 2019): 94–103; Annette Idler, "Venezuela's instability has far broader implications. Here's what's at stake," *Washington Post*, 10 August 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/; and US House of Representatives, *Made by Maduro: The Humanitarian Crisis in Venezuela and US Policy Responses: Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 2019, 1–9; and Statement by National Security Advisor Ambassador John Bolton on Venezuela, 29 March 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/.

The Issue

The continuous fluctuation in worldwide stability necessitates the US military to retain a capability to effectively perform stability operations.[13] History foreshadows US military participation in several stabilization efforts involving politically fragile and economically underdeveloped countries during this century.[14] The US military's bias toward growing the armed forces' conventional capacity and neglecting postconflict capabilities will probably culminate in the US military repeating a number of past stability-related mistakes. The United States' concentration on a high-end fight against China or Russia, through the acquisition of billion-dollar aircraft, missile systems, and ships, will leave the US military susceptible to unsuccessfully executing stabilization actions. The US military trained and prepared DOD personnel for an orthodox military engagement along the lines of Operation Desert Storm as they engaged the Iraqi and Taliban militaries. As Operation Iraqi Freedom's and Operation Enduring Freedom's conventional military phases ended, the US military was not ready to conduct stability operations. US Armed Forces that are set to engage China and Russia will face a similar situation to the men and women entering Iraq and Afghanistan if the United States directs them to lead stabilization actions. The atrophy in stability TTPs and inadequate military equipment will leave an occupation force unready to handle the everyday police and humanitarian functions crucial to pacifying an indigenous populace. US forces will undoubtedly find themselves in similar environments akin to the chaotic situations following the collapses of Saddam Hussain and the Taliban.

As the postconflict situations in Iraq and Afghanistan required the United States Army to concentrate on stabilization actions, the Army organized the service's stability TTPs into Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations* (2008).[15] The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) took FM 3-07 and applied the Army's stability methodologies to the joint force with JP 3-07, *Stability*.[16] Even with the DOD's elevation of stability operations to a military core mission and the publication of the aforementioned documents, the DOD did not address the underlying issues plaguing military stabilization activities. Instead, the DOD continued trying to take a conventionally trained force,

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13. Michael J. McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?" *Parameters* (Winter 2005–2006): 34; and J. J. Messner, ed., *Fund For Peace 2018 Fragile States Index* (Washington, DC: The Fund For Peace, 2018), 4–5.

14. Kavanagh et al., *The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Ground Interventions*, 7–48.

15. US Army Combined Arms Center, Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations*, October 2008, 1–208.

16. Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability*, 3 August 2016, 21–160.

furnished with high-technology weapons, and make them execute peacekeeping operations requiring a police and engineering force.

The aim of studying these operations and prior attempts to improve stability operations is to create a command that expands on previous operational successes and prevents the reoccurrence of past mistakes. Original research on the formation of a stability operations–focused functional combatant command is important since the DOD is shifting its military strategy away from stability operations to one that concentrates on competing with China and Russia.[17] The absence of a command devoted to stability operations will likely result in the joint force's atrophy of stability TTPs and the armed forces' inability to prepare for future stabilization activities.

The United States needs to formulate a permanent solution to increase the effectiveness of stability operations to better prepare the armed forces for inevitable stabilization activities.[18] An examination of the previous century highlights a high frequency of US stability operations, and there are no indicators signaling this trend will change.[19] Since the end of the Cold War, the military conducted a stability operation every two years on average. During each of these activities, strategic and operational guidance were lacking, military planning was hasty and not well conceived, the military repeatedly did not send individuals with the proper experience, and the resources and logistics network to support these operations was deficient.[20]

The United States should focus on modifying specific elements of stability operations or creating new solutions to the manpower, training, and execution problems that plagued previous stabilization activities. A primary means to correct the United States' innate nature to forget the valuable lessons the US interagency community and armed forces learned during previous stability operations is establishing a command or organization capable of refining current stability TTPs or producing novel stabilization methodologies. The United States Army established the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) in 1993 to conduct such tasks, but the Army has continually threatened closing the PKSOI.[21] Furthermore, the PKSOI does not have the capacity or authorities to address other central issues afflicting stability operations. The United States needs to establish a functional stabilization command (STAZCOM)

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17. Idress Ali, "U.S. military puts 'great power competition' at heart of strategy: Mattis," *Reuters*, 19 January 2018, https://www.reuters.com/.

18. McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan," 34.

19. Kavanagh et al., *The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Ground Intervention*, 7–48; Adam Wunische, "America's Military Is Losing Its Counterinsurgency Operations Capabilities," *National Interest*, 2 October 2018, https://nationalinterest.org/.

20. James Jay Carafano, "Principles for Stability Operations and State-Building."

21. Tammy Schultz, "Tool of Peace and War: Save the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 31 July 2018, https://www.cfr.org/.

with the requisite authorities and resources to rectify the enduring difficulties hampering the United States' ability to effectively perform stability operations. STAZCOM's structure would resemble other US functional combatant commands, and the command would undertake the responsibilities of properly manning, training, and equipping military personnel to execute stability operations.

History of US Stability Operations, 1898–2005

Since 1898, the US military has faced several obstacles during stability operations. Many of the stability-related issues endured by the armed forces in the late nineteenth century still plague the US military. The United States typically sent military forces trained and equipped for war into countries to perform nation-building functions. The United States also rarely gave guidance and objectives to the military as units entered countries embroiled in internal strife or recovering from devastating wars. Military forces typically adapted to their situation and established a minimal level of stability. However, the stability typically did not last long, and the United States rarely codified the military's experiences during these operations. The scarcity of recorded lessons learned often culminated in the armed forces relearning the same TTPs in proceeding operations. The United States' lack of guidance, improper use of conventionally trained and equipped forces, and lack of formalized TTPs led to ineffective stability operations. A brief overview of historic US stability operations will demonstrate the United States never properly prepared the US military for stabilization actions. An examination of past stability operations will also show the need for STAZCOM to prevent the same recurring stability-related problems from afflicting future stabilization actions.

The period from 1898 to 1945 established the United States as a premier military power that exerted its national might to increase the country's political and economic worldwide influence. The United States expanded its traditional military role to include occupying and stabilizing Cuba, the Philippines, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. During these 47 years, the United States deployed the United States Army and Marine Corps (USMC) into the Caribbean, the Pacific region, and Central America with little direction other than telling the services to "stabilize" and "pacify" the countries.[22] The United States organized the Army and Marines to fight conventional conflicts, and they were ill-suited for occupational duties.[23] While the soldiers and Ma-

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22. Lawrence Yates, *The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations, 1789–2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2005), 7–8.
23. Yates, *The US Military's Experience in Stability Operation*, 7–8.

rines adapted to their settings, the United States neither planned, nor trained, nor equipped the services for stability operations.

Many of the US military's duties included nonmilitary activities such as creating educational systems, reforming law enforcement and the courts, constructing public works, founding political parties, and creating civil administrations.[24] The Army's and USMC's lack of knowledge on the proper means to set up these administrative functions frequently resulted in the occupied countries having inadequate governments. Once US forces left, the governments sometimes fell apart and the United States reoccupied the countries and started the stabilization process over again.[25] The US military also trained militaries and police forces in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. The training initiative helped to create security in their respective countries. Yet when the Army and Marine Corps departed, the native militaries and police often did not advance democratic ideals. Instead, these organizations supported stability throughout the Caribbean as instruments of repression for a line of national dictators.[26]

Although the USMC enjoyed localized and short-lived success in stability operations from 1898 to 1945, these efforts did not translate into achieving regional and long-term stability. The United States' failure to properly prepare the Army and Marines for stability operations inhibited the force's capacity to successfully implement measures for long-term stability. Moreover, the United States' vague guidance and objectives for these stability operations left the Army and Marine Corps to cobble together operations with no defined end state. The US military's role as a civil administrator regularly fell short since they received no assistance from other US governmental agencies endowed with expertise in law enforcement or nation-building. In combination with these shortfalls, the United States' decision not to capture the military's experiences throughout this period led to the armed forces repeating similar mistakes dur-

24. John Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1899–1902* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1975); Yates, "The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations," 7–8; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Intervention!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913–1917* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993); and Robert E. Quirk, *An Affair of Honor: Woodrow Wilson and the Occupation of Veracruz* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962).

25. David F. Healy, *The United States in Cuba, 1898–1902* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963); Jack C. Lane, *Armed Progressive: General Leonard Wood* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1978); and Allan R. Millett, *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906–1909* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968).

26. Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916–1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984); Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916–1924* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, US Marine Corps, 1974); David F. Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era: The U.S. Navy in Haiti, 1915–1916* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976); Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915–1934* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971); and Lester D. Langley, *The Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire, 1900–1934* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

ing stability operations after World War II. Many of the issues that continue to afflict US military stabilization actions first surfaced during this period. The United States still has not corrected several of these problems. A command focused on stability operations would remedy several of the problems pestering the US military's inability to effectively perform stability operations.[27]

From the end of World War II through Operation Iraqi Freedom, the US military continued to encounter similar problems that beset stability operations in the preceding 47 years. Throughout this period, the United States succeeded in producing nationwide and long-term stability in a few instances. However, the overall trend in ineffective stability operations signaled that the United States did not place enough emphasis on resolving the underlying issues undercutting the efficacy of US stability operations. The United States maintained the strategy of deploying forces organized for conventional warfare into countries requiring a police force, infrastructure development, civil administration, and humanitarian support. The United States' aims for the stability operations were nebulous and shifted as the situation on the ground changed. The amalgamation of these elements resulted in the US military attempting ad hoc solutions to establish and expand stability with minimal long-term success. A review of stability operations from 1945 to 2005 will further validate the need for a stabilization focused functional combatant command to overcome the inadequacies still hampering US stabilization activities.

The stability operations in post–World War II Germany and Japan are the lone long-term and nationwide successful US stabilization activities. The geopolitical environment in 1945 was the primary driving factor in making the German and Japanese stability operations effective. As World War II concluded in 1945, the deteriorating relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union compelled Washington to stabilize and rebuild Germany and Japan as a bulwark to contain perceived communist aggression. The Americans faced several impediments to achieve Washington's desired end state of a revitalized Germany and Japan. As the Allies liberated German and Japanese territory, the responsibility for stability operations fell to combat soldiers, who typically were poorly equipped and received little to no training to conduct policing and humanitarian actions. By 1946, the US military stood up a constabulary force in Germany, which took over numerous noncombat functions from regular Army units. The US military later established a similar police force in Japan. The military educated these units in police and border control methods to help stabilize and pacify the newly conquered German and Japanese peoples.[28]

27. Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004).
28. Yates, "The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations," 11–12.

In concert with transforming military elements into law enforcement functionaries, the United States created civilian organizations dedicated to rehabilitating the German and Japanese economies and reforming the respective countries' public institutions.[29] The US military and government agencies collaborated on several of these ventures to leverage the expertise each organization had in their corresponding fields. US officials also quickly reincorporated the local population into the newly established or reformed government and economic bodies to enable a timely transfer of governmental duties back to the host country. The combination of these stability efforts set the foundation for Germany and Japan to prosper into robust democratic and capitalist countries.[30]

American postconflict operations in Germany and Japan are excellent examples of successful stabilization actions. The combined energies of the US military and civilian agencies demonstrate the quick and positive impact that stability operations can have on a country. The United States' experience in both countries can serve as potential templates to shape future stability operations. However, Germany and Japan's advanced prewar economy, political establishments, societal norms, and infrastructure substantially contrast to the typically underdeveloped countries where the United States performed stability operations in the Cold War and after September 11, 2001. A functional component command dedicated to stabilization activities could not wholly replicate the United States' stabilization efforts in postwar Germany and Japan. However, STAZCOM could employ a similar whole-of-government approach to improve the effectiveness of future stability operations.

After successful stability operations in Germany and Japan, the United States reverted to its unproductive ways of conducting stabilization activities. The United States utilized combat troops for stability operations in the beginning phases of operations in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The US military did not train nor equip these soldiers to execute stability operations. Furthermore, senior military and civilian leadership did not provide guidance on what they wanted these stabilization activities to accomplish. Moreover, there was no centralized chain of command to plan, coordinate, and direct stability operations. The United States rarely synchronized the country's governmental elements to cogently apply the United States' various elements of diplomatic, economic, and military power to perform effective stability operations.

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29. United States Department of State, "Foreign Relations of the United States: The Far East Volume VIII" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1946): 349; George C. Marshall Foundation Home Page, "The Marshall Plan," 2009, https://www.marshallfoundation.org/; US National Archives, *Records of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) 1945–52*, (Washington, DC: U.S. National Archives), 469.2; and Solidelle Wasser and Michael Dolfman, "BLS and the Marshall Plan: The Forgotten Story," *Monthly Labor Review* (2005): 44.

30. Yates, "The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations," 12.

A functional combatant command would likely have solved many of the issues the US military faced during these operations and improved the military's ability to successfully execute stability operations. Various US government white papers and reports and academic journal articles assert that, from Vietnam to Afghanistan, the US military needed a separate "stability force," under one command, to establish security for the native population, restore basic services to the communities, and begin reconstructing the occupied societies.[31] The Stabilization Command would have the requisite combatant command authorities to align, direct, and resource the command's forces with the singular goal of executing effective stability operations.[32] The Stabilization Command would also have subordinate commands at the operational level to integrate with the geographic combatant commands. A summary of these operations will highlight the recurring theme that US military stability operations are ineffective due to a lack of a centralized command to coordinate and direct stabilization activities.

In the beginning phases of the Vietnam War, the US Armed Forces performed well in their conventional military roles, but the forces were not well suited to conduct stabilization activities in Vietnam.[33] The US military sent soldiers to thousands of villages and hamlets who were well versed in combat TTPs, but they had not received training on how to conduct stability operations. As American military personnel faced regular Vietcong assaults, the pacification mission became a secondary priority to rooting out and eliminating the North Vietnamese forces and their sympathizers.[34]

The US military typically worked in parallel to the civilian organizations, and there was rarely coordination among the various entities to advance a whole-of-government approach to stability operations.[35] The noncollaborative environment between the DOD and US civilian institutions did not take advantage of the entities respective capabilities and usually resulted in in-

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31. David W. Shin, "Narrowing the Gap: DOD and Stability Operations," *Military Review* (2009): 25–29; Andrew F. Krepinevich, "The Future of U.S. Ground Forces: Challenges and Requirements" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2007), 1–13; Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, "DOD Task Force for Business and Stability Operations $675 Million in Spending Led to Mixed Results, Waste, and Unstained Projects (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), 1–87; Robert M. Perito, *Where Is the Lone Ranger? America's Search for a Stability Force* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2013), 1–248; and Terrence K. Kelly et al., *A Stability Police Force for the United States: Justification and Options for Creating U.S. Capabilities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 1–213.

32. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 12 July 2017, 83–84.

33. Dale Andrade and Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future," *Military Review* (2006): 12.

34. Andrade and Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix."

35. Ben Kauffeld, *USAID and DOD: Analysis and Recommendations to Enhance Development-Military Cooperation* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College Press, 2014), 6–7.

cremental and uneven progress in stabilizing the country. President Lyndon Johnson's direction to fuse civilian and military stability activities forced the organizations to integrate at the tactical level, which increased security throughout South Vietnam's countryside.[36] However, the coordinated stability operations only produced isolated pockets of stability throughout Vietnam.[37] The US military relearned numerous stability-related difficulties the armed forces experienced during the beginning phases of the Vietnam War when the United States invaded Afghanistan and Iraq after September 11, 2001.

The United States did not view stability operations as a top priority when the Coalition invaded Afghanistan. The White House's guidance to the military centered on the destruction of al-Qaeda with the secondary goal of winning the Afghan peoples' "hearts and minds" through humanitarian and stability operations.[38] The US military's plans for Operation Enduring Freedom focused on combat operations and included minimal preparations for long-term stability operations. This lack of foresight affected the proposed force structure for Operation Enduring Freedom and the military's operational and tactical approaches to the campaign. US Central Command (USCENTCOM) ignored joint and US Army doctrine, which dictated that the military should plan combat and stability operations concurrently to enable the military to maintain and expand territorial, economic, and/or societal gains.[39]

Additionally, a dearth of civil affairs personnel, who the military trained and equipped for stability operations, often left conventional force commanders unsure about how they could stabilize the zones they took control over. The units' unfamiliarity with stability operations often led these forces to conduct ad hoc stability activities or abandon the areas without improving the situation for the native inhabitants.[40] Furthermore, the US military deployed only with combat related material and equipment, which inhibited these units from carrying out stability operations. Without the needed means, these groups could not accomplish the reconstruction of several humanitarian infrastructure projects to alleviate the plight of the Afghan people.[41]

The US military followed a similar pattern during the opening stages of the Afghanistan invasion as the armed forces had during the Vietnam War. The military planned and prepared itself for combat operations, but it neglected

36. Henry Nuzum, *Shades of CORDS in the Kush: The False Hope of "Unity of Effort" in American Counterinsurgency*, Letort Paper (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, April 2010), 46–51; and Kauffeld, "USAID and DOD," 7.

37. Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future," 22.

38. William Flavin, *Civil Military Operations: Afghanistan* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2004), ix.

