



CIVIL AFFAIRS IN A RESISTANCE ENVIRONMENT

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According to the Resistance Operating Concept, the population is the primary actor in a resistance environment. Civil Affairs elements are the “commander’s tool of choice” to engage the population. Further, collaboration between civic organizations, government entities and the larger public is pivotal to the success of any resistance operation. Resilience of the population is paramount when society finds itself struggling to withstand external pressures or influence.⁰¹

U.S. Army Civil Affairs is the purpose built asset that interfaces and engages the civil component of the operational landscape (see Figure 01). Due to their unique knowledge, skills and attributes, Civil Affairs capabilities are at the forefront of any resistance operation. The ability to bolster or degrade the resilience of the population translates directly into supporting or defeating a resistance. Civil Affairs is successful in a resistance environment due to two main themes; *CA Teams are 1) overt and 2) accessible.* Their ability to gain significant inroads to all areas of the civil component through a hyper-communicative and overt approach is unparalleled throughout the Army. At first glance this concept may seem to counter intuitive to some of the ARSOF activities; however,

Civil Affairs has made deep inroads to support or defeat a resistance over the past decade. The following article lays out how any CA element can support of defeat or resistance in broad terms through a counterinsurgency, foreign internal and unconventional warfare crosswalk. Further, it briefly lays out how CA is closely nested with Multi-Domain Operations and some larger Army concepts such as Cyber. Finally, several real-world examples will show the impact CA elements are making throughout the ARSOF enterprise.

The role of CA is to understand, engage and influence unified action partners and indigenous populations and institutions, conduct military governance operations, enable civil military operations and provide civil consider-

ations expertise through the planning and execution of CAO. This role, founded in policy, directive, and joint doctrine, clearly depicts the reason why the CA Branch was established and the unique contributions it provides to the Army and the Department of Defense. Civil Affairs forces execute CA core competencies and functions. The CA branch provides three core competencies nested within CAO. CA functions are structured under each competency, organizing tasks and systems (people, organizations, information and processes) into executable capabilities to achieve the desired effects. They may execute competencies prior to, simultaneously with or in the absence of other military operations across the range of military operations and all levels of war.⁰²

The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028 highlights the “continuous integration of all domains of warfare to deter and prevail as we com-

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A U.S. Army Civil Affairs Soldier and Philippine partner forces engage with local community members to discuss family survival and evacuation plans for natural disasters in Barangay Popolon, Palayan City, Philippines. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC MITCHELL KNAUS

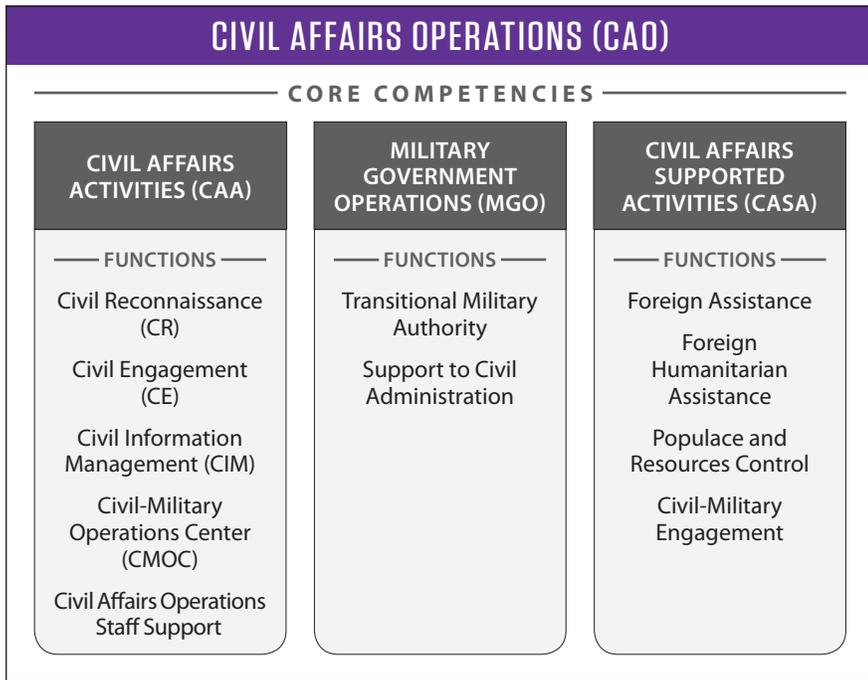


Figure 02 Civil Affairs Core Competencies and Functions (FM 3-57, 1-3)

