



**Semi-Annual Lesson Report:  
Defense Support to Stabilization**

**October 2024**

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## Introduction

In June 2022, the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) published a report focused on the Department of Defense's (DoD) then new interagency support authority, the *Defense Support to Stabilization*, or DSS.<sup>1</sup> As Stephanie Hammond, then Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs, indicated:

This new authority allows DOD to provide logistical support, supplies and services to other federal agencies conducting stabilization activities... [so that] ... critical civilian expertise can get into hard-to-reach areas more quickly and efficiently and with more effective resources, creating a unity of effort that the agencies have lacked in the past.<sup>2</sup>

Shared in [two volumes](#), PKSOI framed the lessons in that report within the “integrated policy responses that advance multiple Administration priorities,” as described in the *2022 Prologue of the US Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability*, published in April 2022.<sup>3</sup> In November 2022, PKSOI authors published the [Defense Support to Stabilization \(DSS\): A Guide for Stabilization Practitioners](#) (hereafter, the *DSS Guide*). It states its purpose is “to provide guidance and direction to stabilization practitioners that compiles United States Government (USG) strategy, Department of Defense (DoD) policy, Joint Forces Doctrine, and applicable Security Cooperation (SC) programs into a single, useful guide” and it complies with Task 1.1.5 of the *Irregular Warfare Implementation Plan for the National Defense Strategy* which directed a DSS framework for implementation “across the spectrum of conflict that includes competition, crisis, and armed conflict.”<sup>4</sup>

In the *DSS Guide*'s review of the various authorities and responsibility streams relevant to DSS, it succinctly condenses DoD policy in two sentences:

DoD's core responsibility during stabilization is to support and reinforce the civilian efforts of the USG lead agencies consistent with available statutory authorities, primarily by providing security, maintaining basic public order, and providing for the immediate needs of the population. DoD's role in stabilization fits within the larger whole of government context of laws, regulations and policies pertaining to the National Security Strategy (NSS), U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (USPCPS), Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR), and National Defense Strategy (NDS).<sup>5</sup>

The *DSS Guide* outlines several points from the DoD Directive (DoDD) 3000.05 *Stabilization*, December 2018, which include the following:

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<sup>1</sup> David Vergun, “Government Officials Announce U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict, Promote Stability,” *DOD News*, December 18, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2452604/government-officials-announce-us-strategy-to-prevent-conflict-promote-stability/source/government-officials-announce-us-strategy-to-prevent-conflict-promote-stability/> (accessed March 20, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> US Department of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, *2022 Prologue to the United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability* (April 1, 2022), <https://www.state.gov/2022-prologue-to-the-united-states-strategy-to-prevent-conflict-and-promote-stability/> (accessed May 15, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Samuel L. Russell, Douglas R. Hurst, and Lynne M. Schneider, “Defense Support to Stabilization (DSS): A Guide for Stabilization Practitioners,” *Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)*, November 2022, <https://pksoi.armywarcollege.edu/index.php/defense-support-to-stabilization-dssa-guide-for-stabilization-practitioners/> (accessed December 2, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

- “Stabilization is an inherently political endeavor” and process supporting locally legitimate authorities and systems”;
- DSS is a process for USG’s “stabilization efforts and [to] promote stability” outside the US boundaries;
- While the Department of State is the “overall lead federal agency for US Stabilization efforts”, DoD support can include “security and reinforcing civilian efforts”;
- USG stabilization efforts are designed to address concerns in “fragile and conflict-affected states...before they impact the security of the United States and its allies and partners”;
- Stabilization must be “incorporated into planning across all lines of effort for military operations”;
- DoD will plan and conduct stabilization “to counter subversion; prevent and mitigate conflict; and consolidate military gains”;
- DoD stabilization will be “small-footprint, partner-focused stabilization”; and
- “DoD will establish a defense support to stabilization (DSS) process.”<sup>6</sup>

In other words, DSS will only apply in fragile or conflict-affected areas external to the US and with DoD elements in a supporting role to other USG agencies. Further, DoD elements must include stabilization efforts in their planning processes.

The intent of this lesson collection is to offer some insight into topics and concepts DoD should recognize or consider as it plans and programs itself to partner with other federal agencies across the stabilization spectrum. They are generally framed in the construct of [policy discourse](#), [equipment and material](#), and [personnel and organizational structure](#). There are also three [case studies](#) herein that assess past US and international military actions that may be reconsidered as DSS efforts. This collection is not a comprehensive review of all aspects of DSS as understood today. Instead, it continues articulation of DSS opportunities and challenges both externally and internally.

PKSOI’s Lessons Learned Analyst, Colonel Lorelei Wilson Copen (US Army, Retired), authored or edited the Lessons found here between May and September 2024, unless otherwise indicated. These lessons are also found in the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) database, identified by the JLLIS number adjacent to each lesson title. JLLIS access is at <https://www.jllis.mil> and requires a Department of Defense Common Access Card (CAC) for registration.

## ***Policy Discourse***

### **NATO Revives Its Human Security Agenda**

OBS-N240730-13078

**Observation.** As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) met in Washington, D.C. in early July 2024, it celebrated its 75 years as a defense alliance. As many observers noted, the endurance and resilience of the alliance is certainly cause for commemoration. One area in which NATO has adapted since its inception is in its adoption of its *Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles* in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

However, in the two years since the initial adoption, NATO has yet to define what it intends with *human security*. As Pauline Paillé points out, NATO’s *Vilnius Summit Communiqué* in 2023 limits mention of human security “to a single paragraph,” in part due to other agenda priorities such as the “Russia’s illegal

<sup>6</sup> Russell, et al, “Defense Support to Stabilization (DSS): A Guide for Stabilization Practitioners,” 1-2.

<sup>1</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles,” October 14, 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_208515.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_208515.htm) (accessed July 17, 2024).

war in Ukraine, NATO enlargement to include Finland and Sweden, and the alliance's ability to ensure collective defence [sic] against external threats.”<sup>2</sup>

Yet, ironically, “human security considerations relate specifically to [NATO’s] core missions and activities—ensuring collective defence [sic] for its members, cooperative security, and crisis management.”<sup>3</sup> The *Washington Summit Declaration*, published at the meeting, reinforces the allies’ commitment to an ambitious human security and Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. In turn, this renewed commitment recognizes the role of security and military forces in stabilization activities.<sup>4</sup>

**Discussion.** Over a decade ago, the *United Nations General Assembly Resolution* defined *human security* “as the right ‘to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair’.”<sup>5</sup> In NATO, the concept promotes five human security concerns: “the protection of civilians; children and armed conflict; countering trafficking in human beings; preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence; and protecting cultural property.”<sup>6</sup> Naturally, these five areas are interconnected with ‘protection of civilians’ (sometimes referred to as POC) as the primary interest.

In the interim period since its 2022 adoption, NATO delivered a few updates, such as a *new policy to combat human trafficking* after observing Russian actions in Ukraine. The *NATO cultural property protection policy* is older than its *human security approach and principles*. It was first shared at the *2016 Warsaw Summit* with additional concerns regarding services and objects protection added in 2018 with NATO’s *protection of civilians* policy announcement.<sup>7</sup> The *2024 Washington Summit* declaration reinforces the impact of *human security* related concerns in “shaping today’s conflicts, including disregard for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians, cultural property protection, and forced displacement that fuels human trafficking and irregular migration.”<sup>8</sup>

**Recommendations.** Paillé’s recommendations are not specific. She points out that “NATO’s approach to human security must reflect and adapt to the fast-evolving threat environment” as encouraged in the *2022 Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles*.<sup>9</sup> As she highlights:

Conflicts are increasingly characterised [sic] by the involvement of non-state actors, a complex mix of interstate and intrastate conflict dynamics, climate and environmental degradation, and the exploitation of new battlefield technologies such as drones and AI. All present new challenges for NATO.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Pauline Paillé, “NATO Needs to Revive Its Human Security Agenda,” *RAND*, June 28, 2024, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2024/06/nato-needs-to-revive-its-human-security-agenda.html> (accessed July 5, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Dawn Petrin, “The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda Made Important Strides at NATO’s Washington Summit,” *Atlantic Council*, July 26, 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-women-peace-and-security-agenda-made-important-strides-at-natos-washington-summit/> (accessed July 28, 2024). See item 35, Heads of State and Government, North Atlantic Council, “Washington Summit Declaration,” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, July 10, 2024, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_227678.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227678.htm) (accessed July 28, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Paillé, “NATO Needs to Revive Its Human Security Agenda.”

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Petrin, “The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda Made Important Strides at NATO’s Washington Summit.” Petrin further notes: “These human security trends disproportionately affect women and girls, who make up more than half of the 117 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, according to the United Nations.”