39. Flavin, *Civil Military Operations*, ix.

40. Flavin, *Civil Military Operations*, xii.

41. Flavin, *Civil Military Operations*, xvi.

the steps the military needed to take once the services won the conventional war. The US presidential administration and senior military leaders did not view preparing for stability operations as a necessity. The military avoidance in planning for stability operations also culminated in an insufficient number of mobilized soldiers who possessed skill sets that could assist combat forces in stabilizing expanses of territory they took over from the enemy. The US military paid limited attention to the stability failures and experiences the services learned in the 2001–2002 period in Afghanistan when formulating and executing operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The US military planned and conducted succinct and well-organized combat operations against Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi forces in the primary phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, the US military neglected to properly prepare for post-hostility operations resulting in a postconflict Iraqi society that constantly teetered on the edge of civil war.[42] Military planners had not established an effective plan for the Coalition to transition from the war's combat phase to stability operations. Although US General Tommy Franks, who led the Coalition, identified the requirements for security, humanitarian assistance, and reconstruction in Iraq, US military leaders did not seem to comprehend the importance of stability operations and shied away nation-building planning.[43]

When Operation Iraqi Freedom started in 2003, the invading force consisted of 145,000 Coalition service members. This number of troops was enough to rout Saddam's military, but Coalition leadership did not train nor equip these men and women to quickly restore the population's basic needs.[44] The shortage of service members led to numerous problems. The combat soldiers could not prevent individuals from looting, which damaged valuable Iraqi infrastructure and undercut the respect that ordinary Iraqi citizens had for the US military. Without the proper manning, the United States could not secure the Syria–Iraq border and stop the flow of insurgents from coming into Iraq, which made the environment even more unstable.[45] The military's lack of coordination and collaboration with the US interagency community also diminished the US military's prospects of containing the devolving humanitarian and society conditions throughout Iraq.

Even before Operation Iraqi Freedom commenced, numerous issues hampered interagency coordination between the armed forces and other govern-

42. Karen Finkenbinder and Paul M. Sangrey, eds., *Preventing and Managing Conflict in an Unstable World* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2014), 21–22.
43. Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 88.
44. Ricks, *Fiasco*, 177.
45. Ricks, *Fiasco*, 148.

ment agencies. The White House did not designate a lead governmental organization to plan and execute postconflict stabilization actions. The White House's inaction to identify a government entity to orchestrate stability operations led to a deficient amount of interagency coordination.[46] Since the United States did not establish an effective mechanism to force interagency coordination, the US military assumed several stabilization roles from 2003 to 2005 that other US governmental entities were more capable of conducting. Without an adequate level of assistance from US interagency community partners, the US military struggled during the transition from the combat to the postconflict phase. Several DOD and scholarly articles cite the need for the US civilian agencies and military to better integrate to engender a collaborative approach to stability operations. These publications view the inadequacies in the interagency process as a reason successful stability operations were frequently short-lived and localized.[47]

An examination of the last century of US stability operations demonstrates the need for a singular command to plan, resource, integrate, and execute stabilization efforts. The United States' repetitive mistakes in nearly all the stabilization actions during this period displays a fragmented and improvised governmental approach to stability operations. The United States' ineptitude to adequately train and equip the country's service members for stabilization activities frequently resulted in minimally successful stability operations. The US military's decision not to document the many lessons the services learned over this period also forced the services to relearn several stability-related TTPs. A lack of US interagency community coordination at the national level further inhibited an all-encompassing approach, which leveraged the multiple aspects of American power, to ensure successful long-term stability operations. A functional combatant command focused on stabilization tasks could rectify a number of these repetitive problems and increase the efficacy of stability

46. Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 139.

47. Caroline Earle, "Taking Stock: Interagency Integration in Stability Operations," *Prism* 3, no. 2 (2012): 37–50; U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations Joint Operating Concept* (Suffolk, VA: US Government Printing Office, 2006), 1–125; The Bush School of Government and Public Service Texas A&M University, *The Interagency Process in Support & Stability Operations: Integrating and Aligning the Roles and Missions of Military and Civilian Agencies in Conflict and Post-Conflict Environments*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 1–299; US Government Accountability Office, *Military Operations: Actions Needed to Improve DOD's Stability Operations Approach and Enhance Interagency Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), 1–60; James Derleth, "Fostering a Whole-of-Government Approach to National Security from the Bottom Up," *Military Review* (2018), 1–6; Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs Princeton University, *Lessons for US Doctrine: Challenges in Stabilization Operations* (Camden, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 1–48; and William J. Denn, *Search for the Philosopher's Stone: Improving Interagency Cooperation in Tactical Military Operations* (West Point, NY: Modern War Institute Press, 2018), 1–70.

operations.[48] The Stabilization Command would centralize the stability operations planning process and properly train and equip the command's personnel for stabilization activities. The command would also facilitate a collaborative government approach to stability operations by nesting other government agencies into STAZCOM's C2 structure.

Analysis of Programs Developed to Improve Military Stability Operations

As the combat phase of warfare concluded in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the United States assessed that the DOD and other US governmental agencies had inadequately planned to fight an elongated counterinsurgency campaign and execute stability operations. The conventional mind-set the military applied to stabilization activities during the immediate conclusion of combat operations did not work well to suppress the Vietcong, the Taliban, or al-Qaeda. The military incorrectly thought the armed forces could stabilize the respective countries through targeting, capturing, and killing insurgents, yet insurgencies maintained or grew their influence on society. The armed forces' bias toward combat actions and hesitation toward undertaking internationally mandated nation-building initially precluded the services from addressing the underlying issues that enabled the insurgencies and terrorist groups to sustain their existence.[49]

However, during each conflict the military began and matured tactical-level stability programs that integrated the US interagency community and succeeded in establishing localized stability. Although none of the concepts led to the entire stabilization of a country, they demonstrated that, when the military dedicated resources and manpower to stability operations and elicited the assistance of the US interagency community, stabilization activities could be effective. Moreover, the Civilian Operations and Revolutionary Support (CORDS) program, provincial reconstruction teams (PRT), and village stability operations (VSO) offer excellent examples of programs the United States could utilize under a STAZCOM construct. CORDS, PRTs, and VSOs rarely received the strategic level of support they required to expand their stability efforts beyond the local level to engender regional or nationwide stability. The lack in strategic guidance, direction, and resources to CORDS, PRTs, and VSOs highlights the need for a combatant command (CCMD) to oversee stability operations. Scholarly journals and DOD and other government agency reports

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48. Bill Flavin, ed., *Stabilization: A New Approach to Whole of Government Operational Planning and Execution* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2018), 58–76.
49. Department of Defense Manual, *Department of Defense Law of War Manual*, 2015.

regularly highlighted the success CORDS, PRTs, and VSOs enjoyed at the tactical level. However, these publications emphasize the lack of an overarching command as a primary reason CORDS, PRTs, and VSOs could not extend stability throughout Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.[50]

The United States created the CORDS program to establish stability throughout the Vietnamese hinterlands and secure support for the United States' larger military campaign. CORDS forced the DOD, Department of State (DOS), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to integrate under a military commander.[51] One set of civilian and military personnel worked at developing the local community by focusing on health and administration, civil affairs, education, agriculture, psychological operations, and logistics. The other service members and civilians concentrated on military matters.[52] The localized pacification and stability operations demonstrated achievements from 1969 to 1972, including supplying security to over a thousand villages and negotiating the surrender of numerous Vietcong members.[53] However, CORDS could not change the Vietnam War's overall outcome.

The US military did not design the CORDS program to prevent a North Vietnamese conventional military invasion; nor was CORDS the panacea to engender popular support for the South Vietnamese government. However, CORDS was successful as an archetype for improving the execution of military stabilization activities and engendering interagency support for the operations.[54] Numerous CORDS components influenced stability operations positively in Iraq and Afghanistan and could serve as a template for STAZCOM to employ for localized stability operations. These elements included the military's willingness to provide security and enable the implementation of civil-funded stability programs, a sizable civilian commitment to the endeavor, an integrated military-civilian command structure, a continuous and candid two-way dialogue between the field and headquarters elements, and flexible leadership.[55]

50. Nima Abbaszadeh et al., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations* (Camden, NJ: Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, 2008), 5; Jon Gundersen and Melanne A. Civic, eds., *Unity of Mission: Civilian-Military Teams in War and Peace* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2016), 342–43; Flavin, "Stabilization," 33; Mark Moyar, *Village Stability Operations and the Afghan Local Police* (Tampa, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2014), 83–84; and Robert Perryman, *Global Collaboration through International Funding Generation and Allocation Solution Strategies,* Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2017.

51. Memorandum from Lyndon B. Johnson to Komer, Subject: Second Komer Trip to Vietnam, 23–29 June 1966, 1 July 1966, 6, Historians files, CMH, Fort McNair, Washington, DC.

