CLASH OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES?

A Comparative Analysis of American and British Approaches to the Coordination of Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Stability Operations, 2001-2010

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the challenge of coordinating civilian and military efforts within a so-called 'whole-of-government' approach to stability operations. The empirical analysis focuses on British and American attempts to implement an integrated civilian-military strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq between 2001 and 2010. Unlike many existing analyses, the thesis consciously avoids jumping to the search for solutions to fix the problem of coordination and instead offers a nuanced explanation of why it arises in the first instance. Empirical data was gathered through personal interviews with a wide range of civilian and military practitioners between 2007 and 2011. Together with the in-depth study of official documents released by, and on, the defence, diplomatic and development components of the British and American governments, they provide the basis for a fine-grained analysis of obstacles to interagency coordination.

The thesis offers a framework for analysis that is grounded in organisation theory and distinguishes between material, bureaucratic and cultural dimensions of obstacles to interagency coordination. It identifies organisational cultures as a crucial force behind government agencies' reluctance to participate and invest in an integrated approach. The empirical chapters cover interagency dynamics within the government bureaucracy and in operations on the ground, including the role of specialised coordination units and Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the pursuit of coordination. The thesis concludes that stabilisation remains an inherently contested endeavour for all organisations involved and that the roles and expectations implied by contemporary templates for coordination clash with prevailing organisational identities and self-perceptions. These findings caution against the procedural and technocratic approach to interagency coordination that permeates the existing literature on the subject and many proposals for reform. While the thesis examines a specific empirical context, its conclusions have broader implications for civilian-military coordination and the quest for an integrated approach to security in the twenty-first century.

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ACRONYMS

CA	Comprehensive Approach (UK)
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CHASE	Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department, DFID
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMM	Bureau for Conflict Mitigation and Management, USAID
CO	Commanding Officer
COCOM	Combatant Command
COIN	counterinsurgency
CPA	Coalition Provincial Authority
CPC	Critical Priority Country
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy (EU)
DCDC	Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (UK MOD)
DCE	Deployable Civilian Expert
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DOD	Department of Defense (US)
DODD	Department of Defense Directive (US)
DODI	Department of Defense Instruction (US)
DWP	Defence White Paper
EBAO	Effects-Based Approach to Operations
ePRT	embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team
EU	European Union
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act (US)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
FM	Field Manual
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
HASC	House Armed Services Committee, US Congress
HCDC	House of Commons Defence Committee (UK)
HCFAC	House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (UK)
HQ	Headquarters
ICI	Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative
IDA	International Development Act (UK)
IDP	Internally-Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMS	Interagency Management System (US)
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force

IW	Irregular Warfare
JDN	Joint Discussion Note (UK MOD)
JDP	Joint Doctrine Publication (UK MOD)
JFCOM	Joint Forces Command (US DOD)
MASD	Military Assistance to Stabilisation and Development (UK MOD)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOD	Ministry of Defence (UK)
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament (UK)
MSSG	Military Stabilisation Support Group (UK)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Security Council
NSDP	National Security Presidential Directive (US)
NSS	National Security Strategy
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (UK)
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OMA	Office of Military Affairs, USAID
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense (US)
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives, USAID
PCRU	Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (UK)
PDD	Presidential Decision Directive (US)
Pol-Mil	Bureau for Political-Military Affairs, US Dept of State
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSA	Public Service Agreement (UK)
QDDR	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (US Dept of State)
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review (US DOD)
QIP	Quick Impact Project
RC	Regional Command
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, US Dept of State
SAF	Stabilisation Aid Fund (UK)
SDSR	Strategic Security and Defence Review (UK)
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRAP	Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (US)
SSTR	Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction
SU	Stabilisation Unit (UK)
TCAF	Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework
TF	Task Force
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USMC	United States Marine Corps
WoG	Whole-of-Government

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War has opened up space for competing visions of security and what it takes to achieve it. Threat analyses have come to be shaped by the recognition of growing interdependence among states and increased vulnerability of communities to events originating anywhere on the globe. Debates over what it takes to achieve both global stability and national security in the new century have informed strategic documents and proposals for policy and institutional reform within governments and international organisations.[1] One of the major trends among these changes has seen troubled places in the developing world rising on the foreign policy agenda of Western democracies because of their seemingly 'ungoverned' state, which is feared to provide a fertile soil for international terrorism, organised crime, and other sources of instability.[2] However, attempts to 'stabilise' remote places through a combination of military and other means in the past decade have prompted the prolonged presence of Western troops and civilian

[1] E.g. the National Security Strategies of the United States of America of September 2002 and March 2006; UK Cabinet Office, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: security in an interdependent world*, Cm 7291, March 2008; European Union, *A secure Europe in a better world: European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003; NATO, *Riga Summit Declaration*, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Riga, 29 November 2006.

[2] Chester A. Crocker, 'Engaging failing states', *Foreign Affairs* 82/5 (2003); Susan E. Rice, *The new national security strategy: focus on failed states,* Policy brief 116 (Washington, DC: Brookings, February 2003); Robert Rotberg, *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror* (Cambridge, MA; Washington, DC: World Peace Foundation; Brookings Institution Press, 2003). This widely shared assumption has been increasingly challenged, see Edward Newman, 'Weak states, state failure, and terrorism', *Terrorism and political violence* 19/4 (2007); Stewart Patrick, *Weak links: fragile states, global threats, and international security* (Oxford: OUP, 2011); James A. Piazza, 'Incubators of terror: do failed and failing states promote transnational terrorism?' *International Studies Quarterly* 52/3 (2008).

advisers on the ground and led to the impression of a fundamental mismatch between policy objectives and the means to achieve them.[3]

Consequently, the policy discourse in the Western world has converged around the recognition that an adequate response to the complex problems posed by state weakness or failure must draw upon all tools of statecraft, including defence, diplomacy, and development.[4] It has become commonplace among decision-makers to assert that there can be no military solution alone to the challenges arising from a combination of weak governance, underdevelopment and violence.[5] The resulting imperative to broaden the range of actors and tools has led to calls for comprehensive, integrated, or 'whole-of-government' approaches to intervention within a number of states and intergovernmental forums.

In the context of protracted and costly stability operations in the wake of US-led military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the main components of a comprehensive approach have become associated with the 'three Ds' of defence, diplomacy, and development. In spite of high-level commitments to the close integration of civilian and military efforts in these campaigns, there has been

[3] A conference of senior policy-makers and academics organised by the Ditchley Foundation in 2004 concluded that 'the most powerful feeling left from the conference was that ... political leaders needed to be sent a warning message. They had to consider how to strengthen the instruments for implementing their global issue objectives or very little would be achieved by the setting of those objectives.' The Ditchley Foundation, *The practical implication of post-conflict peace-building for the international community*, Note by the Director on a conference held at Ditchley Park, 17-19 September 2004.

[4] The terminology of 'failed' and 'fragile' states has been widely used in the policy discourse at national and international levels. The *Failed States Index*, a ranking of 177 states, was first published in 2005 and has since been released annually by Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace, Washington, DC. The OECD, the UN and the World Bank have equally adopted the vocabulary of failed and fragile states but without explicitly framing them as a security threat.

[5] Jaap de Hop Scheffer, NATO Secretary General, speech at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 1 June 2006; The Rt Hon Des Browne, UK Secretary of State for Defence, HC Deb, 26 February 2007, vol. 457, col. 619; Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, speech at the US Global Leadership Campaign, Washington, DC, 15 July 2008.

widespread frustration over a perceived lack of progress towards a joint approach both within the home bureaucracy and on the ground.[6] The perilous consequences of a lack of coordination among military and civilian agencies in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed in numerous memoirs and journalistic accounts over the years.[7] Concerns over wasted resources and duplicated efforts are compounded by the humanitarian consequences and security risks suffered by the affected populations. These have come to be seen as a matter of not only moral but also strategic importance in campaigns fought over local perceptions and loyalties, where unsustainable efforts and incoherent narratives led to setbacks and a sense of stagnation. On the ground, the refurbishment of schools and clinics by military units in their area of operations, which were subsequently left without books, teachers, or medicine – or worse caused further violence and tension within communities because they interfered with cultural values and/or local power relationships – have come to epitomise the lack of an integrated approach that addresses security, governance, and development concerns in parallel.

While there are different visions of how comprehensiveness translates into practice, it invariably implies that a variety of different actors – both military and non-military – must come together to address a wide range of problems. Coordination has been advocated as the key to filling perceived gaps in capability, to reducing costs, and to bringing greater coherence to the conduct of complex missions in the name of security and stability. Roland Paris pointedly remarks that

[6] See for example Philipp Rotmann, *Built on shaky ground: the Comprehensive Approach in practice,* 63 (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2010), pp. 1-3.
[7] James Fergusson, *A million bullets* (London: Bantam Press, 2008); Ronald E. Neumann, *The other war: winning and losing in Afghanistan* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2009); Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: the American military adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006); Hilary Synnott, *Bad days in Basra* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008).

coordination 'like other mantras, offers soothing simplicity in the face of disturbing complexity.'[8] Beneath the official discourse, however, there has been not only persistent doubt over whether the right instruments were available to implement such missions, but also nagging uncertainty over whether they were doing the right thing once deployed.

The thesis focuses on two states that have not only been the main protagonists in these interventions but also enacted new legislation, created new institutional tools and mechanisms, and considerably shaped the discourse over civilian-military integration over the past decade: the United States and the United Kingdom. It analyses how the search for new arrangements to respond to conflict and instability has played out over the past decade within these two institutional architectures.

Research question

The puzzle at the heart of the thesis is why coordination among defence, diplomacy, and development has proven so difficult to achieve over the past decade in spite of widespread agreement on the necessity of an integrated approach.

The two case studies – the institutional architectures of the United States and the United Kingdom – are analysed along two main lines of inquiry. The first is situated in the realm of concepts and ideas. The thesis examines the templates that

[8] Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (eds.), *The dilemmas of state-building: confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 53.

have emerged to support a whole-of-government approach to stabilisation in the two case studies, and asks how roles and responsibilities have been allocated among the different government agencies.

The case studies provide an opportunity for comparison within a subset of questions:

> Which assumptions have underpinned templates for civilian-military coordination in a whole-of-government context; and what type of expectations have these emerging models given rise to?
>
> How do the roles and tasks implied by a comprehensive approach to stability operations compare to traditional understandings of the core missions and competences of defence, diplomacy and development?

A detailed analysis of each institutional context, which pays particular attention to intra-organisational debates over core missions, concepts, and appropriate 'ways of doing business' lays the foundation for the subsequent discussion of obstacles to interagency coordination. The second line of inquiry addresses the practical implementation of a coordinated approach. It sets out to provide a nuanced analysis of the origin and nature of obstacles to coordination. Both cases are analysed with a view to the following subset of questions:

> What types of obstacles have stood in the way of cross-government coordination in the planning, preparation and implementation of stability operations?
>
> Have existing institutional mechanisms addressed these problems?

The thesis critically examines the apparent consensus over the need for coordination and the means to achieve it. The comparison of two empirical cases serves to identify common themes with regard to the challenge of civilian-military coordination but is equally used to highlight differences between institutional contexts. It thus provides an opportunity to examine whether similar problems have been identified in the pursuit of a coordinated approach – which may indicate more general problems – and to what extent the measures that have been taken to address them are contingent on the specific institutional context of either case.

The rapidly growing volume of policy prescriptions, proposals for reform, and scholarly writings on the subject may conjure up the impression that the main ingredients and mechanisms for an integrated approach to stabilising weak or failing states are essentially known and understood. In the policy discourse, however, the focus on remedies to perceived cooperation failures has often overtaken an analysis of where these problems originate in the first place and for what reason. Official statements over the past few years appear to suggest that more civilian-military coordination (or integration) is the – and indeed the only – way forward.

The thesis takes a step back from this apparent consensus and inquires into the reasons for individual agencies and organisations to resist pressures to streamline their mandates, policies, and operations. In parallel to the discourse of 'comprehensiveness' that has invaded policy forums over the past decade, military and civilian organisations have sought to clarify and demarcate their

respective roles and spheres of responsibility in the form of doctrinal publications and policy papers. Rising concerns over state fragility and instability abroad in Western foreign policy agendas have spawned a new terminology, which has sometimes been taken as a sign of growing unity of purpose among different professional communities behind the shared goal of greater stability. This apparent harmonization may well be misleading: some of the most commonly employed terms – such as 'stabilisation' – seem to have reached wide but not deep. In that, they simply brush over highly divisive issues that persist beneath the surface. For the military, as well as for civilian government agencies, taking part in stability operations is likely to require non-traditional approaches, both with regard to the operating environment and the objectives pursued. These may clash with established collective understandings and organisational traditions regarding guiding principles, priorities, interlocutors, or modalities of delivery. The policy discourse to date has obscured much of this intra-organisational soul-searching by focusing on problems of interoperability and on the pooling of resources. It has tended to deflect attention away from the conceptual realm towards the technical and procedural aspects of interagency coordination.

The thesis thus addresses the broader issue of how Western governments have attempted to organise their institutional architectures for the pursuit of security and stability in the twenty-first century. An inquiry into the problems encountered in the conduct of an integrated civil-military approach to stabilisation operations has evident policy implications. The thesis aims to provide an analysis that goes beyond an inventory of 'best practices' and lessons learned by grounding the empirical research on a firm conceptual basis. There is a risk that attempts at

improving cooperation will focus on the most visible problems (e.g. capacity and resource-related ones) without addressing the potentially more salient underlying philosophical and conceptual issues.

Beyond its policy relevance, the thesis stands to make a contribution to security studies in the twenty-first century by providing an in-depth analysis of the difficulties involved in addressing security threats through a combination of military and non-military means. It further contributes to an emerging literature on state-building, which takes an increasingly critical stance towards the precepts advocated and the instruments used in the pursuit of this Western foreign policy agenda over the past decade.[9]

Definitions and scope

The question of how to divide responsibilities and allocate roles among civilian and military actors – and the related quest for coordination among them – is not new. Neither are debates over what constitutes a quintessentially 'military' or 'civilian' task in conflict or war zones. Throughout the twentieth century, military forces have acted in support of, and on occasion as substitutes for, civil authorities in post-war Germany and Japan, in wars of decolonization and counterinsurgency during the Cold War, and in the complex peace operations of the post-Cold War era.[10] The historical lessons of integrating civil and military powers during the so-

[9] For a review of different scholarly critiques of the idea of state-building (subsumed in the broader debate over the 'liberal peace'), see David Chandler, 'The uncritical critique of "liberal peace"', *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010).
[10] James Dobbins*, et al.*, *America's role in nation-building: from Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation 2003); Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *Soldiers and civil power: supporting or*

called small wars of the sixties and seventies have received renewed attention in military circles in light of the development of insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan after 2006.[11] Development officials and diplomats on the other hand – wary of the charge of neo-colonialism – have tended to emphasize the changed context within which post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation activities take place. They have taken care to frame their role as partners – implied in the development principle of local ownership and diplomatic references to host nation sovereignty – rather than interveners. Civilian aid organisations have become increasingly active not only after war's end but in the midst of combat zones. Many of them have vocally defended the concept of a distinct 'humanitarian space' for their activities.[12] The general increase in the number of agencies operating on the ground, as well as the proximity of military and civilian actors in so-called complex emergencies, have prompted a search for rules and models for coordination over the past few decades that is documented within the scholarly and policy literature.[13]

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substituting civil authorities in modern peace operations (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), p. 13.

[11] The classical counterinsurgency literature, to which current discussions return, includes David Galula, *Counterinsurgency warfare: theory and practice* (London; Dunmow: Pall Mall Press, 1964); Frank Kitson, *Low intensity operations: subversion, insurgency, peacekeeping* (London: Faber, 1971); Robert Thompson, *Defeating communist insurgency: experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966).

[12] Beatrice Megevand-Roggo, 'After the Kosovo conflict, a genuine humanitarian space: a utopian concept or an essential requirement?' *International Review of the Red Cross* 837 (2000); Lara Olson, 'Fighting for humanitarian space: NGOs in Afghanistan', *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 9/1 (2006); Hugo Slim, 'The stretcher and the drum: civil-military relations in peace support operations', *International Peacekeeping* 3/2 (1996); Thomas G. Weiss, 'Military-civilian humanitarianism: the age of innocence is over', *International Peacekeeping* 2/2 (1995).

[13] Christopher Ankersen, *Civil-military cooperation in post-conflict operations: emerging theory and practice* (London: Routledge, 2008); Stuart Gordon, 'Understanding the priorities for civil-military co-operation (CIMIC)', *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* 68 (2001); Catriona Gourlay, 'Partners apart: managing civil-military co-operation in humanitarian interventions', *Disarmament Forum* 3 (2000); Raj Rana, 'Contemporary challenges in the civil-military relationship: complementarity or incompatibility?' *International Review of the Red Cross* 86/855 (2004); Sebastiaan J.H. Rietjens and Myriame Bollen (eds.), *Managing civil-military cooperation* (Aldershot: Asghate, 2008).

The thesis is thus concerned with questions over roles, spheres of responsibility, and a division of labour between military and civilian actors that have arisen at various points in history. Some of the tensions that are documented in the literature on civilian-military cooperation during the 1990s are likely to arise in the context of an integrated approach that embraces both the military and civilian dimensions of government. Some of the problems that have impeded coordination among defence, diplomacy, and development over the past decade have undoubtedly arisen simultaneously in other institutional contexts, where the activities of a number of large organisations with independent budgets, mandates, and leadership required coordination. The thesis examines these questions in the specific setting of civilian-military coordination within the framework of a whole-of-government (or comprehensive) approach to stability operations abroad. This set-up has a number of implications for the scope and nature of the inquiry.

The institutional context: 'whole-of-government'

In terms of institutional actors, the analysis is restricted to governmental organisations. It does not deal with similar coordination problems that have arisen in other contexts, for instance within the United Nations or the European Union, or between non-governmental organisations and military forces on the ground.[14] The insights gained from an analysis of coordination within a single government may, to a certain extent, be extrapolated to other sets of actors. There have for instance been parallel attempts to institutionalise greater coordination among UN agencies in post-conflict settings with the introduction of the 'integrated missions'

[14] For an overview of the coordination discourse within the UN system see Roland Paris, 'The "coordination problem"', in Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (eds.), *The dilemmas of state-building: confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 54-8.

concept and the establishment of a UN Peacebuilding Commission.[15] However, the nature of the relationship among government departments differs from the discretionary association with – or dissociation from – military forces by independent civilian organisations. The demand for coordination, and the means available to promote (or enforce) it, differ within the institutional architecture of a single government. While the thesis pays particular attention to the cultural division between military and non-military agencies, it does not automatically suggest that it is the only divide that is worth investigating. Tensions among the diplomatic and development communities on the civilian side of government, as well as within the civil service in general (which includes civilian personnel working for the defence ministries), may be of equal relevance to the inquiry.

The focus on interdepartmental (or interagency) relations does not mean that the analysis is restricted to the home institutional context. The thesis pays attention to the fact that relationships between government departments within the home bureaucracy differ from dynamics among representatives of these same agencies on the ground, but it retains both levels of analysis. This seems necessary in light of the objective to combine an analysis of concepts and ideas with operational implications, as outlined earlier. In terms of operations on the ground, however, the focus remains squarely on the issue of coordination and the difficulties encountered by different agencies in pursuing a common approach to the problems they are facing. The policy discourse has tended to assert that greater civilian-military integration will lead to increased effectiveness in these interventions. Scholars on the other hand have argued that these claims rest on

[15] United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/180 'The Peacebuilding Commission', A/RES/60/180, 30 December 2005; Note from the UN Secretary-General, 'Guidance on integrated missions', 9 February 2006.

theoretically weak assumptions.[16] It is not within the scope of the thesis to test these arguments. Not only is the question of what victory or success look like in these interventions highly contested, they are also likely to depend on a host of factors that are exogenous to the quality of civilian-military coordination. While there are good (policy and scholarly) reasons to focus on coordination, it is important to bear in mind that any insights gained from this study will ever only partly address questions of effectiveness on the ground.

Rather than 'testing' the efficiency of different arrangements with regard to their impact on operational outcomes, the thesis inquires into why institutional arrangements for coordination in the two case studies have fallen short of producing the degree of coordination that was deemed necessary. Importantly, the aim to identify obstacles to coordination, as stated earlier, does not mask a normative judgment in favour of greater civilian-military coordination or integration. The thesis remains attentive to the possibility that given levels or modalities of coordination among military and civilian government agencies may not just be impractical but also undesirable from a philosophical, ethical, or political point of view. This is not only true with regard to the interveners but also with regard to the purpose of intervention. As Roland Paris notes, 'too much, too little, or the wrong type of coordination could do more harm than good.'[17]

[16] Robert Egnell, 'Between reluctance and necessity: the utility of force in humanitarian and development operations', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19/3 (2008), p. 415.
[17] Paris and Sisk (eds.), *Dilemmas of state-building*, p. 61.

The operational context: 'stability operations'

Whereas the pursuit of interagency coordination within the British and American governments over the past decade has not been exclusively geared towards operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, these two wars have been important drivers for the debate over greater coordination. For the purposes of the thesis, they constitute the focal point for civilian-military coordination on the ground. This raises the question of how to refer to these operations. The thesis employs the term 'stability operations' throughout while recognising that the vocabulary surrounding these missions remains contested.

Scholarly literature has discussed attempts to stabilise countries emerging from violent conflict through external intervention from the 1990s onwards under the labels of post-conflict reconstruction, peace-building, and state-building. Highlighting the lack of an agreed formula and the constant evolution of methods and so-called lessons learned, Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk have called peace-building an 'experiment' of the international community.[18] The evolution of UN peace support operations towards more complex, multifunctional missions over the past two decades, as well as US-led campaigns to stabilise Afghanistan and Iraq in the aftermath of military invasions since 2001, have led to a growing volume of academic work on the subject but also to debates over definitions and terminology.[19] Paris and Sisk note that 'it has become increasingly difficult to separate discussions of state-building in war-torn states from the ill-fated attempt to stabilise post-invasion Iraq.'[20]

[18] Ibid., p. 1.
[19] Paris and Sisk offer a overview and categorization of this emergent literature in Ibid., pp. 11-16.
[20] Ibid., p. 11.

The two scenarios are different in some important aspects but the distinction is not as sharp as some would like. UN peacekeeping forces have increasingly struggled to comply with restrictive rules of engagement in the face of violent opposition to the 'peace' they were meant to keep. To some extent, both types of intervention have struggled to find ways to promote a political process and protect the local population in the midst of high levels of violence. Yet, the distinction matters with regard to the political and legal context within which these interventions take place, which is likely to have an operational impact as well. William Durch argues that 'to the extent that the great powers define their own military activities in terms of limited warfare or low intensity conflict that does not entail the calibrated use of force or a perceived need for international legitimacy, they are describing something other than peace support operations.'[21] Durch further contends that the powers involved in stability operations in the recent past have 'reconceptualised peace operations as low-intensity conflict with a hefty hearts-and-minds annex' and, instead of seeing local consent as a precondition for intervention, posited that the intervention itself (if carried out properly) would generate that consent.[22]

Definitional questions have equally become a source of controversy among and within national and international agencies. Different agencies have attempted to coin definitions and practices within the policy discourse with a view to their own mandates. They have tended to characterise the situation on the ground according to different priorities: as a challenge to improve local livelihoods; as low-intensity or counterinsurgency warfare; or as the task of building up a regime that can be held accountable internationally. The lack of definition, or consensus, thus

[21] William J. Durch and Tobias C. Berkman, *Who should keep the peace? Providing security for twenty-first century peace operations* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2006), p. 33.
[22] Ibid., pp. 30-31.

characterises these missions more than any categories established in the scholarly literature or public discourse. The thesis views the stabilisation agenda as a discourse that is contested among different groups who compete for definitional power and ownership. 'Stabilisation' is not a value-free description of how Western states go about confronting the security environment of the twenty-first century.[23] There is competition at the international level and among government agencies over what stabilisation entails and how to measure impact and evaluate progress. In other words, what kind of stability is both desirable and achievable is by no means an objective measure.

The vocabulary of stabilisation has gained traction because of the difficulty of categorising missions that take place in a grey-zone between military and civilian responsibilities. Sharp distinctions between armed conflict – as the exclusive realm of the military – and so-called post-conflict environments that see civilian agencies taking the lead have increasingly been discarded, if they have ever really applied.[24] Shifting levels of violence and insecurity both in space and time have led to fluid operational environments that defy a clear definition. [25] In addition, the stated goals of recent interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have shifted from maximalist aims to engender lasting socio-economic and political reform to the

[23] In the sense of Michel Foucault's definition of discourses as 'sites of social relations of power ... [which] situate ordinary practices of life and define the social fields of action that are imaginable and possible,' and which produce social identities and capacities by giving meaning to them. Cited in Michael N. Barnett and Raymond Duvall, 'Power in international politics', *International Organization* 59 (2005), pp. 55-6 (n.66).
[24] See Richard Teuten, Head UK Stabilisation Unit, 'Stabilisation and post-conflict reconstruction', speech at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London, 31 January 2007.
[25] Sometimes referred to as 'semi-permissive environments', where the level of conflict is generally less than full-scale combat but high enough to present a security threat to civilians engaged in governance and economic efforts. See Christopher M. Schnaubelt, *Operationalizing a comprehensive approach in semi-permissive environments,* (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2009), p. 13.

less ambitious objectives of 'good enough' governance and security to sustain a minimal degree of stability after the departure of foreign troops.