pete short of armed conflict.”⁰³ The U.S. Army employs CA forces throughout competition, armed conflict and return to competition continuum during joint, interorganizational and multinational operations that include military engagement, security cooperation, deterrence, crisis response, limited contingency operations, operations in dense urban environments, defense support to stabilization and large scale ground combat operations. Under mission command authority, and with particular regard to the mission, human factors and other requirements, CA forces operate in small teams, task-organized units or multi-stakeholder organizations that include interorganizational partners. Fully integrated at echelon, future

CA elements must provide Army and joint commanders with the capability to understand, anticipate, shape and exploit the changing conditions in the human geography (see Figure 03, page 22) through civil knowledge integration, to include processed and evaluated civil information and through the development and employment of local, regional and transregional civil (human) networks.⁰⁴

It is widely known that the Army has many varying definitions of components and approaches to resistance. Mr. David H. Ucko writes in his paper titled “Resistance and the Future of Insurgency: Trends and Challenges” that insurgent strategy is evolving. Although states retain force on force superiority, insurgent entities are undertaking

different strategies of resistance. These varying approaches of resistance are leaving the military of these states unable to address the insurgent activity.⁰⁵ Major General Kurt L. Sonntag recently gave his insight on how ARSOF formations are postured to address resistance and the profession of resistance. Although training, definitions and formations will continue to evolve to shape the profession of resistance, ARSOF is, and will be, conducting operations to support or defeat a resistance.

To support or defeat a resistance Civil Affairs will remain focused on the civil component. Civil Affairs Operations will be executed through the lenses of counterinsurgency, Foreign Internal Defense and unconventional warfare. Oftentimes, the on-ground reality of operations makes it difficult to discern whether the operation is a COIN, FID or UW; however, authorities and funding help to bring clarity to this complexity. In a UW environment CAO support is continuous and cyclical (Figure 04, page 23); it represents the relationship between civil strengths and civil vulnerabilities as they pertain to civil instability for the current regime, civil opportunities for the resistance, and stability for a new government. The left side depicts CAO and corresponding resistance actions that increase the de-legitimization of the current regime, through degradation of civil strengths with the population, and attacking civil vulnerabilities to provide legitimacy opportunities for the resistance.

Civil Affairs forces support UW through the execution of CAO, which is critical to the planning and execution of UW campaigns. When integrated throughout all phases of UW planning and execution, CA forces provide the