52. Memorandum from Johnson to Komer, 15–16.

53. Stephen B. Young, ed., The Theory and Power of Associative Power: CORDS in the Villages of Vietnam 1967–1972 (London: Hamilton Books, 2017), 134.

54. Kauffeld, "USAID and DOD," 9.

55. Schoux, "The Vietnam CORDS Experience," 14, 17, 19, 22.

In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the United States mobilized quickly and attacked the Taliban government in Afghanistan to undermine the regime's ability to continue support for terrorist organizations. The US military rapidly diminished the Taliban's capabilities within a few months and forced the remaining Taliban and al-Qaeda elements to begin an insurgency to carry on their struggle. Washington swiftly realized the decades-long neglect of Afghanistan's economy, infrastructure, and public institutions left the allies with the momentous task of nation-building.

The US and allied forces promptly moved to export security and basic services to the Afghan provinces to secure and expand the gains from the Taliban's defeat. In late 2002, the US military implemented the PRT concept in Afghanistan to establish short-term stability at the local and regional levels. The US and allied forces would then turn over PRT responsibilities to the Afghan government.[56]

The PRTs combined civil and military personnel into a single chain of command. The objectives were to extend the Afghan central government's reach into rural areas, establish localized security, improve governance, and help develop the domestic economy.[57] The US military designed malleable PRTs to conform to the disparate cultures throughout the provincial and local tribes.[58] The PRTs had between 50 and 300 joint military and civilian personnel. The units' manning was predominately military service members with a small civilian cohort, which usually included three or four civilian agency representatives from USAID, DOS, and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). The US and allied partners' governments enabled the PRTs to carry out their set missions by providing the PRTs with a broad desired end state and minimal constraints.

The PRTs rose out of necessity to establish and cultivate stability at the foundational levels of society in Afghanistan and Iraq after combat operations concluded in each country. The teams applied a loose C2 framework to morph to the conditions they faced in their areas of operations. The PRTs' application of resources with limited US military and civilian oversight enabled the groups to rapidly identify and initiate development projects, such as building wells and schools, which had immediate effects on the native populations. These

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56. Touku Piiparinen, "A Clash of Mindsets? An Insider's Account of Provincial Reconstruction Teams," *International Peacekeeping* 14, no. 1 (2007): 143; and Carter Malkasian and Gerald Meyerle, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: How Do We Know They Work?* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2009), vii.

57. Shawn Dorman, "Iraq PRTs: Pins on a Map," *Foreign Service Journal* 24 (March 2007), 22, https://afsa.org/; and Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "PRTs in Afghanistan: Successful but Not Sufficient," Danish Institute for International Studies 6 (2005), 11.

58. Mark Sedra, "Civil-Military Relations in Afghanistan: The Provincial Reconstruction Team Debate," *Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies (CISS)* 126 (Toronto: CISS, March 2005), 2, https://afghanhindsight.files.wordpress.com/.

impactful undertakings assisted the US military in mitigating insurgent influence throughout the urban and rural areas in Afghanistan and Iraq and extend the elected governments' reach.

Although PRTs provided a level of stability throughout Afghanistan and Iraq, the framework had weaknesses. The decentralized C2 structure led to the PRTs having different roles and responsibilities for their respective regions. The PRTs also did not have a unified mission statement or a uniform logistical process to prepare for their missions. The lack of proper logistical support prevented the PRTs from receiving basic supplies they required to carry out even the most basic missions.[59] Moreover, the nonstandardization in the PRT structure resulted in recurrent changes to the teams' decision-making process, which confused the PRT members and their Afghan and Iraqi partners. A further disadvantage for the PRT construct was the frequent turnover within teams, inhibiting teams from fusing into a coherent unit.[60] Although there were shortcomings in the PRT model, a vast majority of these faults rested on the higher headquarters not articulating clear commander's intent and shifting PRT objectives and priorities on a regular basis.[61]

Although the PRTs displayed flaws in executing their missions, their overall positive effects outweighed any negative outcomes which came from their actions. A preponderance of the PRTs' issues arose due to incomplete and contradictory direction from higher headquarters. The PRT concept serves as an excellent regional and tactical-level unit to inaugurate and nurture stability. The stabilization functional CCMD would integrate PRT-like elements, called regional reconstruction teams (RRT), into the command's framework. The Stabilization Command strategic and regional level commanders would provide guidance to RRTs, which would serve as STAZCOM's local-level action arm. The clear direction from STAZCOM leaders would mitigate the confusing and contradictory orders PRTs often received from multiple commands in Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, unlike the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's discombobulated logistical network in Afghanistan, the US military logistical system would likely deliver the necessary resources to RRTs to attain their objectives. VSOs copied elements from the PRT structure and slightly modified the framework to perform stability operations more effectively in Afghanistan.

VSOs attempted to foster stability at the local level in Afghanistan, much like PRTs. VSOs endeavored to establish, develop, maintain, and grow the Kabul and regional government's influence and control into rural Afghan areas through a variety of efforts. The main divergence between VSOs and PRTs was

59. Dorman, "Iraq PRTs," 21.
60. Sedra, "Civil-Military Relations in Afghanistan," 2.
61. Pipparinen, "A Clash of Mindsets?," 147.

that VSOs focused on cultivating a robust security element, known as the Afghan Local Police (ALP). In combination with the VSOs' development projects, the US military recruited, screened, and trained native Afghans to safeguard local populations and enable political, societal, and economic development.[62] The US military started VSOs in early 2010, and the program was chiefly run by US special operations forces (SOF) with a mixture of civil affairs and military information support operations personnel.[63] VSOs experienced several successes and a few missteps during the concept's enactment. Even with VSOs' minor mistakes, the paradigm serves a valuable template to inform a possible C2 structure for a stabilization focused CCMD.

Community mobilization was the center piece of VSOs, and VSOs typically had more refined objectives than PRTs. The US military created VSOs to produce stability and security at the Afghan village level. American forces, primarily led by SOF, determined that the construction of an Afghan organic police capability was the best avenue to enable wide-ranging US-assisted improvement ventures throughout Afghan villages.[64] However, the local shuras (consultation groups) vetted the ALP recruits and decided which projects VSOs undertook. VSOs rested on the capacity of US personnel to form and nurture trust-based relationships and then live in strategically important villages to ensure that these hamlets maintained or expanded security.

VSO groups did not have a standardized composition and morphed to adapt to the conditions on the ground. VSO teams consisted of SOF individuals and joint conventional military personnel. The units sometimes included members from civil affairs and cultural support and female engagement teams.[65] The VSOs also requested help from DOS, USAID, and the USDA to assist villages in maturing their governing capacity. Assistance from these various agencies tied local-level projects to larger regional developmental endeavors.[66] The VSO and PRT C2 were often interchangeable, however VSOs were more successful than PRTs due the VSOs' senior leadership's clearly articulated guidance and well-formed objectives.[67]

62. Robert Hulslander and Jake Spivey, "Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police," *Prism* 3, no. 3 (2014), 125–26; and Jeffrey M. Shanahan, "Decentralized Stability Operations and Mission Command," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (2015), 33.

63. Shanahan, "Decentralized Stability Operations and Mission Command," 33.

64. Seth A. Shreckengast, "The Only Game in Town: Assessing the Effectiveness of Village Stability Operations and the Afghan Local Police," *Small Wars Journal*, 27 March 2012, 2, http://smallwarsjournal.com/.

65. Shreckengast, "The Only Game in Town."

66. Robert Hulslander and Jake Spivey, "Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police," *Prism* 3, no. 3 (2014), 134.

67. Shreckengast, "The Only Game in Town," 8.

A major concern for the VSO program was that the ALP sometimes acted in unethical and almost criminal ways while striving to foster a secure environment for economic, political, and societal growth. Governmental and nongovernmental organizations voiced their anxieties. In a May 2011 report, Oxfam and other aid groups stated that the ALP had little oversight, and many Afghan communities saw the ALP as criminal gangs.[68]

Another drawback to VSO was its reliance on the SOF community, which possesses a small and highly specialized cadre. SOF personnel's linguistic capabilities and irregular warfare capabilities made them ideal candidates to lead VSOs. However, the requirements to expand VSOs beyond the local level were outside SOF's capacity.[69] Though the VSO framework displayed flaws, the program demonstrated various aspects that engendered stability at the local to regional level. The Stabilization Command should include the VSO concept of community mobilization in future stability operations. Community mobilization would enable the native population to assume more responsibility for their communities and allow US forces to move onto more places to create additional nodes of stability. The Stabilization Command should also train local security personnel to offer additional protection to their villages. The Stabilization Command would require vetting tools to ensure local individuals had no human rights violations. The Stabilization Command could also utilize the VSO model to inform STAZCOM's tactical force structure.