In sum, different institutional actors have associated different activities, roles, and tasks with the broad concept of stabilisation. This has given rise to a plethora of terms, acronyms, and definitions. The thesis recognises that the choice of vocabulary is often not just an indicator of the collective thinking that has occurred within a professional community but occasionally also matters in terms of power relationships among and within discursive communities. Terminology can empower specific actors or prioritise a given approach over others. At the same time, too much attention to terminology draws the analysis into marginal and contingent debates that distract from the main inquiry rather than support it – in particular as the policy discourse around stabilisation continues to evolve. The thesis employs the term 'stability operations' in recognition of these definitional uncertainties.

The conceptual context: the security-development nexus

The final definitional remarks concern the conceptual basis for civilian-military integration within governments and in stability operations on the ground. Stuart Gordon argues that, as a consequence of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, the fragile states agenda adopted by the development community increasingly merged with counter-insurgency doctrine rediscovered by Western military establishments.[26] Gordon describes how the two approaches converge around the objective of building resilient, legitimate governance structures able to provide

[26] Stuart Gordon, 'The United Kingdom's stabilisation model and Afghanistan: the impact on humanitarian actors', *Disasters* 34/3 (2010), p. 368.

essential services to their populations.[27] The shared conceptual basis reveals itself as weak at closer scrutiny, however. The use of development assistance in tackling conflict and insurgency has given rise to serious academic debate and criticism.[28] There are growing doubts over the nature of the purported link between security and development at the conceptual level, and over the effectiveness of externally-led reconstruction and rehabilitation processes in 'stabilising' societies in practice.

The stabilisation discourse has emerged in a period of uncertainty and flux with regard to the referent objects of security and development. The human security agenda – which promoted a shift from state-centric notions of security to approaches centring on the individual – took root in academic and policy circles in the mid-1990s.[29] The merging of security and development concerns in multilateral and national policy discourses sparked debates over the relationship between foreign assistance and foreign (and security) policy.[30] These trends reflected a shared sense that traditional understandings of security and development were no longer adequate.[31] The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the addition of global terrorism to the perceived threats emanating from weak and

[27] Ibid., p. 369.
[28] See Stuart Gordon, *Winning hearts and minds? Examining the relationship between aid and security in Afghanistan's Helmand province,* (Boston: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, April 2011); Edwina Thompson, *Winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan: assessing the effectiveness of development aid in COIN Operations,* Report on WP Conf 1022 (Wilton Park: 11-14 March 2010).
[29] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: a new framework for analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Human Security Centre, *Human security report: war and peace in the 21st century* (New York; Oxford: OUP, 2005); S. Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human security and the UN: a critical history* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006); Roland Paris, 'Human security: paradigm shift or hot air?' *International Security* 26/2 (2001).
[30] David Chandler, 'The security-development nexus and the rise of "anti-foreign policy"', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10/4 (2007); Mark R. Duffield, *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security* (London: Zed Books, 2001); Roland Paris, *At war's end: building peace after civil conflict* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004); Paris and Sisk (eds.), *Dilemmas of state-building*.
[31] Jan Pospisil, *Die Entwicklung von Sicherheit* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2009), p. 107.

failed states further deepened the security-development nexus in the Western policy discourse. As Mark Duffield observes, this raised concerns within the aid community that 'a situation is emerging where "their" development is only important in so far as it contributes to "our" security.'[32] Indeed, justifications given by the US and UK governments for the prolonged engagement in stability operations overseas have oscillated between 'their wellbeing' – including women's rights, education, and democracy – and 'our security'. Although a multitude of policy documents have embraced the interdependent view of security and development, the nature of the relationship between the two remains contested.[33] The thesis builds on the assumption that the unsettled nature of these debates has an impact on cooperation among different agencies in the context of a stabilisation mission.

Argument

The perceived imperative for coordination in stability operations has led to myriad recommendations for institutional reform. As William Olson notes, 'there is a theoretical framework to suit every taste and presidential commissions, think tank reports, congressionally mandated studies, punditry solutions, and bureaucratic teams swarming with analysis and proposals.'[34] Most analyses address the issue of capacity gaps in terms of manpower, funding, equipment; obstacles in the form of

[32] Mark R. Duffield, *Development, security and unending war: governing the world of peoples* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 128.
[33] Sedra and Goodhand, for instance, contend that 'the historical and contemporary evidence points to a far more ambivalent relationship between security and development than is currently recognised.' Jonathan Goodhand and Mark Sedra, 'Who owns the peace? Aid, reconstruction and peacebuilding in Afghanistan', *Disasters* 34/1 (2010), p. 94.
[34] William J. Olson, 'Interagency coordination: the normal accident or essence of indecision', in Gabriel Marcella (ed.), *Affairs of state: the interagency and national security*, (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2008), pp. 217-8.

budget authorities, legal mandates and bureaucratic red tape; and the absence of organisational structures for joint planning, decision-making, and evaluation.

The subject of the thesis is thus not one that has previously been overlooked by scholars and analysts. However, the thesis takes a critical stance towards existing explanations for the perceived lack of coordination among civilian government agencies and military forces, which have underpinned many of the policy recommendations published over the past years. It takes issue with the lack of attention paid to collective understandings – which are addressed as organisational cultures in the thesis – within contributing agencies over the nature of the endeavour they are involved in, and the roles they are expected to adopt.

The mechanistic and managerial perspectives adopted by many existing analyses are reflected in the language of 'tools' or 'instruments' of statecraft employed in the official discourse, which conjures up the image of a controlled, synchronized, and calibrated application of hard and soft power. Paris makes a similar argument in his analysis of coordination mechanisms within the UN peacebuilding system, where he claims that substantive disagreements over the project at the core of the statebuilding agenda have been redefined in procedural-technocratic terms, as 'coordination problems'. Without denying the existence of what he calls 'genuine' coordination problems (i.e. actors working at cross-purposes in spite of shared objectives), Paris argues that the underlying substantive-philosophical differences among agencies mean that 'any response to such problems cannot be a purely procedural one.'[35] In order to understand the dynamics that make civilian-military

[35] Paris and Sisk (eds.), *Dilemmas of state-building*, p. 59.

coordination difficult and controversial, it is thus necessary to examine not only the material side of institutional architectures but to delve into the ideas that animate them.

The thesis uses a multi-layered conceptual framework to critically engage with the prevailing policy discourse at two levels. First, it questions the focus on capacity-building and its underlying assumption that committing more resources or rebalancing capacity among civilian and military agencies is naturally going to improve coordination. Repeated calls for investments on the civilian side of government to generate so-called expeditionary capacity both in the United States and the United Kingdom are one example of this trend. Second, it critically examines the conventional wisdom that resistance to coordination among large bureaucracies is mostly a function of 'turf wars' and organisational inertia. The thesis aims to show that coordination is not primarily or exclusively hampered by a lack of resources or bureaucratic red tape. This argument has implications for the way in which the coordination problem is understood and addressed. In order to go beyond standard calls for 'more coordination', it is vital to understand what lies beneath different organisations' inability or unwillingness to implement the changes required for cooperation. The conceptual void at the core of the stabilisation agenda, as described above, allows individual organisations to outwardly respond to calls for coordination while simultaneously seeking to protect their own mandates. Yet, the practical implementation of joint or comprehensive responses is likely to bring the different meanings and value attached by organisations to the notion of stabilisation to the fore. The thesis argues that a theoretical approach built around the notion of organisational

cultures is particularly suited to capture the impact of this conceptual uncertainty on the quality of cooperation among the different actors.

It seems useful to briefly clarify what is meant by the 'quality of coordination' among organisations. Building on a definition offered by B. Guy Peters, coordination is understood for the purposes of this thesis as *the requirement for effective collaboration among two or more institutional actors towards a shared goal without producing redundancy or leaving gaps in policy and/or delivery*.[36] As Peters and others have pointed out, the terminology employed in scholarly or policy work on coordination is by no means agreed or consistent.[37] In an interdisciplinary study of coordination, Thomas Malone and Kevin Crowston note that the diversity of existing definitions 'illustrates the difficulty of defining coordination and also the variety of possible starting points for studying the concept' – which arguably applies to the task of measuring it as well.[38] The thesis adopts a broad definition of coordination, which embraces the empirical evidence of a shared sense of frustration over the quality of interagency coordination that was experienced and expressed by the practitioners observed and consulted for this thesis.[39] As Malone and Crowston observe, while 'we all have an intuitive

[36] See B. Guy Peters, *Managing horizontal government: the politics of coordination,* Research paper no. 21 (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, January 1998), p. 5.
[37] Ibid; Ted Strickler, 'Interagency cooperation: quo vadis?' *InterAgency Journal* 1/1 (2010), p. 4.
[38] Thomas W. Malone and Kevin Crowston, 'The interdisciplinary study of coordination', *ACM Computing Surveys* 26/1 (1994), p. 90.
[39] Malone and Crowston offer an even broader definition of coordination as 'managing dependencies between activities' (including through resource allocation, task assignment, decision-making, and communication), which incorporates related notions such as cooperation, competition, and collaboration to some degree. They further note that 'since activities must, in some sense, be performed by "actors," the definition implies that all instances of coordination include actors performing activities that are interdependent. Ibid., p. 90; 101.

sense of what the word "coordination" means ... we sometimes notice coordination most clearly when it is lacking.'[40]

Examples of coordination failures at different levels – tactical, operational, and institutional – were recounted by a vast number of practitioners not only in personal interviews but equally in numerous opinion pieces, blogs, policy reports and official testimonies that form part of the bibliography of this thesis. As the following chapters examine in more detail, weaknesses in civilian-military coordination at the institutional level led to gaps (and occasionally redundancies) in staffing both at headquarters and in the field; coordination at the operational level suffered from tensions between military-led reconstruction efforts and civilian governance and conflict management concerns; and communication failures at the tactical level hampered consistency and coherence in the engagement with local actors. In the absence of an agreed measure for coordination, the thesis refrains from imposing further categorizations or distinctions.[41] The working definition spelled out above serves its purpose as a starting point for analysis by synthesizing the core elements that have informed the search for a joint civilian-military strategy for stability operations: the existence of a shared overarching goal and the (perceived) imperative for (cost-) effective collaboration in order to arrive at an holistic understanding and treatment of the problem at hand.

[40] Ibid., p. 90.
[41] B. Guy Peters suggests a distinction between 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' levels of coordination. Peters, *Managing horizontal government: the politics of coordination*, pp. 5-6. Ted Strickler proposes a so-called Interagency Coordination Maturity matrix as a starting point for a more systematic analysis, which categorizes the nature of relationships among agencies (from personalized to institutionalized); the degree of information sharing, the interconnectedness of agency goals; 'agency attitudes' (from self-absorbed to full interdependence); and the 'interagency process' (from sporadic to systematic), see Strickler, 'Interagency cooperation: quo vadis?' p. 6.

A functionalist perspective expects coordination to materialize over time in response to the perceived or stated imperative to combine resources and expertise that are spread across different parts of the government architecture. In reality, it is evident that government bureaucracies do not automatically cooperate, even when asked to. The difficulty of achieving cooperation has thus frequently been attributed to the dysfunctional aspects of bureaucracy. One finds ample descriptions of this in the public discourse, reaching from 'dissonant bureaucratic cultures',[42] to turf wars, bureaucratic unrest, 'departmental tribalism',[43] and 'professional snobbery'.[44] This view has further shaped the identification of ways to improve cooperation. For instance, many policy recommendations build on the provision of incentives (financial and other) to promote greater co-operation among departments. The idea of coercing unruly bureaucracies into cooperative arrangements is further reflected in the frequent call for an overarching authority, or, in more colloquial terms, 'someone to bang heads together.'[45]

However, neither a functional view depicting the three organisations as levers of power, nor the assumption that bureaucratic politics are at the source of obstacles to cooperation, provide a full picture of the dynamic between the organisations in question and the issues at stake. These existing explanations insufficiently recognise that resistance to greater integration by individual organisations does not automatically have to be a function of temporary 'friction' or petty

[42] Robert E. Hunter and Khalid Nadiri, *Integrating instruments of power and influence in national security: starting the dialogue,* Conference proceedings (Washington, DC: American University, 21 March 2006), p. 2.
[43] Ann Scott Tyson, 'Standard warfare may be eclipsed by nation-building', *Washington Post*, 5 October 2008.
[44] Alan Okros, *Civil-military cooperation in multilateral missions,* Conference report (Stockholm: Forum for Security Studies, 18-19 January 2008), p. 12.
[45] Lord (Paddy) Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon, 'Shall we ever intervene again', The Hands Lecture, Mansfield College, Oxford, 4 November 2008.

bureaucracy. Instead, the deeper, less immediately visible differences in worldviews, values, and problem-solving approaches among the different organisations deserve greater attention. Among policy-makers in particular, there is a tendency to see the lack of integration and coordination as a result of capacity-related problems – as opposed to deeper conceptual ones. The analysis tends to stop at the observation that there is not (yet) enough capacity for true integration. But the more interesting question seems to be what stands behind this lack of capacity generation: is it mainly resource constraints and bureaucratic politics? Or do these questions equally touch upon the institutional identity of the organisations involved, the values they stand for, and the purpose that animates their existence beyond the securing of funding and influence?

The argument is not formulated with the primary purpose of testing hypotheses or making a theoretical point. Rather, the aim is to arrive at a more nuanced and complete picture of the dynamics among military and non-military government agencies in joint operations. The different explanations – material, bureaucratic, and cultural – will therefore not be treated as competing arguments. Undoubtedly, material and bureaucratic obstacles to cooperation exist and may be highly relevant in some instances. The ultimate objective of the analysis is not to discard one explanation or the other but to highlight their interplay and examine the linkages between them. As will become evident in the empirical part of the thesis, the conceptual framework is an analytical device that introduces categories that are nowhere as neat or clear in reality. It makes sense, however, to disentangle the different levels in order to structure the discussion of the empirical data gathered for the thesis. The theory acts like a laser beam directed at different aspects of a

building or statue, which can only be fully appreciated as a whole, but reveals a lot more when examined step by step and with attention to detail.

Research design

Case study selection

The thesis is empirically grounded in a comparative study of the search for greater coordination among defence, diplomacy and development establishments in the United States and the United Kingdom over the past decade. The case study selection first and foremost follows an empirical logic: these two countries have been at the forefront of promoting the integration of civilian and military efforts in the pursuit of stability overseas. In some regards, the variance between the two cases is small: both represent Western liberal democracies with democratic control over their armed forces, which have cooperated closely throughout the past decades.[46] The emergence of similar proposals for – or actual changes to – institutional arrangements in the two governments over the past years is a sign of simultaneous and to some extent shared problem analysis. Hence, the comparative analysis does not aim to uncover the greatest possible variance between two cases with regard to a set of variables in order to test a hypothesis or prove a theoretical argument.

Instead, the thesis aims to provide a fine-grained, historically contingent analysis. Given the particular attention to civilian-military dynamics in the thesis, the choice was made to study two countries whose armed forces exhibit a decisive

[46] For differences between the two cases in terms of political control over the military, see Deborah D. Avant, *Political institutions and military change: lessons from peripheral wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 21.

'warfighting' ethos and identity. A number of other NATO member states that have experimented with whole-of-government approaches, such as Canada, the Netherlands, or Germany, have been discarded from the study not only for reasons of scope but also because their military establishments differ markedly from the British and American ones. The focus on organisational cultures – including historical trajectories and contemporary power constellations within the institutional architecture – suggests that each case is bound to remain *sui generis* to some extent. A large-N study is unlikely to lead to more generic insights, or to a more 'objective' assessment of obstacles to civilian-military coordination that the in-depth analysis of two cases would somehow miss or fail to illustrate. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the analytical insights offered by the thesis can be extrapolated to other institutional settings – e.g. national, multilateral, or non-governmental – only to a certain extent. They do not describe permanent or generalizable features of civilian-military relations but rather offer an approach to examine and conceptualize the dynamics among a number of organisations within a given policy context.

The government architectures in each case differ in terms of their historical development, power relations among different departments (such as between foreign policy and development), as well as with regard to the mechanisms and arrangements that have been introduced with the objective to foster coordination. An unequal distribution of weight between military and civilian resources characterises both cases but not to the same degree. The US case study is marked by an exceedingly powerful defence establishment both with regard to the domestic institutional landscape and in terms of what it can achieve abroad – at

least in terms of conventional military power. To what extent this informs a national strategic culture (or an 'American way of war') based on the notion of overwhelming military power is subject to debate.[47] The British case, on the other hand, is illustrative of a nation with more limited resources and a societal and political climate less favourable to military spending, which is the case of many European nations. Nevertheless, British foreign policy has been guided by a clear commitment to seeking global influence within the parameters of the transatlantic relationship, including through military deployments overseas. Both governments have expressed the intention to use all instruments of power – including armed force – in the pursuit of national and global security.

Efforts to rebuild and 'stabilise' Iraq and Afghanistan in the aftermath of US-led military invasions and the controversies that have accompanied these engagements have strongly shaped institutional reactions in both the British and American governments. The thesis uses the engagement of both countries in Afghanistan as primary focal point. However, the involvement of British and American military and civilian government agencies in the reconstruction of Iraq after 2003 occasionally feeds into the analysis. US forces in Afghanistan are deployed under the US-led *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Within the NATO chain of command (which is formally responsible for the whole of Afghanistan since October 2006) American forces have been responsible for security and Provincial Reconstruction Team operations in regional command east (RC/E) until the spring

[47] Russell Frank Weigley, *The American way of war: a history of United States military strategy and policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973). For a critique, see Antulio J. Echevarria, 'An American way of war or way of battle?', Op-ed, *Newsletter of the Strategic Studies Institute*, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, January 2004.

of 2010, which saw them adopt additional lead responsibilities in the south.[48] The United Kingdom has been operating under ISAF in regional command south (RC/S), which is considered Taliban heartland and has been the scene of heavy fighting since mid-2006. The pressures of the operational environment in Afghanistan are thus similar in both cases. With the influx of a large contingent of US Marines in the summer of 2009, Helmand province in the south of Afghanistan became in some sense a laboratory for the two case studies selected for the thesis. British and American military and civilian officials have come to share contingent and to some degree overlapping areas of operation. The British Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) deployed a civilian liaison officer to the US Marine Corps task force headquarters at Camp Leatherneck, British stabilisation advisers worked alongside US Marines at the district levels, and the US Department of State and Agency for International Development (USAID) each had representatives at the UK-led PRT in Lashkar Gah even prior to the arrival of additional US troops.

The focus on these operations raises the question of whether they are to be considered outliers in the sense that they have little in common with previous contexts that have required a coordinated civilian-military intervention and are unlikely to be repeated in a similar vein in the future. It is indeed possible that the experience of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will deter Western powers from engaging in similar operations in the foreseeable future. Yet many of the

[48] The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan is divided into regional commands (RC), which coordinate all regional civil-military activities conducted by the military elements of the PRTs in their area of responsibility, under operational control of ISAF. Initially, there were five regional commands (Capital (in Kabul), North, South, East and West) led by different NATO member states. A new RC (South-West) was created in May 2010 in order to accommodate American reinforcements in the South. NATO, *ISAF Regional Command Structure*, <http://www.nato.int/isaf/structure/regional_command/index.html> accessed 25 July 2011.

dilemmas, questions, and problems discussed in the following chapters are likely to arise in many instances where the use of force – whether in a preventive, defensive, or protective function – is deemed necessary alongside other means of intervention in order to achieve certain objectives.

Afghanistan is undoubtedly a hard test case for stabilisation but not necessarily an exceptional one to the extent that insights drawn from it will have no bearing on other situations. There may indeed be added value to choosing a difficult context. Afghanistan has forced intervening nations to rethink their institutional response more urgently and fundamentally than other engagements. The combination of low levels of development, weak state institutions, a very traditional and conservative civil society and the development of a serious insurgency in the southern and eastern provinces from 2006 onwards have crystallized some of the controversies between security, development and governance. In terms of military strategy and doctrine, the intervention in Afghanistan has challenged crude understandings of a 'hearts and minds' strategy. For the development community, it has brought to the fore the issue of long-term sustainable development programmes versus visible and rapid 'quick impact projects'. In terms of governance, it has shown the limits of building local legitimacy in the presence of foreign troops and aid workers.

Conceptual framework

While rationalist approaches feature prominently in organisation theory, they seem too limited in scope to provide a nuanced understanding of organisational behaviour and inter-organisational dynamics. As Alex Wendt observes, 'rational

choice directs us to ask some questions and not others, treating the identities and interests of agents as exogenously given and focusing on how the behaviour of agents generates outcomes.'[49] The thesis treats organisations not merely as goal-oriented, rational instruments but sees them as repositories of specific attitudes, principles, and practices developed over time in the pursuit of their mission. It adopts an interdisciplinary approach that draws upon sociological and anthropological work on organisational cultures. According to Elizabeth Kier 'organisational cultures define what is a problem and what is possible by focusing its members' attention on certain features of events, institutions, and behaviours; how a problem is defined determines the range of possible solutions and strategies appropriate for solving it.'[50]

The conceptual framework, which is introduced in detail in the next chapter, is rooted in organisation theory, social constructivism, and the sociological strand of new institutionalism in the social sciences.[51] These approaches privilege the cultural-ideational dimension of institutions over alternative explanations for organisational behaviour. The framework builds on existing theory rather than explicitly proposing a new theoretical approach, as its main purpose is to support a structured analysis of empirical data rather than promoting a theoretical argument.

[49] Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics', *International Organization* 46/2 (1992), pp. 391-92.
[50] Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining war: French and British military doctrine between the wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 28.
[51] Paul DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Ellen M. Immergut, 'The theoretical core of the new institutionalism', *Politics and Society* 26/1 (1998); André Lecours, *New institutionalism: theory and analysis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

The existence of diverging cultures as a source of obstacles to cooperation among military and civilian actors has been highlighted in other works.[52] However, the thesis treats organisational cultures not simply as bullet points on a list of potential impediments to cooperation but as a lens to understanding obstacles at various levels. It is important to guard against superficial labelling of any type of tension as 'cultural' since the term has no conceptual validity if it is taken as a catch-all phrase to explain any sort of behaviour that does not seem to follow a rational cost-benefit or utility-maximization logic. Conventional understandings of 'cultural differences' among soldiers, diplomats and aid workers may have to be revisited. Highly visible differences – such as uniforms and weapons versus sandals or pinstripes – may not be relevant or even prove false with a view to the research question asked in the thesis.

A central task that follows from the adoption of this theoretical lens is to locate organisational cultures, to describe them and to evaluate their impact on cooperation among different organisations. This is expected to direct attention to aspects of cooperation that have previously been neglected or perhaps assigned too readily dysfunctional bureaucratic behaviour. The study of cultures emphasizes the taken-for-granted quality of shared assumptions among members of social groups, including government agencies and organisations. As Kier notes, the researcher seeks to uncover what is considered deviant, taboo or inappropriate, but also appropriate, vital or even heroic in a given culture – and how such beliefs

[52] See Donna Winslow, 'Strange bedfellows in humanitarian crises: NGOs and the military', in Natalie Mychajlyszyn and Timothy M. Shaw (eds.), *Twisting arms and flexing muscles: humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding in perspective*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

may conflict with those of other actors.[53] Tensions among deep-seated, acquired ways of thinking about the world are undoubtedly more difficult to identify and illustrate than differences between budgets, staff numbers, organisational charts, and legal regulations. Studying organisational cultures thus means to 'uncover the structures of meaning in use in the setting and to synthesize an image of that group's reality and make it available for consideration and reflection.'[54]

As Peter Katzenstein notes, a concern with cultural forces and meanings does not automatically impose a separate, so-called interpretive, methodology.[55] The cultural features of a given social group are by definition seen as self-evident and unproblematic by those who are part of it. When studying the cultures of different organisations, attention has to be paid to elements that are easily neglected because of their ingrained, unquestioned and familiar nature. Some degree of distancing is necessary to discover what interlocutors consider self-evident and natural but may not be perceived as such by members of other groups. Distancing does not necessarily mean, however, that more 'objective' research methods such as questionnaires are more suited to capture cultural aspects.[56] *Verstehen*, after all, is about empathy and some degree of identification with the individuals – or cultures – that are the subject of the inquiry. The research methods that have been used to gather empirical data and to analyse it are thus part of the qualitative methods habitually employed in the social sciences.