<sup>9</sup> Paillé, “NATO Needs to Revive Its Human Security Agenda.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

She also notes that many international institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and academic studies have already—and will continue—to contribute to the community of practice knowledge of human security. She suggests NATO “should seek to leverage existing knowledge and experience, and build on past NATO operations to support the translation of its concept of human security into practical action.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Do Not Waste Gaza’s ‘Golden Hour’ of ‘The Day In Between’** OBS-N240530-10748

**Observation.** Dana Stroul, writing for *Foreign Affairs* in May 2024, notes that Israel’s campaign in Gaza against Hamas appears to have only military stated objectives—destroy the Hamas infrastructure. Yet, this specific and limited focus may preclude considerations of any ‘The Day After’ plans. “More troubling,” according to Stroul, is that “observers are paying attention to the wrong day.”<sup>1</sup> Instead:

What matters most is “the day in between,” when the flow of civilian support and services beyond emergency humanitarian aid are needed, even as IDF military operations continue. This support...will be critical to ensuring that “the day in between” is not wasted.<sup>2</sup>

The author further suggests that “Israel is already running risks by not planning for the golden hour.” As the IDF moves through areas in search of Hamas elements, they leave no community structure behind. Consequently, in absence of “a credible security presence and a plan to provide for the needs of the civilian population in northern Gaza, Hamas and others will continuously return, filling the governance and security gaps.”<sup>3</sup> On a larger scale, without basic post-conflict stability in the ‘golden hour’ and ‘the Day In Between,’ ‘the Day After’ might never occur.

**Discussion.** Israeli government, military, and other observers saw this security and governance gap dynamic in April 2024 as the IDF withdrew most of its forces from the Gaza Strip as part of its reset before its return to Rafah. For the first time in several weeks, Gaza was silent from military strikes and maneuvers. Yet it was not free from insecurity. In the ungoverned space, “remnants of Hamas-run ministries are providing services or diverting humanitarian aid, while in others criminal networks loot and then distribute it...communities and humanitarian groups are contracting with armed groups other than Hamas to provide security.”<sup>4</sup> Stroul notes, “some UN officials now refer to Gaza as ‘Mogadishu on the Mediterranean’” as Gaza now has “parallel and competing authority structures taking root.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus far, international and regional planning for Gaza’s post-conflict reconstruction continues, but with aspirational foci (“a deep-water port, its own currency, and a soccer stadium,” according to the author) rather than practical priorities such as a governing framework. Meanwhile, Israel appears missing from these planning efforts. As Stroul outlines:

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. She highlights: “An interesting step in this direction will be the publication later this year of a study conducted by the NATO Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre, which is currently investigating how human topics such as the protection of civilians and children in armed conflict can be implemented at the tactical level by military forces.” See Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre, “The JALLC gets Human Security study underway,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, December 15, 2023, <https://www.jallc.nato.int/articles/jallc-gets-human-security-study-underway> (accessed July 21, 2024).

<sup>1</sup> Dana Stroul, “The Dangers of an Ungovernable Gaza,” *Foreign Affairs*, May 20, 2024, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/israel/dangers-ungovernable-gaza> (accessed May 20, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

In this “day after” scenario, the expectation is that the IDF will have effectively collapsed Hamas as an organized entity, leaving it unable to govern the Gaza Strip. It is also expected that there will be an agreement, acceptable to Arab capitals, Israel, the United States, and international bodies, to create a security force on the ground, a framework for non-Hamas governance, a plan for increased humanitarian aid delivery and distribution, and funding for stabilization and reconstruction.<sup>6</sup>

None of that planning, in its necessary detail, has apparently occurred for Gaza. Yet, the author notes “recent history...of failures to plan for this period directly contributing to bad actors seizing opportunities, accelerating insurgencies, enabling terrorism, and inflaming additional cycles of violence” and lists them: US and UN experiences in Somalia in 1992, Haiti in 1994, Bosnia in 1995, Kosovo in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003.<sup>7</sup> Stroul highlights the US Departments of Defense and State and the US Institute of Peace’s (USIP) efforts to document US and UN stabilization and reconstruction efforts, “ensuring that lessons were learned,” despite these failures, or perhaps because of them.<sup>8</sup> Even more recent is the 2018 *US Stabilization Assistance Review* (SAR), intended to streamline US government efforts in conflict-affected areas. The major and common finding in the analysis of post-conflict planning failures and directed in the SAR is simple: start early and “integrated with military,” and include everyone or risk “counterterrorism operations (that) can have a destabilizing effect.”<sup>9</sup>

In this case, the author argues, the plan for “postwar Gaza... should have started concurrently with the IDF campaign in Gaza in October 2023.”<sup>10</sup> As she summarizes:

*The golden hour is the critical period that is missing in Gaza planning. During this period, those on the ground will be traumatized and the social contract broken. Humanitarian aid may be available, but no occupant of Gaza will readily accept a life of waiting in lines for foreigners to distribute assistance. Civilians will want to understand the plan and who will be responsible for implementing it. They will want to know if they can go home and what remains for them to return to. They will want information on whether they will be safe and on what authority will organize essential services and respond to their needs as they seek to rebuild their lives. Without confidence that there is a plan, armed groups and foreign powers will move in and create parallel structures that set conditions for further instability. This is the opportunity that Hamas, Iran, and others are cynically waiting to exploit...Most alarming is...that in every post–Cold War U.S.-led intervention, a larger force was required on the ground to stabilize the situation than was used to fight the war itself. If the IDF will not be on the ground in large numbers and there is no consensus on a postwar security force, the golden hour will be lost.*<sup>11</sup> [Emphasis added]

**Recommendation(s).** Stroul points out:

Without a civilian-centric approach to stabilizing an area after war, any military accomplishment will be fleeting. The Israeli campaign in Gaza is at risk of not only squandering opportunities during the golden hour but also of missing the opportunity to set conditions for postwar recovery in Gaza that will be critical for Israel’s security.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Stroul, “The Dangers of an Ungovernable Gaza.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. The author emphasizes USIP’s 2009 manual, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction*, and its *Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding* as available resources for post-conflict Gaza planning, as well as the *Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization* (CRS) bureau in the State Department.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

She recommends several immediate tasks to improve post-conflict stability planning for Gaza, starting with a law enforcement proposal to meet security needs and, as important, to be an alternative to Hamas or other irregular armed groups. Then, find “a partner on the ground that retains legitimacy in the eyes of civilians to distribute aid and begin other essential activities, including rubble clearance and explosive ordnance disposal,” such as dictated in an international mandate.<sup>13</sup> Only with security and a safe environment in place can the consensus on a governing framework for Gaza begin. Ironic to some, perhaps, but there may be “political space for unity on post-Hamas governance in Gaza” between Israel and its Arab neighbors to begin work.<sup>14</sup> Stroul reports:

Netanyahu has stated that Israel does not want to occupy Gaza in the long term. Israel shares the goal with Arab capitals, the United States, and other countries that Hamas should not be able to return to power, impose a stranglehold over Gaza, and export terrorism.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, “the sequencing is key: first, an interim multinational or UN-led mission must be established, which should eventually hand over governance responsibility to a Palestinian-led entity.”

None of this can occur without funding and resources. Stroul shares the UN Development Program description of the Gaza reconstruction requirements “as the most significant since World War II and estimates that it will cost tens of billions of dollars” but suggests it can be done “when political will aligns with recognition of urgent needs for Gaza.”<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, “months of planning for postwar Gaza have already been lost,” so “a civilian-military planning cell that includes diplomatic, development, and security representatives from Arab capitals, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the UN, and the United States should convene immediately” to ensure “the critical golden hour is not squandered.”<sup>17</sup>

## ***Equipment and Materiel***

### **An Air Power Concept for Peace Operations** OBS-N240531-10785

**Observation.** It has long been understood that air assets are critical to peacekeeping operations. Predominately, the assets are used for the movement of supplies or people within remote locations—especially in an emergency evacuation. However, “the democratization of airpower in Ukraine and other recent conflicts demonstrates growing threats and new opportunities for UN peacekeeping” and its use of air power.<sup>1</sup> As authors for *Stimson* note:

The notion of air power and the use of the air domain in the context of UN peacekeeping missions is quite distinct from its use in other contexts....To support a more comprehensive approach to air power — one that links roles to the delivery of mission mandates — the UN Secretariat should work with member states to bring more clarity and coherence to the use of air power in the context of UN peacekeeping.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Stroul, “The Dangers of an Ungovernable Gaza.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1</sup> Kelly A. Grieco, “What Can UN Peacekeeping Learn from Ukraine’s Drones?” *Stimson*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.stimson.org/2023/what-can-un-peacekeeping-learn-from-ukraines-drones/> (accessed May 18, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Lisa Sharland, Jarrod Pendlebury, and Phillip Champion, “The Role of Air Power in UN Peacekeeping,” *Stimson*, April 17, 2024, <https://www.stimson.org/2024/the-role-of-air-power-in-un-peacekeeping/> (accessed May 15, 2024).

They propose “an air power concept for UN peace operations” with “three core roles: providing *mobility*, enabling *situational awareness*, and mobilizing a *response* to attacks.”<sup>3</sup>

**Discussion.** As observed, the “air domain is an integral part of UN peacekeeping.” Among many potential uses, air assets allow for movement of people and supplies, observation and awareness, civilian protection, and can deter and respond to immediate threats. However, unlike purely military uses in an armed conflict, “air power in a peacekeeping sense is more closely entwined with the politics of UN intervention...[where] host-country authorities provide access to, or in some instances, obstruct, the air space.”<sup>4</sup>

While the term *air power* itself can generate concerns as it may connote air strikes or other “excessive force beyond the principles of peacekeeping,” the most significant limitations on air assets for a particular UN mission is the directed mandate, budget, and availability of member-provided air resources.<sup>5</sup> As the authors highlight, the UN currently uses templates to decide the amount and type of air assets—as it does for all its force generation—“with limited consideration given to the effects that are being sought or the threat environment in which the assets might operate.” Certainly, the air domain threat environment has changed and continues to evolve. For example, cheap “off-the-shelf” drones (unmanned aviation systems, or UAS) are armed to attack aircraft and air bases in Ukraine. Non-state armed actors use them to observe UN peacekeeping operations and bases as well.