The US military's localized stability programs met with varying levels of success. Nevertheless, CORDS, PRTs, and VSOs routinely left an area more stabilized than when the units arrived. From Vietnam through Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States' attempts to improve tactical-level stability operations resulted in innovative ways to establish and expand stability. However, the absence of a CCMD prevented CORDs, PRTs, and VSOs from expanding stability in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq beyond the regional level.[70] Without a strategic command to plan, integrate, resource, supply, and execute stabilization activities, the US military diverted much of the military's resources to combat operations and delegated stabilization actions to a tertiary function during the above conflicts. A new stabilization functional combatant command could incorporate elements from CORDS, PRTs, and VSOs to build tactical

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68. Gretal Kovach, "As U.S. Scales Back in Afghanistan, Local Defense Program Expands—Push for Afghan Local Police Proves Controversial," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 16 August 2011.

69. *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan: Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: DOD, December 2012), 77, https://www.globalsecurity.org/; and *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan: Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: DOD, July 2013), 97–98, https://dod.defense.gov/.

70. Flavin, "Stabilization," 33.

units with the requisite operational and strategic-level support to generate nationwide stability during future stabilization activities.

Contemporary US Military Stability Operations Capabilities

The US military wrote Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability*, to collate the numerous stability-related TTPs the armed forces garnered from the US military's past stability operations. JP 3-07 laid the groundwork for conventional and special forces to effectively perform stability operations. Even though the DOD established stability operations as a core military competence alongside combat operations in DOD Directive 3000.05, *Stability Operations*, and cemented this belief with JP 3-07, there are no military units dedicated solely to stabilization activities.[71] The US military stood down PRTs and VSOs and established the US Army Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) in 2017. The Army intends to create six SFABs to deploy worldwide.[72] The SFAB predominantly instructs foreign militaries on several military and nonmilitary TTPs, but it also views stability operations as a competence within the overall mission.[73]

The SFAB doctrinal focus on stability operations looks to establish or develop the foundational components which a country requires to build and mature sustainable political, societal, and economic growth. However, the first SFAB completed a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan and did not perform any stability-related tasks during that time. Instead, the SFAB trained the Afghan National Security Forces primarily on planning combat operations.[74][75] The SFAB's evasion of stability activities during the brigade's deployment is a microcosm for the US military's avoidance of any operation resembling nation-building. The DOD's insufficient manpower, equipment, and will to proactively address issues in failing or fragile countries will likely result in the perpetual cycle of costly occupations. A functional CCMD solely focused on stability-related actions could obviate repeating the US military's stability missteps.

Outside the SFAB, the US military trains to provide short-term (one to six months) humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations. The DOD's recon-

71. Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 3000.05, *Stabilization*, 13 December 2018, 1–9.

72. Mehgann Myers, "The Army's second security force assistance brigade is activated and preparing to deploy next year," *Army Times*, 30 November 2018, https://www.armytimes.com/.

73. Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication 3-96.1, *Security Force Assistance Brigade* (Headquarters Department of the Army: Washington, DC, 2018), 5.

74. Security Force Assistance Command Public Affairs, "1st SFAB returns from Afghanistan," *U.S. Army*, 4 December 2018, https://www.army.mil/; and Sean Kimmons, "In Afghan-led missions, SFAB Soldiers accompany partners, assist when needed," *Army News Service*, 22 September 2018, https://www.army.mil/.

75. Sean Kimmons, "In Afghan-led missions, SFAB Soldiers accompany partners, assist when needed," *Army News Service*, 22 September 2018, https://www.army.mil/.

centration on conventional warfare has relegated stabilization activities to a tertiary undertaking. The absence of any organizations focused on stability operations reinforces the requirement for a combatant command and its associated theater- and tactical-level operational forces. Although DOD Directive 3000.05 and international law codifies DOD's obligation to plan and conduct stabilization activities, the DOD is devoting little time to refining the US military's capabilities to conduct stability operations.[76] The Stabilization Command would prepare forces for future stability operations through a continuous regiment of planning and training concentrating on stabilization tasks.

Recommendations

The United States requires a stability-focused functional CCMD to surmount issues when the armed forces carry out stabilization activities. US policy and international law also requires the US military to participate in stability operations, reinforcing the need for a command dedicated to stabilization activities.[77] The DOD should model the Stabilization Command after other functional combatant commands, especially utilizing the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) C2 structure. The authorities and resources nested within a new CCMD would enable the United States to plan proactively for potential postconflict operations and inject US forces preemptively into countries or regions on the precipice of chaos. The Stabilization Command commander would have combatant command (command authority) (COCOM) over the forces assigned to command. COCOM would give the STAZCOM commander the ability to organize and employ his/her subordinate commands and forces as he/she saw fit under US policy to execute stability operations. The STAZCOM commander could also assign stability-related tasks and define objectives pertaining to stability operations.[78] A combatant command framework would lead to US interagency community integration and help realize a comprehensive approach to stability operations by appointing US interagency community workers to key positions within the command and creating a combined joint interagency task force (CJIATF).

The Stabilization Command will emulate the excellent examples of contemporary functional combatant command C2 frameworks. Functional CCMDs focus on transregional issues and attempt to provide the necessary support to geographic CCMDs.[79] The USSOCOM, US Transportation

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76. DoDD, *Stabilization*, 1–9; Jeff Goodson, "Defense Department wants out of stability operations," *The Hill*, 7 August 2018, https://thehill.com/.

77. Robinson, "Finding the Right Balance Department of Defense Roles in Stabilization," 14.

78. JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 23.

79. JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 83–84.

Command, and US Strategic Command contribute unique capabilities to geographic CCMDs based on the specific forces each command controls. The Stabilization Command would fall on par with these functional CCMDs and provide geographic CCMDs with forces dedicated to stability operations in peacetime or in a conflict's aftermath.

The Stabilization Command would require approximately 70,000 military and civilian personnel at the command's strategic, operational, and tactical levels to successfully accomplish STAZCOM's aims. The DOD would direct the US Army and Marine Corps to resource 80 percent of STAZCOM's manpower with the remaining 20 percent coming from the Navy, the Air Force, and US interagency community partners. The demand for STAZCOM to rapidly deploy tactical units into fragile or failing countries would justify a 70,000-person command. Moreover, service members would receive four-year orders to STAZCOM and the command's subordinate elements. Four years at STAZCOM would allow service members to develop and refine their stability TTPs, especially at the operational and tactic commands through multiple deployments to the same region. The STAZCOM commander, in conjunction with his/her staff, the geographic combatant commanders (GCC), and US ambassadors would identify fragile or failing countries willing to allow US forces into them. Once the two countries agreed to a US presence, STAZCOM would begin to prepare forces for deployment. An example of this type of coordination occurred in the Lake Chad Basin from 2013 to 2016. During this period, the DOD and DOS worked with Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger to enable US, British, and French military and civilian forces to enter the region. These individuals worked on development projects to prevent the spread of the Boko Haram insurgency.[80]

The Stabilization Command's four-star general officer-led strategically focused headquarters would ensure requisite planning, personnel, and material were ready to assist geographic CCMDs with stabilization actions. The STAZCOM commander would accomplish the aforementioned tasks through his/her COCOM authorities. The STAZCOM commander position would rotate between an Army and Marine Corps officer since the two services would supply a preponderance of the personnel for STAZCOM missions. Moreover, the command's missions would mostly center on the land-centric operations. The Stabilization Command should appoint a vice commander from the Air Force and Navy, due to the services' supporting roles to the command. The command should promote interagency involvement by selecting a Senior

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80. Flavin, "Stabilization," 51–56.

Executive Service (SES) individual, the equivalent of a three-star general officer, from the DOS to serve as the deputy commander.

The US military should use USSOCOM's headquarters structure as a template for STAZCOM (fig. 1) due to USSOCOM's streamlined C2 and demonstrated ability to effectively equip, train, and globally deploy US SOF. The Stabilization Command requires identical command attributes to effectively carry out stability operations. The continuous counterterrorism (CT) campaigns over the previous two decades refined USSOCOM's C2 structure to quickly adapt to meet the requirements of fighting a constantly morphing enemy.[81] The inherent danger to the US homeland and overseas national interest posed by terrorism and the SOF community's culture of honest and rapid feedback drive the commander and the staff to typically make decisions more quickly than other CCMDs. Additionally, USSOCOM is the "lead" CCMD for planning and executing synchronized CT operations, which empowers the command to take timely and decisive action. Furthermore, USSOCOM performed several stability-related functions throughout Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom; thus, USSOCOM partially aligned the command's C2 to undertake stabilization activities.[82] The USSOCOM's stability mission set reinforces the justification to utilize the command's C2 and adapt the framework to construct STAZCOM.

81. John Alvarez, ed., *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual* (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2015), 26.

