NEWS FROM THE FRONT

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OPERATING IN THE INTERORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: INSIGHTS FROM U.S. ARMY AFRICA

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❖ **Background.** U.S. military leaders and planners must understand the purpose and mission of the many governmental, nongovernmental (NGO) and international organizations in the area of operations to facilitate collective cooperation. This paper highlights some challenges the U.S. Army faces when operating in the interorganizational environment and provides insights to enhance collaboration to achieve mutual objectives. These insights were collected during the civilian-led Interorganizational Tabletop Exercise (ITX) conducted in Washington D.C., hosted by the U.S. Institute for Peace (USIP) in conjunction with the Department of Defense (DOD), and the Joint Staff J-7 Exercise Directorate from 17 – 20 July 2017. Attendees included civilian and military personnel representing the Department of State (DOS), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), DOD, U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), U.S. Army Africa (USARAF), and the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). Participating international organizations and NGOs included the Red Cross; Alliance for Peacebuilding; African Union; Centers for Civilians in Conflict; Inclusive Security, an NGO working with policy makers (particularly women's participation) to influence decisions that affect peace and security globally; and Saferworld, an independent international NGO working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. The ITX facilitated dialogue among senior leaders and planners on the shared and potentially differing objectives and operating requirements during a regional or global crisis focused Somalia.

The exercise created opportunities for senior military leaders and planners to learn from other U.S. government (USG) agencies and NGOs while sharing information relating to DOD capabilities and how the military can assist civilian efforts in Somalia. The ITX observations and insights focused on military cooperation with interagency representatives, unified action partners (UAPs), USG organization representatives, NGOs and international organizations. UAPs are those military forces, governmental and NGOs, and elements of the private sector with whom Army forces plan, coordinate, synchronize and integrate during the conduct of operations (Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations)*. The observations and insights are intended to assist USAFRICOM, USARAF and U.S. military leaders and planners with interacting more efficiently and effectively with the partner nations, international organizations and UAPs.

Front Cover. Exercise participants from more than 10 nations discuss interagency cooperation during working groups at Exercise Unified Focus, April 26, 2017, at the Douala Naval Base, Cameroon. U.S. Army photo by CPT Jason Welch, USARAF Public Affairs Office via Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System (DIVIDS).

❖ **Purpose.** The purpose of the ITX was to promote and develop relationships, mutual understanding, knowledge sharing and cooperation among the USG, NGOs and international organizations to enhance conflict sensitivity while improving effectiveness of those sharing space in the operational environment.

❖ **Overarching Theme.** Transitioning from fragility toward stabilization and sustainable human security in Somalia and the region.

❖ **Objectives:**

- Better understand organizations' processes with an eye toward managing a changing environment due to an African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) drawdown.
- Identify and improve ongoing planning, coordination, collaboration and information sharing mechanisms based on better understanding of the organizational objectives, approaches and capacities of all relevant actors, including civil society.
- Work through planning considerations for an upcoming AMISOM transition with a focus on both opportunities and challenges.
- Promote and strengthen habitual practitioner relationships by maintaining the ITX for future interorganizational events.

❖ **Methodology:**

- Conduct ITX concept development and event design through interorganizational planning meetings hosted by USIP and facilitated by a core planning team.
- Provide interorganizational cross-leveling informational briefings.
- Conduct a three day, reality based scenario ITX, followed by a two hour senior leader forum for discussion of ITX findings and subsequent actions.

❖ **Expected Outcomes:**

- A more informed planning process that can integrate organizational considerations for an AMISOM transition in Somalia and the region.
- Inform USG policy on Somalia and its environs through recommendations stemming from the ITX process.
- Outcomes are independent but align to USAFRICOM operations, training and education opportunities.

❖ **Observations and Insights**

- **What are the major gaps and issues associated with U.S. military forces leveraging UAP cooperation and integration?**

While USARAF continually improves collaboration and coordination with Somalia, partner nations, NGOs, international organizations and USG organizations, greater emphasis is required to achieve common objectives, mutual understanding of UAP missions (including multinational partners), collaboration to develop common goals and understanding the needs of the partner nation. Multinational meetings or working groups conducted by the host nation or partner nations at local embassies are key to synchronizing activities and developing a shared understanding and complementary lines of effort among stakeholders. A trained, competent, trusted and informed military liaison officer embedded into selected organizations provides a critical link enabling direct, physical communications between military commands and nonmilitary agencies and organizations.