[53] See Elizabeth Kier, 'Culture and French military doctrine before World War II', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The culture of national security*, (New York: Columbia Press, 1996), p. 203.
[54] Linda Smricich, 'Studying organizations as cultures', in Gareth Morgan (ed.), *Beyond method: strategies for social research*, (Beverley Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1983), p. 164.
[55] Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The culture of national security: norms and identity in world politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 67.
[56] Mats Alvesson, 'The culture perspective on organizations: instrumental values and basic features of culture', *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 5/2 (1989), p. 130.

Sources

The empirical research for the thesis included a series of personal interviews conducted between November 2007 and June 2011 with key officials within different government departments and ministries; with members of the armed forces; and with independent consultants and experts providing advice to governments on these issues. Initially, the method of 'snowballing' was used in both case studies to access a broad range of practitioners within different departments. This approach not only allowed building a network for the identification of further contacts but also helped to prevent a particular organisational narrative or perspective from dominating the inquiry. Additional interviewees were subsequently selected in a more targeted approach, i.e. on the basis of their involvement in the drafting of key policy documents pertaining to stability operations (e.g. military doctrine, interagency planning frameworks, training manuals); the positions they had occupied either within the bureaucracy or on the ground (e.g. the heads of cross-departmental units); or their experience in working within and among other departments and agencies.

The aim of the interviews was not to generate data for quantitative analysis but to provide insight into different modes of thinking and decision-making, to put in perspective the written documents consulted for this study, and to give an indication of tensions among and within departments with regard to the challenges associated with coordination in the context of stability operations. This meant that no single, uniform questionnaire was employed, even though a basic set of questions formed the core of each interview. The large majority of interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured personal conversations with one or

several interlocutors, which could last anywhere between thirty minutes and three hours, depending on the interest and availability of the interviewee. Phone interviews were conducted occasionally when the location of the interviewee rendered a personal meeting impossible (e.g. with stabilisation advisers in the field). Written records were kept in all instances and interviews were recorded electronically whenever interlocutors agreed to it.[57] Many interviews were conducted at the workplace of the interviewee (e.g. military barracks or training facilities, government ministries, etc.). Albeit anecdotal in nature, observations gathered before, during, or after a formal interview session added to the understanding of differences among organisational cultures.

However, observations shared by individual interlocutors by definition remain anecdotal and cannot simply be extrapolated to wider social groups as describing a shared culture. Organisational cultures thus have to be assessed more broadly than just on the basis of interviews through a variety of organisational outputs. Insights drawn from personal interviews were analysed in perspective with written sources produced by the different organisations in each case. These include doctrine, strategy papers, official communications, organisational charts, programme reviews and capability evaluations, and press articles.

[57] Given the sensitive content of their remarks in the context of inter-departmental relations, the majority of interviewees requested to remain anonymous. A coded reference system, which indicates the case study and date of the interview (e.g. UK_XX, Date) is used throughout the thesis to reference information obtained from these individuals. Information about the background of the interviewee is provided in the text body where relevant. An undated, alphabetical list of all interviewees (including full names, professional affiliations, and interview locations) forms part of the bibliography. The two examiners of the thesis have been provided with the key to the coded references, which will not be bound with the final copy of the thesis deposited at the Bodleian Library.

Official documents are valuable sources, but often only tell part of the story. Careful wording may hide a host of disagreements and debates that have taken part in the drafting of such documents. Doctrinal sources (understood in a broader sense to include the policy guidance produced by civilian organisations in a non-hierarchical system) may contain elements of outward hedging against pressures on organisational mandates but also sometimes serve to shape intra-organisational debates. Training schedules, promotion schemes, and performance measurements further reveal what organisations value and how they perceive themselves. Public statements, official testimonies and published interviews added to the information gathered in each case. Survey data gathered by other institutions provided a source to corroborate and compare the interview data collected by the author for both case studies. In addition, a number of online discussion forums and weblogs were mined for indicators of policy trends and debates. These publications are semi-official in the sense that authors often write in a personal capacity in order to express critical views while nevertheless having a specific target audience in mind.

Triangulation among this combination of public and private, written and oral, official and confidential sources allowed identifying omissions and contradictory statements and led to a richer description of the debate than the official publications suggested. The time span covered by the empirical analysis starts at the beginning of the twenty-first century and ends with the close of its first decade in December 2010.[58]

[58] A small number of interviews and official statements or publications released in the first half of 2011 equally fed into the analysis.

Thesis outline

The thesis comprises a brief theoretical part, which sets up the empirical study that constitutes the core of the analysis. The institutional architectures of the United States and the United Kingdom are first introduced as separate case studies, before the analysis of obstacles to coordination and mechanisms to address them synthesizes insights from both cases in two comparative chapters. The structure of the thesis is thus as follows:

Chapter two outlines a framework for assessing obstacles to coordination through the lens of organisational cultures. The chapter makes the case for framing the issue of civilian-military coordination in terms of a redefinition of roles and responsibilities that affect deep-seated collective understandings about core missions and competences within each organisation. It introduces the concept of organisational culture as key to the analysis and offers an analytical framework that integrates the cultural dimension with a rationalist-functionalist and bureaucratic politics perspective on organisational behaviour. The framework established in the chapter distinguishes three layers – material, bureaucratic, and cultural – in order to structure the analysis of obstacles to cooperation.

Chapter three analyses the institutional set-up of defence, diplomacy, and development in the United Kingdom and discusses the main template that has come to shape the pursuit of a so-called 'Comprehensive Approach' among the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, and the Department for International Development. It examines the implications of the existence of an

independent development ministry within the government architecture and illustrates the struggle within each of Britain's 'three Ds' to formulate their mission in stability operations in spite of the increasingly shared terminology of 'stabilisation'.

Chapter four turns to the search for coordination among the Department of Defense, the State Department and USAID in the United States. It examines prospects for coordination in an institutional context that is shaped by a dominant defence establishment supported by the policy discourse of a so-called 'war against terror' throughout most of the past decade. It probes into the formal template for coordination that has emerged in the wake of a disastrous experience in the early stages of administering post-war Iraq and analyses debates that have arisen within and among government agencies in this context.

Chapter five then turns to the analysis of obstacles to coordination in a comparative perspective that covers both the institutional context at home and operations on the ground. The analysis of the institutional level focuses on arrangements within the government infrastructure for the preparation, planning, support and evaluation of stability operations. It highlights that obstacles to coordination at this level tend to touch on longstanding structural arrangements, which often cannot be changed in the short-term and require careful consideration of the long-term implications of any reforms. The operational level, on the other hand, represents a fluid context marked by frequent staff rotations and extraordinary pressures on people and resources. It is in this charged environment that expectations over roles, competences, and objectives clash and require

practitioners to find pragmatic solutions. The evaluation of obstacles at both levels is guided by the three-layer structure established in the conceptual framework in chapter two.

Chapter six retains the comparative perspective in discussing existing and proposed institutional remedies to the coordination problems identified in both the United Kingdom and the United States. It briefly discusses the prospects for top-down, centralised leadership within the government architecture to conclude that the main challenges to coordination reside at the agency level and thus are likely to require additional mechanisms. The creation of specialised units within the home bureaucracy, as well as the use of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the field as platforms for coordination, are therefore analysed in greater detail. The evaluation of these mechanisms links back to the obstacles identified in the previous chapter and follows the three layers identified in the theory framework.

The conclusion starts with a summary of key insights gained from the empirical inquiry. It then offers a series of observations on the value of a multi-layer theoretical approach to the study of interagency coordination. Finally, it discusses the implications for policy that arise from the analysis, and outlines avenues for future research.

II A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The inquiry has started out with the argument that existing accounts of interagency coordination, which often privilege material factors and/or the logic of bureaucratic politics, may be accurate but nevertheless fail to provide a full picture of the challenges involved. This chapter sets out to ground the assumption that organisational cultures hold the key to a more nuanced and thorough understanding of these challenges in organisation theory. It makes the case for adding a broader cultural context, or a deeper layer, to the analysis of organisational behaviour, outlines the theoretical concepts that will guide the empirical analysis, and highlights their implications for the remainder of the thesis.

The chapter starts with a set of observations about the notion of (interagency) coordination and the assumptions that have underpinned the policy discourse surrounding it. The second section surveys the development of organisation theory from rationalist-functionalist models to alternative understandings of organisations as complex entities animated by power struggles and interests, and, ultimately, as repositories of collective systems of meaning. Building on this review of the literature, the third section outlines a three-layer framework for the analysis of obstacles to coordination. The chapter concludes with a more detailed discussion of the conceptual choices made in the analysis of interagency coordination through the lens of organisational cultures.

1. Coordination within the government architecture

The terminology employed in the introduction calls for additional clarification on a number of definitional aspects regarding the notion of coordination. At closer inspection, the vocabulary employed in policy statements, official documents, and doctrinal sources offers little clarity. The terms ‘cooperation’, ‘coordination’, and ‘integration’ are often used interchangeably. An attempt to categorize them appears futile in the absence of agreed or consistent use by officials, decision-makers and practitioners. Rather than getting fixated on the terminology, it seems important to inquire about the expectations that are attached to the idea of interagency coordination, in other words, what outcomes coordination is expected to produce, and how.

Interagency coordination is frequently advocated as a means to bring existing capacity together in order to create a seamless body of expertise supported by the capabilities of different agencies for the conduct of stability operations. Yet, these operations might also require different types of capacity and expertise that have not traditionally been available within the government architecture. Under the first assumption, coordination is the chief solution to the challenge posed by the complex nature of stability operations. This does not exclude the need for some additional investment in mechanisms to facilitate the coordination of existing capabilities, such as the establishment of joint decision-making forums and operational platforms, or the acquisition of information-sharing technologies. Under the second assumption, however, coordination alone is not sufficient to cover the full spectrum of activities in stability operations and consequently

provides only a partial solution. The two scenarios have often been intertwined in official statements in spite of the different implications they have for a given institutional context. The dominant policy discourse in Western democracies has assumed that the expertise required for the conduct of stability operations is spread throughout the institutional landscape – hence the need to bring a variety of agencies together – rather than lacking altogether. Coordination is further seldom explicitly recognized as requiring the transformation of traditional roles and missions of defence, diplomacy, and development. The policy discourse often evokes the mechanical image of different components – or tools – joining up or plugging into each other like pieces of a puzzle whilst retaining their original shape and form and 'doing what they do best'. The thesis takes a critical stance towards this discourse, which may hold a number of false promises. In practice, the attempt to coordinate government agencies in the conduct of stability operations may well reveal that i) organisations do not actually possess the expertise or capacity they are expected to bring to the table; and ii) coordination, or closer collaboration, requires organisations to substantially change their ways of doing business.

The nature of the coordination challenge in stability operations has been subject to divergent opinions in scholarly and policy debates, which can be formulated in the form of hypotheses for the sake of clarification (without formally testing them). A first hypothesis states that the main ingredients of a joint or 'comprehensive' approach (and the modalities for coordination it implies) are basically known and agreed, but implementation fails because of a number of material and procedural obstacles. A second hypothesis is that the modalities remain inherently contested

in spite of overall agreement on the necessity of coordination. A third hypothesis questions the imperative for coordination *per se*, which is seen as having entered the policy discourse without sufficient debate over tradeoffs and long-term consequences. Occasionally, the issue of interagency coordination in the conduct of stability operations has been dismissed as insignificant altogether because the mission itself and its objectives are seen as intrinsically flawed. Whereas the focus is on removing obstacles to coordination under the first hypothesis, the second and third raise more fundamental questions over the arrangements in place. The thesis does not claim to evaluate the impact of interagency coordination on the overall effectiveness of stability operations in the broader context of state- or peace-building. However, it remains open to the possibility that the problem is not merely one of removing obstacles to coordination, but deeper uncertainty over the rationale for coordination and the appropriateness of the means and methods employed to promote it.

If the argument is accepted that there is persistent uncertainty over the validity and modalities of coordination, it follows that there is no agreed measure of what 'good' coordination looks like. As William Olson notes, coordination is 'generally recognized as a good thing' but it also implies potential tradeoffs for individual agencies between the pursuit of their own objectives and the commitment to a larger, coordinated endeavour.[1] Existing assessments of the quality of interagency coordination tend to privilege standardization and harmony as measures for successful coordination.[2] Whereas coordination indeed serves the purpose of de-conflicting activities and goals among different actors, there is a risk that

[1] Olson, 'Interagency coordination', p. 225.
[2] E.g. Strickler, 'Interagency cooperation: quo vadis?' p. 7.

disagreement and friction are automatically seen as signs of failure. Yet, particularly in the pursuit of a vaguely defined policy goal that remains contested and rests on weak conceptual foundations – which arguably is the case for stability operations, as will be shown in the thesis – coordination may require bringing parties together to confront views and to challenge assumptions, rather than merely streamlining approaches. In other words, 'good' coordination may produce a considerable amount of friction because it allows different views to clash in the process. Such confrontation arguably holds the promise of contributing to a better understanding of the tasks at hand in the first place.

2. Understanding coordination through the lens of organisation theory

The different government agencies behind the labels of defence, diplomacy and development are portrayed in this analysis first and foremost in their quality as *organisations*. They further exhibit the typical features of modern bureaucracy – hierarchy, continuity, impersonality, and expertise – which make them efficient instruments for the accomplishment of complex social tasks in a Weberian sense.[3] Organisation theory is situated in a broad and eclectic field of literature on institutions, which has been further developed in several phases and within several disciplines.[4] Together, organisation theory and the different branches of sociological institutionalism provide a rich body of literature to draw from, but also an eclectic field of theory one has to navigate through. The aim of this section

[3] David Beetham, *Bureaucracy*, 2nd edn. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), pp. 9-12.
[4] For an overview see Richard H. Hall, *Organizations: structures, processes, and outcomes*, 5th edn. (Englewood Cliffs; London: Prentice-Hall International, 1991); Gareth Morgan, *Images of organization* (Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Sage, 1986); W. Richard Scott, *Organizations: rational, natural, and open systems*, 3rd edn. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall International, 1992).

is not to provide an exhaustive review of the development of organisation theory but rather to trace the main theoretical concerns that have preoccupied scholars who have studied the nature and behaviour of organisations and to identify those that are relevant to the analysis of the case studies in the subsequent chapters.[5]

Organisations as technical instruments

Classical organisation theory emerged alongside the factory system pioneered in eighteenth-century Britain. The basic tenets of this first generation of theory, which have been refined and expanded upon by subsequent approaches, stipulate that (i) organisations exist to accomplish certain goals; (ii) there is one – scientifically identifiable – best way to organise for the achievement of these goals; (iii) production is maximised through specialisation and division of labour; and (iv) people and organisations act rationally (in accordance with economic principles).[6] The image of organisations as rational-utilitarian actors, which are pursuing a fixed set of goals, is still found in so-called modern structural organisation and systems theory. The focus of these theoretical approaches is directed towards the design and management of organisations in order for them to achieve the declared objectives in the most effective and efficient way.[7]

From the early twentieth century onwards, the concept of bureaucracy was inscribed in this tradition as a defining feature of organisations. The term was used to refer both to specific working arrangements and to the type of behaviour

[5] For an extensive review of the development of organisation theory, see Jay M. Shafritz and J. Steven Ott, *Classics of organization theory*, 5th edn. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 2001).
[6] Ibid., p. 28.
[7] Ibid.

they were held to engender.[8] Max Weber's ideal type of bureaucracies as rule-governed, hierarchical, and specialised entities with appointed offices that are salaried and situated in fixed career lines, has served as point of departure for numerous studies on the quintessentially modern phenomenon of bureaucracy.[9] In spite of his seminal work defining modern bureaucracy as the prime form of rational social organisation, Weber came to see rationality as a social practice that had to be interpreted inter-subjectively, rather than some objective standard derived from transcendental laws.[10]

In a rationalist perspective, organisations are seen first and foremost as efficient instruments for the achievement of fixed goals. The functionalists within organisation theory treat organisations as 'systems with goals, purpose, and needs in functional interaction with their environment.'[11] They assume that adaptation to structural demands will eventually lead to the development of an optimal organisational form for the fulfilment of a given task.[12] Criticisms of the early model of organisations as rational, goal-oriented instruments have informed the gist of subsequent theories on organisational behaviour, many of which 'routinely point to findings that are hard to square with either rational-actor or functionalist accounts.'[13] Given the limited explanatory power of rationalist-functionalist

[8] Ibid., p. 32.
[9] Max Weber, *The theory of social and economic organization*, trans. Talcott Parsons and A. M. Henderson (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1947).
[10] Frank R. Dobbin, 'Cultural models of organization: the social construction of rational organizing principles', in Diana Crane (ed.), *The sociology of culture: emerging theoretical perspectives*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 118. The idea that the seemingly self-evident, rational features of Western economic and administrative organisation are in fact ideological or cultural features (rather than universal precepts) is also found in the work of more recent organisation theorists, see for instance Alvesson, 'The culture perspective on organizations'.
[11] Yvan Allaire and Mihaela E. Firsirotu, 'Theories of organizational culture', *Organization Studies* 5/3 (1984), p. 200.
[12] Dobbin, 'Cultural models', p. 138.
[13] DiMaggio and Powell, *The new institutionalism*, p. 3.

analyses in cases where organisations do not seem to adapt to external demands in a linear, observable way, these critiques are important for the thesis. A main contention directed at both classical and modern organisation theories relying on rational-actor models has been that organisational behaviour and decisions are often not 'rational' in the sense that these theories suggest. Much of what can be observed in organisational reality does not immediately seem to be 'directed toward the accomplishment of established organisational goals.'[14] The next two sections will highlight a number of these criticisms and their implications for the analytical framework presented in this chapter.

Organisations as complex bureaucracies

The rather narrow and mechanical theories of bureaucracy as a prime method of organisation (by increasing efficiency through division of labour and rational decision-making structures) came under criticism by behaviouralist and institutionalist scholars who contended that the organisational reality they observed rarely matched the formal bureaucratic template.[15] Rather than seeing them as procedural-technical arrangements, these scholars paid greater scrutiny to the environment that surrounded the organisations they studied, as well as to the individuals that inhabited them. Inquiry into the human dimension of organisations led a number of scholars within the new institutionalism, bureaucratic politics, and behaviouralist schools to critically evaluate the assumptions that underpinned rational-functionalist models of organisation.

[14] Shafritz and Ott, *Classics of organization theory*, p. 300.
[15] W. Richard Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, 2nd edn. (Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Sage, 2001), p. 80.

Philip Selznik was among the first scholars to pay attention to the goals and aspirations of individuals within organisations, which he recognized as not necessarily congruent with the organisation's declared goals. Selznik concluded that, 'if we are to comprehend these bureaucratic machines ... it is essential to think of an organisation as a dynamic conditioning field which effectively shapes the behaviour of those who are attempting to remain at the helm.'[16] Social action is always mediated by structures, which inevitably generate new centres of need and power, according to Selznick. He thus suggested that the study of organisations should thus focus on the 'recalcitrance of the tools of action' – which interpose themselves between actors and their goals – rather than their conformity.[17] In contrast to the previous one, this perspective thus views organisations as potentially unruly bureaucracies, which are limited in their utility-maximizing strategies by cognitive deficiencies and bureaucratic dysfunctions, and animated by internal power politics and vested interests.

Large organisations require complex systems of rules and routines to function properly, which produce a number of side-effects. Herbert Simon's notion of bounded rationality states that utility-maximizing behaviour is circumscribed by the limited intellectual capacity of individuals working within organisations. According to Simon, individuals (and hence organisations) 'satisfice' rather than maximize, because of cognitive limitations that prevent them from assembling and processing information effectively.[18] Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and routines are introduced to mitigate these constraints and enable choice and

[16] Philip Selznick, *TVA and the grass roots: a study in the sociology of formal organization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949), p. 10.
[17] Ibid., p. 253.
[18] Herbert A. Simon, *Models of bounded rationality* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 1982).

action.[19] The same SOPs and routines that are needed in the day-to-day operations of these large and complex bureaucracies, however, are prone to become one of the main sources of constraint and rigidity in decision-making, as described by Graham Allison in *Essence of Decision*.[20] Overall, however, Allison's bureaucratic politics model is of limited use in analyzing organisational behaviour as it focuses on decision-making processes at a given point in time without paying much attention to how the organisational structures and procedures held to constrain them have come into place.[21]

Robert Merton famously described the dysfunctional aspects of Weber's ideal-type model of bureaucracy, which he saw arising from the very same features that made bureaucracy an efficient form of organisation.[22] Merton's concept of goal displacement argues that an over-concern with rules and regulations within bureaucracies – which elevates conformity with rules to an end in itself rather than a means to achieve other objectives – induces risk-averse, formalistic, and rigid behaviour. The declared goals of the organisation are in jeopardy because of the very procedures put in place to attain them. In the extreme case, an obsession with process leads to a degree of bureaucratization that risks defeating the initial purpose of the organisation – or what is commonly known as 'red tape'.[23] Some scholars have argued on the basis of empirical observations that routines are in

[19] Scott, *Institutions and organizations*. p.80
[20] Graham T. Allison, *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban missile crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).
[21] Zegart makes this point and concludes that new institutionalism provides a better foundation for general insights (rather than 'snapshots') due to its attention to the 'stickiness of organisational arrangements' and agency behaviour. Amy Zegart, *Flawed by design: the evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 20-21.
[22] Heather A. Haveman, 'The Columbia school and the study of bureaucracies', in Paul S. Adler (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of sociology and organization studies*, (New York; Oxford OUP, 2009), p. 587.
[23] Robert Merton, 'Bureaucratic structure and personality', *Social Forces* 18/4 (1940), p. 564.

reality often modified and overridden.[24] However, it appears reasonable to assume that the rule-based character of bureaucracies introduces a degree of rigidity by promoting standardized approaches over innovative ones. As Heather Haveman observes, this is particularly the case when circumstances change and new approaches are needed, which bureaucrats might either fail to recognize because they focus on rules rather than context, or reject because they value conformity to established routines over other outcomes.[25]

Furthermore, bureaucratic politics and new institutionalist approaches alike have paid attention to parochial interests as forces behind organisational behaviour and policy outcomes within large bureaucracies. As Amy Zegart notes, 'bureaucrats...have interests of their own and some powerful weapons to pursue them. Whether this means ensuring their organisation's survival, maintaining professional norms, or advancing certain policy goals, agencies often behave in ways that legislators and presidents never intended.'[26] Selznick concluded that parochial imperatives to maintain stability and continuity ultimately determined organisational behaviour. He saw organisations' struggle for survival as 'intimately connected with the struggle for relative prestige, both for the organisation and for elements and individuals within it.'[27] The notion of vested interests was further used by Merton, who contended that members of large bureaucratic organisations could be expected to 'oppose any new order which

[24] David A. Welch, 'The organizational process and bureaucratic politics paradigms: retrospect and prospect', *International Security* 17/2 (1992), p. 127. For a critique of Allison's argument see Stephen D. Krasner, 'Are bureaucracies important? (or Allison Wonderland)', *Foreign Policy* /7 (1972).
[25] Haveman, 'The Columbia school', p. 588.
[26] Zegart, *Flawed by design*, p. 16.
[27] Philip Selznick, 'Foundations of the theory of organization', *American Sociological Review* 13/1 (1948).

either eliminates or at least makes uncertain their differential advantage deriving from the current arrangements.'[28]

The next section introduces a third theoretical approach in order to examine whether 'recalcitrant' behaviour by organisations may have its roots in deep-seated collective meanings that collide with new roles and missions. Some degree of conceptual overlap with the bureaucratic perspective seems inevitable.[29] It is nevertheless helpful to distinguish the two perspectives from an analytical point of view, as they stand for different approaches to the problem of coordination and are likely to lead to different conclusions on how to address it.