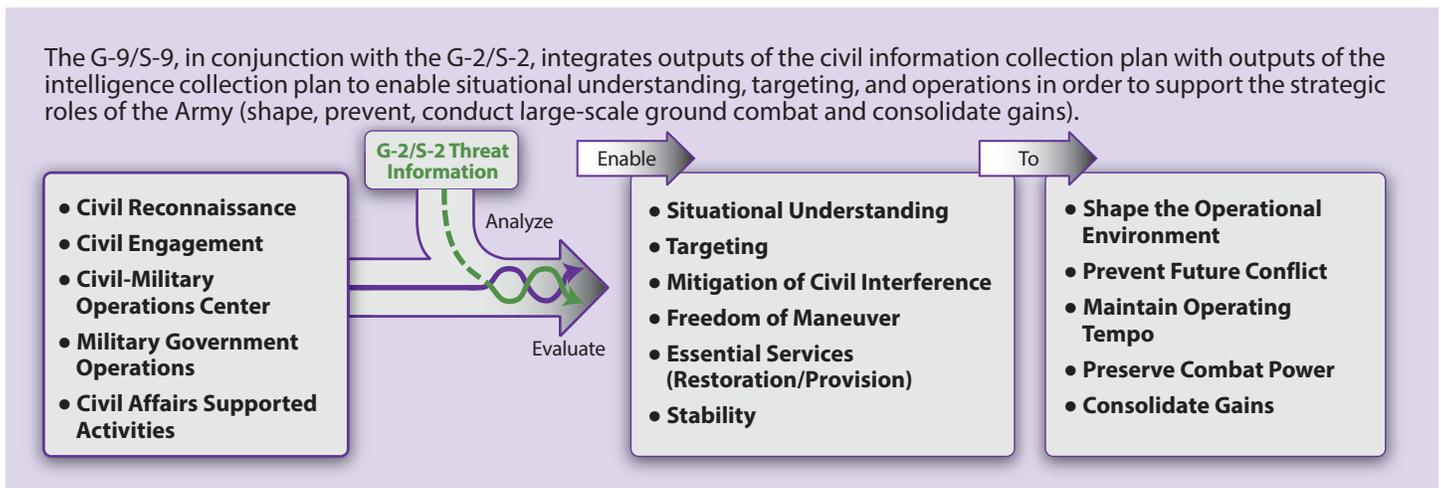


Figure 01 FM 3-57 Civil Affairs Logic Chart Excerpt

capability to analyze the civil component's strengths and vulnerabilities as applicable to both the existing regime and to the resistance movement. CAO also provide a comprehensive approach toward assisting the resistance in legitimacy and transitional governance, from the initial resistance movement through transition, to an emergent stable government. Also, CA forces are able to assist in developing broader CMO efforts in support of the resistance. CA forces are typically sought for their unique capabilities with regards to identifying the underlying causes of instability, which can then be mitigated in order to create a stable environment. This same capability, however, can be utilized by the resistance to identify strengths and bonds of the existing regime, which they can then work to degrade into vulnerabilities, resulting in its continued de-legitimization. This in turn creates legitimacy opportunities for the movement. Separately, within their sphere of control and influence, the resistance can consolidate legitimacy and initial governance by utilizing CA assessments, strengthening civil vulnerabilities and cementing a bond with the greater population. Methods to realign the legitimacy of power should consider the timeliness required to help facilitate restoration of essential services and strengthen the bonds between the population and the resistance movement or new government upon the collapse of the old regime.⁰⁶

Figure 05, page 24, is a macro-level example of major tasks a CA team would plan and execute in support of UW operations. Oftentimes, CA is thought to only interface with certain UW actors or in certain geographical areas within the context of UW. Simply put, that is a myopic view of the capability that Civil Affairs brings to bear. In fact, the CA tasks would be closely planned and executed with the other ARSOF team members; therefore, ensuring the ARSOF Cross Functional Team is operating at its maximum potential.

Through Support to Civil Administration, CA forces can support a "shadow government or government-in-exile" to plan for and administer civil government in the areas of rule of law, economic stability, infrastructure, governance, public health and welfare and public education and information. SCA is the systematic application of specialized skills for assessing and advising on the development of stability and governance. When conducting Civil Reconnaissance and Civil Engagement to develop civil knowledge, CA forces assigned to special operations CA formations collaborate with CA military government specialists within United States Army Reserve CA formations to formulate governance and stability lines of effort for the resistance. The resistance gains legitimacy and transitional governance by addressing grievances and providing essential services to create a civil strength or bond with the

population. As the regime becomes severely degraded or collapses, CA will assist with addressing the remaining civil vulnerabilities to create stability for the emergent government, and inclusively, across the indigenous population.⁰⁷

In FID, CAO facilitate the integration of U.S. military support into the overall internal defense and development programs of the supported nation. Within the FID framework and functional areas associated with joint strategic capabilities planning, CA forces:

- Perform specific planning tasks in support of the Services and combatant commands.
- Execute targeted Civil Reconnaissance to support IDAD framework goals.
- Identify and address human factors of the civil space.
- Coordinate internally and with the host nation and other unified action partners.