> Liaison is that contact or intercommunication maintained between elements of military forces or other agencies to ensure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action. (Joint Publication [JP] 3-08, *Interorganizational Coordination*)

A lack of knowledge and mutual understanding of the mission, purpose, capabilities, activities and operations of each participating organization can create uncertainty and lends itself to miscommunication. As a result, military planners are unable to effectively plan, coordinate and conduct operations to capitalize on the activities of UAPs to achieve common objectives.

Due to this lack of knowledge and mutual understanding, trust is not developed between all of the participants. Knowledge of an organization is based on a previous interaction with a member of that organization and can result in a misunderstanding or underestimate of the organizations capability. As individuals interact more with UAPs, a greater understanding and appreciation for each organization’s efforts will develop.

Figure 1 depicts the necessary coordination with various external organizations that may be involved, or operate simultaneously, with joint operations. This coordination includes the United States armed forces; USG agencies, bureaus and departments; state, territorial, local and tribal government agencies; foreign military forces and government agencies; international organizations; NGOs; and the private sector. Interagency coordination describes the interaction between USG agencies, bureaus and departments and is a subset of interorganizational cooperation. The DOD conducts interorganizational cooperation across a range of operations, with each type of operation involving different communities of interest, structures and authorities. The terms “interagency” and “interorganizational” do not define

structures or organizations, but rather describe processes occurring among various separate entities.

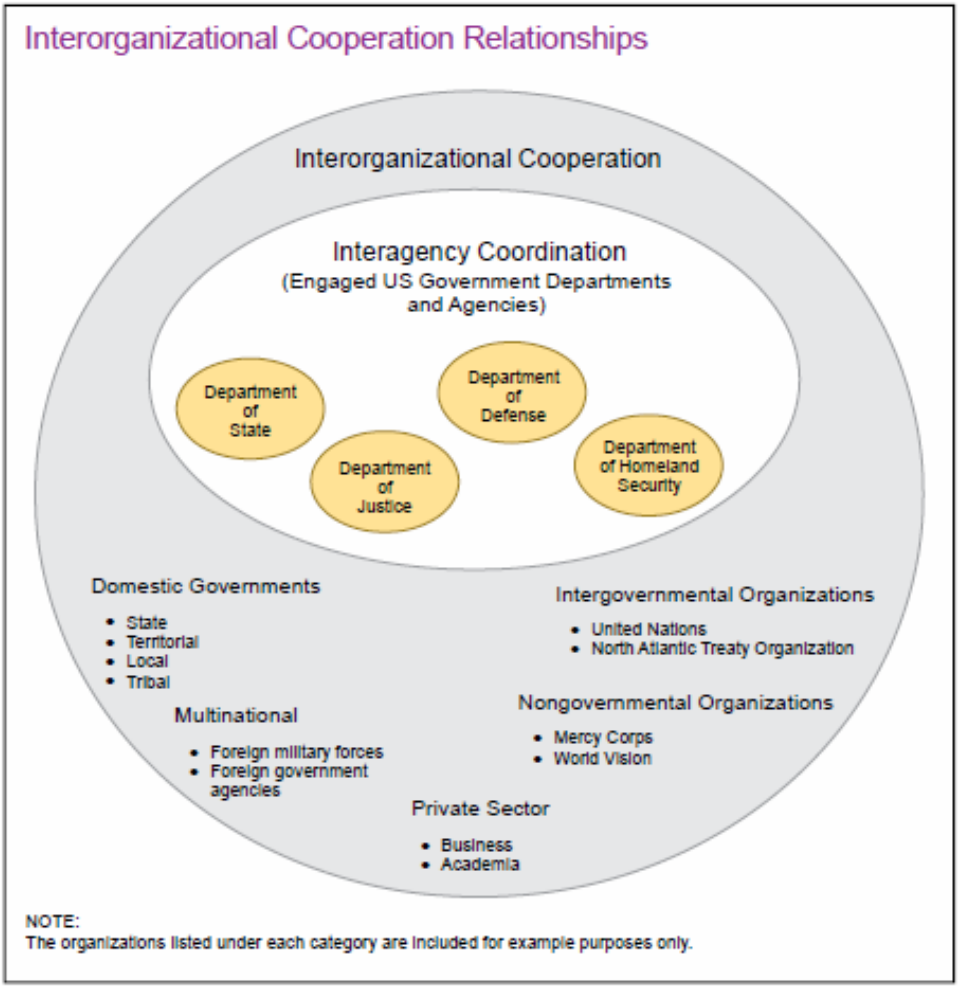

Figure 1. Interorganizational Cooperation Relationships. (Source: JP 3-08)

U.S. military forces have clearly defined planning processes and expected outcomes. UAPs do not understand or follow this type of process and often defer to the military to plan. This results in military planners making assumptions about the capabilities or expectations of UAPs, which may not be realistic or attainable. Therefore, it is critical to include the UAPs in the planning process to solicit their input and synchronize activities to achieve common objectives.