Organisations as repositories of meaning

As Linda Smircich notes, cultural approaches conceptualise organisations as a particular form of human expression. The perspective they offer is distinct from 'the views derived from the machine and organism metaphors, which encourage theorists to see organisations as purposeful instruments and adaptive mechanisms.'[30] Smircich and others have built on insights from related disciplines, such as anthropology and sociology, in their study of organisational cultures. Their approach is based on the assumption that the cultural, or ideational,

[28] Shafritz and Ott, *Classics of organization theory*, p. 107.
[29] The bureaucratic and the cultural perspectives are treated separately in the thesis but have been collapsed together by scholars who have analyzed bureaucracies from a cultural perspective and associated their organisational culture primarily with a 'bureaucratic' one. Barnett and Finnemore have analysed international organisations as actors shaped by a 'bureaucratic culture', Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the world: international organizations in global politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 19. Morton Halperin *et al.* use the term 'organisational essence' as a hybrid of bureaucratic interests and culture, Morton H. Halperin, Priscilla Clapp, and Arnold Kanter, *Bureaucratic politics and foreign policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1974), p. 28. Jeffrey Legro argues that bureaucracies are particularly prone to cultural influence, Jeffrey Legro, 'Culture and preferences in the international cooperation two-step', *The American Political Science Review* 90/1 (1996), p. 122.
[30] Linda Smircich, 'Concepts of culture and organizational analysis', *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28/3 (1983), p. 353.

dimension of the environment that surrounds organisations has an impact on them – not only in terms of their behaviour but also by shaping the properties that make these organisations what they are. The sociological tradition tends to approach culture not as something an organisation *has*, but something an organisation *is* – and arguably *does*.[31]

Cultural and constructivist approaches offer a distinct way of understanding organisations on a number of different accounts. They seek to explain organisational behaviour by reference to the social, as opposed to the purely material, world occupied by institutional actors.[32] By locating a (socially constructed) framework of meaning within organisations, these approaches expand the range of possible motivations behind organisational behaviour beyond utility-maximisation.[33] James March and Johan Olsen contrast the logic of expected consequences applied by a rational, utility-maximizing actor with a 'logic of appropriateness' that sees behaviour as guided by rules, identities or roles. These roles spell out what actors can and cannot – or should and should not – do in a given context.[34] In March and Olsen's perspective, rules not only refer to the procedural and technical aspects of organisations but equally 'the beliefs, paradigms, codes, cultures, and knowledge that surround, support, elaborate, and contradict those rules and routines.'[35] Jeffrey Legro establishes a similar link between cultural, procedural, and material factors by arguing that 'organizations will channel resources to methods suited to culture, which subsequently appear

[31] Ibid.
[32] See Katzenstein (ed.), *Culture of national security*, p. 38.
[33] DiMaggio and Powell, *The new institutionalism*, p. 58.
[34] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering institutions: the organizational basis of politics* (New York; Oxford: Free Press; Maxwell Macmillan, 1989), pp. 24-6.
[35] Ibid., p. 22. Emphasis added.

more feasible than those that are incompatible with culture and are deprived of funding and attention.'[36]

These approaches further expand the conceptual grounds on which organisational behaviour can be analysed through the notion of identity. Constructivist scholars highlight the role of intersubjective meanings in the social construction of both interests and identities of actors.[37] Within the framework proposed by Katzenstein *et al.* norms not only establish expectations about how actors behave (i.e. regulatory norms) but equally 'who the actors will be in a particular environment' (i.e. constitutive norms).[38] In his study of the US Marine Corps, Terry Terriff notes that cultural attributes can be understood as constitutive norms that 'express critical elements of deeply felt understandings of *what it means to be* a Marine.'[39] King *et al.* argue that such 'identity claims' are institutionalized in the form of mission statements, policies and routines. They form the organisation's social context by providing 'a common set of phenomenological points of reference' to members of an organisation (and outsiders able to access them) and are held to guide deliberation and decision-making within the organisation.[40]

[36] Legro, 'Culture and preferences', p. 122.
[37] John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the world polity: essays on international institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 1998); Alexander Wendt, *Social theory of international politics* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).
[38] Katzenstein (ed.), *Culture of national security*, p. 54.
[39] Terry Terriff, '"Innovate or die": organizational culture and the origins of maneuver warfare in the United States Marine Corps', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29/3 (2006), p. 481. Emphasis added.
[40] Brayden G. King, Teppo Felin, and David A. Whetten, 'Finding the organization in organizational theory: a meta-theory of the organization as a social actor', *Organization Science* 21/1 (2010), p. 295.

3. A framework for analysis

The above survey of theoretical approaches to the study of organisations has laid the groundwork for a multi-layer framework, which will be used to identify and analyse obstacles to interagency coordination. While *levels* convey the idea of a sequential move from one level to the next, *layers* function more like the different coatings of an oil painting that together create a final colour scheme. One might not immediately appreciate the foundational layers of paint when looking at the finished work but it is those layers that give the painting its unique atmosphere. Hence, applying the framework can be thought of as scraping off one layer after another, from the most superficial one to the deeper, less evident. It is important to keep in mind that the separation introduced by the layers is primarily analytical and that the different elements ultimately have to be understood as a whole.

The instrumental layer

The first layer is derived from the rationalist-functionalist approach to organisations. In this perspective, the imperative to combine the capabilities and expertise of different government departments in the conduct of stability operations is expected to lead to the emergence of cooperative mechanisms over time. The often used phrase that the pursuit of a foreign policy objective (such as stabilising post-conflict or failed states) requires 'all levers of state power' to be applied implicitly conveys a mechanical view of the corresponding governmental departments or ministries – defence, diplomacy, and development – as tools in a toolbox.

Staying within the mechanistic image, this perspective nevertheless expects some degree of friction to occur among different organisations as they are called upon to work together more closely. Different parts and components of the 'whole-of-government machine' do not have the same weight and density; they do not automatically rotate at the same speed; and they may require additional plugs that allow them to connect. This layer directs our attention to the material, and thus the most visible, obstacles to coordination that are primarily related to resources and capacity. It contains an implicit expectation that coordination will get smoother over time as friction decreases and capacity gaps are bridged. The measures to accelerate this process are primarily located within the material realm, as opposed to the philosophical-political one. While their implementation does not as such provoke fundamental debate, it may be slowed down by a lack of resources. Policy recommendations pertaining to this perspective emphasise the allocation of more resources, or the redistribution thereof between civilian and military government agencies, as well as greater streamlining (and some degree of standardisation) with regard to planning processes and means of delivery among different organisations.

The bureaucratic layer

The second layer follows from the identification of government agencies as complex bureaucracies with independent agendas and corresponding interests. A number of theoretical approaches, subsumed under a 'bureaucratic' perspective in the previous section, suggest that organisations are likely to privilege their own objectives over others that may arise in the context of a joint, cross-governmental endeavour. These approaches further tend to view bureaucracies as inherently

hostile towards change. Calls for coordination or integration across departmental fault lines may thus be perceived by government agencies as threats to their interests. In Olson's words, for the bureaucrat 'one's agency and its requirements are closer to where one lives than some distant, esoteric value such as the putative benefits of coordination. ... Outlasting current enthusiasm is an institutional art form.'[41]

The second layer further acknowledges the pernicious side of professionalization and expert specialisation within a bureaucratic structure and their impact on coordination. Rigid adherence to fixed routines and entrenched templates make it harder to coordinate the workings of different agencies. SOPs are difficult to adapt once they have acquired a taken-for-granted nature and are applied by default by members of a specific organisation or unit. In a complex mission, different organisational routines and SOPs may clash in the first instance, particularly when all parties are under high pressure to deliver. In these situations, organisations are likely to default to ingrained problem-solving approaches and trained behaviour, and may simply reject alternative ways of doing business.

Hence, the image conveyed by the second layer is one of resistance to change based on a combination of routines and interests to be protected. It expects organisations to engage reluctantly in tasks that require substantial changes to organisational structures and routines. With regard to the first layer, the bureaucratic perspective adds the possibility of irrational behaviour as a reason why cooperation may not run smoothly. It sees obstacles to cooperation as

[41] Olson, 'Interagency coordination', p. 225; 27.

products of parochial interests and 'turf wars', or as the result of bureaucratic rigidity and inertia.

Obstacles to coordination that fall into this category are usually held to require the provision of (budgetary) incentives and/or the designation of authorities to push changes through against parochial interests and inertia. Graham Allison for instance lists budgetary feasts, prolonged budgetary famine, or dramatic performance failures as 'catalysts of change'.[42] Many of these obstacles are seen as primarily procedural and thus seldom associated with fundamental philosophical debates. Cooperation is believed to ensue if different departments are either provided with clear incentives to change their ways of doing business; or if they are coerced into cooperation by a higher authority.

The cultural layer

The third and final layer emerges from the conceptualisation of organisations as repositories of collective meaning and as bearers of a distinct identity. Wendy Griswold, for instance, notes that organisations 'manag[e] *meaning* as much as they manage money, products, and people.'[43] The third layer thus embodies the ideational dimension that is missing from a framework purely based on resources and interests. As noted earlier, the introduction of a cultural perspective is not only geared towards understanding how organisations perceive the environment they operate in, but also to examine how their self-perception and identity impact upon cooperation. The third layer expands our understanding of organisational

[42] Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban missile crisis*, 2nd edn. (New York; Harlow: Longman, 1999), p. 171.
[43] Wendy Griswold, *Cultures and societies in a changing world*, 3rd edn. (Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Pine Forge Press, 2008), p. 120. Emphasis added.

behaviour by introducing the logic of appropriateness as a motivation for conduct in addition to – and sometimes in opposition to – the maximization of utility. Culture in that sense is shorthand for organisations' understanding of the way things *are* and *ought to* be.

In this perspective, organisations are conceptualised by reference to the specific attitudes, practices, and beliefs developed over time in the pursuit of their mission. For military units trained to prevail in the face of hostility, a propensity to take charge, the ability to reach decisions swiftly, and respect for discipline and hierarchy are valuable attributes to cultivate. Yet, for diplomats it is equally important to master the art of political subtlety and persuasion, feel comfortable thinking in shades of grey, and display patience and flexibility. Development professionals for their part identify more easily with fluid hierarchies and become attuned to working within programmes over which they often only have partial control and authority. Quite naturally, these specific attitudes are not automatically understood or valued by all actors to the same degree. The concept of culture further introduces the notion that actors operating in the same environment may attach different meanings to their surroundings and the problems they face, which makes it more difficult for them to agree on the most appropriate strategy of action. Hence, in addition to suggesting a different approach to conceptualizing obstacles to coordination, this layer also invites us to inquire beneath the surface of apparent consensus and shared terminology. For the organisations called upon to intervene in post-conflict environments and failed states, responding to the demands placed upon them raises fundamental questions

with regard to their core mission, the values they embody and the principles underpinning their work.

In sum, a cultural approach challenges the assumptions contained in the two previous layers. It suggests that problems arising in the pursuit of a common approach among different agencies do not stem from gaps in capacity alone. Nor can they be attributed solely to the congenital dysfunctions of large bureaucratic organisations. Consequently, this perspective does not see material adjustments, or the creation of incentives or authorities within the bureaucracy to promote coordination, as sufficient (or even effective) measures to remove obstacles to interagency coordination. Rather, it calls for the evaluation of clashes among different organisations over missions, roles, and competences.

A three-layer framework

The framework is expected to shed light on a number of different motivations and dynamics at play in the context of interagency coordination. Following the theoretical evolution of the study of organisations outlined above, the framework gradually builds in complexity by moving from a mechanistic, ideal-type model towards a view of organisations as institutional actors that harbour competing bureaucratic interests as well as collective systems of meaning. The different steps introduced by the framework provide an opportunity to disaggregate between different dimensions of obstacles that arise in the pursuit of interagency coordination. They are intended to add nuance to the understanding of challenges encountered by agencies within the government architecture and in stability operations by highlighting connections between capacity-related or procedural

problems, on the one hand, and dilemmas that have deeper roots in organisational cultures and identities, on the other. The different layers further help to structure the discussion of institutional remedies – in the form of new mechanisms, legal clauses, and policies – that have been proposed and introduced in the two case studies with the aim to make coordination more effective. Finally, the three-layer structure may also be helpful in thinking about different types of drivers, or incentives, for cooperation as opposed to obstacles to it.

The table on the next page summarizes the different layers of the framework and the assumptions they contain with regard to obstacles to coordination. The distinction between the layers is not always as clear-cut as the table suggests. The quality of cooperation among a given set of actors can be evaluated at different levels, but a focus on one single layer is bound to be incomplete. As the empirical analysis will show, some issues span all three layers despite their apparent 'technical' or 'bureaucratic' character.

Table 1: Three-layer framework for analysis

	Perspective on organisations	Obstacles to coordination: assumptions
1	**Rational-functionalist: 'instruments'**	Lack of material capacity (resources, equipment, manpower) Incompatibility among existing structures and capabilities
2	**Bureaucratic: 'recalcitrant tools'**	Cognitive impairments (including SOPs and routines), which induce a tendency to 'satisfice' and stick to 'business as usual' Bureaucratic dysfunctions (e.g. 'red tape' and goal displacement) Parochial interests of the organisation (survival, reputation, influence) and its members (prestige, career, promotion)
3	**Cultural: 'repositories of meaning'**	New roles clash with organisations' core missions, identities and self-images Clashing professional values and principles (e.g. how to measure performance) Divergent expectations over ways, means, and outcomes

4. Organisational cultures at the core of the analytical framework

The theoretical perspective adopted in the thesis assumes that it is possible to identify attributes, or 'patterns of meaning' that are shared to such an extent among members of an organisation that they validate the notion of organisational culture. In doing so, it follows King *et al.*, whose perspective on organisations frames individuals as extensions and representatives of the organisational actor and assumes that 'member-agents [of the organisation] ... know when they are

acting on their own and when they are acting as agents.'[44] They further argue that 'certain forms of behaviour and choices' informed by an organisation's mission, routines, practices and hierarchies are 'directly attributable to the organization rather than to the individual.'[45] These claims are supported by the concept of socialisation, which according to Richard Little and Steve Smith describes how individual members internalise an organisation's culture through a process 'based on rewards and punishments which eventually induce a voluntary commitment to the beliefs associated with the socialising institution.'[46]

The concepts of culture and identity are both widely employed and poorly defined. Following the example of Katzenstein *et al*., the thesis employs the two terms as 'useful labels', and as shorthand for more complex processes, rather than as flags or signposts of a specific theoretical and methodological inclination.[47] Nevertheless, the choice of these concepts raises a number of additional questions which will be addressed in this final section. If culture is the 'deep layer', how conscious of its content are those involved in its reproduction? If cultures are assumed to be relatively stable patterns of meaning, how do we account for cultural change? Finally, if it is assumed that organisational cultures do not exist in isolation from each other, their relationship to other cultural contexts, for instance at the national-strategic or sub-organisational levels, have to be clarified.

[44] King, Felin, and Whetten, 'Finding the organization', p. 293.
[45] Ibid., p. 294.
[46] Richard Little and Steve Smith, *Belief systems and international relations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 43.
[47] Katzenstein (ed.), *Culture of national security*, p. 34.

Defining organisational cultures: some caveats

The choice of using culture as a concept comes with a double caveat. First, while everyone has an intuitive grasp of what is meant by 'culture', its content is difficult to pinpoint, define, and conceptualise. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz has argued that this should not prevent scholars from attempting to locate culture. 'Though ideational, it does not exist in someone's head; though unphysical, it is not an occult entity,' according to Geertz.[48] Second, if culture is everywhere – or everything – it explains nothing. Following Weber and Geertz, culture refers to those aspects of social life which have meaning. Cultural expressions do not simply describe the material world around us, they stand for something. Yet little in social life – apart from purely instinctive behaviour – would qualify as 'meaningless' in this sense.

For the purposes of the study, the concept of organisational culture is understood as broadly referring to 'collectively held beliefs, symbols, rituals and practices, which give meaning to the critical aspects of an organisation's work or goals,' and often provide a specific language.[49] The concept expresses culture's shared, collective nature, the taken-for-granted character of its content (among those who share it), and its function of providing meaning. In anthropology, the notion of culture has been developed largely in reference to Geertz's seminal definition of culture as 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes

[48] Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 10.
[49] Kier, *Imagining war*, p. 28.

toward life.'[50] However, the image of culture as an all-pervasive context that affects the entire way of life of an individual or people does not give sufficient guidance as to the way in which it affects actors' behaviour.

Scholarly literature offers conceptualisations of culture both as an all-encompassing context and as an independent causal variable. The thesis does not treat organisational culture as an explanatory variable for behaviour alongside other factors such as technology, environment, or resources. As Legro notes, organisational cultures are shaped by multiple factors, including 'technology, domestic and international environments, individuals, and accident.'[51] He thus suggests treating culture as an 'autonomous force not easily reducible to the many factors constituting it.'[52] The thesis employs organisational culture as a theoretical lens through which empirical evidence of the difficulty of achieving coordination among civilian and military agencies can be analysed and understood. Culture is not taken to explain organisational behaviour in a direct causal relationship – or in competition with other variables such as resources or bureaucratic interests – but rather in the sense of Albert Yee's notion of 'quasi-causal effects'.[53] Yee notes that, rather than directly or inevitably determining actions, intersubjective meanings render them 'plausible or implausible, acceptable or unacceptable, conceivable or inconceivable, respectable or disreputable.'[54] Geertz equally contends that 'culture is not a power, something to which social events,

[50] Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures*, p. 89.
[51] Legro, 'Culture and preferences', p. 122.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Albert S. Yee, 'The causal effects of ideas on policies', *International Organization* 50/1 (1996), p. 97.
[54] Ibid.

behaviours, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is thickly – described.'[55]

Scholars have further conceptualized culture as a lens or prism through which actors perceive the world around them. Culture affects their understanding of the world by 'screen[ing] out some parts of "reality" while magnifying others.'[56] In a cognitive approach, the concept of belief systems is used to describe a 'filtering device' between actors' beliefs and the objective reality.[57] Similarly, David Elkins and Richard Simeon describe (political) culture as a '"mindset" which has the effect of limiting attention to 'less than the full range of alternative behaviours, problems, and solutions which are logically possible.'[58] The image of a filtering device, however, is problematic in the sense that it views the rules or beliefs that are held to do the 'filtering' as external to and disconnected from actors' identity. The idea that culture somehow limits a range of logically possible solutions fails to acknowledge that what appears 'logically' possible is itself a function of culture.[59] It further appears overly passive and too limited to capture the social process of 'structuring' by actors of their context, in which they are actively involved. Hence, the thesis views culture not as a separate, external force that constrains decision-making but as a dynamic process, in which actors are

[55] Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures*, p. 14.
[56] Kier, *Imagining war*, p. 28.
[57] Alexander L. George, 'The causal nexus between cognitive beliefs and decision-making behavior: the 'operational code' belief system', in Lawrence S. Falkowski (ed.), *Psychological models in international politics*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979); Ole R. Holsti, 'The belief system and national images: a case study', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 6/3 (1962).
[58] David J. Elkins and Richard E. B. Simeon, 'A cause in search of its effect, or what does political culture explain?' *Comparative Politics* 11/2 (1979), pp. 127-8.
[59] Quoting DiMaggio and Powell's as well as Zucker's works, Vaughan argues that 'new institutionalists posit culture as a mediating link: Institutionalized cultural beliefs have a complexity reduction effect that determines what individuals will consider rational at a given moment.' Diane Vaughan, 'The dark side of organizations: mistake, misconduct and disaster', *Annual Review of Sociology* 25 (1999), p. 280.

simultaneously products and producers. In this sense, culture – or the shared structures of meaning within which it is located – may well *limit* the range of possible ways to act but arguably also *enables* action.[60]

Enacting organisational cultures: roles and identities

If an ideational environment made of shared norms, beliefs, and practices is seen to affect organisational behaviour, it can also be expected to have an impact on how organisations perceive themselves and others. Constructivists have posited the concept of *identity* as a link between structure (made of intersubjective meanings) and the behaviour of actors. They see behaviour as guided by the desire to enact, sustain or transform a particular identity.[61] The connection between cultural norms and identity is illustrated in the notion of *roles* that actors adopt in a given game. These roles describe not only what actors can do – in other words which moves are allowed and possible – but also who they are, and how they are perceived by others. In that sense, culture can be seen as a script that assigns roles to actors, which guide their behaviour in different situations.

According to Katzenstein, the concept of identity by convention references 'mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other.'[62] Wendt uses the term reciprocal typifications to describe how actors – through repeated interactions rewarding them for holding certain ideas about each other and discouraging them from holding others – create 'relatively stable concepts of self

[60] See for instance Morgan, *Images of organization*.
[61] Katzenstein (ed.), *Culture of national security*, p. 60.
[62] Ibid., p. 33.

and other.'[63] Identities are therefore defined not only by intrinsic characteristics but also through social interaction.[64] Hence, organisations derive only part of their identity from functional aspects, for example as 'legitimate wielders of violence' in the case of the military, or as servants of the state in the case of the civil service.[65] They also incorporate relational aspects, such as the 'most influential' or 'most reputed' agency in the government architecture in their perceptions of self and other. The relationship between two unequal partners affects the respective identities that each of them internalises (one example of which would be a patron-client mentality).[66]

Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall offer a taxonomy of power that includes the concept of 'productive power', which does not describe the power of one actor over another but rather sees power as a diffuse resource on which all actors can draw independently of their hierarchical position.[67] Productive power is seen as operating through the 'discursive production of the subjects, the fixing of meanings, and terms of action' in a given field.'[68] The emerging stabilisation agenda may have opened a new playing field, or what Barnett and Duvall call a 'discursive space', in which even weaker actors find themselves empowered legitimately to evaluate each others' performance and compete in order to fix

[63] Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', p. 405. Wendt cites Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1967), pp. 54-58.
[64] Katzenstein (ed.), *Culture of national security*, p. 59 (n.85).
[65] Ends-based functional definitions describe the military as a unique institution established to defend state territory and citizens, while means-based definitions take to the management of violence as the defining feature. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The soldier and the state: the theory and politics of civil-military relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957); Harold B. Lasswell, 'The garrison state', *The American Journal of Sociology* 46 (1941).
[66] See Alexander Wendt and Michael N. Barnett, 'Dependent state formation and Third World militarization', *Review of International Studies* 19 (1993).
[67] Barnett and Duvall, 'Power in international politics'.
[68] Ibid., p. 56.

definitions and meanings.[69] Friedrich Kratochwil further argues that 'norms not only establish certain games and enable the players to pursue their goals within them, they also establish inter-subjective meanings that allow the actors to direct their actions towards each other, communicate with each other, appraise the quality of their actions, criticize claims and justify choices.'[70]

In this sense, foreign interventions – whether they are labelled counterinsurgency operations, peace support, or state-building missions – can be construed as games with a set of (initially contested) rules, which affect the roles and identities of established players. These roles may be formally spelled out in a doctrinal note or plan, or become implicitly assigned through practice and the formation of mutual expectations. Against the backdrop of contemporary Western security architectures, stability operations appear to constitute a new game that challenges established roles among the players involved. Military education and training has been heavily oriented towards defeating an enemy through conventional means of warfare over the past few decades; diplomats have little (recent) experience in dealing with interlocutors at the sub-national level; and aid agencies are unsure about the value of development assistance while bullets are still flying.

The theoretical concepts outlined above suggests two important considerations: first, these roles may clash with individual organisations' understanding of their *raison d'être*, or, less dramatically, they may not coincide with collective beliefs of what it takes to enact and sustain a given organisational identity (e.g. as the world's leading donor agency or supreme military force). Second, these roles are

[69] Ibid., p. 61.
[70] Friedrich Kratochwil, 'The embarrassment of changes: neo-realism as the science of Realpolitik without politics', *Review of International Studies* 19/1 (1993), pp. 75-6.

not fixed but subject to debate and contestation within a social space that is characterised by power discrepancies among players. To date, governments have appeared unable or unwilling to establish definite hierarchies among the different instruments of power in the context of stability operations, which would stabilise the dynamics of interagency coordination. While the reality of troop numbers on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan has favoured the military's reading of the problem, there has been a concurrent desire to frame stabilisation as a fundamentally civilian-led enterprise.

Shaping organisational cultures: actors as producers and products

Culture has been variably treated as an external social 'whole' that exists somehow beyond the consciousness of individuals, or alternatively as subjective, internalised cognitive frames and beliefs.[71] If culture is reified as a 'self-contained "superorganic" reality with forces and purposes of its own,' its relation to actors becomes highly deterministic.[72] As Margaret Archer observes, top-down conceptualisations of culture, which neglect the role of human agency, lead to a robotic, programmed view of actors.[73] Furthermore, if culture is somehow beyond (or below) the consciousness of its bearers, it is difficult to conceive how it could change or evolve. If, on the other hand the focus is exclusively on actors, culture becomes extremely volatile and subject to change with the actions of those who produce it.[74]

[71] Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, p. 78.
[72] Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures*, p. 11.
[73] Margaret Scotford Archer, *Culture and agency: the place of culture in social theory*, rev. edn. (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), p. 72.
[74] Margaret Archer aptly describes this as the oscillation between the 'hyperactivity of agency' on the one hand (which implies the innate volatility of the cultural realm), and rigid coherence of ordering rules on the other. Ibid., p. 86.