CAO are vital to theater FID operations in areas from planning to execution. It is a valuable resource in planning and facilitating the conduct of various indirect, direct support (not involving combat operations), and combat operations in support of the overall FID effort. CAO also support the reconstitution of viable and competent civil infrastructure in the operational areas that were previously ungoverned, undergoverned, or in the direct control of threat forces or shadow govern-

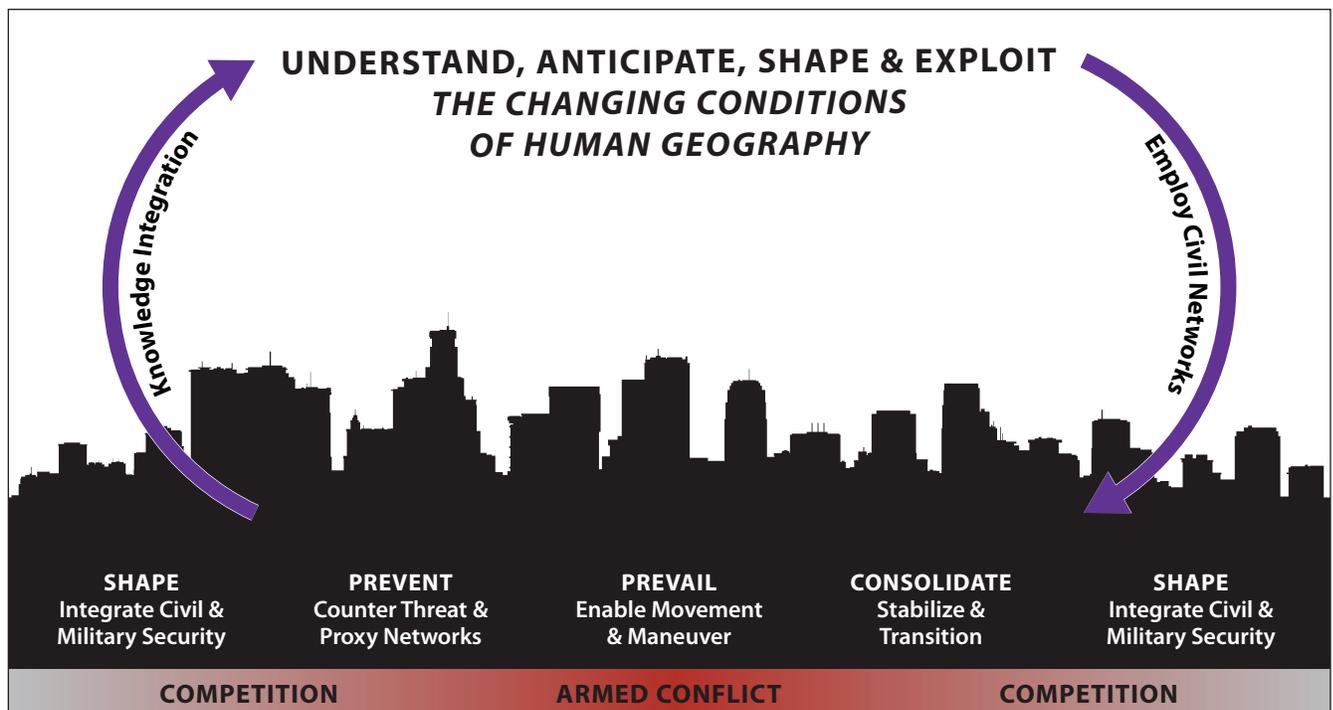


Figure 03 Civil Affairs Whitepaper 2025 and Beyond (Components of the Solution)