82. Alvarez, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, 21.
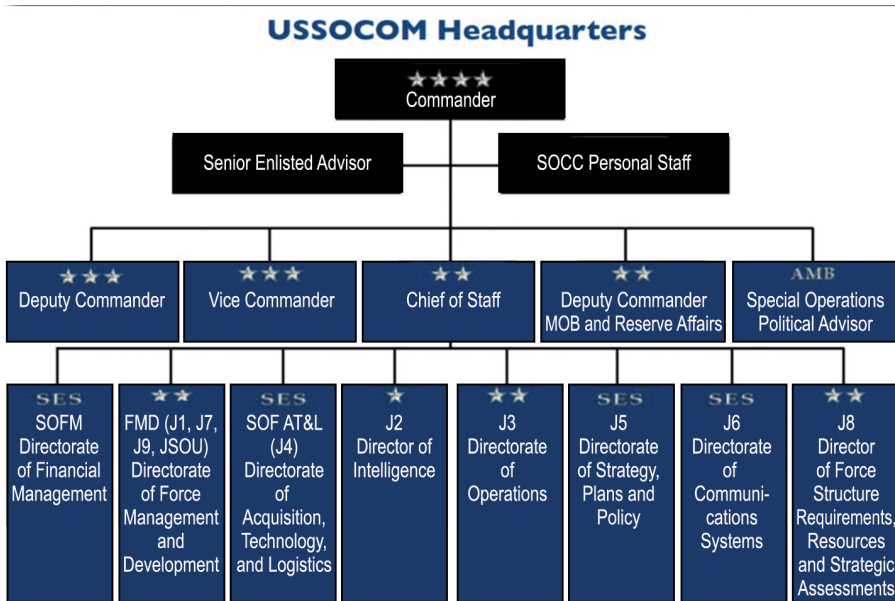
Figure 1. US Special Operations Command Headquarters structure. (Source: Alvarez, _Special Operations Forces Reference Manual_, 26.)

The Stabilization Command would also benefit from a USSOCOM-like C2 since stability operations frequently morph, much like CT operations. The United Special Operations Command's C2 continues to evolve as the CT threat changes, making the command's framework an excellent command template for STAZCOM to follow. The US military's lethargic efforts to quickly restructure the services' C2 to respond to changing events on the ground requires the armed forces to construct an agile CCMD C2 to meet the volatile nature of stability operations. The DOD would have to make minor adjustments to convert USSOCOM's structure into STAZCOM. The DOD would need to construct a much more robust STAZCOM directorate of acquisition, technology, and logistics (J4). The Stabilization Command's mission sets would involve more men and material and a larger logistical network than USSOCOM actions.

The DOD should also follow USSOCOM's example and place a command or organization within STAZCOM which educates command personnel and codifies stability-related lessons learned. The USSOCOM nested the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) within the command's Force Management and Development directorate to provide education to the SOF community, examine and critique past missions, and recommend SOF TTPs for future

missions.[83] The DOD should pattern STAZCOM after USSOCOM and move the PKSOI under STAZCOM to serve a similar function as JSOU. Along with an educational component, STAZCOM would require a sizable interagency element within the command structure to engender a collaborative environment between the military and interagency workforces.

The Stabilization Command should modify USSOCOM's combined joint interagency task force Operation Gallant Phoenix (OGP) as a template to incorporate the US interagency community into STAZCOM's C2 framework. A CJIATF could help overcome obstacles inherent in the US interagency community process by bringing the numerous agencies together in one entity. OGP focuses on foreign terrorist fighters' (FTF) movement throughout the world. The CJIATF includes personnel from US and international military, law enforcement, intelligence, and diplomatic agencies.[84] These organizations have varying authorities, which enables the disparate elements to leverage each other's capacity to track and target terrorists in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. OGP can also pass information to international law enforcement agencies in coordination with US country teams, made up of DOS and other governmental personnel, to arrest terrorists when they return to their host nation.[85] The OGP commanding officer is a US O-6 military officer, but there are US and allied interagency and military representatives who hold key positions throughout the C2 framework. The combined C2 structure forces the multiple parties to take a whole-of-government and international approach to planning and executing operations against FTFs.[86]

The Stabilization Command should create a similar CJIATF at STAZCOM HQ and position the group within the operations directorate (J3) to assist with formulating future stability operations (J35) and help refine ongoing stabilization actions (J33) (fig. 2). The STAZCOM commander should appoint a DOS or USAID SES to concurrently serve as the deputy J3 and the CJIATF lead. The J3 would appoint a military officer (US or Coalition) as the CJIATF's deputy commander and imbue the directorate with US and international military and interagency members. These personnel would serve various function throughout the J3 to include handling administration function associated with operations (J31) and integrating intelligence and logistics from the STAZCOM J2 (J32) and J4 (J34), respectively, into stability operations. Individuals assigned to

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83. Alvarez, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, 2.

84. David Martin, "German intelligence part of secret anti-terror unit targeting returning IS fighters," *DW*, 2 March 2018, http://www.dw.com/.

85. James Kitfield, "CJCS Dunford Talks Turkey, Iran, Afghan Troop Numbers & Daesh," *Breaking Defense*, 16 June 2017, https://breakingdefense.com/.

86. Jim Garamone, "Australia, U.S. Discussions Ranged the Globe, Dunford Says," *US Department of Defense*, 7 June 2017, https://dod.defense.gov/.

the J36 would coordinate with the STAZCOM J6 to fulfill stability operations communication requirements. J37 service members and civilians would work with the STAZCOM J7 and PKSOI to verify personnel deploying to perform stability operations received the applicable training before leaving. The Stabilization Command would not have a J38, since the STAZCOM J4 and PKSOI would handle operational concept development and research. The J39 would incorporate information operations into stability operations. The STAZCOM commander should also designate interagency persons to senior level positions within the CJIATF to promote an interagency approach to stability operations. The CJIATF would also work with the PKSOI to fashion and mature TTPs to increase stability operations' efficacy.
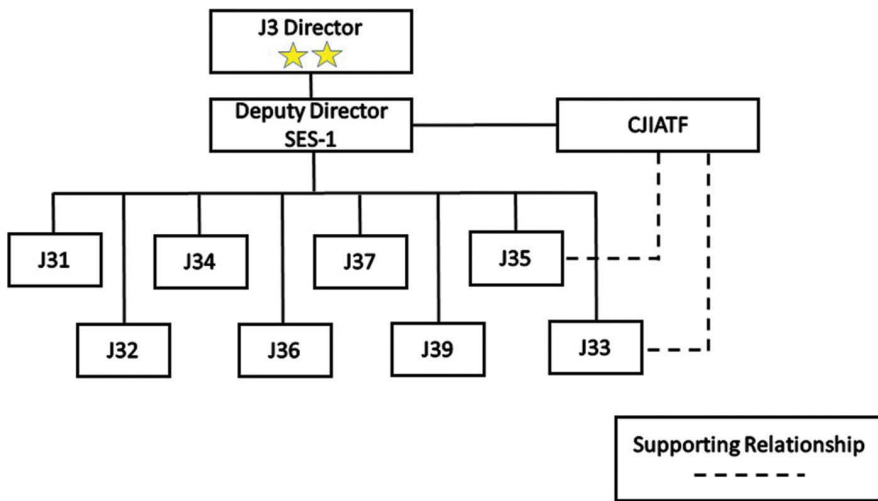
Figure 2. Stabilization Command J3 command-and-control construct

The CJIATF inputs to stabilization plans, intelligence estimates, and logistic and manpower requirements would concurrently go to the STAZCOM J3 and STAZCOM DOS deputy commander. The STAZCOM deputy commander and J3 would jointly review and discuss the CJIATF products and then distribute the interagency contributions to the appropriate directorates and operational and tactical-level units. The J3 and deputy J3 collaborative review and dissemination would signal the high regard STAZCOM had for the interagency's attempts to improving stability operations. In combination with a dynamic C2 framework, the Stabilization Command would also benefit from the DOD

designating the STAZCOM as the singular entity responsible for orchestrating stability operations.

The United States should designate STAZCOM the "lead" synchronizer for all DOD worldwide stability operations and model many of the command's responsibilities after USSOCOM's tasks. The Stabilization Command should verify the readiness of all forces assigned to the command and monitor the preparedness of stability forces apportioned to geographic areas of responsibility.[87] The Stabilization Command would also coordinate with GCCs throughout the planning process leading up to a conflict where the potentiality for stability operations existed. Stabilization Command personnel would recommend methods to geographic combatant command planners during mission planning to expedite the transition from phase 3 combat operations (fig. 3) to phase 4 stability operations. Stabilization Command service members and civilians would identify facilities, infrastructure, and other considerations; stability forces would need to quickly restore basic needs to the local population. These individuals would recommend combat forces minimize any damage to these entities. As a conflict became more imminent with the activation of an operational order (fig. 3), the STAZCOM commander would shift operational control (OPCON) of the command's operational units to the GCC. The GCC staff, with advice from the STAZCOM staff, would direct RRTs to work with combat forces in phase 3 operations (fig. 3) to collaboratively identify regions and districts in need of reconstruction and developmental assistance. As combat operations subsided in these areas and the campaign moved into phase 4 (fig. 3), combat forces would shift responsibility for these areas over to stability forces.