Hence, while a cultural analysis seeks to identify patterns that are stable enough to speak of collective systems of meaning, it needs to remain receptive to the possibility of fragmentation and change at the same time. Social actors – whether individuals or organisations – are neither obedient marionettes nor detached and calculating manipulators of their own cultures. Based on Anthony Giddens' theory of social structures as 'both the medium and the outcome of the practices they recursively organize,' cultures can be seen as both ordering human experience (the medium) and as the resulting order (the outcome).[75] The conceptualisation of culture as social practice mitigates the elements of determinism and dominance: rather than an external structure or the product of a dominant elite, culture is a resource drawn upon by all actors to render action meaningful. Members of a given organisation can thus be seen as 'products' as well as 'producers' of their cultural environment.[76]

The image of producers raises an additional question over whether culture is consciously constructed or rather emerges in a less controlled way.[77] The idea that cultures can be proactively fostered or managed with a view to the effective pursuit of an organisation's goals accords a significant degree of control to actors. Edgar Schein's definition of organisational culture as the 'pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration' exemplifies the functionalist emphasis on culture as

[75] Anthony Giddens, *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984), p. 25.
[76] Kier, *Imagining war*, p. 33.
[77] While the academic literature tends to view culture as the underlying, hidden and complex context of organisational life, business management manuals often treat culture in a more instrumental way. These perspectives are functional in the sense that they see culture as social glue that keeps the organisation together and produces an environment that – as long as carefully managed – enhances efficiency, productivity, and creativity within the organisation.
For a critique of so-called functionalistic-pragmatic conceptualisation of culture, see Alvesson, 'The culture perspective on organizations'.

something that serves the needs of a system (or organisation).[78] Those who locate culture in socially and symbolically constructed systems of meaning, on the other hand, tend to understand it as emerging through social interaction rather than through the work of purposive individuals (e.g. the founders or leaders of an organisation). Again, it seems possible to qualify the extent to which actors can proactively manage culture without denying their participation in its formation altogether.

Members of an organisation may attempt to use culture instrumentally (through what Elizabeth Kier calls 'manipulated myths') to resist external pressures or to promote internal change, but they are likely to draw upon existing ideas and beliefs in doing so. Hence, these cultural entrepreneurs enjoy limited control over the myths they attempt to create, as these ideas in turn become part of organisational culture and come to shape perceptions and behaviour in ways that are difficult to foresee. Ann Swidler, whose theory is closer to the agency-end of the spectrum, ultimately acknowledges that 'people are often used by their culture as much as they use it.'[79] King *et al.* further introduce a temporal dimension to this argument by arguing that 'organisations in early stages of existence may be more amenable to change and may largely reflect the preferences and even characteristics of their founders.'[80] This influence is held to diminish as organisations mature and 'operational answers to organizational identity-related

[78] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational culture and leadership*, 2nd edn. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992).
[79] Ann Swidler, *Talk of love: how culture matters* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 24.
[80] King, Felin, and Whetten, 'Finding the organization', p. 295.

questions ... are exogenous to and predate the individual or shared beliefs of current members.'[81]

So far, the determinism inherent in a top-down view has been tempered by allowing for some degree of agency in the construction of culture without going as far as seeing culture as an instrument in the hands of managers or leaders. What is yet missing from the discussion is the question to what extent culture is a coherent, unified system of beliefs, values, and practices. Relatively static representations of culture can be found in both functionalist and interpretive theories (which is reflected in the use of terms such as 'patterns', 'images', and 'systems' to describe a given culture), which stand in contrast to post-structuralist accounts that emphasize flux and discontinuity.[82] In contrast to earlier works, contemporary theorists have more readily considered the possibility of disjuncture, fragmentation, and competition *within* cultures rather than *between* internally coherent cultural systems.[83] Although functionalist perspectives tend to see any departure from the main culture as a problem, internal fragmentation and contestation do not have to be dysfunctional by default. Challenges to existing practices can be at the root of new norms and changing beliefs.[84] But under which conditions do actors contest the relative order provided by culture?

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[81] Ibid.
[82] Majken Schultz and Mary Jo Hatch, 'Living with multiple paradigms: the case of paradigm interplay in organizational culture studies', *The Academy of Management Review* 21/2 (1996), p. 542.
[83] For example Michel Foucault's archaeology of overlaid cultural systems and Levi Strauss' notion of 'bricolage', cited in Griswold, *Cultures and societies*. Ann Swidler explores different ways of putting a single culture to use rather than comparing and contrasting different cultures, in Swidler, *Talk of love*.
[84] As Richard Scott argues, the fact that institutions (understood here as norms) provide stability and order does not automatically exclude that they also undergo change, 'both incremental and revolutionary,' in Scott, *Institutions and organizations*, p. 50.

Scholarly literature on the origins of cultural change tends to evolve around two main themes: first, the role of resourceful individuals who successfully contest prevailing beliefs, such as Stephen Rosen's mavericks;[85] and second, a moment of crisis or failure which prompts a rethinking of established ways. If individuals are assumed to be at the root of cultural change and contestation, it has to be examined how they attained the necessary influence to effect the desired change and what prompted them to perceive existing practices as inadequate. This also raises the question to what extent individuals or organisations as a whole are able to know defeat or failure when they see it. Success and failure are not objective measures but subject to diverging interpretations both within and among different organisations. Hence, the emphasis on leadership and crisis as drivers of cultural change in the existing literature might deflect attention away from the possibility that cultural change may occur in a less dramatic, more incremental way through cross-cultural interchange and exposure to other ways of thinking and acting.

Interagency coordination appears to offer a setting to explore this idea, as it inevitably entails exposure to other organisations' ways of thinking and doing business, for instance in the context of cross-departmental working groups or integrated civil-military headquarters in the field. March and Olsen argue that 'institutional collisions between previously separated or segmented traditions ... may generate destructive conflicts but they may also generate rethinking, search, learning and adaptation by changing the participants' reference groups, aspiration-levels and causal understandings.'[86] They further note that new experiences may challenge collective self-understandings to the point where 'entrenched accounts

[85] Stephen Peter Rosen, 'New ways of war: understanding military innovation', *International Security* 13/1 (1988).
[86] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *The logic of appropriateness,* Arena working paper 04/09 (Oslo: Center for European Studies, University of Oslo, 2004), p. 16.

and narratives' no longer make sense, and trigger a 'search for new conceptions and legitimations that can produce a more coherent shared account.'[87] Stability operations, as argued earlier, may indeed offer this type of novel experience.

In sum, the thesis views culture as relatively stable patterns of meaning, which are continuously shaped, confirmed, and contested by actors who are both products and producers of their culture. Leadership and crisis are recognised as potential drivers of cultural and (normative-) institutional change, but so is the alternative of a more fragmented, gradual, micro-level process suggested by March and Olsen.[88] Subcultures and internal tensions within organisations, as well as interactions among representatives of different agencies within joint forums and shared operating environments, are therefore given a privileged place in the empirical analysis. A whole-of-government approach is likely to require agencies to strike a balance between seeking legitimacy (by demonstrating willingness and capacity to pursue broader goals) and preserving their identity (e.g. in the form of distinct organisational practices and attributes).[89] Finally, contestation and change of established organisational values and practices in the context of closer coordination among government agencies may lead to the emergence of new, hybrid professional cultures within the institutional landscape.

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[87] Ibid., p. 15.
[88] Ibid., p. 17.
[89] Neoinstitutionalists have argued that organisations move towards homogeneity within or across professional fields as they seek to acquire legitimacy through uniformity ('isomorphism'). See Paul DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, 'The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields', *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983); John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, 'Institutionalized organizations: formal structure as myth and ceremony', *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (1977); Scott, *Organizations: rational, natural, and open systems*. Pedersen and Dobbins, on the other hand, claim that organisations can at the same time strive for legitimacy *and* seek to protect and promote distinctive identities. Jesper Strandgaard Pedersen and Frank Dobbin, 'In search of identity and legitimation: Bridging organizational culture and neoinstitutionalism', *American Behavioral Scientist* 49/7 (2006), p. 897; 901.

Embedding organisational cultures: the broader context

While organisations harbour multiple subcultures they are also embedded in larger cultural settings at the national and international level. The national decision-making level, in particular the interaction between civilian policy-makers and the armed forces, has attracted the interest of scholars who seek to describe the strategic cultures of different states.[90] Alastair Johnston conceptualises strategic culture as a system of symbols containing basic assumptions both about the 'orderliness of the strategic environment' – the role of war in human affairs, the nature of the adversary, and the efficacy of the use of force – and operational assumptions about how to deal with the threat environment thus established.[91] The study of strategic cultures refers to the beliefs held by (civilian) policy- and decision-makers and military planners, as well as values supported by a given society at large.

The strategic culture of a given state and the organisational cultures of its ministries or state departments are likely to have a mutual impact upon each other. Neither could plausibly exist in hermetic isolation from the other, but they are probably not fully aligned either. Elizabeth Kier notes, for instance, that decisions made by political actors may limit an organisation's perception of available options.[92] Policy decisions may also empower one organisation over another in a given context or process. Hence, strategic cultures interact with organisational

[90] Ken Booth and Russell B. Trood, *Strategic cultures in the Asia-Pacific region* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Cultural realism and strategy in Maoist China', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The culture of national security*, (1996); Iver B. Neumann and Henrikki Heikka, 'Grand strategy, strategic culture, practice', *Cooperation and Conflict* 40/1 (2005); Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic culture and ways of war* (London: Routledge, 2006).
[91] Johnston, 'Cultural realism', p. 223.
[92] This point is made by Elizabeth Kier in her study of French military doctrine in the interwar period. See Kier, 'Culture and French military doctrine before World War II', p. 204.

cultures insofar as they contain ideas about the place, role, and form of government agencies in the domestic political sphere. For instance, where the prevailing discourse favours a military-led approach over diplomacy and civilian assistance, this is likely to affect the self-perception and identity of the organisations and ministries associated with either approach. Influential practitioners and analysts within organisations, on the other hand, may influence strategic culture through their contributions to practice and doctrine. The configuration of relationships between strategic and organisational cultures can be expected to vary across cases.

Furthermore, as Steven Rosen observes, 'some organisations by their nature are more likely than others to reflect the larger patterns of social organization of their societies, whereas others will be shaped more by the special nature of their tasks.'[93] Professional military institutions have traditionally developed in isolation from society at large, not unlike monasteries. They are unique in their adherence to separate traditions and customs, the level of organisational discipline, their system of rewards and punishments, and appearances.[94] Military establishments are 'total institutions' in Erving Goffman's sense: they break down barriers between spheres of life, their members have limited contact with outsiders, and they consciously inculcate values at odds with those of the surrounding society.[95] The military's organisational culture is strengthened by long-term membership, powerful affiliation mechanisms, and the training for, and exercise of, a collective

[93] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Societies and military power: India and its armies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 5.
[94] Martin L. Van Creveld, *On future war* (London: Brassey's 1991), p. 38.
[95] In Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute destruction: military culture and the practices of war in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 97.

task in a particularly demanding and potentially life-threatening environment.[96] Civilian government agencies are arguably closer to the surrounding society than members of the armed forces, but they may nevertheless cultivate certain practices that set them apart from the general public (such as a cosmopolitan 'expat' culture, for instance).

Following Elizabeth Kier's interpretation, organisational culture is treated in the thesis as the culture of an organisation in a given context, not in the sense of a generic mindsets of 'civil servants', 'soldiers' or 'development workers'. A given organisation may cultivate an image of what it means to be a 'true soldier' or a 'good civil servant', but these images are likely to vary among different organisations (of the same type) in different national contexts. Generic labels such as 'civilian' and 'military' will have to be applied with care. Defence establishments feature civilian employees just as a number of development consultants or diplomats may have a military background.

5. Chapter conclusion

An overview of theoretical developments in the study of organisations has provided the basis for the analytical framework outlined in this chapter. A multi-layer framework, which integrates a cultural perspective with rationalist and bureaucratic analyses of organisational behaviour, is deemed to provide the most adequate guidance for the empirical analysis in the remainder of the thesis. The chapter has offered a working definition of culture as a dynamic but relatively

[96] Kier, *Imagining war*, p. 4.

stable set of shared beliefs, values and practices, which remains receptive to processes of fragmentation, contestation and change. Members of a given organisation are held to participate in the construction of organisational culture through the confirmation and contestation of established beliefs and practices. These actors are furthermore not submerged or 'trapped' in a single, unified cultural system but are likely to participate in several parallel cultures. In the context of a whole-of-government approach to stability operations, different organisations can be expected to compete over definitional power as they seek to reconcile the demands of a new 'game' with established organisational identities. In doing so, organisations are assumed to strive for influence and resources, but also for conformity with formal and informal rules to enhance their legitimacy. Their members are likely to defend parochial interests within the context of the whole of government or among subdivisions of their own organisation. Yet, they also hold a shared sense of appropriateness regarding their conduct and mission, and the tasks and roles they can be asked to take on. Or, in more simple terms, 'what the organisation is about' and what it means to belong to it.

III DEFENCE, DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom has regularly been considered a forerunner in the pursuit of an integrated approach to conflict and instability abroad.[1] This chapter introduces the institutional set-up of defence, diplomacy and development in the British context with a view to the analysis of obstacles to civilian-military coordination presented in the second half of this thesis.

Unlike in other Western democracies, the United Kingdom's 'three Ds' are embodied in three distinct, independent government departments. Standing out in the United Kingdom's institutional landscape is an independent Department for International Development (DFID), which leads a separate existence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). This set-up leads – at least formally – to a trilateral relationship between three government departments with equal standing within Whitehall.[2] Calls for greater civilian-military coordination speak to a range of historical experiences in the United Kingdom's nearer and farther past. During the colonial era, the British withdrawal from Malaya took the form of a counterinsurgency campaign often quoted as the textbook case for unified civilian-military command. In the 1990s, British forces took part in complex

[1] See for instance Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown, *Greater than the sum of its parts? Assessing 'whole of government' approaches to fragile states* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2007), p. 9.

[2] Whitehall is sometimes employed as shorthand for the UK government apparatus by reference to the road that extends south from Trafalgar Square in central London. Whitehall Road is lined with government departments and ministries including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, and the Cabinet Office. DFID is geographically separated from the FCO by St James' Park.

peace support operations under the auspices of the United Nations (most notably UNPROFOR in Bosnia), which brought them into close contact with humanitarian agencies on the ground. In the twenty-first century, British participation in the NATO mission in Afghanistan and in the US-led military campaign in Iraq became the focal point of cross-departmental coordination efforts among the Ministry of Defence (MOD), FCO and DFID.

This chapter begins with an overview of the policy discourse surrounding civilian-military coordination within the UK government and the template for coordination that has emerged over the past years. It then turns to introducing the main protagonists of the United Kingdom's whole-of-government effort – the MOD, FCO and DFID – in the second part of the chapter, which focuses on organisational identities and internal debates over core missions and values within each of these organisations. The third part examines how these three organisations have approached stability operations in conceptual terms; including their attempts to clarify the terminology associated with the idea of stabilisation and to define the scope of their responsibilities within a civilian-military division of labour.

1. The policy discourse in the United Kingdom: a 'Comprehensive Approach' to stabilisation

Britain's military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq have arguably been the chief drivers behind an integrated, cross-departmental approach to stabilisation this past decade. Nevertheless, the desire to better integrate defence, diplomacy and development has also been voiced more broadly with regard to other contexts, including conflict prevention, reconciliation, and support to UN peacekeeping

efforts in places like Sudan, Kenya or Nepal. Referring to previous British engagements in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone, the National Security Strategy published by the UK government in the fall of 2010 contended that the United Kingdom had 'unparalleled experience' in applying a coordinated civilian-military approach to the stabilisation of fragile states.[3]

The rationale for coordination

As Stuart Gordon notes, the idea of cross-departmental integration within the UK government has its roots in the Labour government's broader reform agenda for 'joined up government' following the 1997 elections.[4] In the realm of conflict management, this quest for cross-government coordination is reflected in the introduction of joint funding structures for MOD, FCO and DFID in 2001 (so-called conflict prevention pools), as well as in the formulation of a shared Public Service Agreement on reducing conflict for the three departments in the Treasury's spending review in 2007 (PSA 30).[5] The publication of Britain's first National Security Strategy (NSS) as late as 2008 meant that a template for cross-government coordination in stability operations had been proposed by the defence establishment prior to its formulation at the national strategic level.

The rationale behind an integrated civilian-military approach to Britain's national security assumes an increasingly interconnected set of security challenges

[3] Cabinet Office, *A strong Britain in an age of uncertainty: the National Security Strategy* (Cm 7953, October 2010), p. 5. (NSS 2010)
[4] Theo Farrell and Stuart Gordon, 'COIN machine: the British military in Afghanistan', *The RUSI Journal* 154/3 (2009), p. 23; Stuart Gordon, 'Defence policy and the 'joined up government' agenda: defining the limits of the 'comprehensive approach'', in David Brown (ed.), *The development of British defence policy: Blair, Brown, and beyond*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).
[5] HM Treasury, *PSA Delivery Agreement 30: Reduce the impact of conflict through enhanced UK and international efforts* (London: HMSO, revised November 2007).

replacing the Cold War era's more conventional security threats. The 2008 NSS posited the existence of a causal link between insecurity, conflict, and poverty. Accordingly, it concluded that security and development assistance in so-called fragile and failed states needed to be closely integrated in order to simultaneously strengthen governance, development, and security capabilities.[6] The interconnected nature of security and development concerns was seen by the Labour government as leading to a convergence between moral values and hard security interests. Tackling poverty and promoting development abroad would therefore both reflect Britain's core values and at the same time provide important security benefits.[7] In addition to an integrated response 'that cuts across departmental lines and traditional policy boundaries,' the 2008 NSS called for preventive action and expressed a preference for operating within a multilateral framework whenever possible.[8] The emphasis on tackling threats at their source through prevention and poverty reduction was reiterated by Labour's successor government in a *Strategic Security and Defence Review* (SDSR) and NSS released in 2010.[9] The 2010 NSS reiterated the imperative of a whole-of-government approach but placed greater emphasis on centralized leadership and 'leaner, better coordinated structures' under a newly established National Security Council.[10]

The UK government's relatively recent formulation of national security and defence strategy reveals a major concern over limited resources, which arguably favoured the adoption of a multilateral lens in terms of policy and capacity-

[6] Cabinet Office, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Security in an interdependent world* (Cm 7291, March 2008), pp. 7-8; 55. (NSS 2008)
[7] NSS 2008, p. 52.
[8] Ibid., p. 8; 36.
[9] Cabinet Office, *Securing Britain in an age of uncertainty: the Strategic Defence and Security Review* (Cm 7948, October 2010), p.44 (SDSR); NSS 2010, p.5.
[10] NSS 2010, p. 34.

building. This is reflected in the wording of the 2008 NSS, which emphasises support to the United Nations and regional organisations in the area of conflict prevention and management, as well as in Britain's engagement in the development of an EU crisis response capability under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).[11] In terms of national capabilities, the reality of finite resources made it imperative to define priority areas of engagement and draw resources together from across government in a unified approach.[12]

Unsurprisingly, there are discrepancies between the envisioning and execution of Britain's approach to security in the twenty-first century. Both the 2008 NSS and the 2010 SDSR contain cost-benefit arguments in favour of greater investment in non-military means (including conflict prevention) and a corresponding increase in the development budget.[13] Yet despite the talk of hard choices and prioritization, as Michael Clarke argues, the SDSR does not represent a real 'shift of resources from military "hard power" towards diplomatic, economic or cultural "soft power".'[14] Decisions to invest in multilateral capabilities versus national ones have not been clear-cut either. Despite emphasis on using multilateral instruments and investing in international partnership, successive strategic documents have contained a number of pledges to increase national capacity both on the civilian side (through an increase in deployable staff) and within the armed

[11] E.g. The Rt Hon David Miliband, UK Foreign Secretary, 'Strong Britain in a strong Europe', speech at the FCO, London, 28 October 2009.
[12] NSS 2008, p. 40.
[13] Ibid., p. 52; SDSR, pp. 3; 44-5.
[14] Michael Clarke, 'Has the defence review secured Britain's place in the world?' *Daily Telegraph*, 20 October 2010.

forces for the conduct of stability operations.[15] An update to the NSS published by the Labour government in the wake of the global financial crisis in 2009 announced the establishment of a 'one thousand strong UK civilian standby capability' by the end of the year.[16] The 2010 SDSR pledged to expand the remit of the cross-governmental Stabilisation Unit and to create additional civilian-military 'Stabilisation Response Teams' to be deployed at short notice in conflict prevention and crisis response missions.[17]

The policy discourse on stabilisation within the UK government has thus evolved within the broader objective of prioritizing scarce government resources in the area of conflict and crisis management. It continues to emphasize the need to build capacity outside government, primarily in the multilateral sphere and within regional security organisations. It echoes prior initiatives of the Labour party to 'join up' government via cross- and inter-departmental cooperation, and makes reference to the security-development nexus substantiating the need for greater coordination between defence, diplomacy, and development.

The template: the 'Comprehensive Approach'

The template that has provided a vision for the integration of defence, diplomacy, and development in the United Kingdom over the past decade has become known as the 'Comprehensive Approach' (CA). It is grounded in the assumption of departmental equity among its three main contributors: the MOD, FCO and DFID. While the term initially turned into a policy buzzword, it has gradually fallen out of fashion over the past few years as many practitioners grew cynical about

[15] NSS 2008, p. 39.
[16] Cabinet Office, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Update 2009; Security for the next generation* (Cm 7590, June 2009), p.11.
[17] SDSR, p. 46.

achieving the ambitious goals of close cross-government cooperation associated with the term. A government consultant's description of the CA as a 'tortuous journey ... that for a long time was trodden by mid-ranking MOD officials and military officers, allied with a small number of officials in the cross-departmental Stabilisation Unit, DFID and the Foreign Office' captures this frustration.[18]

The template for the CA originated within defence arguably due to an asymmetrical balance of interests between the military and the civilian government departments. For the military, the need for coordination was one of the main conclusions drawn from the peace support operations in the Balkans and became further accentuated during the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. The MOD had a clear incentive to push what it perceived to be necessary measures to ensure success in campaigns that put its credibility on the line and cost soldiers' lives. A Defence White Paper (DWP) released by the MOD in 2003 called for closer alignment between military planning and wider strategic planning and cross-government efforts in the realm of crisis prevention and management.[19] The concept of the CA was then updated by the MOD in a joint discussion note (JDN 4/05) and published in January 2006.[20]

[18] Daniel Korski, 'The Comprehensive Approach', Memorandum dated 22 June 2009, Defence Committee, *The Comprehensive Approach: the point of war is not just to win but to make a better peace* (HC 2009-10, 224), Ev. 140.
[19] Ministry of Defence, *Delivering security in a changing world* (White Paper, Cm 6041-I, December 2003), p.8. (DWP)
[20] Ministry of Defence, 'The Comprehensive Approach', Joint discussion note (JDN) 4/05 (Shrivenham: The Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre, June 2006). The Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre is responsible for publishing joint doctrine and joint warfare publications of the British military. It was established in the wake of the Strategic Defence Review in 1997, and expanded in 2006 to become the defence authority for doctrinal, conceptual and futures work (renamed DCDC). It is co-located with the UK Defence Academy at Shrivenham.

The note offered a conceptual framework for coordinating objectives and activities across government in response to 'complex situations'. In doing so, it sought to support the 'appropriate application of the 3 national instruments of power (diplomatic, military and economic).'[21] Rather than allocating responsibilities among the different government departments, JDN 4/05 assumed that the different agencies would agree on supported and supporting roles 'depending on the agreed main effort at any particular time.'[22] The note did not discuss mechanisms for decision-making or the allocation of resources in any detail either. In practice, however, JDN 4/05 became identified with a vision of civilian-military cooperation whereby military forces provide the space (or 'hold the ring') for primarily civilian-led socio-economic and political processes to take hold. While the scope of 'civilian' tasks remains subject to divergent interpretations, it is often associated with the restoration of basic services, political engagement with local leaders, and promoting trust in government institutions among the civilian population.[23] Hence, even though the note itself did not spell out a precise division of labour, the military increasingly came to see the CA as shorthand for a single, integrated plan that assigned a set of responsibilities to each department: the FCO would provide overall leadership and direction while DFID would 'deliver' on the ground.