Commitment to interorganizational cooperation can facilitate cooperation in areas of common interest, promote a common operational picture, and enable sharing of critical information and resources. (JP 3-08, *Interorganizational Cooperation*)

- **How can the Army best harness the strengths and resources of USG civilian agencies and nongovernmental organizations in a concerted and coherent way?**

A key point that must be understood is that the Army is a supporting effort to the ambassador's integrated country plan, supporting the ambassador's strategy and objectives. As a result, Army leaders must ensure they understand the country team's goals and what the Army's role is to help accomplish them. From the integrated country plan, the military will have a part that is further delegated to the Army to accomplish. Some elements of the plan will involve coordinating with other government agencies to complete, such as coordinating with the embassy to expedite the customs process for delivery of shipments required to conduct a security force assistance event.

It is also important to remember that a theater army interacts with interagency partners on a daily basis. The G-2 (intelligence) interacts with the intelligence community continually, while the Security Cooperation Directorate communicates with country teams and DOS personnel frequently. Because there is an established relationship, reinforced on a daily basis, and all parties are comfortable working together, the interagency partnership process is efficient for the Army component.

The relationship begins among Army personnel, interagency and NGOs before the planning or execution of an operation. UAPs need to be incorporated into exercises and training events. As interagency and NGO personnel interact with military personnel, they gain knowledge and understanding of the capabilities and limitations of Army forces. The expertise of UAPs can be used to develop objectives during planning and coordination.

Authorities to conduct activities are key elements to consider. Army forces operate under Title 10 U.S. Code (USC), Armed Forces, while many security cooperation activities are authorized by Congress through Title 22 USC, Foreign Relations and Intercourse. Other activities and organizations are covered under different parts of the USC (i.e., Title 32 USC, National Guard; Title 14 USC, Coast Guard; Title 50 USC, War and National Defense). The limitations on authorities prevents the Army from participating in certain activities in the area of operations. Planners must understand what authority Army forces have to operate in a partner nation and plan events within the confines of these parameters.

Sharing of information between partners is critical for each party's success, however, the information must remain unclassified. The concern of many NGOs or interagency partners is that the Army will take information they provide and convert it into actionable intelligence that results in negative impacts on the NGO or interagency partner. Just as military forces do not share certain information with nongovernmental or other government agencies, these organizations can be expected not to share all of their information with the military. In order to protect their

relationships with host nation personnel, UAPs will limit what is discussed in an open forum. As relationships are developed and trust is built, the amount of information shared during a bilateral or multilateral discussion may increase.

- **What are the most significant impediments to effective Army and UAP operations and what corrective measures should be considered?**

The most significant impediments are trust and understanding of how the other organizations contribute to the strategic objectives in the operational area. The Army perception of nonmilitary personnel is often harsh and the appreciation for what civilian organizations bring to the table is sometimes undervalued. The USG is a large, complex organization composed of many agencies, bureaus and departments with a multitude of capabilities to provide assistance in theaters of operation. This complexity within the USG is further exacerbated by the plethora of NGOs and private organizations operating in foreign countries. It is often difficult to identify all of the organizations involved and to reach out to them to learn what they are doing and identify how to integrate their activities with the U.S. Army role.

Conversely, NGOs and UAPs often lack familiarity with DOD and U.S. Army processes and procedures which significantly limits their engagement opportunities. There is not a simple, intuitive guide laying out where the partner needs to go for access to military capabilities. Because of the size of the organization, it is often overwhelming for NGOs to identify a point of contact or to meet with U.S. Army staff. The Army service component command (ASCC) Civil-Military Directorate (G-9) is the key point of access for all partners integrating with the military capabilities and serves as the office of secondary responsibility. Once contact is made, the NGO's mission and objectives are identified and the NGO may then be handed off from the G-9 to the respective Army staff, the office of primary responsibility. The office of primary responsibility would track the NGO's activities and gain synergy from partnering with the NGO. For example, USARAF is conducting a foreign humanitarian assistance mission in an African country. Doctors Without Borders, an NGO, is also assisting residents in the area of operations. The G-9 introduces the NGO to the command surgeon, who begins communicating with the organization to synchronize where military medical teams are employed to minimize interrupting the NGO activities. The surgeon maintains awareness of the NGO and updates the G-9 and the rest of the command on the activities of the organization during daily update briefings.