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87. Alvarez, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, 24.

Notional Operation Plan Phases
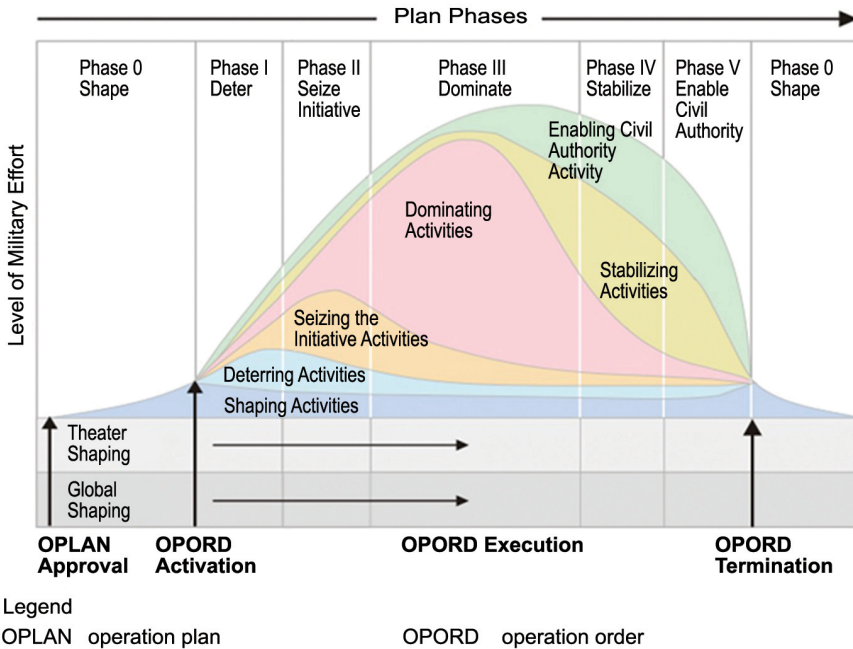
Figure 3. Notional operations plan phases. (Source: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, _Joint Operations_, 22 October 2018, 126.)

The Stabilization Command should also invest in human capital programs to ensure the command's members are receiving the foremost training and professional development on stability operations and other areas affecting the service members' career progression. The United States should assign STAZCOM the responsibilities of developing joint stability TTPs and leading research, development, and acquisition of equipment needed for stabilization activities.[88] The PKSOI and STAZCOM J4 would share these tasks due to their functions within STAZCOM. The Stabilization Command's orchestration of global stability operations, including planning, intelligence, manning, acquisition, logistics, execution, and incorporating lessons learned from missions, would produce efficiencies and standardization. By developing baseline norms for stability operations, STAZCOM would remedy the assorted problems stabilization actions encountered since 1898. Congress could also enable STAZCOM to perform

88. JP 3-0, 126.

stabilization actions more effectively by allotting money to the command and not make STAZCOM request support from the services.

An underpinning factor that would affect STAZCOM's ability to operate akin to USSOCOM is STAZCOM's ability to secure funding directly from Congress and not through the services. Congress allocates resources to USSOCOM, which permits USSOCOM a high level of flexibility to conduct SOF operations.[89] STAZCOM would require a comparable autonomy to execute stability operations, which the command could only attain by obtaining a defined budget. Furthermore, the services' recent pullback from any actions resembling nation-building would make acquiring the necessary resources for stability operations difficult for STAZCOM. The STAZCOM leadership should justify the mandatory budget request by reviewing the United States' participation in stability operations with Congress. The command's four-star general officer could extrapolate the past level of US involvement in stabilization activities and point to the likelihood US forces will participate in stabilization actions numerous times in the coming de-cades. The STAZCOM leadership should ask for resources comparable to USSOCOM's $14 billion budget and demonstrate the high degree of impact the command could have with a relatively low level of funding in comparison to the services' budgets.[90] With STAZCOM's strategic-level C2 and budget in place, the command's operational and tactic elements would implement the guidance from the four-star flag officers and civilian authorities.

The Stabilization Command should once again model the command's operational elements after USSOCOM. The regionally aligned Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) serve as an excellent example to influence STAZCOM's Theater Stabilization Operations Commands (TZOC). United States Special Operations Command constructed the TSOCs in the late 1980s to fulfill unique theater-specific SOF requirements. The TSOCs' C2 frameworks are distinctive and model to the GCCs' requirements. Commander, USSOCOM retains COCOM over the SOF personnel and typically delegates OPCON of SOF to the GCC. OPCON allows the GCC to organize and employ SOF by assigning these forces tasks and objectives which support regional goals.[91] OPCON also enables the GCC to create subordinate commands, such as joint task forces, which permit SOF to concentrate on specific mission sets during larger military operation. TSOCs affect broad theater level military mission planning by in-

89. JP 3-0, 25.

90. Congressional Research Service, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2019), 2.

91. JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 23; Alvarez, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual,* 36.

corporating SOF personnel. Embedding SOF individuals at these planning events guarantees military planners understand and integrate SOF capabilities into the joint planning process. Moreover, the TSOC commander usually advises the GCC on all SOF-centric requirements and typically helps the GCC craft the composition of theater SOF components.[92]

The fluid nature of stability operations requires a flexible operational command structure akin to the TSOCs. The respective GCCs would likely ask TZOCs for unique stability-related capabilities, which would influence the TZOCs' C2 structure and result in no two identical TZOCs. The Stabilization Command commander should appoint a two-star flag officer as the TZOC commander and request the DOS or USAID select an agency SES as the TZOC deputy commander (fig. 4).
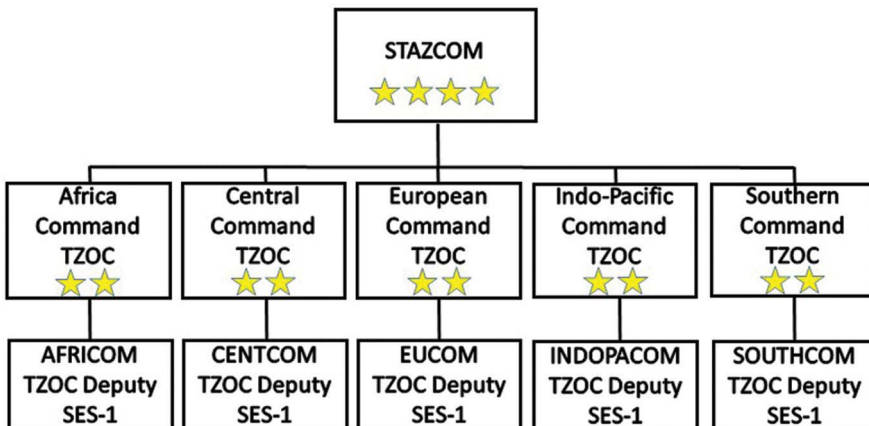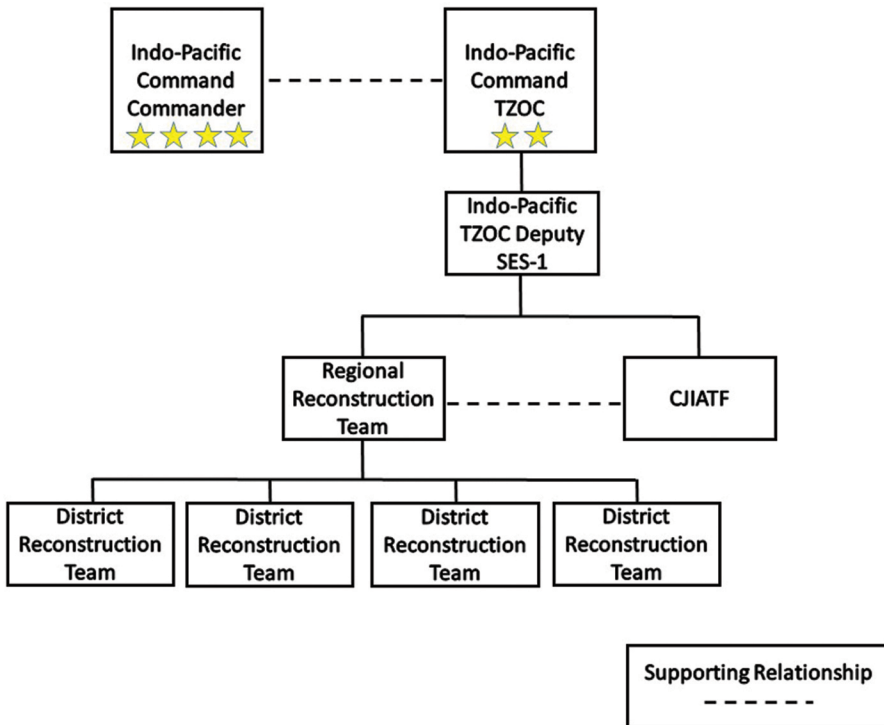