Whether or not it was the MOD's intention to push its own vision of inter-departmental coordination to the fore, JDN 4/05 profoundly shaped expectations

[21] JDN 4/05, ch. 1, p. 2.
[22] JDN 4/05, ch. 1, p. 8.
[23] UK Stabilisation Unit, *The UK approach to stabilisation: Stabilisation Unit guidance notes* (London: Stabilisation Unit, November 2008), Appendix 4 'Stabilisation: a matrix of possible tasks – Version 2.0', pp. 66-104. See also Douglas Alexander, UK Secretary of State for International Development, 'Afghanistan: from stabilisation to state-building', speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, 17 September 2008.

about interagency coordination within Whitehall. The doctrinal note consciously refrained from using the term 'whole-of-government' because the CA envisioned broader engagement beyond government to include international, non-governmental and private sector partner organisations.[24] Even so, this did not prevent the government bureaucracy from identifying the concept largely with a cross-Whitehall approach in subsequent years. JDN 4/05 further cautioned that 'a shared understanding does not imply conformity and uniformity, as each participating entity or Department will contribute a distinctive set of professional, technical and cultural disciplines, values and perceptions.'[25] Its drafters warned that the CA could only be fully realised if it was culturally accepted by different departments.[26] In a similar vein, one of its main authors described the CA as the 'civilian-friendly, acceptable face of British military doctrine.'[27] However, the CA failed to command the same degree of enthusiasm from FCO and DFID that it had been greeted with by the defence establishment and executives within Number 10.[28] A senior military officer argued in 2007 that the civilian side of government tended to see the CA as 'something dreamt up by the military which then became cited as the standard.'[29] Another military officer involved in the drafting of subsequent military doctrine noted that the publication of JDN 4/05 in 2006 retrospectively looked like a 'very bad idea' because it had driven other departments away.[30] An FCO official confirmed that civilian government departments tended to associate the term 'Comprehensive Approach' with a

[24] JDN 4/05 also recalled that the first stage of the CA was a purely military initiative intended to foster 'jointery' among the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. JDN 4/05, ch. 1, p. 2.
[25] JDN 4/05, ch. 1, p. 6.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Rear Admiral Chris Parry, 'The Comprehensive Approach', in Paul Cornish (ed.), *Britain and Security* (London: The Smith Institute, 2007), p. 55.
[28] Korski, 'The Comprehensive Approach', para. 18.
[29] UK_01, 1 November 2007.
[30] UK_54, 25 May 2011.

military-led approach which did not entirely do justice to their own vision of coordination, and preferred using alternative terminology (for instance that of 'integrated missions' borrowed from the United Nations).[31]

Over the years, the CA has evolved both in terms of its conceptual orientation and the expectations about what it should deliver operationally in Iraq and Afghanistan. Stuart Gordon describes a shift from a focus on infrastructure and service delivery towards a more political approach centred on the legitimacy and capacity of host government authorities at national and sub-national levels.[32] A shift from a primarily delivery-oriented model towards one based on influence could possibly lead to a re-evaluation of the contributions made by individual departments and their value added within an integrated approach. Such a change in perceptions, however, has been incipient at best towards the end of the decade. Expectations informed by a delivery-oriented model have remained prominent within military circles in particular. Deep-seated frustrations over the purported unwillingness and inability of civilian agencies to play their part in the CA have complicated interdepartmental relations throughout most of past decade. Yet, in spite of these tensions, no attempts have been made by either DFID or FCO to formulate an alternative, more explicitly 'civilian', vision of the CA. The creation of a cross-departmental 'Stabilisation Unit' (which will be discussed in more detail in chapter six) arguably changed the incentive structure for both DFID and FCO to invest in stabilisation both in conceptual and operational terms.

[31] UK_27, 2 September 2009.
[32] Gordon, 'The UK's stabilisation model', p. 370.

2. Organisational identities in the UK government architecture

This section takes a closer look at the organisations behind the labels of defence, diplomacy and development. It inquires into organisational mandates and examines how historical trajectories, the place of each organisation within the government architecture, and collective understandings of core missions and competences have shaped self-perceptions and organisational identities. As it was argued in the previous chapter, organisational cultures are not monolithic structures but socially constructed through internal debate and contestation. This section thus explores the existence of intra-organisational tensions, which point to uncertainty over roles and responsibilities in the context of a whole-of-government approach to stabilisation.

Defence: the Ministry of Defence and the military services

The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen the British military passing from a confident stance with regard to its ability to fight so-called small wars or low intensity conflicts to significant soul-searching. The conduct of military campaigns in Basra, southern Iraq, and Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, led members of the defence establishment as well as outsiders to question whether the armed forces were adequately prepared – both in conceptual and material terms – to fight these wars.[33] In 2009, Theo Farrell and Stuart Gordon observed a 'growing consensus that the British are no longer any good at counterinsurgency

[33] The self-congratulatory view was most prominently reflected in an inflammatory article by Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster published in 2005, see Nigel R. F. Aylwin-Foster, 'Changing the army for counterinsurgency operations', *Military Review* (2005) pp. 27-40. It is also discernible in Defence Committee, *Iraq: an initial assessment of post conflict operations* (HC 2004-05, 65-I), p. 34-5. For a detailed analysis see of the British Army's COIN legacy see Robert Egnell, 'Lessons from Helmand, Afghanistan: what now for British counterinsurgency?' *International Affairs* 87 /2 (2011), pp. 298-9.

(COIN),' whereas only a few years prior, British troops had displayed a sense of superiority with regard to the failings of the American military in Iraq.[34] In the words of Paddy Ashdown, 'we British have a tendency to be rather self-congratulatory about our skill at this and a bit sniffy about our US allies' hamfistedness and clumsy use of force.'[35]

The self-confidence initially displayed by the British military was not entirely unjustified with a view to its historical record, which reaches back to the counterinsurgency campaigns at the drawdown of the Empire (Malaya, Dhofar, Kenya); military policing and counter-terrorism in Northern Ireland, contributions to UN-led peace support operations in the Balkans in the 1990s; and a short, successful expeditionary operation in Sierra Leone in 1999. However, the British engagement in Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and in Iraq as junior partner within the US-led coalition turned out to be very different from these previous engagements.

Traditionally, the British defence establishment is seen as well-integrated – but clearly subordinate – to the civilian policy-making apparatus. Although the FCO's budget is considerably smaller than that of its defence counterpart, it is traditionally considered the more influential ministry within Whitehall. Robert Egnell further argues that there is deep and widespread civilian-military cooperation within the MOD, which leads to mutual understanding of political and military concerns on both sides.[36] However, opinions diverge on the degree of

[34] Farrell and Gordon, 'COIN machine', p. 18.
[35] Paddy Ashdown, 'A strategy to save Afghanistan', *Financial Times*, 12 February 2008.
[36] Robert Egnell, 'Explaining US and British performance in complex expeditionary operations: the civil-military dimension', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29/6 (2006), p. 1053.

influence exerted by the British military over foreign policy within Whitehall over the past decade. Britain's former Special Representative to Afghanistan, (retired) Ambassador Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, and others have argued that the uniformed leadership bullied ignorant political leaders and subservient civil servants, who were either wary or incapable of questioning the soundness of military advice regarding campaign goals, strategy, and adequate resources.[37] Cowper-Coles has argued that the war in Afghanistan has given the British Army 'a *raison d'être* it has lacked for many years, and new resources on an unprecedented scale,' as well as the chance to redeem itself after perceived failures in Iraq.[38] He has further accused the Army of following a 'supply side strategy' by pushing for greater troop numbers in order to forestall budget and personnel cuts.[39] These arguments, however, are tempered when the British case is viewed in a comparative perspective, as well as when the broader context of stabilisation is taken into consideration. Given the broad array of stabilisation tasks implied by the policy discourse, the British military has appeared wary of pushing into new spheres of responsibility without the certainty that corresponding budget positions would follow. As one military officer noted, 'we do not want to be the government's only instrument for dealing with conflict.'[40] In a comparative perspective, the MOD is nowhere close to dominating the institutional landscape in the same way as its defence counterpart in the United States, as the next chapter will outline in more detail.

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[37] Sherard Cowper-Coles, *Cables from Kabul: the inside story of the West's Afghanistan campaign* (London: Harper Press, 2011), p. 177. Equally noted by Matthew Cavanagh, 'UK political and military decision-making on Afghanistan', presentation at the Oxford Strategic Studies Group (OUSSG), All Souls College, Oxford, 14 June 2011.
[38] Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, Supplementary written evidence dated 23 December 2010, Foreign Affairs Committee, *The UK's foreign policy approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan* (HC 2010-11, 514-I), Ev. 85.
[39] Julian Borger, 'Sherard Cowper-Coles: "'The nightly slaughter of the Taliban is profoundly wrong"', *The Guardian*, 25 May 2011.
[40] UK_02, 11 January 2008.

The first decade of the twenty-first century thus saw the British military and the civilian leadership within the MOD facing an imperative for introspection under considerable operational pressures. The impression of falling behind their American peers – in material, doctrinal, and tactical terms – in the conduct of counterinsurgency warfare was fuelled by controversies over the conduct of the British campaign in Basra and increasing difficulties encountered by British troops in Afghanistan's Helmand province. Widespread frustration among military professionals over the lack of operational support by civilian agencies and inadequate policy guidance by the political leadership stood in contrast to a generally positive legacy of fighting so-called small wars.

Mission and self-perception

Unlike its European peers, the British military maintains the ambition to be a full-spectrum force ready to engage conventional and unconventional enemies at all levels of intensity, albeit at a smaller scale than its US counterpart.[41] The 2003 DWP spelled out the aim 'to deliver security for the people of the United Kingdom ... and to act as a force for good by strengthening international peace and stability' as a core mandate for Britain's defence establishment.[42] The British military thus identifies with the model of a professional warfighting force, which retains the full range of conventional combat skills, but readily adapts to situations where the military instrument is only one tool among others. The DWP made clear that 'success in [high intensity combat] situations ... will remain the

[41] In his valedictory lecture as CGS, General Sir Richard Dannatt argued that 'there are no strategic concepts or technologies that represent a silver bullet: we must retain a carefully calibrated broad range of capabilities and should not specialise, but I believe we would be wise to optimise in the near term at least.' General Sir Richard Dannatt, UK Chief of the General Staff, 'The challenge for defence in the next decade', International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, 30 July 2009.
[42] DWP, p. 4.

benchmark against which to judge operational capability,' even if the armed forces might increasingly be called upon for stabilisation and prevention activities.[43] A senior Army officer described British military culture as 'not militaristic but cautious ... You might not want to fight but you may well have to, and it takes a long time to rebuild a war-fighting army.'[44]

Given the British military's reluctance to codify operational experience in the form of official doctrine until fairly recently, past lessons have been all the more important in shaping organisational self-perceptions. The historical experience of colonial policing and counterinsurgency operations during the withdrawal from colonial territories supports the image of the military as an enabling force. In such contexts, the British Army has traditionally supported rather than replaced civil institutions.[45] As noted earlier, the perceived successes of British counterinsurgency and military policing operations in the past have induced a tendency within military circles to assume that British troops are innately good at fighting 'wars amongst the people'.[46] The assumption that they 'instinctively understand … the complicated web of history, culture, and prejudice'[47] of their operational environment has become a cultural myth within the armed forces that may well have impeded institutional learning to some degree.[48] Historical experiences are further likely to have shaped expectations about the nature of coordination. In the interviews conducted with British military officers for this

[43] DWP, p. 11.
[44] UK_01, 1 November 2007.
[45] Gordon, 'Understanding priorities for CIMIC'.
[46] General Sir Rupert Smith uses the term 'war amongst the people' as 'a graphic description of modern war-like situations, and also a conceptual framework: it reflects the hard fact that there is no secluded battlefield upon which armies engage, nor are there necessarily armies, definitely not on all sides.' Rupert Smith, *The utility of force: The art of war in the modern world* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 3.
[47] UK_04, 13 February 2008.
[48] See Egnell, 'Lessons from Helmand', p. 300.

thesis, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer's handling of the Malayan Emergency (1952-54) was referred to with somewhat surprising regularity. For many of them, this historical example validated the notion that the civilian and military lines of operation of a counterinsurgency campaign were best combined in the hands of a single decision-maker. Yet, Hew Strachan notes that Templer's appointment as both high commissioner and director of operations in Malaya was in reality an 'exceptional and short-lived combination of political and military authority,' as dual control was re-established upon his departure in 1954.[49] As an institutional myth, Templer's legacy nevertheless remains significant.[50]

At first sight stability operations are easily subsumed within the formal mission of the British military. They resonate positively with the armed forces' self-perception built on a legacy of fighting 'small wars' and acceptance that most wars will have to be fought 'amongst the people'. Consequently, the formal definition of 'Military Assistance to Stabilisation and Development' (MASD) as a new military task in 2009 was perceived not as a revolutionary change, but rather as the formal acknowledgment of a role troops were already engaged in *ad hoc* for many years.[51] An introduction note to the MOD's stabilisation doctrine (released in late 2009) stated that Britain's armed forces 'should consider stabilisation to be

[49] Hew Strachan, *The politics of the British Army* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 173.
[50] General Sir David Richards, who commanded NATO-ISAF from May 2006 to February 2007, for instance, argued 'what Templer did in Malaya was a big factor in my own thinking.' Rear Admiral Richard Cobbold, 'RUSI interview with General David Richards', *The RUSI Journal* 152/2 (2007), p. 31.
[51] UK_43, 5 May 2010. MASD tasks the armed forces to plan and conduct operations to stabilise and reconstruct in those areas where security situation does not allow civilian agencies to work alone. It was announced in a review of defence planning assumptions in the House of Commons by Secretary of State for Defence, The Rt Hon John Hutton. HC Deb (written ministerial statement), 11 February 2009, vol. 487, col. 59WS.

a *permanent component* of most scenarios in the future.'[52] This assertion was immediately followed by a reminder that stabilisation remained highly likely to involve combat, as evidenced by contemporary operations. The outgoing Chief of the General Staff, Sir Richard Dannatt, noted in 2009 that the 'expanded kaleidoscope of conflict' required the armed forces to engage in conflict prevention and capacity-building while remaining prepared to intervene militarily in cases where these measures failed to contain threats emanating from failed states and non-state actors. In the latter case, he added, 'stabilisation operations are a key role that the military must deliver, and so the means to do this must be properly attributed in the Defence Programme.'[53]

A survey conducted among British military officers in the Joint Services Command and Staff College in 2007 showed agreement among roughly 88 per cent of respondents (of which 54 per cent 'strongly agreed') with the statement that 'future operations will be characterised by an holistic approach, involving a mix of military and non-military instruments, and directed towards achieving strategic effects.'[54] Even so, as one civilian interviewee observed, while this will to cooperate was often genuine both at a personal and an institutional level, the way in which cooperation was framed institutionally (and hence perceived by

[52] Ministry of Defence, *Security and stabilisation: the military contribution*, Introduction note to Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40 (Shrivenham: DCDC, December 2008).
[53] Dannatt, 'The challenge for defence in the next decade'.
[54] Professor Theo Farrell, Department of War Studies, King's College London, survey data reprinted in a supplementary memorandum dated 11 June 2009, Defence Committee, *The Comprehensive Approach: the point of war is not just to win but to make a better peace* (HC 2009-10, 224), Ev. 152-55, fig. 12. The memorandum further states that 60 per cent of the respondents were from the Army, and 66 per cent were middle ranking officers. Farrell emphasises a direct link between the survey results (on the EBAO) and officers' attitudes to the Comprehensive Approach. Also reprinted in Theo Farrell, 'The dynamics of British military transformation', *International Affairs* 84/4 (2008), p. 795. The full survey questionnaire is attached as Annex A to Terry Terriff *et al*., *The diffusion of US military innovations and European military transformation*, Non-technical summary (research summary), ESRC end of award report, RES-228-25-0063 (Swindon: ESRC, 2008).

military personnel) in reality often meant cooperation on the military's own terms. As a result, the same interviewee noted, 'there are signs that the military is starting to find the CA difficult ... whenever it would require the military to do things differently.'[55] Furthermore, a former government official with longstanding experience in civilian-military cooperation asserted that 'to be able to defend the country, the military have to do certain things and think in certain ways that are essentially non-negotiable.'[56] Ingrained cultural attitudes and specific functional demands of the military profession were widely perceived as introducing a degree of rigidity that affected the readiness of military professionals to coordinate with other non-military actors. What may have looked like a natural progression from a legacy of fighting small wars to the conduct of stability operations on the basis of an integrated civilian-military template thus turned out to be a more difficult and complex journey. The next section further unpacks competing visions of the military's role that have framed the debate within the defence establishment.

Internal tensions and debates

British military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan prompted serious debate within the defence establishment over how much transformation the armed forces required in the conduct of these operations. Disagreements arose not only with regard to the future shape of the force but equally touched on more profound questions about the essence of 'soldiering' and the core competences that characterise the military profession. Impending choices in the areas of doctrinal development, education curricula and procurement required an assessment of

[55] UK_27, 2 September 2009.
[56] UK_13, 26 February 2008.

potential tradeoffs among the equipment, skills, and attitudes required for both conventional warfare and stabilisation.

The multifaceted nature of stability operations challenged traditional understandings of the military's combat function but did not make it redundant. As General Sir David Richards pointed out during his command of NATO forces in Afghanistan, 'we like to think that the concept of "hearts and minds" is all about soft power – humanitarian aid, development projects – but in the Afghan context there is a hard edge to it.'[57] With regard to skills and training, for instance, opinions diverged over the value of mainstreaming stabilisation functions within the force versus keeping them as a specialist orientation. The commander of a newly formed Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG) emphasized that soldiers needed to come at the task of stabilisation as soldiers, and that their training required the adaptation of core military competences rather than building new skill sets.[58] When asked for further detail on these competences, the commander listed a mix of skills and attitudes, which included robust planning mechanisms and a 'focused approach with a clear end-state in mind;' a unique understanding of security; a focus on delivery; enthusiasm and 'can do energy'; and readiness to take risk. He underlined that the MSSG was not created with the intention 'to blunt all these skills and lose them because all we do is stabilisation.'[59]

[57] Cobbold, 'RUSI interview with General David Richards', p.29.
[58] Author interview with Colonel Greville Bibby, Commander MSSG, Combined Arms Tactical Trainer, Warminster, 2010 (exact date omitted in conformity with the coded reference system used elsewhere in the thesis).
[59] Ibid.

Tensions between a combat-oriented image of the military profession and the requirements of an 'enabling' or 'supporting' military role (within the CA) have played out differently according to rank and/or service among subcultures within the British defence establishment. Particularly among junior ranks, expectations of what soldiering was about could differ considerably from doctrinal precepts on stabilisation. As a British civil servant noted, 'this is something I am not sure the military would want to admit, but most soldiers who go out there [Afghanistan] want to have a fight, they do not want to do the humanitarian bit.'[60] A BBC journalist embedded with British forces in Afghanistan observed, 'during down time, soldiers' conversation is mostly about "contact". A good contact is a shoot-out that involves a number of enemy fighters and lasts a decent amount of time.'[61] These attitudes are to some degree institutionalised in promotion patterns and career structures. A junior Army officer noted that 'kinetic, or aggressive, enemy-oriented operations equal a progressive mindset within the Army. Awareness of the value of cross-departmental working is only found at the level of Lieutenant-Colonel and above, not below.'[62] Arguably, however, the dilemma resides not merely in a cultural propensity to equate soldiering with high-intensity combat. There is genuine uncertainty over whether the cultivation of so-called soft skills risks impinging on the traditional warrior ethos that is considered crucial not only in conventional combat but also in the conduct of low-intensity warfare. Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely argued 'to be capable of warfighting, an army needs to have as its characteristic cultural spirit, or ethos, one which is warfighting-oriented, and its soldiers need to have a self-perception as warriors.'

[60] UK_06, 18 February 2008.
[61] Ben Anderson, 'Diary', *London Review of Books* 30/1 (2008).
[62] UK_26, 8 May 2009.

He further noted that this ethos was hard to combine with a culture of empathy required in a counterinsurgency campaign.[63]

These dilemmas are echoed at a broader level where the military establishment as a whole has been grappling with competing visions about the value of transformation away from conventional warfare. In 2001, Stuart Gordon argued that the British Army was culturally 'orientated towards the demands of high-intensity mechanized warfare.'[64] In 2010, the incoming coalition government noted scathingly in its National Security Strategy that 'the equipment we have available is still too rooted in a Cold War mind-set ... main battle tanks aplenty, but not enough protected vehicles to move our forces on the insurgency battlefield.'[65] In spite of considerable changes to military doctrine and education in all services over the past seven or eight years, the degree to which change is embraced collectively (i.e. not only within the top leadership or within a single service) remains limited.[66] Too much of a focus on the enabling role associated with stabilisation missions is feared to infringe upon the armed forces' preparedness to defend the nation against other – including conventional – threats. In the above-mentioned survey, only 53 per cent of respondents expressed agreement with the statement that 'national armed forces must radically change their approach to warfare to compete effectively against future adversaries.' Agreement was highest among the Royal Marines, officers of senior rank, and respondents with combat experience.[67] This relatively even divide arguably

[63] John Kiszely, 'Learning about counter-insurgency', *The RUSI Journal* 151/6 (2006), p. 19.
[64] See Gordon, 'Understanding priorities for CIMIC'.
[65] NSS 2010, p. 5.
[66] UK_22, 3 April 2008.
[67] Author's copy of survey data collected by Professor Theo Farrell, Department of War Studies, King's College, London, March 2007, see n. 54.

illustrates the uncertainty over future requirements and the salience of perceived tradeoffs associated with change and transformation.

Diplomacy: the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office – by tradition the lead department in the foreign policy arena – found itself under pressure to maintain its influence within the government architecture at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The organisation not only saw its place within the institutional architecture challenged by debates over the continued relevance of its competencies and expertise but also faced negative budgetary trends. The establishment of an independent development ministry in 1997 signified the loss of control over a significant share of government spending by the Foreign Office. While the aid budget has been rising steadily throughout the past decade, the FCO's real-term budget increased only marginally if at all, and its share of total government spending remained steady at approximately 0.4 per cent between 1998/99 and 2009/10.[68]

Testimonies collected in early 2011 by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (HCFAC) for a review of the FCO's place in government conveyed a generally positive image among former and active senior civil servants of their organisation, with some concerns over a decline in performance in the more recent past.[69] Daniel Korski notes that the loss of power suffered by the FCO over

[68] Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO in the UK Government* (HC 2010-12, 665-I), p. 27. The HCFAC further expressed concern that the 2010 Spending Review settlement would 'accentuate the regrettable long-term trend for the FCO to lose out relative to other departments and agencies in the allocation of government spending.' Foreign Affairs Committee, *FCO performance and finances* (HC, 2010-11, 572-I), p. 17, para. 25.

[69] The HCFAC noted that witnesses testifying for the inquiry still considered the FCO and the UK government 'among the world's most accomplished diplomatic operations' while at the same time expressing concerns over a loss of competitiveness by the FCO with regard to its peers in recent years. Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO*, p.21.

the past fifteen years – both in terms of resources and influence – presents the organisation with challenges that are not entirely new to its history, but 'different and harder to deal with' in light of the widening and changing scope of diplomacy.[70] Indeed, the annual report published by the HCFAC in 2008-9 highlighted a number of concerns with regard to the FCO's traditional role in the analysis and making of foreign policy in a time of increasing demands on the organisation. These included diminishing appreciation within the government of the foreign ministry's special role given new means of global communication; competition with the Prime Minister's office and DFID in shaping the foreign policy agenda; and downward pressure on resources.[71] Increasing attention to specialist expertise and management skills in departmental performance evaluations and understandings of effectiveness furthermore raised questions with regard to the relevance of traditional diplomatic expertise in a changing world, and the skills required to both formulate and implement foreign policy.

In the context of the 'three D' triangle, the FCO has struggled to prove its effectiveness as a primarily policy-oriented organisation next to the more operational defence and development ministries. Although some of the language employed in more recent strategic documents resembles that of DFID or MOD (for instance by making reference to 'delivery' or 'impact'), diplomatic activity more often consists in observation, persuasion, and shaping perceptions than in

[70] Daniel Korski, 'Reversing decline, reforming the FCO', written evidence dated 23 January 2011, Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO in the UK Government* (HC 2010-12, 665-II), Ev. 54.
[71] Foreign Affairs Committee, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2008-9* (HC 2009-10, 145), pp. 116-19.

delivering tangible impact.[72] Whereas development programming often relies on formal analysis and technical expertise, an important dimension of the diplomatic toolbox – such as linguistic, cultural, and local knowledge – is not easily formalised or measured. The HCFAC concluded in 2011 that 'formal performance reporting of the kind used across Government by successive administrations since 1997 often does not capture the nature of the FCO's foreign policy work, and definitely does not do so when performance is defined in quantitative terms.'[73]

The FCO was formally given the lead on UK government policy in the area of global conflict prevention and management in the form of a cross-departmental Public Service Agreement (PSA) formulated by the Treasury in 2008.[74] The update to NSS 2008 published by the Labour government in 2009 attributed a lead minister/department role to the FCO in the area of 'global instability and conflict and failed and fragile states.'[75] However, the FCO's leadership role in the UK government's conflict architecture has become increasingly challenged by DFID's growing attention to this area both in terms of policy and funding. The *Strategic Security and Defence Review* conducted by the newly elected coalition government in 2010 assigned joint lead responsibility to FCO and DFID for 'building stability overseas' rather than putting the FCO in charge.[76]

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[72] The FCO's 2006 White Paper for instance notes that the FCO's purpose 'to work for UK interests in a safe, just and prosperous world ... includes *developing and delivering* specific international policies,' alongside a more traditional monitoring role of developments overseas and the delivery of services to British citizens. FCO, *Active diplomacy for a changing world: The UK's international priorities* (White Paper, Cm 6762, March 2006), p. 42.
[73] Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO*, pp. 49-50.
[74] The Public Service Agreements (PSA) were first introduced by the Labour government in 1998 to set government-wide goals for service improvements. PSAs identify what departments plan to deliver in return for the resources allocated by the Treasury. FCO, *Better world better Britain: Departmental report, 1 April 2007-31 March 2008* (Cm 739, May 2008), p. 84.
[75] Cabinet Office, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: update 2009*, p. 45.
[76] SDSR, p. 69.