These situations create obvious challenges—there is not enough to do all that is required—but also opportunity. For example, the UN should develop new adaptations such as cyber- and space domain employment “to gather situational awareness, safeguard communications systems, and protect aircraft and personnel from attacks” and “mission leaders need to reconsider how they plan for air infrastructure and the use of air bases, as well as the use of satellites and the electromagnetic spectrum in their operations.”<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, perhaps, is that the UN should develop an air power concept that ensures peacekeeping missions “keep pace with the adaptations taking place in other conflict settings within the air domain.”<sup>7</sup>

**Recommendation(s).** The authors identify four areas the UN should address to better support air power’s critical role in peace operations, summarized and paraphrased here:

- “Articulate and communicate how air power supports mission effectiveness and mandate implementation.” They recommend the UN develop an air power concept that includes collecting data on air assets use in current missions and to ensure adequate training.
- Develop “a force generation framework” to “ensure mission planning, procurement, and force generation processes are focused on the delivery of strategic effects in the air domain.
- “Identify capabilities to counter the future threat environment to and from the air domain” that includes “a defensive counter-air policy...to enhance force protection and mandates needs in peacekeeping missions.”

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<sup>3</sup> Sharland, et al, “The Role of Air Power in UN Peacekeeping.”

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

- “Better prepare for the role of air power in different future models of peace operations operating alongside multinational, regional, or sub-regional missions.” Also, consider the role of regional support models and inter-mission cooperation to deliver greater strategic effect, among other concerns and settings.<sup>8</sup>

## Practical (Often Military) Tools for Peacekeeping

OBS-N240630-12103

**Observation.** On the annual *International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers* on May 29, 2024, the United Nations (UN) shared this reminder: “When we think about keeping peace, we often think of mediation, treaties and international laws,” however, “Peacekeepers can be soldiers, police officers, engineers, doctors, veterinarians, human rights officers, justice and corrections officers, radio producers, environmental scientists and surveillance experts.”<sup>1</sup> In their UN missions, the UN also noted “peacekeepers use a wider array of tools” that some observers may consider unexpected or untraditional because those tools are military equipment or have, primarily, military applications.<sup>2</sup> One can expect that much of the identified peacekeepers ‘tools’ will remain sourced by various militaries supporting peace and stability missions, given their expense and, in many cases, the national control levied on those technologies. Therefore, in the immediate or near-future, should those peace missions require such ‘tools,’ they need militaries to provide them.

However, other authors and researchers also identify ‘practical tools’ for peacekeepers that may not depend on contributing military equipment, such as *artificial intelligence* (AI). Heather Ashby, writing for the *United States Institute for Peace* (USIP) suggests “Peacebuilders should harness technology for uses that range from monitoring cease-fire violations to online hate speech” and describes how AI can facilitate those uses.<sup>3</sup> Authors Verhulst and Kluz, as reported in *Medium*, group seven other specific technologies as part of the “emerging field of PeaceTech...to foster public good.”<sup>4</sup> They emphasize “that technology can actively contribute to easing conflicts rather than simply exacerbating them” but caution “the adoption of technology for peacebuilding markedly lags behind its utilization for military offenses.”<sup>5</sup>

**Discussion.** The UN highlights only five non-traditional tools for peacekeepers use and provides examples of each in recent or current UN peace missions. They are as follows (summarized and paraphrased here):

*Helicopters.* “Helicopters are critical aviation assets in peacekeeping missions for a variety of reasons” such as reaching otherwise inaccessible places, “rapid response and evacuation” (to include medical), supply delivery (to include election materials), and reconnaissance.<sup>6</sup>  
*Engineering tools.* Engineers and their tools are necessary to (re)build infrastructure to enhance

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<sup>8</sup> Sharland, et al, “The Role of Air Power in UN Peacekeeping”

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, “Explainer: Five practical tools for keeping peace,” *UN News, Peace and Security*, May 29, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/05/1150336> (accessed June 1, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Heather Ashby, “A Role for AI in Peacebuilding,” *United States Institute for Peace*, December 6, 2023, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/12/role-ai-peacebuilding> (accessed January 7, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> Stefaan G. Verhulst and Artur Kluz, “Peace by Design? Unlocking the Potential of Seven Technologies for a More Peaceful Future,” *Medium*, September 17, 2023, <https://sverhulst.medium.com/peace-by-design-unlocking-the-potential-of-seven-technologies-for-a-more-peaceful-future-f8b5eea829e5> (accessed January 7, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, “Explainer.”

the peace and stability of a country. The UN quotes Captain Taimoor Ahmed, of UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) as stating, “We are saving people not from bullets but floods.”<sup>7</sup>

*Satellite imaging.* “Satellite imaging, one of the most innovative tools available to peacekeeping, helps to enhance operational awareness in many missions, particularly those in countries with vast, remote and difficult terrains.”<sup>8</sup> Such situational awareness is needed to monitor armed groups as well as natural disasters.

*Mine detectors.* As the UN reports, “Today, nearly 70 countries and territories have landmines” and “The UN Mine Action Service deploys deminers to nearly 20 countries and territories...to detect and destroy the mines.”<sup>9</sup> Further, “Since the late 1990s, more than 55 million landmines have been destroyed, over 30 countries have become mine-free and casualties have been dramatically reduced.”<sup>10</sup>

*Radio.* Radio “remains a powerful communications tool in many parts of the world” and many peacekeeping missions manage their own radio stations.<sup>11</sup> Radio provides news as well as threat warnings (armed or natural) and educational programs.

While all the UN’s list of ‘practical tools’ (and often military-sourced) use technology to some extent, Verhulst and Kluz focus their attention on the role of technology alone for peace missions. Such technology may not depend on military resources. They note:

A critical difference between this era and earlier times of conflict is the potential role of technology for peace. Along with traditional weaponry and armaments, it is clear that new space, data, and various other information and communication technologies will play an increasingly prominent role in 21st-century conflicts, especially when combined.<sup>12</sup>

They describe seven types of *PeaceTech*, with accompanying examples, which they suggest can “encompass technologies that can actively avert or alleviate conflicts” (summarized and paraphrased here):<sup>13</sup>

- Social Media. They suggest “Social media plays a wide variety of roles in responding to, and often reducing the scope of, conflict,” such as “crowdsourcing and crowd-documenting...to foster peace.” Or, to “to track down victims and re-connect separated families.”<sup>14</sup>
- AI and ML. Both *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) and *Machine Learning* (ML) can “predict conflict, to improve mediation efforts, and to analyze data to assess and help drive responses to infrastructure damage.” In other examples, the researchers suggest AI/ML can analyze social media for inciteful speech or climate data for related threats to resources.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations, “Explainer.”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Verhulst and Kluz, “Peace by Design?”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. They authors also highlight “the absence of data” in their list. They explain: “We have chosen to include data as a cross-cutting category that applies across the seven technologies. This points to the ubiquity of data in today’s digital ecology. In an era of rapid datafication, data can no longer be classified as a single technology, but rather as an asset or tool embedded within virtually every other technology.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

- Satellites and Drones. “Satellites and drones provide imaging that can help prevent or mitigate the effects of war, respond to conflict, and foster post-conflict reconstruction in a number of ways,” from overview information to communications networks.<sup>16</sup>
- 3D printing. “3D printing also offers a low-cost alternative for a variety of tools and equipment that can be used to reduce conflict” to include but not limited to educational materials.<sup>17</sup>
- Virtual and Augmented Reality. While not yet in common use, *Virtual Reality* (VR) may be useful in both preparedness exercises and emergency and response scenarios. The authors suggest VR may be “the ultimate empathy machine” and highlight its potential to “facilitate compassion and charity toward migrants” *Augmented Reality* (AR) may contribute for rapid learning of on-the-job skill development.<sup>18</sup>
- Biometrics. While noting that biometrics are “contentious from a privacy perspective,” the authors highlight its use to mitigate or eliminate conflict because it can be “*more* privacy-protective, and overall, upholds the dignity of aid recipients.”<sup>19</sup> [Emphasis added.]
- Robotics. The authors describe the robotic drones used in surveillance efforts or to deliver aid to displaced populations. They highlight the use of “peacebots” in social media platforms “propagating peace and compassion.”<sup>20</sup>

**Recommendation(s).** Authors Verhulst and Kluz suggest *PeaceTech* development and use must be a collective effort to “advance the responsible use of technology for peace, contributing to conflict prevention, resolution, and the overall well-being of societies.”<sup>21</sup> Implied here is the technologies usage for peace is no longer dependent on the various national militaries that support peace efforts. They offer eight lines to consider: Fostering Collaboration; Investing in Research and Development; Promoting Responsible Tech Development; Enhancing (Digital) Literacy and Access; Supporting Local Capacity Building; Sharing and Utilizing Data and Analytics; Engaging Stakeholders; and Establishing Evidence on Impact.<sup>22</sup>

Heather Ashby, specifically referencing AI, also emphasizes the current “opportunities for peacebuilders”—not specifically military—regarding “how technology can be used.”<sup>23</sup> As she argues:

Peacebuilding organizations are uniquely positioned to combat MDM, especially technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Peacebuilders are active in communities across the world with a deep understanding of the drivers of conflict and often engage with civil society, governments and the private sector. As governments and multilateral institutions convene experts on AI to understand the evolving risks and challenges, peacebuilders should be included in those discussions to provide their perspective on the impact of this technology across societies to mitigate harm that could further violence in countries.<sup>24</sup>

She offers a final caution which applies regardless of the equipment or technology in discussion: “Of course, technology is not a magic solution to achieve peace, but it does offer options...”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Verhulst and Kluz, “Peace by Design?”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ashby, “A Role for AI in Peacebuilding.”