Figure 4. Theater Stabilization Command leadership structure

The combined interagency C2 would reinforce a whole-of-government approach to stability tasks. The Stabilization Command's commander should assign OPCON of the TZOCs to the GCC as a conflict becomes imminent. Even with this decision, the TZOC commander and deputy commander should heavily influence how the GCC employs STAZCOM forces (fig. 5). The US military's historically poorly executed stability operations necessitate continuous advice from individuals trained and experienced in stabilization activities to prevent past failures from repeating themselves. Furthermore, the TZOCs should replicate the CJIATF from STAZCOM on a smaller scale and nest re-

92. Alvarez, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, 36.

gional US interagency community experts within the CJIATF (fig. 5). The CJIATF individuals would provide the TZOC commander with methodology describing how interagency elements could interject themselves into stability operations. The TZOC commander could also use the interagency personnel to augment tactical STAZCOM components.

Figure 5. Theater Stabilization Operations Command relationship to RRTs and DRTs

The Stabilization Command should organize the command's tactical units based on a combination of the Army's SFAB and the PRT constructs. Four district reconstruction teams (DRT) and an RRT headquarters (HQ) element would comprise the 12 newly devised RRTs (fig. 5). The Stabilization Command would allocate 5,000 individuals to an RRT with each DRT consisting of 1,000 personnel and assign two RRTs to each TZOC and keep two RRTs in reserve for a crisis. The TZOC would consult with the GCC and position an RRT into a region for a yearlong deployment, while the other RRT prepared itself to

rotate with the in-country RRT. The two RRTs would deploy at least twice to the same region and districts for continuity and to ensure security and development were taking root. A US colonel or captain (O-6) officer would head the RRT HQ with his/her deputy coming from the US interagency community to ensure the integration of military and civilian authorities and capabilities. A combined military/civilian C2 would help promote a whole-of-government approach to executing regional stability operations. The civilian deputy leaders would have authority over the military members and could assign these individuals tasks during the absence of the commanding officer.

The RRTs would equally divide the teams' manning between combat and support personnel. In past stability operations, security was typically the first requirement to enable long-term development, which necessitated the US military to perform policing actions.[93] An infantry or armor component would offer security to the RRTs' other elements delivering developmental assistance to the native population and completing construction projects. The other half of an RRT's military members would come from the civil affairs, medical, engineering, intelligence, and logistical communities. Personnel with these military occupational backgrounds would build upon the security imparted from the combat soldiers through various development projects, such as building infrastructure, schools, and hospitals. The RRTs would also allocate representatives from the US interagency community to the DRTs to afford the host national population additional expertise and training on agricultural techniques, rule of law, governance, and educational methods of teaching.

The DRTs would mimic the PRT structure and combine military and civilian members into the DRT C2. The RRT leadership would consult with TZOC and GCC leader to direct the four DRTs to a specific district or districts based on combined intelligence assessments from the STAZCOM and GCC intelligence directorate (J2) and STAZCOM CJIATF. The STAZCOM and GCC J2 and STAZCOM CJIATF would predicate these district evaluations on reporting derived from the host nation and the US and Coalition intelligence community. The DRT members would construct compounds to live as close to the local population as possible to foster rapport with the community. District reconstruction team leaders would follow TTPs from US experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq and begin meeting with local district heads to jointly determine the community's pressing needs. After these initial consultations, the DRTs would initiate development projects and training.

The RRTs in consultation with the TZOCs, STAZCOM, and GCCs would determine metrics to evaluate the overall efficiency of the DRTs' stability op-

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93. Ricks, *Fiasco*, 88.

erations. The Stabilization Command enterprise could utilize measures of effectiveness such as an increase in district and regional employment, access to potable water, electricity usage, primary school attendance, and economic activity. A defined chain of command from the DRT to the STAZCOM commander, which facilitated speedy and continuous feedback to the STAZCOM and TZOC leadership, would help quickly identify and correct deficiencies in stabilization activities. Additionally, the constant information flow from the tactical to strategic levels would assist in pinpointing stability TTPs which worked well and help the command decide how other RRTs and DRTs could employ these methods.

The Stabilization Command is necessary to correct the endemic inadequacies that plagued each historical stabilization action and prepare the services for the high likelihood of future stability actions. The US military has not fought a full-scale ground campaign since World War II, yet the DOD still prepares the armed forces to fight this type of war. The Stabilization Command would reorganize a portion of the US Army and Marine Corps and refocus these forces away from a high-end fight against China or Russia and toward stabilization activities. The unpredictable nature of stability operations requires a dynamic command C2. The USSOCOM's C2 has continuously adapted to the evolving nature of CT operations and presents an excellent template for STAZCOM to model the commander after. The Stabilization Command would differ from USSOCCOM's C2, especially at the tactical level, however the commands would look similar at the strategic and operational levels. While STAZCOM would not solve all the issues that hamper stability operations, a distinct chain of command and the associated free flow of information from the tactical to strategic levels would help improve stability operations' effectiveness.

Conclusion

The US military requires a stabilization functional combatant command within a 10-year time horizon (by the early 2030s). International law and US policy charge the US military with conducting stabilization actions in the aftermath of any conflict. Additionally, history indicates that the United States will participate in multiple stability operations throughout the twenty-first century. From the Spanish–American War to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States performed 33 stability operations in comparison to 16 combat operations. However, throughout each of these stabilization actions, the US military utilized combat forces to undertake constabulary and reconstruction endeavors. The inappropriate employment of US combat forces over the past century-plus culminated in the nation's ability to only cultivate localized stabil-

ity in the various countries its military occupied, with one exception. The US military remains inadequately prepared to create and mature long-term and national-level stability with the contemporary combatant command constructs. US operational and tactical military units do not have sufficient equipment, properly trained personnel, or guidance to efficaciously execute stabilization actions. The US military must create a strategic-level command, imbued with the necessary authorities, funding, and manpower. The command would direct, train, and resource the armed forces to conduct stability operations to prevent the recurrence of past failures and improve the effectiveness of future stabilization activities.

The United States has ample data from previous stability operations to erect a command structured to correct the inadequacies from earlier stabilization activities. Although officially the US military did not begin organizing joint stability TTPs and lessons learned until 2011, academic institutions and US military and civilian organization wrote extensively on the issues afflicting stability operations since the 1960s. These writings offer insights on methods STAZCOM could exercise to rectify inefficiencies in prior stabilization activities. The Stabilization Command would take the historical lessons from these publications to inform the command framework to ensure military members are ready to oversee stability operations. The US military also has previous programs STAZCOM could draw from to render a C2 framework. During the Vietnam War, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States created several initiatives that the military could modify and incorporate into the STAZCOM concept. The CORDS program, PRTs, and VSOs offer the military examples of stability concepts that produced tactical-level stability. The Stabilization Command should integrate the lessons learned from past stability operations and incorporate aspects from CORDS, PRTs, and VSOs to formulate a command capable of achieving nationwide stability.

The Stabilization Command should model its strategic- and operational-level C2 structure after the USSOCOM. USSOCOM presents an excellent command template for STAZCOM due to the dynamic nature of the SOF mission set. It has continuously adopted its C2 structure as the command's missions changed over the past 30-plus years. The Stabilization Command will need a similarly fluid construct to mold to the ever-evolving nature of stabilization activities. Additionally, SOF played a leading role in stability operations during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, which further reinforces the suggestion that USSOCOM's framework is a suitable example for STAZCOM. The Stabilization Command would require few departures from the USSOCOM C2 structure to operationalize stability forces, cutting down on the time horizon to establish STAZCOM. The Stabilization Command should pattern the

command's tactical-level units after a hybridized PRT/VSO version. The RRTs and DRTs would combine the PRT/VSO–malleable C2 configuration and carry out comparable operations.

The United States has a long history of stability operations, and indications are that the future holds many more stabilization activities. The longer the United States waits to establish and grow a stability functional combatant command, there is an increasing likelihood that US service members will go into potential stability operations unprepared. The US military has not resolved underlying issues that plagued the effectiveness of past stability operations. The DOD has indicated that the military will concentrate on great-power competition and allow the hard-won gains in stability TTPs to deteriorate. The United States needs to prepare the military for different types of potential stability operations; otherwise, the nation will continue to execute unproductive stabilization activities, needlessly costing American lives and treasure.

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