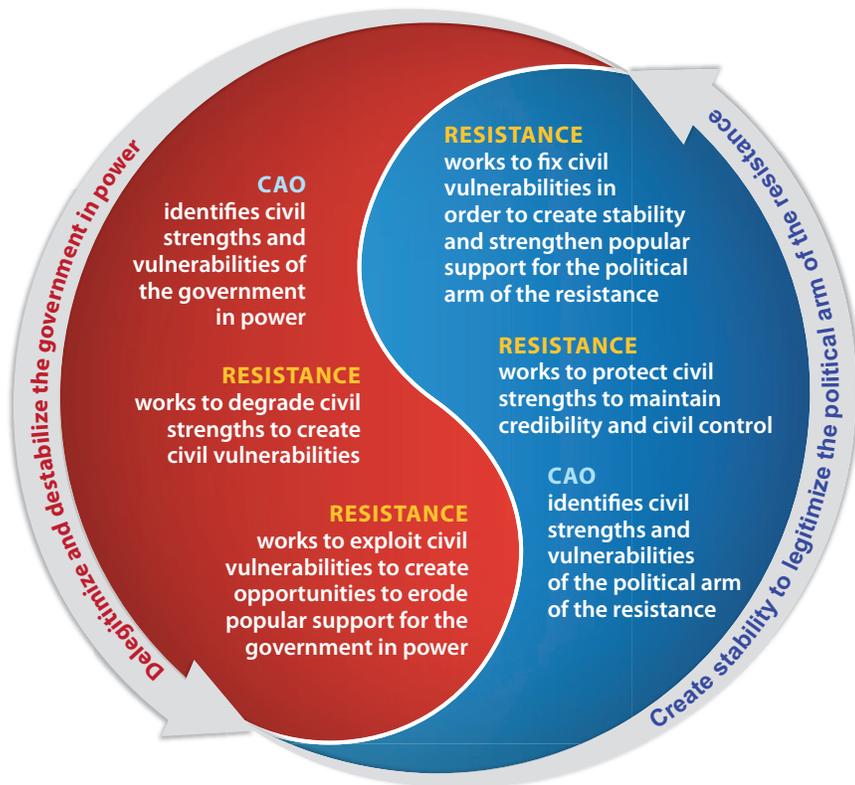


Figure 04 Civil Affairs Operations in Unconventional Warfare

ments. Through CAO, CA forces assist the government by executing SCA. The CA forces supporting FID range from staffs to Civil Affairs Teams. Essential tasks performed may include:

- Incorporating CAO in all activities related to FID (from planning to execution).
- Reviewing and supporting HN internal defense and development goals.
- Ensuring HN public support, from local to national levels.
- Close coordination with UAPs to ensure HN agencies are at the forefront of all operations.
- Establishing and maintaining contact with nonmilitary agencies and local authorities.
- Advocating HN self-sufficiency. (This must be the primary goal of CAO in support of FID).⁰⁸

Figure 06, page 25, is an ideological representation of how Civil Affairs can directly support any specified mission in the resistance environment. Additionally, they can support or defeat a resistance through Civil Reconnaissance

(tactical mission task), Civil Engagement (tactical mission task), and Civil Information Management (at echelon), Civil Affairs elements translate these skills into tangible capabilities for commanders in a resistance environment. Civil Affairs can take on any of the roles listed in Figure 05 irrespective of the specified resistance mission (UW, FID or COIN) to achieve mission accomplishment. Further, Civil Affairs can operate in a permissive, semi-permissive or denied environments while executing *capabilities* such as engaging unified action partners and indigenous populations and institutions.

The mission sets and resistance environment across Africa are widely complex. The operational setting in Kenya is vastly different from that in Nigeria; ball down the field one first down at a time and making positive mission strides with each deployment. The 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, 95th CA BDE(Special Operations)(Airborne) is an Africa Command-focused battalion that lives and breathes the challenges existent across that mission set. They are highly trained