- **How can the Army improve interorganizational planning and operations to facilitate complementary collaboration, planning and operations?**

Integrate interagency and NGO representatives in professional military education courses describing the capabilities, goals and objectives of their respective organization. Reach out to the interagency and NGOs and establish lines of communication. Include these organizations in the development of objectives and

plans. Figure 2 describes some of the different U.S. government departments and agencies encountered at each of the levels of decision making.

Send military personnel to DOS/USAID courses such as Development in a Vulnerable Environment or the Joint Humanitarian Operations course. Reaching out to these interagency courses and sending young leaders enhances their knowledge and increases the level of positive interaction the interagency and NGO leaders will have with Army personnel. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI), located in Arlington, VA, also invites military students to attend courses on campus.

Invite the interagency partners and NGOs to participate in exercises and training events. At the conclusion of the ITX, USARAF invited interagency and NGO partners to participate in subsequent years' exercises in Africa. Additionally, the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Ft. Polk, LA established a relationship with FSI to integrate DOS members into JRTC rotations on a recurring basis.

Relevant United States Agency Organizational Structures Levels of Armed Forces of United States Executive Departments and Agencies

Levels of Decision Making	United States Executive Departments and Agencies
National Strategic	National Security Council Secretary of Defense Joint Chiefs of Staff Secretaries of State, Homeland Security, etc. United States Agency for International Development administrator
Theater Strategic	Combatant Commander Ambassador Chief of Mission Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrator
Operational	Joint Task Force Defense Coordinating Officer Embassy Country Team staffs FEMA region directors Federal coordinating officers
Tactical	Task Force or Service Component Commander Agency Field Representatives (e.g., Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance disaster assistance response team) Domestic response teams

Figure 2. Equivalent Organizational Structures. (Source: JP 3-08)

- **How can the Army best educate the interagency on Army lexicon, capabilities, capacity and planning, and are there short-term gaps filling solutions and products that would assist this effort?**

Interacting with the interagency and NGO partners helps develop shared understanding and appreciation for what each partner provides. Invite interagency and non-governmental organizations to send key leaders to participate in professional military education courses such as Intermediate Level Education/Command and General Staff College. Rather than waiting late in a person's career to send them to a senior service college, beginning early in the career and exposing civilian personnel to the capabilities of the military would enhance the collaboration between the organizations to achieve U.S. objectives.

- **How can the Army prepare its leaders and forces to lead a whole of government approach, and to appreciate and understand how best to leverage the capability and capacity of the interagency?**

Begin educating leaders on the whole of government approach early in their development. Conduct training at pre-commissioning sources on the USG capabilities, organizations, goals and objectives. Explain the role of NGOs and the resources they can provide during a conflict to support military operations. U.S. Army operations are conducted in support of civilian government objectives. Leaders need to understand the role the interagency and NGO partners perform as military operations end and civil governance develops to take control of the contested environment.

A whole of government approach integrates the collaborative efforts of USG departments and agencies to achieve unity of effort. Under unified action, a whole of government approach identifies combinations of USG capabilities and resources that could be directed toward the strategic objectives in support of U.S. regional goals as they align with global security priorities. Commanders integrate the expertise and capabilities of participating USG departments and agencies, within the context of their authorities, to accomplish their missions. (JP 3-08)

Unified action synchronizes, coordinates and/or integrates joint, single-service, and multinational operations with the operations of other USG departments and agencies, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and the private sector to achieve unity of effort. (JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*)

Unity of effort is coordination and cooperation toward common objectives, even if the participants are not necessarily part of the same command or organization, which is the product of successful unified action. (*Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,* as of August 2017)

Once an officer is commissioned, the interagency and NGO discussion should be continued at the Basic Officer Leadership Course and Captains' Career Course. Command and General Staff College and Senior Service College curriculum should continue to include instruction on USG departments and agencies. Leaders need to understand and be comfortable with the capabilities of the interagency and NGO partners while willingly accepting their participation and support to accomplish shared objectives.

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) should also be exposed to the capabilities of the interagency and NGO partners as part of the NCO Education System. Like the officer development, the education begins with explaining the USG organizations and their capabilities as instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic) in the basic leader's course and advanced leader's course. Integrating the joint, interagency perspective with intergovernmental and multinational, including NGO, organizations these young leaders will encounter, provides an understanding of their operating environment. Education continues with the integration of interagency and NGO personnel in the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy during joint exercise planning modules.