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## **Personnel and Organizational Structure**

### **An Irregular Use of Military Force, or Stability Policing Operations**

OBS-N240829-16084

**Observation.** In November 1923, Emrah Özdemir, an ex-gendarmerie major and a faculty member at the Military Academy at Turkish National Defense University, Ankara, argues on behalf of *stability policing* (SP):

As global security needs grow more complex, the deployment of specialized law enforcement entities such as MSUs [Multinational Specialized Units composed of gendarmerie and military police units from various countries<sup>1</sup>] and Formed Police Units [FPUs<sup>2</sup>] becomes increasingly relevant.<sup>3</sup>

Predicting the Gaza future in a post-conflict environment, he asserts, “Integrating [stability policing] specialized expertise is not just beneficial; it’s essential to effective management of conflict resolution and cultivating enduring stability in regions beset by turmoil,” and therefore, “SP may play a significant role in maintaining order and fostering peace in volatile regions.”<sup>4</sup>

**Discussion.** Özdemir suggests “The practice of military units performing law enforcement functions ...traces its origins to colonialism” and shares a phrase for it: *imperial policing*. He further describes:

Unlike in traditional military roles, imperial policing emphasized suppressing insurrections, establishing administrative authority, minimizing the use of force, and winning over the local population. These tasks, often associated with “small wars,” were historically deemed secondary missions and received limited attention within military units.<sup>5</sup>

He believes the military engagements of the Cold War, such as they were, continued relegating policing and police-like activities as “non-prestige tasks.”<sup>6</sup> Yet by the 1990s, most stabilization practitioners recognized reliable and trustworthy policing as a vital component to peace and stability in a potential or post-conflict area. However, it was the post- Cold War landscape of diverse—and mostly non-state—threats that “underscored the increasing importance of military-like law enforcement units.”<sup>7</sup> The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) *Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations*, originally published in 2007, shares this perspective. A current website version dedicates a full paragraph

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<sup>1</sup> Emrah Özdemir, “An Irregular Use of Military Force: Stability Policing Operations,” *Irregular Warfare Institute*, November 9, 2023, <https://irregularwarfare.org/articles/an-irregular-use-of-military-force-stability-policing-operations/> (accessed August 1, 2024). The author notes: “The first MSU deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina on August 2, 1998. Its main tasks included supporting military operations, filling the security gap between military units and law enforcement agencies, gathering intelligence, verifying compliance with the Peace Agreement, and supporting local law enforcement elements. The MSU consisted of some 600 troops from Austria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, and Italy, and later became a part of the European Union military mission (EUFOR Althea) under the name Integrated Police Unit (IPU). MSU units were subsequently deployed in Kosovo...”

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* The author describes UN Formed Police Units (FPUs) as “similar to MSUs” and “were first deployed in 1999 during peace missions in Kosovo and East Timor. Defined as specialized, mobile police units, FPUs secure UN personnel, protect civilians, and support police operations requiring a heavier, more organized response. Following NATO’s MSU initiative, the creation of FPUs marked a significant shift toward integrating law enforcement into peacekeeping.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

to the US Military Police and highlights “Military police (MP) play a *critical role in stability operations*, especially during periods of transitional security.”<sup>8</sup> [Emphasis added] In 2012, a military paper—among many others of the past decade or more—asserts Military Police as “The Answer to the Stability Operations Gap,” given the US Army’s Military Police units “re-establishment of policing as a core competency and its professionalization.”<sup>9</sup>

Özdemir, however, asserts that neither civilian nor military policing is appropriate in “contemporary conflict environments” with “elevated threat levels.”<sup>10</sup> Instead, he argues for the police attributes found in gendarmerie-type law enforcement forces “that combine military readiness with expertise in human rights, crime prevention, judicial processes, and socio-cultural issues.”<sup>11</sup> He points to the MSUs formed during the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the emerging United Nations (UN) International Police Task Force as models for future potential and/or post-conflict environments policing. Yet he also acknowledges:

While the MSUs performed well in Bosnia and Kosovo compared to other military units, they too encountered challenges. One primary issue was the lack of familiarity with gendarmerie-type forces among military leaders, particularly from nations that do not maintain such units. The gap in understanding often resulted in the MSUs being underutilized and relegated to secondary roles like reserve troops or guard duty. Moreover, the limited availability of gendarmerie forces – as countries with these specialized units often needed to retain them domestically – restricted the number of personnel available for international deployment.<sup>12</sup>

In 2020, authors Massimo Pani and Karen J. Finkenbinder reinforced concerns about reliance on US—or other nation—military police to meet stability policing requirements. A critic of the authors’ *Parameters* Winter 2020 article, “Projecting Stability: A Deployable NATO Police Command,” posits that most US Army military police are skilled regarding the nuances of civilian population policing as many are local police in their civilian roles. In their response, the authors acknowledge the critic’s point. Yes, “there are many civilian police officers serving within the Reserves and National Guard.”<sup>13</sup> However, they reiterate the larger concern, which mirrors Özdemir’s observations of the MSUs (and, perhaps, the UN FPUs) limitations. First, “stability police from gendarmerie-type forces (GTF)...have much longer training and education programs” than those required for US military police.<sup>14</sup> Second, “GTF often have extensive experience in international operations.”<sup>15</sup> Third, “military police are not recognized by the United Nations as police for a police component.”<sup>16</sup> Finally, they suggest that US decision-makers should also “pause before the US military provides any support to civilian police under the auspices of security cooperation.”<sup>17</sup> They ask and answer: “Do we inadvertently risk delegitimizing the police when they begin

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<sup>8</sup> “Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations,” *United States Institute for Peace*, <https://www.usip.org/guide-participants-peace-stability-and-relief-operations-161> (accessed August 2, 2024.)

<sup>9</sup> Jesse D. Galvan, “Military Police, The Answer to the Stability Operations Gap,” U.S. Army War College, March 19, 2012, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA561238> (accessed August 12, 2024).

<sup>10</sup> Özdemir, “An Irregular Use of Military Force: Stability Policing Operations.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Massimo Pani and Karen J. Finkenbinder, “The Authors Reply On ‘Projecting Stability: A Deployable NATO Police Command,’” *The U.S. Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* Volume 50 Number 4 *Parameters* Winter 2020 Article 11, November 20, 2020, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2692&context=parameters> (accessed August 15, 2024).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* The authors further note, “Similarly, the African Union and other regional organizations have similar philosophies—the military are not police.” They also explain “In many countries in which there are peace operations, security forces have been (and sometimes are) bad actors, related to a predatory, corrupt political class that came into power as the result of a coup supported by the military.”

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

to use military tactics, dress, or act like the military? We have seen this occur domestically when police adopt military practices.”<sup>18</sup>

**Recommendation(s).** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Stability Policing Center of Excellence (SP COE) published a report in July 2023 that emphasizes:

As a military capability focusing on policing civilians, Stability Policing fosters collaboration between military and civilian actors in a comprehensive approach. This would be improved if agreements and mechanisms were established in advance of crises to facilitate day-zero integration, flexibility and freedom of action for commanders. A shared approach to Stability Policing and common training would enhance the resilience of NATO Nations as single entities, and as members of the Alliance. SP plays a key role in consolidating battlefield gains, understanding the local environment, and dealing with criminal activities, also in a Human Security perspective. Therefore, the integration of Stability Policing within NATO would benefit from a dedicated conceptual document outlining the capability and clarifying guidelines, establishing roles and responsibilities.<sup>19</sup>

Its overarching recommendation states “the role of Stability Policing within...NATO ...conflicts and crises benefit from the inclusion of Stability Policing (SP) to respond to police-and justice-related needs of the Host Nation, its governance, the Indigenous Police Forces, and its populace also in a Human Security perspective.”<sup>20</sup> Özdemir both appreciates NATO’s SP COE’s work towards integration into NATO’s Human Security framework and also suggests it is not enough. He recommends “creating a NATO High-Readiness Constabulary Force (HRCF)” because:

such a force would be a positive step toward upholding peace and stability, especially in situations involving hybrid threats, and would enhance NATO’s crisis management capabilities. The insufficient recognition of the importance of stability policing among political leaders and military commanders often results in the ineffective utilization of specialized units like gendarmerie and military police. Consequently, it’s crucial to raise awareness and provide information about SP doctrine to NATO members and its partner nations.<sup>21</sup>

He makes two additional observations in support of his HRCF recommendation. First, he notes the 2022 UN Police Division *Statement of Unit Requirements* (SUR) added to the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS). The SUR intends to allow for the creation of a Rapid Reaction Police Unit that can be deployed within 60 days of a request. Relatedly, he points out that international organizations like the UN, European Union (EU), and NATO “each conduct SP operations, albeit under varying monikers” and therefore, “harmonizing these operations into a unified framework would enhance coordination in peacekeeping and crisis management.”<sup>22</sup> Consequently:

Integrating the HRCF into NATO’s structure would bolster these response efforts significantly. Moreover, the establishment of the HRCF would foster shared understanding and language

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<sup>18</sup> Pani and Finkenbinder, “The Authors Reply On ‘Projecting Stability.’”