In sum, while the FCO remains widely perceived as the most influential UK Cabinet ministry in the twenty-first century, its leadership role has been questioned at several levels. Uncertainty over the relevance of its core expertise and skills, juxtaposed with a traditional sense of exclusivity (and sometimes superiority) within the civil service, has risked turning the FCO into a somewhat awkward and reluctant leader within Whitehall.[77]

Mission and self-perception

The stated mission of the FCO is to pursue the UK government's international agenda and to deliver services to British citizens.[78] This mandate at first sight naturally puts the organisation in a privileged position to provide overall coherence to Britain's engagements, military and other, abroad. This assumed leadership role arguably also applies within the context of a whole-of-government approach to stability operations. The HCFAC noted in 2010 that 'it may seem particularly unnecessary to query the purpose of the FCO, which is one of the "great" departments of state and one of the most well-established elements in the Whitehall landscape.'[79] However, both the assumption that the FCO is a natural candidate for leading cross-government processes and the feeling that it unquestioningly occupies a *primus inter pares* position within the government have come under pressure over the past decade.[80]

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[77] FCO civil servants are drawn from the top tier of those who pass the civil service exams, and are often said to perceive of themselves as an elite for this reason. A government consultant for instance observed that 'joining the FCO is not quite the same as joining the civil service. It is a different stream and a distinct culture.' UK_33, 25 September 2009.
[78] FCO, *Better world better Britain*, introduction by Sir Peter Ricketts.
[79] Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO*, p. 19; 21.
[80] Hocking suggests that the British case is not necessarily unique in that sense and argues that 'whole-of-government' rhetoric has challenged the central place of foreign ministries within Western democracies more generally. Brian Hocking, 'Reconfiguring public diplomacy: from competition to collaboration', in UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (ed.), *Engagement: public diplomacy in a globalised world* (London: FCO, 2008), p. 67.

The adoption of a more explicitly strategic approach by the FCO to the definition of its role at the start of the new century may thus be interpreted as an attempt by the organisation to demonstrate its value added to the rest of the government. In 2003, under the leadership of Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, the FCO produced its first ever White Paper in over two hundred years of existence. The document identified eight priorities, which were subsequently distilled into four core priorities in a strategic review initiated by Foreign Secretary David Miliband in 2007.[81] Earlier in the same year, the Cabinet Office had called upon the FCO to 'articulate clearly for the benefit of its staff and its partners the particular contribution and value it brings to new and changing areas of overseas policy.'[82] Whereas Foreign Secretary Jack Straw acknowledged the difficulty of setting strategic direction for the FCO's naturally broad portfolio in 2006, his successor David Miliband asserted in 2008 that a 'rigorous strategic framework' would guide the organisation's future work.[83] In spite of these efforts, the organisation was again called upon to 'continue to think radically about its place in a changing world' in a capability review in 2009.[84] Two years later, the HCFAC reached the sobering conclusion that 'despite over a decade of formal priority- and objective-setting, the FCO's institutional purpose has become "confused" and "blurred".'[85]

Over the past decade, opinions have shifted back and forth on the scope and degree of authority the FCO's policy advisory function should have over the rest

[81] FCO, *Better world better Britain*, p. 16.
[82] Cabinet Office, Capability Reviews Team, *Capability reviews tranche 3: findings and common themes, Civil Service; Strengths and challenges* (London: HMSO, March 2007), p. 8.
[83] Jack Straw, Foreign Secretary, 'Active diplomacy for a changing world', address to the FCO Leadership Conference, Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London, 27 March 2006; FCO, *Better world better Britain*, foreword by David Miliband.
[84] Cabinet Office, Capability Reviews Team, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office: progress and next steps* (London: HMSO, March 2009), p. 7.
[85] Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO*, p. 32.

of the government. Successive spending reviews published by the Treasury (in 2000, 2002, and 2007) and the FCO's own White Papers and strategic reviews (in 2003, 2006, and 2008) spelled out different degrees of responsibility and authority for the FCO in the delivery of Britain's foreign policy. These documents variably presented the organisation as a leader, service provider, or 'flexible global network serving the whole of the British Government.'[86] Several official documents acknowledged that in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world, the FCO no longer occupied a gatekeeper role with regard to external affairs.[87] A strategic review by the FCO in 2008 explicitly addressed this reality and acknowledged the need to forge closer partnerships with other departments, 'which will, on certain issues, be taking the lead on international as well as domestic policy-making.'[88] Consequently, at times the FCO's self-image was more explicitly service-oriented than aspiring to authority. In 2010, the change in government brought more assertive rhetoric back with a Foreign Secretary vowing to place the FCO back at the centre of government.[89] Yet doubts persist over the FCO's ability to assume leadership on cross-governmental issues in the absence of control over economic and financial matters (which remain under the Treasury's authority) and in light of the FCO's perceived prioritization of its departmental agenda over wider government interests.[90]

[86] For an overview of priority-setting by the FCO over the past decade see Ibid., pp. 29-32.
[87] A capability review of the FCO conducted under the auspices of the Cabinet Office in 2007, for instance, observed that 'a growing number of departments ... have a role to play in developing and supporting international policy in Whitehall and in delivering it cohesively overseas.' Cabinet Office, Capability Reviews Team, *Capability review of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office* (London: HMSO, March 2007), p. 14.
[88] FCO, *Better world better Britain*, p.7.
[89] William Hague, UK Foreign Secretary, 'Britain's foreign policy in a networked world', speech at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 1 July 2010.
[90] Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO*, p. 55.

Internal tensions and debates

Debates over the continued relevance of traditional diplomatic competences and skills, in addition to calls for the FCO to play a more active role in stability operations, are occasionally accompanied by references to Britain's imperial past and the Colonial Office's role in administering overseas territories. Several practitioners interviewed for this thesis pointed out that stronger leadership skills had existed on the civilian side of government during the colonial era, when civil servants were in charge of running provinces and districts. One military officer observed with discernible regret that 'the nature of civil service today does not produce leaders, it produces advisers.'[91] Within the FCO, however, such comparisons are largely rejected and – in contrast to the 'small wars' legacy of the British military – the colonial past is viewed in a negative light. The post-colonial context quite obviously demands a different attitude and expertise from diplomats, who see little commonality between their core trade and the demands of running an empire. An FCO civil servant, for instance, pointed out that his organisation 'neither runs places, nor sorts out people's politics.'[92]

The extent to which the FCO can and should adapt its working methods to assume a more assertive leadership role is thus subject to diverging opinions within the organisation. Additional tensions have arisen with regard to the staff profile rewarded and promoted within the FCO, and the degree to which traditional diplomatic skills apply to the implementation of foreign policy in the twenty-first century – including in the context of stability operations. Diplomats are often described as gifted generalists who possess a range of core skills that allow them

[91] UK_26, 8 May 2009.
[92] UK_18, 10 March 2008.

to move nimbly between different issue areas and among different functions.[93] What these core skills should consist of and how they relate to crisis management and foreign intervention in particular, however, remains subject to debate. A number of interviewees again referred to Britain's colonial past. An MOD civil servant observed that 'the colonial service taught civil servants how to do things with local people. Although they did not have a term for it, it resembled what we call capacity-building or local empowerment today.'[94] Shorter tours, limited training in foreign languages and cultures, and a relatively risk-averse attitude to deploying diplomats outside secure embassies and consulates in the contemporary civil service, however, work against the cultivation of such skills. While one rationale behind the call for more civilian advisors on the ground in stability operations has been the collection and provision of local knowledge and expertise, these very skills have come under pressure by a greater focus on functional and managerial competences by the FCO recently.

The HCFAC noted a decline in regional expertise partly due to the growing reorganisation of the department among functional lines, and as a result of greater weight given to generic managerial skills in the FCO's promotion system. Witnesses testifying before the HCFAC noted that there was a danger for the FCO to give too much weight to (consular and commercial) service delivery in an attempt to comply with performance measurement standards, thereby neglecting the policy advisory role.[95] The report further noted that the '"core competences" against which staff in the department are now assessed for appointment and

[93] See for instance Jim Murphy, 'Foreword', in Foreign and Commonwealth Office (ed.), *Engagement: public diplomacy in a globalised world* (London: FCO, 2008), p. 11.
[94] UK_38, 13 January 2010.
[95] Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO*, p. 31.

promotion ... do not include language capabilities.[96] In a written submission to the HCFAC, a former civil servant argued that the FCO had 'agonised in recent years over whether to invest in functional or geographical skills. ... it has often flitted between the two and, in the end, probably undermined investment in both.'[97] Rory Stewart, a former civil servant who had served a tour as senior provincial officer in Iraq under the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) deplored that promotion criteria in the FCO were based on 'abstract management and policy skills, rather than deep knowledge of a country.'[98] According to Stewart, these came at the detriment of 'particular knowledge of power politics in specific countries,' which he deemed crucial for Britain's 'most extravagant and dangerous international exercises: interventions.'[99] On the other hand, a civil servant interviewed for this thesis pointed out that too great an emphasis on regional knowledge could be equally detrimental: 'the regional desk officers, who are the first port of call in an emergent crisis, may or may not have the relevant expertise to lead a process that involves the deployment of the military instrument.'[100]

Compared to its US counterpart (as the next chapter will show), the FCO has thus adopted a relatively cautious stance with regard to a more operational role in stability operations, which would imply substantive changes to traditional diplomacy. While acknowledging the imperative to improve the quality of UK government interventions in places like Afghanistan or Iraq, the FCO's annual

[96] Ibid., p. 69.
[97] Korski, 'Reversing decline', Ev(w) 54.
[98] Stewart further argued that this trend was even more pronounced within the US State Department. Rory Stewart, 'The gentle art of not intruding', *New Statesman*, 14 April 2011.
[99] Ibid.
[100] UK_28, 17 September 2009.

report for 2006-07 pointed out that 'discreet diplomacy can be equally effective ... we can advise ministers on the possible nature and scale of UK interventions, and, where appropriate, when others are better placed to intervene.'[101] At an individual level, Rory Stewart has called for policy guides that 'will not make us intervene more or entice us with a promise of better occupations. Frequently, their role will be to make the detailed, country-specific arguments about why we cannot intervene in a particular place or why we should not intervene too deeply.'[102]

Development: the Department for International Development

The establishment of the Department for International Development as an independent government ministry with Cabinet-level representation after the 1997 UK general election considerably changed the dynamics among the government departments concerned with external affairs. Over the past fifty years, the responsibility for administering British development aid moved back and forth several times between the Foreign Office and (semi-) independent departments. DFID's predecessor, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), had operated as a functional wing of the Foreign Office from 1979 to 1997. After 1997, therefore, the degree to which British development policy was aligned with matters of national interest changed. A former ODA official recalled what he had perceived as a 'coherent system' prior to DFID's arrival: 'you had the Foreign Office with whatever foreign policy there was, and two arms of delivery, the MOD and ODA ... it was not for [the junior minister for development at the time] to disagree, her boss was the Foreign Secretary.'[103] By contrast, the UK's first cabinet-level development minister, Clare Short, pursued an independent agenda

[101] FCO, *Departmental report 1 April 2006-31 March 2007* (Cm 7099, May 2007), p. 47.
[102] Stewart, 'The gentle art of not intruding'.
[103] UK_20, 13 March 2008.

that placed the fight against global poverty at the core of DFID's mandate. The adoption of the International Development Act (IDA) in 2002 codified into law the British government's commitment to disburse foreign aid exclusively in accordance with the core purpose of poverty reduction.[104] Although subject to interpretation like any other legal instrument, the IDA signified a break with the practice of tying foreign assistance programmes to national interests (commercial and other). DFID's relations with the FCO have elsewhere been described as 'low-intensity bureaucratic warfare', which nevertheless improved over time and eventually gave way to collaboration in the context of post-conflict reconstruction and on a variety of logistical issues.[105] From the military's perspective, the creation of an independent development agency meant it had to deal with an organisation that did not naturally perceive its interests to align with UK foreign policy priorities, and had to be persuaded to deliver its share rather than simply being told to do so.[106]

DFID thus entered the twenty-first century as an independent government ministry, aspiring to become the world's leading donor agency, and empowered with a strong sense of purpose and a growing budget.[107] Despite coming under sustained criticism for its perceived unwillingness to throw its weight behind Britain's foremost foreign policy commitments, DFID largely succeeded in

[104] International Development Act 2002 (c.1), 26 February 2002.
[105] Owen Barder, *Reforming development assistance: lessons from the UK experience,* working paper no.70 (London: Center for Global Development, 2005), p. 19.
[106] DFID's assertion of autonomy from national interests is seen as a break with earlier practice, such as in Bosnia where development staff (then under its Foreign Office-controlled predecessor organisation ODA) followed in closely behind British military. See Sir Jeremy Greenstock, 'Iraq: The role of humanitarian agencies in post-conflict situations', oral evidence before the International Development Committee, dated 14 July 2004 (HC 2003-04, 918-i).
[107] Total department spending by DFID rose by a percentage change of over 60 per cent between 2004 and 2011 with a further increase up to 100 per cent projected for 2013-14. Source: House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, fig. reprinted in Foreign Affairs Committee, *The role of the FCO*, p. 24.

striking a balance between its multilateral ambitions and the demands placed on it within a whole-of-government context.[108] The general election in 2010 saw the Conservative Party returning to office without a serious threat to place foreign assistance once more under the authority of the FCO (in contrast to 1970 and 1979).

Mission and self-perception

DFID's attachment to an autonomous multilateral agenda is reflected in a series of White Papers and other strategic communications released by the department since 1997. From the beginning, the elimination of poverty in developing countries provided DFID with a strong objective from which to build an institutional identity. Additional reference was made to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) from 2003 onwards.[109] The clarity of purpose instilled by the focus on poverty reduction has been described as a 'powerful motivating, unifying and guiding force' within the organisation.[110] The IDA played an ambiguous role in the defence of organisational interests. The impetus for separating development aid from foreign policy in 1997 was the result of a scandal over close ties between aid, trade and commercial interests and party politics.[111] However, the IDA's invocation to protect the (growing) foreign aid budget from 'contamination' by commercial or other interests occasionally gave

[108] The OECD noted in 2006 that development co-operation in the UK was at 'an historic high point of political and public support' and urged DFID to think about ways to maintain this momentum. OECD, *United Kingdom: Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer review* (Paris: OECD, 2006).
[109] As spelled out in consecutive Public Service Agreements for DFID from 1998 to 2008, see comparative table in Simon Maxwell, *Where next for DFID?* [weblog], London: Overseas Development Institute, 5 December 2006.
[110] John Vereker, 'Blazing the trail: eight years of change in handling international development', *Development Policy Review* 20/2 (2002), p. 137.
[111] On the controversy over the Pergau Dam project in Malaysia see Sarah Collinson, *Donor accountability in the UK,* Background paper (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, 2002).

rise to suspicions that DFID was trying to hide behind legal restrictions to avoid participating in missions it opposed for ideological reasons. A government consultant argued that the IDA contributed to the development of a collective attitude within DFID that saw involvement in conflict as a distraction from the organisation's aim of becoming the world's leading donor agency.[112] Yet he further noted that the counter-argument, which saw DFID's core mission as requiring the organisation to address conflict as a primary driver of poverty, had begun to 'trickle down from some senior people in the organisation.'[113] A technical focus on means and methods of aid delivery would see DFID resembling more closely its Foreign Office-controlled predecessor. Such a narrow vision, however, was opposed by those who wanted to see DFID assuming a broader role and lead government policy on all development-related issues, including conflict management and trade.[114] A White Paper published by DFID in 2009 eventually stated that development agencies had 'a major role to play ... [in helping to address] the underlying causes of conflict.'[115] An emerging policy paper declared in the same year that 'addressing the causes and effect of conflict is "core business" for DFID.'[116]

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[112] A peer review of the United Kingdom by the OECD's development assistance committee (DAC) in 2001 acknowledged DFID's 'engagement and influencing agenda' within the international development community and urged the organisation to be more collaborative in its pursuit. OECD/DAC, *United Kingdom (2001), development co-operation review; Main findings and recommendations*, pre-print of the *DAC Journal* 2/4 (2001). The peer review of 2006 again acknowledged DFID's leadership ambitions within the donor community but pointed out that 'British advocacy can be perceived as promoting DFID's own model rather than leading and encouraging complementary donor action.'
OECD, *United Kingdom: Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer review* (Paris: OECD, 2006).

[113] UK_05, 15 February 2008.

[114] See Maxwell, 'Where next for DFID?'.

[115] DFID, *Eliminating world poverty: building our common future* (White Paper, Cm 7656, July 2009), p. 71.

[116] DFID, *Building the state and securing the peace* (Emerging policy paper, DFID, June 2009), p.22.

DFID's self-perception as the guardian of objective, needs-based foreign assistance remained strong even as the perceived links between poverty and security-related concerns were putting pressure on DFID to align its programmes with UK foreign policy priorities. The department's strong commitment to poverty reduction is seen as benefitting the organisation in its relationships with a variety of stakeholders. As a military officer noted, 'DFID's strength lies in being perceived as having a distinctive identity and independence from foreign policy. It offers a way of influencing other partners almost like diplomacy.'[117] A capability review ordered by the Cabinet Office in 2009 noted that DFID was a 'well-run department', which was regarded as a leader throughout the international donor community.[118] DFID's ideological cohesion is built around altruistic values that inspire passion among its staff and command respect and authority within the donor community. While the strength of these are powerful organisational attributes in their own right, they have not been easy to transfer to the context of cross-departmental cooperation. Part of DFID's identity as an internationally recognised leader in development policy is based on its relative independence from 'narrow' national interests, which are nevertheless at the core of a whole-of-government approach. Hence, the department has been walking a tight rope between maintaining its credibility as strong supporter of independent aid policy in the multilateral and non-governmental realm on the one hand, and the need to be seen as a cooperative partner within Whitehall on the other.

While Clare Short's assertive leadership helped build a strong organisational identity in DFID's early days, it also made cooperation within Whitehall

[117] UK_30, 23 September 2009.
[118] Cabinet Office Capabilities Review Team, *Department for International Development: progress and next steps* (London: HMSO, March 2009), p.6.

difficult.[119] Short was widely perceived as having shaped the newly independent department in a NGO-like image, which led staff to identify with a departmental mission rather than seeing themselves as part of the government.[120] A considerable number of DFID's original staff were moreover drawn from humanitarian and non-governmental organisations, who tended to view government as the source of problems rather than a trusted partner. As a government consultant observed, although these individuals found themselves serving a sovereign government upon joining DFID, they did not automatically identify with the role of civil servants, a mindset he described as 'mentally wearing sandals.'[121] While Short's successors placed greater emphasis on being perceived as a cooperative partner within the government, the legacy of DFID's early days had a lasting effect on perceptions within Whitehall and is still discernible in how other departments perceive and judge DFID's behaviour.

Internal tensions and debates

The rhetoric of the CA accentuated tensions between DFID's mandate and its place in the government architecture. First, the delivery role implicitly attributed to DFID in the template for cross-government coordination signified greater involvement in countries affected by conflict and hence the inevitable politicization of assistance. This was rejected by DFID members who were

[119] In opposition to Prime Minister Tony Blair's decision to send British troops to Iraq in 2003, Clare Short was believed to have prevented her staff from taking part in any planning meetings related to the military operation or its aftermath, referred to by multiple interviewees including UK_13, 26 February 2008; UK_14, 28 February 2008; and UK_34, 25 September 2009. Clare Short vehemently refuted such allegations in her testimony to the UK government's Iraq Inquiry under Sir John Chilcot in early 2010, but insisted that the primary responsibility for humanitarian relief in the post-conflict phase lay with the intervening military forces and their obligations under the Geneva Conventions. Clare Short, testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010, final transcript, pp. 45-47.
[120] UK_20, 13 March 2008.
[121] UK_33, 25 September 2009.

holding on to an orthodox understanding of development, which saw aid as apolitical and purely based on needs. Second, it required DFID to work more closely with other Whitehall departments and – perhaps most significantly – it implied a renewed rapprochement with the military that had been opposed (or at least downplayed) by DFID's senior leadership during the organisation's formative years. Finally, the delivery role did not match the department's actual organisational structure and staff profile. In the eyes of external reviewers hired by DFID to evaluate its programme in Afghanistan in 2009, the organisation was 'continually under pressure to demonstrate that it was contributing to the Helmand effort both through its contributions to tri-departmental mechanisms, and through its bilateral programme.'[122] The report further warned that this had 'to some extent constrained the choices available to DFID and undermined the coherence of DFID's overall strategy.'[123] Competing arguments about how to protect DFID's essence and promote its interests at the same time indeed affected decisions over programmes and funding as well as the development of policy guidance.

The Treasury's comprehensive spending review in 2007 listed 'contribution to cross-government efforts within the reformed conflict stabilisation and prevention arrangements' as the third priority for the disbursement of funds allocated to DFID.[124] Pressure on DFID to align its programmes with Britain's foreign policy priorities – in particular the military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan – was strongly resented by many within the organisation, as well as among its

[122] Jon Bennett *et al.*, *Country programme evaluation: Afghanistan* (EV696, DFID, May 2009), p. xiii.
[123] Ibid.
[124] HM Treasury, *Meeting the aspirations of the British people*, 2007 Pre-budget report and Comprehensive Spending Review (Cm 7227, October 2007), p. 237.

implementing partners in the not-for-profit sector, who feared a dilution of the organisation's strong commitment to the MDG. Yet others within the organisation feared that too narrow an interpretation of DFID's mandate would constrain the organisation's ability to seek greater influence within government. DFID's leadership thus had to weigh concerns over a dilution of the organisation's core mandate against the ambition to secure a greater role for the department in the UK government's emerging conflict architecture. In a significant departure from previous policy, the 2009 White Paper spelled out concrete pledges to mainstream conflict and security concerns into programmes, priority-setting, staff development, and funding decisions.[125] Yet this shift did not *per se* indicate greater willingness on DFID's part to fund stabilisation activities.[126] Many areas of intervention in fragile states identified by DFID – such as election support, job generation, healthcare and education – signified a different type of investment than the 'quick fixes' to infrastructure and livelihoods sought after by the military in the context of a counterinsurgency campaign. In 2006, the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC) noted that 'DFID will only fund QIPs [quick impact projects] if they have a poverty reduction objective. DFID wrote to us saying that "winning hearts and minds" is a military concept which DFID cannot support.'[127]

While DFID largely complied with demands for programme funding that arose from stability operations, it continued to publicly justify its programme choices on

[125] DFID, *Eliminating world poverty: building our common future,* ch. 4.
[126] The 2006 White Paper pledged to 'increase investment in at least ten countries where security has been identified a priority'. DFID, *Eliminating world poverty: making governance work for the poor* (White Paper, DFID, 2006), pp. 39-40. The 2009 White Paper stated that at least 50 per cent of funding would be reallocated to fragile states. DFID, *Eliminating world poverty: building our common future*, p.71.
[127] International Development Committee, *Conflict and development: peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction* (HC 2005-06, 923-I), p. 23.

the basis of context-analysis, complementarity with other donors, and comparative advantage over other actors – in other words, factors that had apparently little to do with Britain's strategic interests. Nevertheless, DFID allocated more resources to Afghanistan than the country would have received on the basis of the traditional aid allocation framework.[128] As a witness before the HCDC in 2007, Lindy Cameron referred to 'research [showing] that it is four to seven years after the conflict that aid is most effectively absorbed in a post-conflict state' in order to justify the organisation's departure from its normal aid allocation framework with regard to Afghanistan.[129]

In 2009, the HCDC questioned the impact of the IDA on DFID's participation in reconstruction and stabilisation operations. Significantly, it did so not just on the merits of the legal clauses contained in the Act, but also out of concern that it might 'create a culture within DFID which adversely impacts on its participation [in the Comprehensive Approach].'[130] In response to the HCDC, the government defended the IDA and noted that shared funding arrangements (the so-called conflict pools) allowed DFID to participate jointly with other departments in stabilisation activities without violating its commitments under multilateral agreements, such as the OECD's overseas development assistance guidelines.[131] Stuart Gordon and Matthew Jackson argue that DFID resorted to 'financial

[128] DFID's evaluation of its Afghanistan programme in 2009 noted that DFID provided the largest civilian expenditure among UK government departments (apart from the military effort) and that the UK spent about 10 per cent of its total overseas development assistance on Afghanistan since 2003, making it the third largest donor. Jon Bennett *et al*., *Country programme evaluation: Afghanistan* , p. ix.
[129] Lindy Cameron, Head of DFID Afghanistan, oral evidence dated 8 May 2007, Defence Committee, *UK operations in Afghanistan* (HC 2006-07, 408), Ev. 77, Q373.
[130] HCDC, *The Comprehensive Approach*, para. 60.
[131] Defence Committee, *The Comprehensive Approach: the point of war is not just to win but to make a better peace; Government response to the House of Commons Defence Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2009-10* (HC 2010-11, 347), para. 12.

gymnastics' in order to bypass the restrictions placed on its funding by the IDA (by transferring it to the cross-departmental conflict pool), as DFID staff became increasingly aware 'both of the need to rapidly implement projects and to link these to local "political" effects within the context of a "stabilization plan".'[132] Lindy Cameron, then head of DFID's Afghanistan programme, argued before the HCDC that the transfer of £4 million from DFID's budget to the conflict pools (destined to fund quick impact projects) in 2006 reflected the philosophy of the Comprehensive Approach by allowing the three departments to work in a coordinated fashion in Afghanistan.[133]

These verbal and financial gymnastics point to the persistence of debates within DFID over the relationship between development assistance and Britain's foreign policy agenda, which in turn affect the standing of the department within Whitehall. Attempts to satisfy a variety of audiences at the organisational, national, and international levels have complicated the formulation of DFID's policy discourse as well as operational decisions.