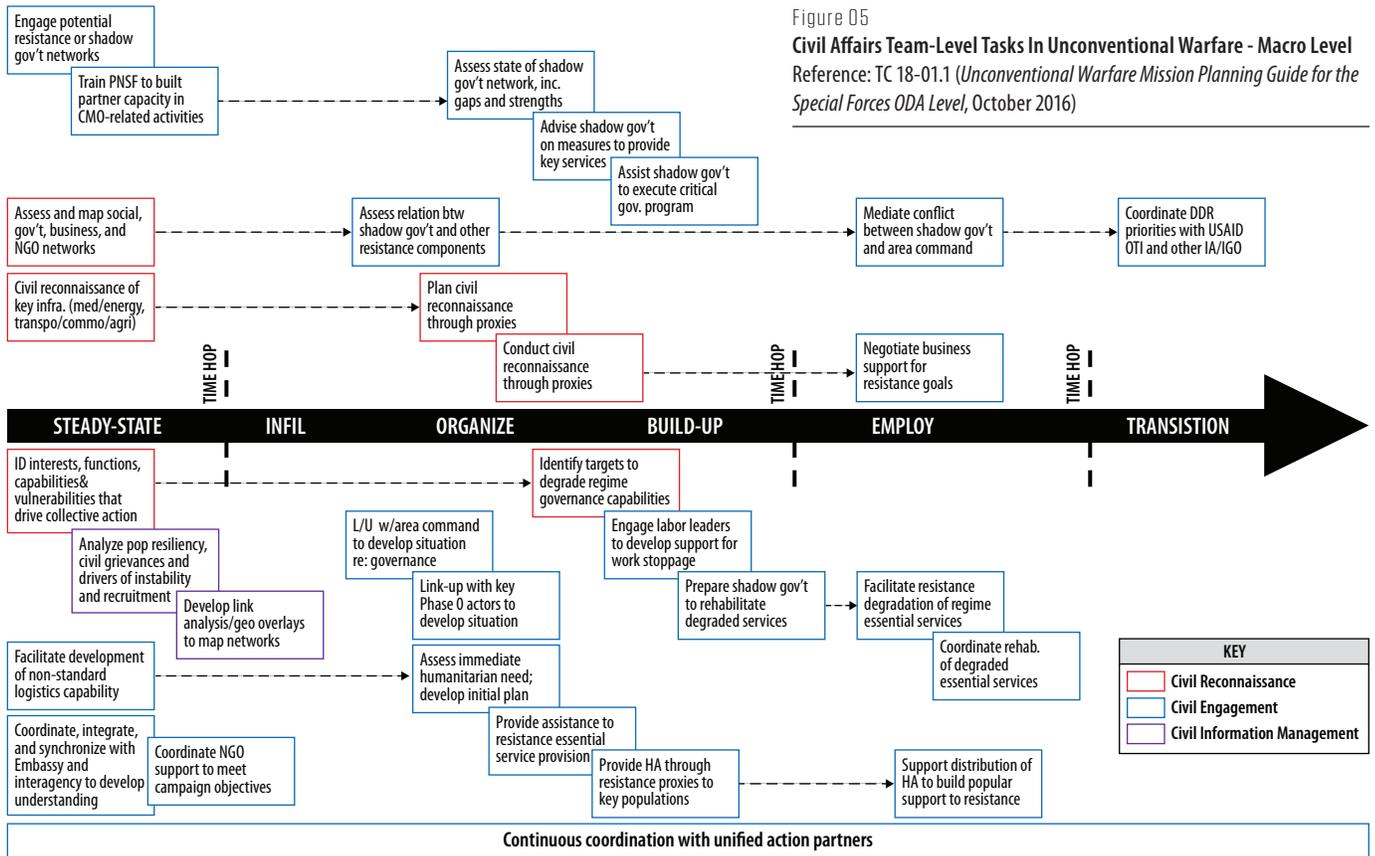
in all aspects of mission planning, survival, language, governance, culture and many others that make them highly successful in this extremely austere landscape. A Special Operations Civil Affairs Company Commander assigned to the 91st CA Bn., just redeployed his company from a tough deployment and has on-ground resistance insight. During a recent interview, Major “S” highlighted that in proxy conflicts and competition there is greater opportunity for CA involvement. For example, Boko Haram maintains a monopoly on coercive violence in many of the areas within Nigeria; civilians have to decide whether to capitulate or resist.

The CA teams have seen many examples of the latter and the teams have worked with partner governments and military forces to support them. This is a long-term effort that presents many challenges; it requires CA teams that possess an innate understanding of authorities and how to best employ Civil Affairs Support Activities. In Cameroon, the government dug hundreds of miles of trenches to protect populations on the Nigerian border and partnered with civilian groups called vigilance committees that would guard crossings (the extensive trenching can be seen on Google Earth around the town of Kolofata, Cameroon). The U.S. CA team provided material support to the vigilance committees and helped the Cameroonian forces tap their potential as an early warning network. Working with this kind of resistance or militia group certainly indicates a localized conflict that possesses numerous other implications of long-term resistance efforts. However, the teams were able to navigate those challenges and support indigenous resilience and resistance with minimal investment. In cases where the insurgent opponent is state-sponsored, more resources would be required to counter their influence.⁰⁹

Similarly, operations in Europe are also highly complex but in a much different way when compared to Africa. The CA Soldiers in the 92nd, CA Bn., 95th CA Brigade (SO)(A) are trained to the same high standard as mentioned above, but

ACCORDING TO THE RESISTANCE OPERATING CONCEPT, THE POPULATION IS THE PRIMARY ACTOR IN A RESISTANCE SITUATION. CIVIL AFFAIRS IS “THE COMMANDER’S TOOL OF CHOICE” TO ENGAGE THE POPULATION.