<sup>19</sup> “Report of the Conference: The role of Stability Policing within Human Security,” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s Stability Policing Center of Excellence*, Vicenza, Italy, July 2023,

[https://nllp.jallic.nato.int/iks/sharing%20public/20231011\\_664!2023nspcoe\\_humansecurityconference\\_report.pdf](https://nllp.jallic.nato.int/iks/sharing%20public/20231011_664!2023nspcoe_humansecurityconference_report.pdf)[https://nllp.jallic.nato.int/iks/sharing%20public/20231011\\_664!2023nspcoe\\_humansecurityconference\\_report.pdf](https://nllp.jallic.nato.int/iks/sharing%20public/20231011_664!2023nspcoe_humansecurityconference_report.pdf) (accessed August 15, 2024).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Özdemir, “An Irregular Use of Military Force: Stability Policing Operations.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

among NATO members, particularly concerning gendarmerie-type law enforcement units, facilitating the exchange of different ideas and techniques.<sup>23</sup>

### **An Overlooked Capacity—The Army Expeditionary Civilian Workforce (AECW)** OBS-N240730-13052

**Observation.** Madeline Bodoh, a Department of the Army civilian and a member of the *Carlisle Scholars Program* at the *U.S. Army War College*, recently and succinctly observed, “The AECW [Army Expeditionary Civilian Workforce] is an under-appreciated part of the workforce ‘always ready to answer the call’.”<sup>1</sup> While she argues their expertise is needed across the conflict spectrum expected of military members, they may be especially useful in stabilization activities and efforts. As Bodoh points out:

members of the AECW are integral to the operational landscape, functioning within a variety of roles that demand resiliency and proficiency, whether technicians, engineers, medical professionals, or logistics specialists. Beyond immediate operational support, the *AECW plays a foundational role in the stabilization and reconstruction* of regions emerging from conflict. Development experts, economists, and governance specialists work to lay the groundwork for long-term peace and stability, addressing the root causes of conflict and helping communities recover and rebuild.<sup>2</sup> [Emphasis added]

**Discussion.** The Department of Defense (DoD) created the AECW entity in 2007 as a means “to alleviate strain on military force...in contingency operations.”<sup>3</sup> Bodoh shares RAND’s report that describes “three factors that were the driving force behind the concept of expeditionary civilians”: “the initiation of the DoD’s insourcing initiative, aimed at reducing the services’ reliance on contractors”; the 2008 request to staff positions in support of Iraqi ministries; and finally, US Central Command’s demand for civilian personnel through the Request for Forces (RFF) and Global Force Management (GFM) procedures.<sup>4</sup>

In 2020, the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD), Personnel and Readiness delegated AECW authority to Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) G-1, Personnel Operations Group. According to a recent report, “the DoD deployed over 50,000 expeditionary civilians during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Presently, more than 1,000 civilians are supporting military forces across 20 countries.”<sup>5</sup> Bodoh reports:

senior leaders...value [the] AECW civilians who bring skillsets not readily available among uniformed servicemembers; the presence of these expeditionary civilians in turn allows military personnel to dedicate their focus where it is most necessary—on core tactical and strategic missions.<sup>6</sup>

She emphasizes:

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<sup>23</sup> Özdemir, “An Irregular Use of Military Force: Stability Policing Operations.”

<sup>1</sup> Madeline Bodoh, “AN OVERLOOKED CAPABILITY: THE ARMY’S EXPEDITIONARY CIVILIANS,” *War Room - U.S. Army War College*, July 18, 2024, <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/aecw/> (accessed 28 July 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

AECW's capabilities—comprised of skills, adaptability, and expertise—increase the Army's versatility in operating across multiple challenging and unpredictable environments.... This force multiplier is an indispensable part of today's military ecosystem, contributing to a resilient and versatile culture of warfighting that addresses complexities of the changing character of war, operations, and conflict resolution.<sup>7</sup>

Most importantly for DSS engagement efforts, "Expeditionary civilian experience in civil-military operations is advantageous for navigating the complex social and political terrain of contested regions, facilitating engagement with local populations, and gathering intelligence."<sup>8</sup>

**Recommendations.** While almost two decades old, the AECW remains "under-represented and under-utilized."<sup>9</sup> Bodoh argues that situation exists because both military and civilian leaders remain unaware of its existence and its capacity. She recommends the following:

- *Invest in a forward-facing online presence for the AECW.* Units should have ready access to information, including a sample joint manning requirements document, relevant policies, and the procedures for ASCCs to submit RFFs or central support requests. Publishing the requirements on a frequently visited Army.mil site will generate interest and further accentuate the program.
- *Promulgate knowledge through professional military education (PME).* Schools at the intermediate, senior, and general officer levels can create awareness among future commanders and staff officers about the program's options. PME curriculum developers should consider placing this AECW content within existing military readiness and force structure modules.
- *Revamp strategic human capital planning for the total force.* As units conduct crisis and contingency planning, they should integrate AECW as a force enabler. In accord with the 2022 *National Defense Strategy*, the joint force must stretch resources in an ever-changing threat landscape; better use of the civilian workforce should be one part of this.<sup>10</sup>

As she concludes, "The integration of AECW capabilities is indispensable for commanders as they leverage the full range of available expertise to confront emerging challenges in modern warfare and novel theaters of conflict."<sup>11</sup> Or, in short, "Modernizing the Army of 2030 and sustaining long-term readiness inevitably must include the civilian corps."<sup>12</sup>

## US Army Civil Affairs for US Global Missions OBS-N240603-10853

**Observation.** It is a trite phrase, but accurately conveys the sentiment: "If you have a hammer, then all is a nail."<sup>1</sup> Attributed to various authors, it addresses what psychologists call *the Law of the Instrument*, or the tendency to "over-rely on a familiar tool, method, or approach when faced with a problem or

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<sup>7</sup> Bodoh, "AN OVERLOOKED CAPABILITY: THE ARMY'S EXPEDITIONARY CIVILIANS."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, *The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance*, Madison, WI: Harper & Row, 1966. "It is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."

decision-making situation, even if it may not be the most appropriate or effective solution.”<sup>2</sup> US policy makers have a similar conundrum. They often need force that has the military characteristics of deployability and training, but not intended “to seize terrain or destroy the enemy” but, instead, to engage with the civil dimension of the concern.<sup>3</sup> Walter Haynes, writing for *The Modern War Institute at West Point*, suggests the solution is:

A civil affairs task force (CATF) [as] exists in the Army’s most recent Civil Affairs doctrine, but a more robust, flexible, and scalable version of it would meet the requirements of these missions without demanding growth in an Army actively reducing troop size.<sup>4</sup>

As he continues, a “CATF would be able to contribute to a multilateral mission even without putting US troops on the ground...it will be a better option than expecting combat formations to be adaptable when dealing with missions they did not train for.”<sup>5</sup>

**Discussion.** Walter Haynes notes that despite the US reduction of military forces overseas, there is still a couple of hundred thousand military members deployed worldwide. He further observes that notwithstanding the National Security Strategy focus on China and Russia—or the potential large scale combat scenarios—“the US military will continue responding to crises that are not predominantly military in character,” such as the ongoing humanitarian support efforts for Gaza.<sup>6</sup> However, he cautions, not every non-combat effort needs combat assets. Further:

There can be a mismatch between the unit’s enemy- and terrain-centric operations cycle and the actual operational requirements. On top of this, each of these prospective missions can be so complex that significant coordination, intelligence analysis capacity, and synchronization between disparate actors will be necessary to achieve any kind of sustainable outcome.<sup>7</sup>

“To address this gap,” the author suggests, “is by formalizing the CATF as a scalable unit responsible for directly monitoring and leveraging elements of the civil dimension during crisis or conflict.”<sup>8</sup> He offers three lines of efforts supported by this approach, paraphrased and summarized here:

- *Integrate civil knowledge at echelon.* Or, as the author asserts:

A robust civil knowledge integration section would collate, analyze, and disseminate relevant reporting and other pertinent information from the civil dimension to answer a commander’s information requirements, support operations, and increase situational awareness. This section’s products should all be made unclassified, which will simplify sharing them to other actors without the problem of overclassification endemic to military intelligence products.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jason Hreha, “What is The Law of the Instrument In Behavioral Economics?” *The Behavioral Scientist*, undated, <https://www.thebehavioralscientist.com/glossary/law-of-the-instrument> (accessed June 3, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> Walter Haynes, “Optimizing the Civil Affairs Task Force for the Army’s Global Missions,” *The Modern War Institute at West Point*, May 9, 2024, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/optimizing-the-civil-affairs-task-force-for-the-armys-global-missions/> (accessed May 30, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

- *Coordinate with joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partners through a civil-military operations center to increase engagement with civil elements that can support friendly force objectives and maneuver.* As the author highlights, “Better knowledge of what other actors are doing in an area of operations is important for many reasons, from preventing tragedy to making better use of limited resources.”<sup>10</sup>
- *Direct subordinate civil affairs or other assigned units to support the previous two lines of effort.* As the author notes, “the subordinate units can also work closely with local stakeholders—such as partner militaries or governments—to set the theater to enhance friendly maneuver and support consolidation of gains.”<sup>11</sup>

Haynes further suggests “The CATF’s value is not limited to nonconflict scenarios.” The CATF’s analysis can provide commanders in combat contexts an understanding of “second- and third-order effects of their decisions” to avoid “angry towns start disrupting supply convoys or harboring insurgents.”<sup>12</sup> As he concludes in this discussion, “While no military element can overcome a failure of policy, the CATF stands a better chance of fusing together various stakeholders to make progress,” because:

What distinguishes the CATF from other units typically assigned to respond to a crisis is that it can specially train to work with partners to address a problem that can’t simply be bombed into submission.<sup>13</sup>

**Recommendation(s).** The civil-military function is already a staff section for most Army and Joint headquarters. What is new in Walter Haynes’ proposal is the scale he suggests. He points out an existing model “from US Army Special Operations Command, which has five active duty civil affairs battalions and a single brigade capable of forming the Army core of a CATF.”<sup>14</sup> He does not suggest a permanent formation, but “an enhanced version of the current, ad hoc concept” outlined in existing doctrine.<sup>15</sup> As he reminds:

In a situation where the deployment is to a civil or humanitarian crisis, the CATF can integrate DoD capabilities with the expertise multinational and nongovernmental organizations bring to the table. Civil affairs teams and companies already do this every day, on every continent...<sup>16</sup>

Lastly, Haynes reiterates the available model of the US Army’s 1st Special Forces Command and its reorganization of its civil affairs and psychological operations battalions. This reorganization places those unites “under the command of their respective Special Forces groups” which allows “a single commander to improve unity of effort.”<sup>17</sup> Consequently, according to Haynes, “The current civil affairs brigade headquarters, now (mostly) relieved of its responsibility to train and support the battalions, should be able to train for operational deployments.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Haynes, “Optimizing the Civil Affairs Task Force for the Army’s Global Missions.”

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

## Case Studies

### Case Study—US Army Civil Affairs in Niger OBS-N240916-16419

**Observation.** As the Department of Defense (DoD) withdraws assets from Niger and redeploys some military personnel and equipment to Coastal West Africa, it is prudent to retain the lessons from the civil-military engagements and partnerships that built strong community resiliency against violent extremist expansion. Since 2012, when *jihadists* began expanding from Mali into other neighboring Sahelian countries such as Niger and Burkina Faso, there were several tactics that groups like Al-Qaida used to consolidate their presence. These tactics included coopting or creating *jihadists* groups, integrating themselves in communities where conflict or grievance exists, exploiting those grievances to gain support, stifling dissent and exploring other areas in which to expand once their base is fully consolidated..<sup>1</sup>

Niger is a case study of how US Army Civil Affairs personnel prevented, mitigated and built community resilience against violent extremist expansion. By conducting similar engagements, training and projects, Civil Affairs personnel can reduce the impact of further attempts by violent extremist groups to expand into Coastal West Africa.

**Discussion.** In Coastal West Africa, particularly in Cote d'Ivoire, US Army Civil Affairs personnel conducted episodic engagements such as joint combined exchange trainings and rotations for the past couple of years. Most of these exchanges focused on the medical capacity and capability of the military forces of Cote d'Ivoire to enhance their capacity to provide services to their civilian population with the goal of improving civil-military relations in the country. However, just as in Niger with the neighboring *jihadist* threat incursions from Mali, the northern border areas of Cote d'Ivoire face similar concerns from Burkina Faso. Since 2020, there were sporadic *jihadists* attacks near the border within 50 kilometers of the border between Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire or within the territory of Cote d'Ivoire itself..<sup>2</sup> This activity is very destabilizing to the region just as the United States Government (USG) implements the *Global Fragility Act* through its 10-year strategic plan to prevent conflict and promote stability..<sup>3</sup>

With the recent political turmoil in the central Sahel States of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, the security situation will only get worse before it gets better. As a result of the military *junta's* stance in power, an overly enemy-centric approach will only exacerbate the conflict dynamics in the Sahel. This will further increase the number of refugees, internally displaced peoples and *jihadist* groups movements as they plan to seek areas that are considered safe havens. In fact, the military *juntas* in the Sahel are using the tactics of Al-Qaida aligned groups to capitalize on grievances due to overly abusive national security forces. For example, security forces are known to heavily discriminate against the Fulanis, a specific ethnic group, which has driven some of them into the arms of *jihadists*. The Mali-based Fulani commander

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<sup>1</sup> Caleb Weiss, "AQIM's Imperial Playbook: Understanding al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb's Expansion into West Africa," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, April 29, 2022, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/aqims-imperial-playbook-understanding-al-qaida-in-the-islamic-maghrebs-expansion-into-west-africa/> (accessed September 15, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Eizenga and Amandine Gnanguênon, "Recalibrating Coastal West Africa's Response to Violent Extremism," *Africa Security Brief No. 43*, *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, July 22, 2024, <https://africacenter.org/publication/asb43en-recalibrating-multitiered-stabilization-strategy-coastal-west-africa-response-violent-extremism/> (accessed September 15, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Stringer and Madison Urban, "The Global Fragility Act and the Irregular Warfare Center: A Path for Diplomacy, Defense, and Development," *Irregular Warfare Center*, January 27, 2023, <https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/publications/the-global-fragility-act-and-the-irregular-warfare-center-a-path-for-diplomacy-defense-and-development/> (accessed September 15, 2024).

Amadou Koufa of the Al-Qaida-aligned *Macina Liberation Front* has leveraged these grievances and tasked other *jihadis* in Burkina Faso to recruit in Cote d'Ivoire.<sup>4</sup>

**Recommendation(s).** As DoD conducts a redeployment to Coastal West Africa with priority to Cote d'Ivoire, it behooves policymakers to invest more in civil-military support in the northern border areas of Cote d'Ivoire. The current US 10-year plan in Coastal West Africa under the US Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability has laudable objectives to increase social cohesion, government and security force responsiveness.<sup>5</sup> From the DoD scope of support to the plan, US Army Civil Affairs personnel are well suited to address all three objectives. Beyond the medical focused engagements that have happened so far in Cote d'Ivoire, Civil Affairs can positively improve community-based peace dialogues held between security forces and other civilians. These forums, which may include stakeholders from all walks of society such as tribal elders, religious leaders or local prefects, can increase the social contract between government and the populations. As these engagements happen in or near centers where refugees are processed from Burkina Faso, they can serve as early warning mechanisms to prevent radicalization or implantation of *jihadist* ideology. It is foolhardy to ignore the problems of the Sahel by only focusing on the Coastal West African states. The problems that negatively impact the Sahel will ultimately impact the stability of neighboring countries.<sup>6</sup> It is all connected.

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### Case Study—Sinjar, August 2014 OBS-N240917-16479

**Observation.** One reviewer of Susan Shand's 2018 book, *Sinjar: 14 Days that Saved the Yazidis from Islamic State*<sup>1</sup>, highlights the book's narrative that "moves the reader between the experiences of the victims in northern Iraq as they try to flee ISIS's massacres and the political developments in Washington that eventually led to the US military intervention."<sup>2</sup> Another reviewer states the book contains "great insight about contemporary warfare."<sup>3</sup> Of less note is that the book offers a case study for *defense support to stabilization* (DSS). In this instance, US military resources with international military partners

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<sup>4</sup> International Crisis Group, "Keeping Jihadists Out of Northern Côte d'Ivoire," *Africa Briefing No. 192*, August 11, 2023, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/b192-keeping-jihadists-out-northern-cote-divoire> (accessed September 15, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of State, "United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability: Country and Region Plans: Coastal West Africa," March 2024, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/The-U.S.-Strategy-to-Prevent-Conflict-and-Promote-Stability-10-Year-Plan-for-Coastal-West-Africa-Accessible-03.22.2024.pdf> (accessed September 15, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Shurkin, "Don't Abandon Burkina Faso," *War on the Rocks*, June 20, 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2023/06/dont-abandon-burkina-faso/> (accessed September 15, 2024).