Planners discuss multinational interorganizational cooperation during Exercise United Focus, 26 April 2017. Photographer CPT Jason Welch, USARAF Public Affairs via DVIDS.

- **How can the Army enable improving support to training exercises from combat training centers (CTC) through geographic combatant commands?**

USG agencies and NGOs should be involved early in the CTC rotation planning process to ensure the exercise supports their training objectives. Integrating NGOs into training events, especially pre-deployment, has operational security ramifications and should be considered when developing exercise scenarios for maximum NGO participation. Develop realistic, pertinent scenarios to encourage USG agency and NGO participation. Integrating USG agencies and NGOs into CTC exercises exposes the force to partners' capabilities and objectives while further enhancing their understanding of the Army's capabilities. At the ASCC level, most activities involve interagency partners. USARAF has taken this further by inviting interagency organizations and NGOs to participate in the accord series of exercises

in fiscal year 2018. The accord series is a USAFRICOM program composed of four annual, combined and joint military exercises that take place in African countries and encourage partnerships between participants from the U.S., the African Union, European and other coalition partner forces and agencies.

- **What are the UAP information requirements? What are the impediments to sharing this information/knowledge?**

Disparate information systems create a significant hurdle to the sharing of information along with classification and the willingness to share information. In order to maintain operational security, the Army is careful sharing with those outside of DOD. One approach suggested during the ITX, carried over from experiences in Afghanistan, is to describe in generalities what activities U.S. Army forces are conducting in a given area. Detailed times, locations and tactical objectives are not discussed with NGOs.

- **How was information shared among Army/DOD information systems and other governmental/NGO systems?**

Current methods to share information is via email. Document sharing for the ITX was conducted using the Protected Internet Exchange (PIX). Users of PIX are able to create libraries and add files to the library. New users must be sponsored by a current user, ensuring the security of the system. None of the information on PIX is classified. With limited network or email access in many parts of Africa, discussion during the ITX suggested using different mobile phone applications such as WhatsApp, an application that can be downloaded onto different makes of smart phones, during the execution of an event. Distribution lists can be created and information can be shared via text message. This is a potential method for interacting with NGO personnel who do not have consistent email or network access.

- **How was a complementary common operating picture developed and maintained?**

Convening working groups to plan and share information is important to developing trust and confidence with each partner. Understanding that some information may be classified and partners who are not cleared cannot have access, much of the discussion can be maintained at the unclassified level.

The use of PIX is a venue to share information, however, sensitive information cannot be maintained on the site.

- **How did resources play in transitioning from one phase to the next?**

    - Interagency (U.S.). These agencies can provide resources due to funding authorizations different from those available through traditional DOD channels. An example would be using Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) funding, Title 22, for building partner capacity.
    - NGOs. NGOs have resources to conduct specific, limited activities and should be integrated with U.S. objectives. Integrating DOD, interagency and NGO activities is critical to employing a unified plan to accomplish shared objectives.

- **How does the UAP-Army team assess itself? How does the team solicit information from a variety of sources within the mission area and from international organizations?**

Discussions were conducted with participants from many different organizations focused on a specific scenario examining a shared objective. Each participant was encouraged to participate in the discussion and provide their organization's perspective and input. From this discussion, the group developed recommendations for the senior leaders.

- **How were security, governance and participation; justice and reconciliation; and economic and social well-being incorporated into the mission framework to facilitate planning and mission accomplishment?**

While security is paramount for the accomplishment of the mission, governance and participation are the key factors leading to mission accomplishment. Establishing a secure and stable environment facilitated justice and reconciliation while emphasizing social and economic and well-being. Public trust is paramount to the success of a burgeoning government. Anything that undermines the public trust will facilitate the growth of an insurgency or forces counter to the objectives of the developing government. For Army forces operating in a nation supporting these efforts, treating the host nation civilian populace with respect and dignity helps facilitate trust and facilitates success of the mission.

❖ **Summary**

The ITX identified some challenges the Army has when conducting operations in support of civilian organizations. These challenges can be overcome by education and open communication. Understanding other UAP and NGO purposes and objectives helps military and civilian leaders and personnel work collectively towards the common end state.

❖ **References:**

- *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as of Aug 17
- Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the U.S.*, 12 July 17

- Joint Publication 3-08, *Interorganizational Cooperation*, 12 Oct 16
- Unified Action Handbooks (Available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/jwfc_pam.htm)
    - *Handbook for Military Support to Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure*, 15 Mar 16
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