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are uniquely postured to address the ever-changing landscape of the EUCOM theater. CPT “B”, a team leader from the 92nd CA Bn., recently re-deployed from Lithuania from his second rotation to a country that lives a *culture of resistance* as a way of life. His teams two primary tasks were to identify and build the partner resistance capabilities throughout the region. The team utilized CR and CE to identify human and physical infrastructure for resistance. These missions were directly tied to Lithuania’s capability to conduct crisis response (conflict). By leveraging civil society groups CPT B and his team were able to identify key influencers and relationships. These operations were anything but unilateral; the team was partnered closely with the Lithuanian Special Forces and ultimately were able to integrate civic capabilities into exercises much beyond basic NATO Civil Military Cooperation activities. CPT B’s rotation is an extremely positive example of a USSOF cross functional team . They partnered closely with other USSOF entities and in many cases were able to access areas of Lithuania that other US-SOF partners were not. They were able to accomplish this by joint missions, daily interaction, and methodical synchronization with other SOF elements. The CA

team also made significant contributions to developing institutional viscosity within physical, infrastructure and key human terrain networks that can be leveraged in future contingency operations. According to TC 18-01, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, to support resistance activities, a complex area must include a security system, guerrilla bases, communications, logistics, medical facilities and a series of networks capable of moving personnel and supplies. The area may consist of friendly villages or towns under guerrilla military or political control.¹⁰ Capt. B and his team proved that Civil Affairs is an extremely valuable member of the ARSOF CFT.¹¹

As the *profession of resistance* continues to be codified throughout USAJFK-SWCS, examples are plentiful throughout the force from which to emulate. SFC K, a team sergeant from the 92nd CA Bn., is a great example of an NCO who has become a regional resistance expert based on his mental acumen and a number of repeated deployments to the EUCOM AOR. Additionally, he was selected to attend a pilot course at the Naval Postgraduate School) called the Master UW Practitioners Course. Following that he was able to sync resources at the CORE lab (Common Operating Research Environment) from

NPS and work on a variety of organizational thickening of several internal Estonian networks that culminated in U.S. SOF CA spearheading (along with other ARSOF cross functional teams in the region) the creation, advisement and seminar on an Estonian State, Resistance Communications Center that garnered significant attention from the President of Estonia’s personal staff. This is just one example of the professionals that are already existent in the CA formations. He has personally briefed Commander, USSOCOM and other general officers on resistance throughout the EUCOM region and continues to be invested in Civil Affairs’ resistance profession.¹²

The concept of a resistance is not new but the conditions in which they are undertaken are evolving and changing. As highlighted above, our enemies will continue to employ new stratagems to achieve their objectives; Civil Affairs must be ready to counter these. Cyberspace continues to influence the operational environment; moreover, ARSOF missions are, and will continue to be, affected by cyberspace. The U.S. Army Concept for Cyberspace and Electronic Warfare¹³ specifically highlights the ability to employ cyberspace, EW and SMO capabilities as an integrated system,