<sup>1</sup> Susan Shand, *Sinjar: 14 Days that Saved the Yazidis from Islamic State* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowan and Littlefield, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Iddon, "Book Review, Sinjar: 14 Days that Saved the Yazidis from Islamic State," *Fathom Journal*, January 2019, <https://fathomjournal.org/book-review-sinjar-14-days-that-saved-the-yazidis-from-islamic-state/> (accessed July 30, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> George Hodge, "Book Review, Sinjar: 14 Days that Saved the Yazidis from Islamic State," *Military Review*, January 2019, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/MR-Book-Reviews/January-2019/Book-Review-001b/> (accessed July 28, 2024).

provided foreign humanitarian assistance and some limited protection to a threatened group of people in the face of genocidal actions.

**Discussion.** In the summer of 2014, armed elements of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)<sup>4</sup> conducted several harassing attacks on the Sinjar region in northwest Iraq. The ISIS operations of August 3<sup>rd</sup> were different in that they were coordinated and used heavy weapons, such as mortars, against the Sinjar residents' own light personal arms. Within 72 hours, most of the 80 villages in the area were essentially empty, with thousands of people dead and thousands more captured.<sup>5</sup> More thousands fled up Mount Sinjar as refugees. Strand's carefully reconstructed story of how the *Yazidis* diaspora engaged the US government at its highest levels for their people's survival is important. Also of interest is the swiftness of an international military response designed to both provide humanitarian assistance to the *Yazidis* as well as protect them, albeit from the air.

The Iraqi government was the first to act. On August 5, 2014, Iraqi military helicopters dropped food and water for the *Yazidis* in the mountains, although they did not engage the ISIS armed forces.<sup>6</sup> By August 7<sup>th</sup>, then US President Obama announced he had

authorized targeted airstrikes, if necessary, to help forces in Iraq as they fight to break the siege of Mount Sinjar and protect the civilians trapped there [and that] American aircraft have begun conducting humanitarian airdrops of food and water to help these desperate men, women and children survive.<sup>7</sup>

By August 9<sup>th</sup>, the US airdropped 3,800 gallons of water and 16,128 meals to the estimated 40,000 *Yazidis* on the mountain. Airstrikes continued as well, with the US attacking ISIS positions to allow for "20,000–30,000 Yazidi Iraqis to flee into Syria and later be rescued by Kurdish forces."<sup>8</sup> Other nations followed suit.<sup>9</sup> On August 13<sup>th</sup>, US military members conducted a site survey of Mount Sinjar to plan more evacuations, but determined "a rescue operation was probably unnecessary since there was less

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<sup>4</sup> This Lesson uses the term the *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria* (ISIS) as Shand does in her book. As attributed to multiple sources, the *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria* (ISIS) are also known as the *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant* (ISIL)—the U.S. government's preferred designation for this entity—or simply as the *Islamic State* (IS) as well as the Arabic acronym *Daesh*. While there are nuanced differences in these designations, those distinctions are not relevant to this Lesson.

<sup>5</sup> Valeria Cetorelli and Sareta Ashraph, "A demographic documentation of ISIS's attack on the Yazidi village of Kocho," *Middle East Centre reports, London School of Economics and Political Science*, 2019, [https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/report/a-demographic-documentation-of-isiss-attack-on-the-yazidi-village-of-kocho/Cetorelli\\_Demographic\\_documentation\\_ISIS\\_attack.pdf](https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/report/a-demographic-documentation-of-isiss-attack-on-the-yazidi-village-of-kocho/Cetorelli_Demographic_documentation_ISIS_attack.pdf) (accessed July 23, 2024). The captured women were enslaved—often into forced sexual relationships. The boys were sent to military training to become ISIS soldiers. See: Inci Sayki, "Where Are the Yazidis Today, Almost a Decade After ISIS's Genocidal Campaign?" *Public Broadcast Station Frontline*, March 13, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/yazidis-decade-after-isis-genocidal-campaign/#:~:text=In%20August%202014%2C%20shortly%20after,stranded%20and%20hungry%20for%20weeks> (accessed August 1, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> Mohammed A. Salih and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Iraqi Yazidis: 'If we move they will kill us'," *Aljazeera*, August 5, 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2014/8/5/iraqi-yazidis-if-we-move-they-will-kill-us> (accessed July 7, 2024).

<sup>7</sup> The White House, "Statement by the President," August 7, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/07/statement-president> (accessed July 6, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Haroon Siddique, "20,000 Iraqis besieged by Isis escape from mountain after US air strikes," *The Guardian*, August 10, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/10/iraqi-yazidi-isis-jihadists-islamic-state-kurds> (accessed July 13, 2024). Iraqi Maj. Gen. Majid Abdul Salam Ashour was killed in a helicopter crash as the pilot while delivering aid and rescuing stranded Yazidi refugees on August 12<sup>th</sup>. See: Alissa J. Rubin, "On a Helicopter, Going Down: Inside a Lethal Crash in Iraq," *The New York Times*, August 16, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/17/world/middleeast/iraqi-alissa-j-rubin-a-times-correspondent-recounts-fatal-helicopter-crash-in-kurdistan.html> (accessed July 28, 2024).

<sup>9</sup> Chelsea J. Carter, Mohammed Tawfeeq, and Barbara Starr, "Officials: U.S. airstrikes pound ISIS militants firing at Iraq's Yazidis," *CNN*, August 9, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/09/world/meast/iraqi-crisis> (accessed July 30, 2024).

danger from exposure or dehydration and the Yazidis were no longer believed to be at risk of attack.”<sup>10</sup> That evaluation was controversial. According to one source, “Kurdish officials and Yazidi refugees stated that thousands of young, elderly, and disabled individuals on the mountain were still vulnerable.”<sup>11</sup>

October 2014 highlighted August’s ‘missed opportunity’ to rescue additional refugees from the mountains. On October 20<sup>th</sup>, ISIS forces again “attacked the mountains with armored vehicles, mortars, and rockets... forcing the Yazidis to retreat toward the mountaintop.”<sup>12</sup> The October 29-30<sup>th</sup> coalition airstrikes against the ISIS in the area did not open a civilian egress route. As one observer remarked:

More than 200,000 Yazidis fled Sinjar in August, catching the world’s attention as they hid in the mountains without food or water. They became a brief *cause célèbre* in America, galvanizing a U.S.-led air campaign that helped most of the Yazidis evacuate through Syria to Iraq’s Kurdistan region. But while international attention has flitted away, several thousand civilians are still stranded on the mountain. Most were living in areas too remote or were physically incapable of leaving....<sup>13</sup>

It was not until December 2014 that “Kurdish fighters...opened a land corridor that enabled Yazidis to be evacuated.”<sup>14</sup>

**Recommendation(s).** The Sinjar experience of August through December of 2014 is a case study for *defense support to stabilization* (DSS), albeit imperfect. In this instance, US military resources—with international military partners—were utilized in a conflict-affected area to address a humanitarian and protection need. Further, while the “military might” use was the most obvious aspect of the engagement, it was in a supporting role to other US government agencies, international organizations, and, perhaps most importantly, at the request and with the consent of the Iraqi government—exactly as intended by the DSS concept.

### **Case Study—The Gaza Aid Pier, May - July 2024** OBS-N240829-16085

**Observation.** The horrific Hamas incursion into Israeli on October 7, 2023, and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) subsequent military responses propelled the Gaza population into a humanitarian crisis—no food, no shelter, no medical aid. While the international aid community, led by the United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP), negotiated for humanitarian land corridors to deliver much needed supplies, the United States Government (USG) sought a means to deliver aid more directly in greater quantities. On March 7, 2024, in his State of the Union address, President Biden turned to the US military to enact a relief mechanism:

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<sup>10</sup> Martin Chulov, Julian Borger, Richard Norton-Taylor, and Dan Roberts, Dan, "US troops land on Iraq's Mt Sinjar to plan for Yazidi evacuation," *The Guardian*, August 13, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/13/us-ground-troops-direct-role-evacuate-yazidis-iraq> (accessed July 13, 2024).

<sup>11</sup> Liz Sly and Craig Whitlock, "Most Yazidis have been rescued from a besieged mountain in northern Iraq," *The Washington Post*, August 14, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/yazidis-still-reported-trapped-on-mountain-in-northern-iraq-despite-us-assessment/2014/08/14/d85337fb-c5d2-4b82-b53a-410467e0db90\\_story.html?hpid=z2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/yazidis-still-reported-trapped-on-mountain-in-northern-iraq-despite-us-assessment/2014/08/14/d85337fb-c5d2-4b82-b53a-410467e0db90_story.html?hpid=z2) (accessed July 20, 2024).

<sup>12</sup> Alice Su, "No Escape from Sinjar Mountain," *Foreign Policy*, November 4, 2014, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/04/no-escape-from-sinjar-mountain/> (accessed July 20, 2024).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Dexter Filkins, "An Early Success for the Kurds in Sinjar," *The New Yorker*, December 19, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/early-success-kurds-sinjar> (accessed July 20, 2024).

Tonight, I'm directing *the U.S. military to lead an emergency mission* to establish a temporary pier in the Mediterranean on the Gaza coast that can receive large ships carrying food, water, medicine and temporary shelters. No U.S. boots will be on the ground..<sup>1</sup> [Emphasis added]

Within two months, the Gaza Aid Pier, or simply, the Gaza Pier, was in place. While it conducted operations from mid-May to the end of July 2024 at a cost of \$230 million, it supported far less aid distribution than predicted..<sup>2</sup> Many observers judge the Gaza Aid Pier as a failed effort.

The *United States Agency for International Development's* (USAID) Office of the Inspector General's report indicated there were several external factors that contributed to the ineffectiveness of this relief mechanism..<sup>3</sup> However, despite the objective failure..<sup>4</sup> of the specific effort, it is a case study for the use of defense resources in support of a stabilization activity—in this case, foreign humanitarian assistance.

**Discussion.** Among the subtopics of paragraph 7, *Implementation, of Defense Support to Stabilization (DSS): A Guide for Stabilization Practitioners*, includes this statement: "(4) Stabilization requires sustained civilian and military integration at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels to achieve unity of effort."<sup>5</sup> It further includes three direct actions: (a) Actively solicit participation from mission-critical USG departments and agencies; (b) Utilizing civil-military teams that can integrate key instruments of national power in a way that complements indigenous, international, allied, partner, civil society, and private entities to achieve stabilization objectives; and (c) When appropriate, leverage DoD humanitarian assistance and foreign disaster relief activities to complement USG stabilization efforts..<sup>6</sup>

The Gaza Aid Pier effort—formally known as the Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS) system or even the JLOTS Maritime Corridor—is a case study of these directives in action. As the report summarizes, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) began its work with the WFP, among other humanitarian agents, in October 2023. However, due to the ongoing hostilities, closed routes, and inspection delays at land crossings, the Gaza humanitarian aid delivery was significantly encumbered. While the Gaza Aid Pier, or JLOTS, was not USAID's preferred mechanism..<sup>7</sup> to mitigate the factors restricting aid delivery, President Biden's March 7 announcement made it available.

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, "Remarks of President Joe Biden – State of the Union Address As Prepared for Delivery," March 7, 2024. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2024/03/07/remarks-of-president-joe-biden-state-of-the-union-address-as-prepared-for-delivery-2/> (accessed August 30, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> David Brennan, "USAID report reveals why Biden's Gaza humanitarian pier 'fell short'," *ABC News*, August 28, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/usaid-report-reveals-bidens-gaza-humanitarian-pier-fell/story?id=113205603> (August 30, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> Office of Inspector General, "Report E-000-24-004-M: USAID's Gaza Response: External Factors Impaired Distribution of Humanitarian Assistance Through the JLOTS Maritime Corridor," *U.S. Agency for International Development*, August 27, 2024, <https://oig.usaid.gov/node/7063> (accessed August 29, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> Brennan, "USAID report reveals why Biden's Gaza humanitarian pier 'fell short'." Brennan reports the pier "was only able to operate for 20 days over its lifespan, far short of the 90 or so days planned." He quotes from the USAID OIG's report that it "fell short of its goal of supplying aid to 500,000 or more Palestinians each month for three months and instead delivered enough aid to feed 450,000 for one month."

<sup>5</sup> Samuel L. Russell, Douglas R. Hurst, and Lynne M. Schneider, "Defense Support to Stabilization (DSS): A Guide for Stabilization Practitioners," *Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)*, November 2022, <https://pksoi.armywarcollege.edu/index.php/defense-support-to-stabilization-dssa-guide-for-stabilization-practitioners/> (accessed December 2, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Office of Inspector General, "Report E-000-24-004-M." USAID preferred to negotiate for land routes for a variety of reasons expressed in the report. The report does acknowledge: "According to a senior BHA official, interagency discussions had considered options for commercial and DoD-supported piers to establish a maritime corridor into Gaza....According to WFP staff, after the President's State of the Union address, conversations about the pier shifted from a commercial option to the DoD JLOTS capability."

The US and other donors established the maritime corridor to transport humanitarian aid from Cyprus directly to Gaza, where partner (non-military) agencies would transload for distribution across the region:

For Gaza, this multinational operation has involved the United States, led by USAID and DoD, with assistance from Cyprus, Israel, the UN, and other foreign donors, including the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. DoD dedicated more than 1,000 US soldiers and sailors, as well as several ships, to this project. Engineers from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) anchored the temporary pier to the shore to ensure US military personnel would not have to enter Gaza in keeping with the President's mandate of no US military "boots on the ground" in Gaza. DoD construction of the temporary pier was completed on May 16, 2024; delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza began the following day.... USAID positioned Disaster Assistance Response Team members in Cyprus and Israel to provide direct coordination between DoD, Israel Defense Forces, and UN stakeholders involved in JLOTS operations.<sup>8</sup>

As the report highlights, this was not DoD's first use of the JLOTS system. The US military had previously utilized versions of the system in Kuwait, Somalia, and South Korea. However, the Gaza effort differed significantly in that it "was the first time DoD used JLOTS to support a humanitarian response in an active combat, nonpermissive environment."<sup>9</sup> This "active combat, nonpermissive environment" prompted the WFP and its partner agencies to establish prerequisites for themselves for their participation in the maritime corridor operation which "included the clear and visible distinction between humanitarian and military actors." This is a position which reflects the international humanitarian principle of neutrality and is a tenet of most humanitarian agencies.<sup>10</sup> Other prerequisites included, but not limited to: Locating the pier in northern Gaza; Obtaining security for humanitarian operations from a UN member state; and Transitioning the response to civilian operation after the initial 90 days of planned use.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these prerequisites, however, the USAID report indicates that "DoD and IDF requirements took precedence over the expressed humanitarian response needs" fairly quickly in the planning for JLOTS.<sup>12</sup> DoD rejected the northern coast of Gaza for the pier—closest to Gaza City and the most dire aid needs—for a more central coast pier location "to ensure that military personnel and JLOTS infrastructure could be protected."<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, this location meant that the WFP distribution convoys were still hampered by the same IDF checkpoint delays as they experienced with the land corridors. In addition, the extended distance from pier to distribution maximized rather than minimized the opportunities for "self-distribution" (looting of the aid).<sup>14</sup>

More troubling was the perceived lack of distinction between humanitarian and military support. WFP expected a third-party UN member state—not a party to the conflict—to provide the humanitarian response security. However, reportedly, "no third-party country agreed to provide security and, as a result, the IDF provided security...for JLOTS."<sup>15</sup> The consequences of the lack of distinction between humanitarian and military support was most readily seen and felt in June 2023 with "community misperceptions from disinformation that the pier had been used to assist the IDF in a military operation

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<sup>8</sup> Office of Inspector General, "Report E-000-24-004-M."

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. The report does not address WFP's last prerequisite—to transition the maritime corridor to civilian authority within 90 days—because the JLOTS was dismantled by then.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. The report also alludes to the perception that the IDF—or Israel—would not allow another nation's military force to provide security.

to free several hostages” after the IDF’s June 8 “rescue of four Israeli hostages and the deaths of multiple Palestinians.”<sup>16</sup>

Social media posts showed video of the IDF with the JLOTS pier in the background, resulting in the inference that Israel had used the pier in connection with the military operation. In a statement on June 8, U.S. Central Command officially denied that the IDF used the pier in a military operation. The next day, WFP publicly announced a pause in operations at the temporary pier to conduct a security review...

The WFP’s “pause” resulted in “thousands of pallets of aid from the JLOTS operation piled up on the Gaza beach.”<sup>17</sup> The USAID report suggests there was no contingency plan for a security pause and, therefore, no onshore storage available. Meanwhile, DoD assets needed to transport goods “while the weather permitted.”<sup>18</sup> Fortunately, the stockpiled aid was shelf-stable canned goods. However, the situation created an obvious backlog for WFP to address once it was operational again.

**Recommendation(s).** The USAID report concludes:

In the 20 days JLOTS operated, 8,100 metric tons of assistance were delivered through JLOTS to Gaza. This was enough to feed 450,000 people for 1 month, according to USAID, at a time when access and security constraints hindered aid deliveries and distribution through traditional land routes. However, despite its role as the U.S. government lead for humanitarian assistance in Gaza, USAID had limited control over the decision to use JLOTS, where it would be located, and who would provide security on the beach and during transportation of JLOTS-delivered aid. These issues, coupled with high winds and rough seas in the Mediterranean Sea near the Gaza coast, impaired the Agency’s ability to deliver the intended amounts of aid through the maritime corridor.<sup>19</sup>

It still recognizes USAID must “examine its experience with JLOTS for lessons related to deconfliction, stakeholder coordination, and contingency planning.” This is true for the Department of Defense (DoD) as well, especially as a case study for the opportunities and challenges inherent when defense resources are utilized to support stabilization activities.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. The report authors note: “Gaza’s health ministry reported 274 deaths while the Israeli military stated it knew of less than 100 Palestinians killed during the operation.”

<sup>17</sup> Office of Inspector General, “Report E-000-24-004-M.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Acknowledging the report was from a USAID-perspective, the authors suggest the DoD report, which is not yet published, will review “DoD’s involvement in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza through the JLOTS maritime corridor, as well as a separate evaluation of DoD’s capabilities to effectively carry out JLOTS operations and exercises.”

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- [PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Protection of Civilians \(POC\) and Civilian Harm Mitigation & Response \(CHMR\), Volumes I and II \(March 2023\)](#)

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