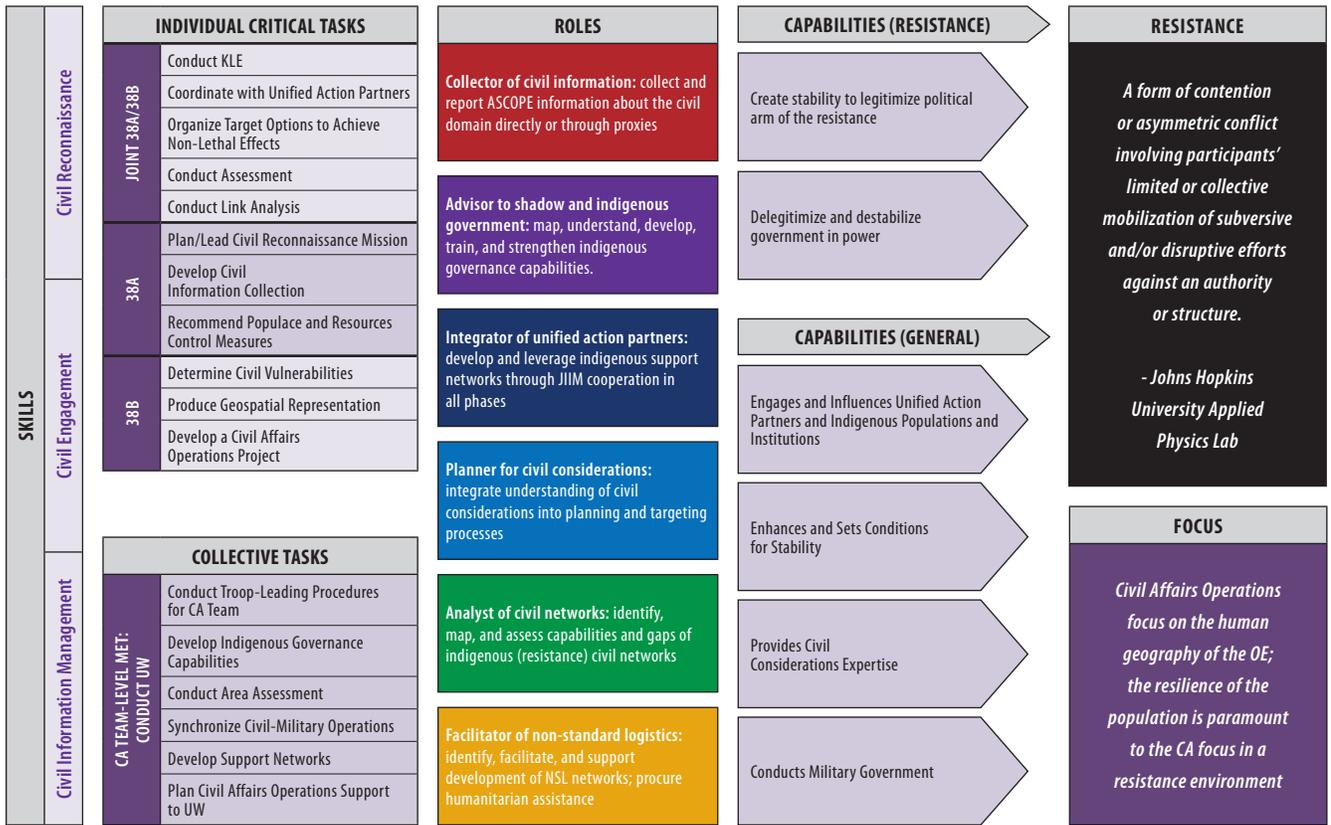


Figure 06 Civil Affairs crosswalk in a resistance context

acting as a force multiplier, improves the commander's ability to achieve desired operational effects. Cyberspace systems provide significant points of presence on the battlefield, and can be used as delivery platforms for precision engagements.¹⁴ Civil Affairs Teams of the future could be called upon to exclusively engage the civil component digitally. Although authorities and permissions are the precursor that drives these, Civil Affairs Operations have to be more than just face to face communication. In a UW context, a CA Team could engage a government in exile through social media due to the nature of the denied area. Other science and technology is currently available to aide CA teams in civil reconnaissance such as throwable, commercial off the shelf drones. These pieces of equipment are capable of short duration flights and can digitally "stitch" several city blocks together. Although this capability should

not be exclusive to only Civil Affairs, it has clear applicability. A CAT could use these renderings to provide updated assessments and input into civil vulnerabilities, which would bring clarity to the common operating picture.

Civil Affairs remains the tool of choice to engage the civil component of the OE. Through its core competencies, CA is doctrinally built to address the myriad of challenges existent in resistance environment. Whether executing missions in a FID, COIN or UW context, Civil Affairs can expertly navigate the human geography to produce results for commanders. The battlefield of the future in competition, armed conflict, and return to competition is constantly shifting; Civil Affairs will continue to be an essential component in the resistance landscape by ensuring the ARSOF enterprise's success remains in current and future operating environments in which the population is an essential component. 

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