3. Conceptual developments around the notion of 'stabilisation'

Within the UK government, the term 'stabilisation' has provided a common platform for a variety of organisational discourses and departmental narratives about the contribution of different organisations to stability operations and the rationale behind them. Convergence around a shared term should not too readily be taken for a sign of common analysis and agreement on the finer nuances of the

[132] Stuart Gordon and Matthew Jackson, 'Rewiring interventions? UK Provincial Reconstruction Teams and 'stabilization'', *International Peacekeeping* 14/5 (2007), p. 652.
[133] Lindy Cameron, oral evidence dated 8 May 2007, Ev.75 (see n. 129).

new policy construct. 'Stabilisation' has turned out to be a fairly elastic concept. The term has been employed in the public discourse in reference to the vaguely defined and shifting goals of foreign intervention in a conflict-prone or -ridden country, the activities leading up to them, and the context in which they take place.[134] Stabilisation can be interpreted in a developmental logic as providing the basis for longer term development; in a political logic centred on the aim of supporting a weak government; or in a military logic centred on force protection benefits and the preparation of transition and withdrawal. Stabilisation has been understood as closely tied to the pursuit of national security interests for the MOD and the FCO from the start. DFID, on the other hand, has approached it on the basis of adapting traditional approaches to aid delivery to an insecure environment. Likewise, definitions of goals and objectives – or desired end states – of stabilisation have shifted over time and according to different professional communities. This section traces these underlying tensions in the policy guidance and doctrine published over the past decade by the different organisations. It equally highlights drivers for conceptual change, and inquires into the significance of the terminology employed by different organisations.

The MOD and the military: stabilisation and COIN

The writing of new doctrine within the British defence establishment in light of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan was undoubtedly influenced by the revival of counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine within the US military under the leadership of

[134] The cross-departmental UK Stabilisation Unit offered the following definition in 2008: 'Stabilisation is the summary term for the essential processes (military, humanitarian, political and developmental) that are required to establish peace and security and put in place a political settlement that produces a
legitimate government in states that have experienced (and sometimes still are experiencing) violent conflict.' UK Stabilisation Unit, *Stabilisation Unit guidance notes*, p. 8.

General David Petraeus in 2005-06.[135] However, the release of Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40, *Security and stabilisation: the military contribution*, in November 2009, and the Army's Field Manual *Countering insurgency*, in January 2010 occurred with a certain delay.[136] This suggests that the sense of impending failure that arguably spurred the doctrinal process within the US military was not necessarily shared by the British in either degree or timing. According to one of the lead authors of the Army's new COIN doctrine, there was a shared understanding that different viewpoints of what these wars were about (e.g. counterinsurgency, warfighting, or peace support) needed to be reconciled.[137] However, these efforts took the form of parallel and to some extent rival processes within the MOD's doctrine centre (DCDC) and the British Army until they were ultimately brought to a rest with the publication of JDP 3-40. Against the backdrop of increasing levels of hostility in southern Afghanistan after 2007, and controversy over British campaign strategy in Basra, Iraq, in the spring of 2008, the new doctrine was widely perceived as late in the game.[138]

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[135] For a detailed account of drivers of stabilisation doctrine in the British military, see Stuart Griffin, 'Iraq, Afghanistan and the future of British military doctrine: from counterinsurgency to stabilization', *International Affairs* 87/2 (2011), pp. 318-21. Theo Farrell points out that the British Army already had a COIN doctrine (dating back to 1995) that was 'fit for purpose' and arguably influenced FM 3-24 but was not widely known or shared at the time. Theo Farrell, 'Improving in war: military adaptation and the British in Helmand 2006-2009', *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33/4 (2010), pp. 583-4.

[136] Ministry of Defence, *Security and stabilisation: the military contribution*, Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 3-40 (Shrivenham: DCDC, November 2009); UK Army Field Manual, *Countering insurgency*, vol. 1, part 10 (Warminster: Land Warfare Development Group, January 2010).

[137] Colonel Alex Alderson, British Army Land Stabilization and Counterinsurgency Centre, 'Writing doctrine for counterinsurgency: the British experience (2001-11)', presentation at a workshop on *Counterinsurgency: where we are and what's next*, Changing Character of War Programme, Merton Global Directions, and British Army COIN Centre, 26 May 2011, Merton College, Oxford (author's copy), slide 13.

[138] Ibid., slide 18.

Stabilisation doctrine: a widening audience and growing abstraction

The doctrinal process that has accompanied British military involvement in stability operations is noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, it represents a departure from previous doctrinal writing in terms of the input that was sought from other government organisations and a wide community of civilian and military experts and practitioners.[139] The imperative to coordinate with other agencies in the conduct of stability operations provided a logical basis for the inclusion of non-military actors in the drafting of doctrine. It also meant that the doctrine was directed at a broader audience than usual. An introduction note to JDP 3-40 pointed out that – while the doctrine's primary audience were commanders and staff charged with the planning and conduct of stabilisation at the operational level – it also addressed the wider audience of other government departments, 'whilst in no way attempting to impose direction on them.'[140]

Second, JDP 3-40 reflected a trend towards a more abstract treatment of the operational environment and the tasks it implied for the military, which reached back to the adoption of a so-called Effects-Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) by the MOD in its 2003 Defence White Paper.[141] Farrell notes that effects-based doctrine, albeit relatively short-lived, shaped the British military's approach to operations in two major ways. Firstly, operational objectives, such as seizing a hill or defeating the enemy, were being redefined as 'decisive conditions', which were expected to lead to broad operational end states (e.g.

[139] Griffin, 'Iraq, Afghanistan and the future', p. 322.
[140] Ministry of Defence, Introduction note to JDP 3-40, p.2.
[141] This point is made by Theo Farrell, who further argues that the logic underpinning the Comprehensive Approach survived the abandonment of EBAO doctrine by the British military in 2008, and lies at the heart of JDP 3-40. Farrell, Supplementary memorandum dated 11 June 2009, Ev.152-5 (see n. 54).

'lasting peace' or 'stable governance'). Secondly, EBAO contained an explicit recognition of the need for a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach to operations.[142] Both features were replicated by JDP 3-40, which furthermore argued that stabilisation was to be understood as 'a creative process, not a science.'[143] The goal of this process was defined as 'support[ing] states which are entering, enduring or emerging from conflict'. It covered a wide array of tasks that ranged from more clearly defined objectives, such as immediate protection and infrastructure rehabilitation, to broader processes that were vaguely identified as providing the foundation for sustainable political, social, and economic development.[144]

JDP 3-40's reluctance to prescribe a particular model of thought or template for stability operations resonated with widespread and longstanding scepticism towards formal doctrine within the British military establishment. The British military's 2008 joint planning doctrine (JDP 5-00) equally argued that 'the contemporary operating environment does not encourage the classification or labelling of discrete types or phases of military intervention(s), such as Counter-Insurgency (COIN) or Stabilisation Operations.' Instead, it referred to 'military activities' that were likely to vary over the course of a campaign.[145] The outgoing Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt, argued in 2009 that 'peace-keeping, peace-enforcement, COIN, irregular warfare and conventional war-fighting are neat, linear ways to look at conflict. But we now know that we

[142] Farrell, 'The dynamics of British military transformation', pp. 793-4.
[143] JDP 3-40, p. xvi.
[144] JDP 3-40, p. xv.
[145] Ministry of Defence, *Campaign planning*, Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 5-00, 2nd edition, Supplement 1 'Transition and termination' (Shrivenham, DCDC: December 2008), p. 1.

are facing a complex amalgam of all of these, delivered by hybrid adversaries within an increasingly complex environment.'[146]

Operational guidance or strategic analysis?

The trends described above raise a number of questions regarding the role of military doctrine. In spite of the addendum of 'the military contribution' to the title of JDP 3-40, the broad conceptual approach adopted by its authors led practitioners and scholars to question whether JDP 3-40 was shaping policy, or substituting for its absence, at a higher strategic level in addition to (or perhaps instead of) providing guidance to field commanders on the ground. Stuart Griffin, for instance, contends that JDP 3-40 suffers from doctrinal schizophrenia which leaves it to 'occupy an awkward no-man's-land between doctrinal direction and policy advocacy.'[147] Hew Strachan equally argues that DCDC's work 'has aspirations which are both strategic and ultimately political.'[148] A senior military officer admitted with regard to JDP 3-40 'we had a gap in policy, so we wanted to give a framework that policy makers should think through.'[149]

The same officer furthermore noted that 'we sell it [JDP 3-40] as operational art, but there is too much policy in there,' and contended that the doctrine was 'good on context but not on conduct.'[150] Hence, while the military's stabilisation doctrine addressed a conceptual vacuum within the policy discourse it raised the (legitimate) question among practitioners whether it still fulfilled the more

[146] Ibid.
[147] Griffin, 'Iraq, Afghanistan and the future', p. 332.
[148] Hew Strachan, 'Strategy or alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the operational level of war', *Survival* 52/5 (2010), p. 168.
[149] UK_54, 25 May 2011.
[150] Ibid.

traditional purposes of military doctrine. The common perception of an increasingly multifaceted and fluid operational environment further raised doubts over the feasibility of distilling operational experience in the form of a single, unified text. In practice, individual experiences of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns could vary considerably from one area of operations to another or between one rotation and the next.[151] While the notion of stabilisation proved elastic enough to accommodate the military's suspicion towards supposedly constraining doctrinal definitions, its inclusion in the body of doctrine raised further question over the relationship between stabilisation and other concepts of operation, such as peace support and counterinsurgency. Griffin, for instance, argues that the coexistence of these different terms unravels a (supposedly) coherent pre-existing conceptual framework and thereby creates a 'doctrinal minefield'.[152]

What division of labour among civilian and military actors?

By seeking refuge in the claim that stabilisation had to be approached as an art rather than a science, JDP 3-40 at once highlighted and eschewed the central question of defining spheres of responsibility for civilian and military actors in stability operations. Somewhat puzzling, the MOD's short guide to JPD 3-40 stated in its definition of 'the *military* contribution to stabilisation' that the initial emphasis on military action to establish security in stabilisation operations 'does not mean that the military should be in charge.'[153] JDP 3-40 envisaged for the transition from 'military-led security to civilian development' to occur during the

[151] In his presentation, Alderson referred to this as 'the obstacle of experience', or 'the "not the war I fought" argument'. Alderson, 'Writing doctrine for counterinsurgency', slide 13 (see n. 137).
[152] Griffin, 'Iraq, Afghanistan and the future', p. 323.
[153] MOD, *A guide to Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40* (Shrivenham: DCDC, April 2010), p. v. Emphasis added.

so-called hold phase, after military forces have secured the terrain but – as the doctrine was quick to point out – this was unlikely to be a sequential process. Rather, civilian agencies should be prepared to move nimbly through 'windows of opportunity' created by the military forces on the ground.[154] Crucially, JDP 3-40 acknowledged that the impact of the military's presence was ambiguous in that regard. While it could provide a temporary security envelope that allowed civilian actors to operate, an influx of troops could equally render an area which had hitherto been safe for civilian agencies to operate in less permissive.[155]

JDP 3-40 arguably continued circling above rather than tackling a dilemma that had surfaced in previous attempts to define the scope of military responsibilities (as opposed to civilian ones) in stability operations.[156] An internal Army document dated June 2007 outlined a conceptual framework for 'stabilisation operations' that attempted to separate 'enduring' military tasks from 'initial or interim' ones, and further identified a range of tasks that were seen as clear civilian responsibilities. However, most of the areas that have been at the centre of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade – including local governance, property ownership, agricultural development, prisons, legal reform, employment, education and health – ended up sitting uneasily on a dotted line, which tentatively separated the military and civilian spheres, with each word stretching out into both halves without further guidance as to how to resolve the

[154] JDP 3-40, ch. 4, p. 19.
[155] JDP 3-40, ch. 2, p. 21.
[156] The British Army's Field Manual *Countering insurgency* relies mostly on the stabilisation model outlined by JDP 3-40 as a basis for the military's coordination with other government departments. UK Army, *Countering insurgency*, para. 4-5.

dilemma.[157] The idea of a temporary, initial responsibility by the military for a wide range of areas and activities 'which might ordinarily be undertaken by civilian organisations' was repeated in doctrinal guidance on *Transition and Termination* annexed in JDP 5-00.[158] The term 'transition' employed in the doctrine is slightly questionable in the sense that these activities are nowhere described as a core responsibility for the military (which is defined as 'contributing to the delivery of a safe and secure environment') and are thus arguably seen as someone else's responsibility from the start.[159]

In the division of labour between civilian and military actors, therefore, the British military's stabilisation doctrine oscillates between the desire to contain the military role within the provision of a secure environment for stabilisation to occur, and the realisation that the armed forces may often become directly involved in the multiple (non-security related) processes associated with stabilisation. Hew Strachan points out this ambiguity by arguing, 'after all, the armed forces are not designed specifically to build government capacity, to sustain economic development or to drive political analysis, but Security and Stabilisation [JDP 3-40] is a manual which demands that they acquire these capabilities.'[160]

[157] 'Stabilisation operations: conceptual framework', Annex A to LAND/PLANS/5203, Dated ** June 2007 (restricted), author's copy.
[158] JDP 5-00, Supplement 1, p. 2.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Strachan, 'Strategy or alibi?' p. 169.

FCO: conflict management and prevention

Britain's global engagement in the prevention and resolution of conflict abroad has traditionally been one of the FCO's priority areas. Throughout successive departmental reviews, its importance has only slightly shifted as a function of the total number of strategic objectives or priority goals identified at any time. In 2008, the FCO formed an internal 'Conflict Issues Group' to improve coherence within the government's approach to conflict, and from 2001 began co-managing a fund with DFID and the MOD for conflict prevention and peacekeeping projects. Yet, conceptual guidance by the FCO on conflict, fragile states, and stabilisation has been scant. To date, no attempts have been made to provide a civilian complement the MOD's doctrinal work on stabilisation.[161] The apparent lack of interest by the FCO in formulating policy guidance specifically applicable to stabilisation has to be seen in perspective with the creation of a cross-departmental Stabilisation Unit, which gradually took on a doctrinal function in this area from 2005. However, as chapter six will outline in more detail, this role continues to be regarded with a measure of suspicion by the FCO.

The FCO faces challenges defining its role in stabilisation, which arguably result from a lack of clear vision on the Foreign Office's place within the UK government's conflict architecture rather than from a clash between its core mandate and the new policy construct. Both the FCO's conceptual orientation and associated methodology place the organisation in a difficult position to formulate policy guidance on how to implement the CA. In contrast to the military's

[161] In late 2008, the cross-departmental Stabilisation Unit published a 'Stabilisation Guide' addressed to 'UK officials and officers', which consisted of two guidance notes, one on emerging experience and best practices, and a 'Stabilisation Task Matrix'. However, the foreword signed by Richard Teuten, Head of the SU, clearly stated that the guide did not represent official HMG policy. UK Stabilisation Unit, *Stabilisation Unit guidance notes*, p. 3.

doctrinal infrastructure, there are few formal structures within the FCO to capture the expertise acquired by diplomats in the course of their assignments and feed it back into formal policy. Consequently, specialist knowledge often remains informal and may be lost entirely once core staff retire or depart. This problem is not necessarily unique to the FCO but poses a challenge to civilian agencies in general. However, a former civil servant singled out the insular nature of thinking and policy-making within the FCO as providing few opportunities for exchange and debate, and contrasted it specifically with the more permeable system of the US State Department.[162]

A multilateral, norm-based approach to conflict management

The FCO's policy guidance on the prevention and resolution of conflict has been consistently oriented towards a multilateral and rule-based approach. Successive departmental reports emphasized the strengthening of capacity within regional and global institutions such as the UN, the EU, or the African Union for early warning, prevention, peacekeeping and conflict resolution. In line with its multilaterally-oriented policy guidance, the FCO has traditionally striven towards improving conflict management and peacekeeping capacity within international and regional institutions, including through the contribution of personnel to UN and EU missions. In doing so, however, the organisation simply maintains a database and leaves recruitment, training, and deployment to the partner organisation.

[162] Korski, 'Reversing decline', Ev(w) 54. Peter Singer notes that more than sixty percent of the assistant secretaries at the US State Department (under the Obama administration) have come out of think tanks. Peter W. Singer, 'Factories to call our own', *Washingtonian*, 13 August 2010.

The FCO's policy documents on engagement in conflict-affected or weak states offer little clarification on concepts and definitions. A 2007 departmental report, for instance, merely noted that experience in Afghanistan demonstrated that 'the line between conflict, stabilisation and peace-building is not clear cut.'[163] The FCO's political strategy for Afghanistan further illustrates that the lens through which the organisation views its engagement in conflict-affected states is strongly shaped by Western democratic values. These include the importance of inclusive political processes, good governance, human rights and gender equality.[164] The decidedly multilateral outlook and normative approach adopted by the FCO to deal with issues related to (armed) conflict is further reflected in the UK government strategy for the protection of civilians in armed conflict published by the FCO in 2010.[165]

Civilian and military priorities in stability operations

The standards and priorities that informed the FCO's approach to stability operations could lead to tension with other government agencies within the CA. In Iraq and Afghanistan, government strategy led the FCO to focus on rule of law and justice. Specific priorities arising from Britain's multilateral engagements, such as its lead on counter-narcotics as 'G8 partner nation' in Afghanistan (which gradually diminished in importance after 2009), further defined the FCO's frame of reference. Yet the reality encountered by troops and civilian advisers on the ground often proved hard to square with Western understandings of justice, liability, or the role of women in society. With regard to corruption and counter-

[163] FCO, *Departmental report 1 April 2006-31 March 2007*, p. 44.
[164] FCO, 'Our political strategy for Afghanistan' [electronic source].
[165] FCO, 'UK government strategy on the protection of civilians in armed conflict' [electronic source].

narcotics in particular, the principles advocated by the FCO were sometimes perceived as of little help (and occasionally clashing) with the demands of a counter-insurgency campaign. British General Sir David Richards for instance noted '*our modern scruples* might not permit it, but I think you could buy off 90 per cent of the opposition tomorrow in the way our grandfathers would have done. Instead, today we seek influence through reconstruction and development – but that is in danger of not keeping pace with people's expectations.'[166] A civil servant argued that the military's reluctance to support counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan stemmed from a combination of legal constraints and cultural discomfort about getting involved in an area of ambiguity that was seen as a diversion from the main military mission. 'That is an example of a policy where there is a civilian priority, which the military have downplayed and therefore have not delivered the support that is needed to deliver the civil effect,' this official contended.[167]

DFID: peacebuilding and statebuilding

The evolution of DFID's policy guidance over the past decade illustrates a remarkable shift from a technocratic approach to poverty reduction to a more politically informed vision of foreign aid. These doctrinal developments, which are underpinned by broader cultural change within the organisation, were driven by a combination of changes in leadership and external pressures. Greater involvement in conflict-affected countries and a shift to shorter time-frames in crisis response were further encouraged by similar trends at the multilateral level, for instance with the United Nations Development Program's work on early

[166] Cobbold, 'RUSI interview with General David Richards'. Emphasis added.
[167] UK_09, 18 February 2008.

recovery.[168] Hence, the 'NGO legacy' of the early days may have slowed down but ultimately did not prevent the organisation from reinterpreting its mission in ways that made it more amenable to cross-governmental working and engaging in high priority states on Britain's foreign policy agenda.

Integrating conflict, security, and development

So-called fragile and conflict-ridden countries have moved from the margins of DFID's institutional attention to the centre of policy-making in a relatively short span of time. The rationale for integrating conflict and insecurity in DFID's policy and programmes has oscillated between statistical arguments (e.g. the percentage of the global poor affected by conflict); arguments in favour of early warning and prevention on the basis of cost-effectiveness; and references to a conceptual link between poverty and security. Security concerns were initially framed in terms of regional implications (e.g. IDPs and refugee flows) but increasingly included threats to homeland security such as drugs, extremism and the emergence of 'terrorist traps' within these states.[169]

In 2005, DFID formally stated its view on the implications of a conceptual link between development and security in a strategy that was cautiously worded but overall cooperative in its tone.[170] The policy carefully underlined differences between the development and security paradigms in terms of objectives, timeframes, and operational approaches, and contained clear elements of hedging in explicit references to the legal and policy constraints on DFID's ability to

[168] UK_06, 18 February 2008.
[169] Reflected in consecutive DFID White Papers in 1997, 2000, 2006 and 2009.
[170] DFID, *Fighting poverty to build a safer world* (Policy Paper, DFID, 2005), p. 14-15.

support Britain's security concerns.[171] In 2007, a Cabinet Office-sponsored capability review called on DFID to strengthen its technical expertise and understanding 'in areas across its broader agenda, such as security, conflict, and post-conflict issues.'[172] Subsequent years saw increasingly formal recognition by DFID that conflict-affected states required a different approach to the design and implementation of projects and that its engagement in these contexts did not constitute traditional development assistance.[173] A practice paper on *Building peaceful states and societies* published by DFID in 2010 noted that 'there is a tendency in development to work "around" conflict and fragility.'[174] In response to such omission, the practice paper offered an 'integrated approach', which used the concepts of state-building and peace-building as 'critical building blocks for achieving poverty reduction and the MDGs' in fragile and conflict-affected states.[175]

The practice paper emphasized that state-building was an inherently *internal* process, whereas peace-building was acknowledged to 'rely heavily on *international* support to succeed.'[176] The document's explicit focus on poverty reduction and its distinctly multilateral approach, which emphasized partnership between international and local and national partners, were hallmarks of DFID's organisational philosophy and did not require a large conceptual stretch. A more remarkable departure from traditional approaches was reflected in the statement

[171] E.g. the White Papers of 1997 and 2000, the International Development Act of 2002, and the organisation's commitment to spend 90 per cent of bilateral aid in so-called Low Income Countries, stated in DFID, *Fighting poverty to build a safer world: a strategy for security and development* (DFID, March 2005), p. 14.
[172] Cabinet Office, Capability Reviews Team, *Capability Review of the Department for International Development* (London: HMSO, March 2007).
[173] For instance with the help of new conflict assessment tools developed by DFID.
[174] DFID, *Building peaceful states and societies* (Practice paper, DFID, 2010), p.5.
[175] Ibid., p. 17.
[176] Ibid., p. 15.

that 'political analysis must inform programme design,' for which the 2009 White Paper had prepared the ground.[177] The conceptual lens adopted by DFID to engage with conflict-affected states relied on the notion of grievances as causes of conflict and fragility – quoting the work of Paul Collier, Frances Stewart, and James Fearon – and consequently focused on 'inclusive' settlements that respond to both state and society within the host nation; on building and supporting fair and effective state functions (i.e. security, law, and justice); and on 'responding to public expectations' (through essential services and job creation).[178]

Preparing the ground to become a 'Whitehall player'

The shift in the organisation's conceptual approach to conflict-affected states from 2006 on was also reflected in DFID's stance towards cooperation with other parts of government. Tackling the issue of violent conflict in a 2006 policy paper, DFID only briefly acknowledged its collaboration with the MOD 'to provide a stable environment for development and reconstruction efforts,' while overall retaining a multilateral outlook on conflict prevention.[179] A handbook on quick impact projects published by DFID in 2006 further contained clear signs of hedging, such as the call to keep military involvement in activities beyond the core function of providing a safe and secure environment to an absolute minimum.[180] The multiple references to cross-government cooperation and a comprehensive approach in the 2009 White Paper are thus striking when compared to the complete absence of similar commitments only three years

[177] Ibid., p. 8.
[178] Ibid., p.7. The academic literature mentioned in the text is quoted in Ibid., p. 19, n. 22.
[179] DFID, *Preventing violent conflict* (Policy paper, DFID, 2006), p. 2-4.
[180] DFID, *Quick Impact Projects: a handbook for the military* (DFID, June 2006), p.8.

earlier.[181] In rather self-congratulatory fashion, DFID noted that it had adapted to the challenge of 'delivering support in difficult security conditions' as evidenced by 'improved coordination between civilians and military in Helmand [Afghanistan].'[182] The White Paper also called for close co-operation with the FCO in order to improve the political analysis of the environments that DFID was working in.[183] Hence, from a passing reference to the importance of consistency among different policies in 1997, DFID came to formally acknowledge its role in a comprehensive approach that saw the three Ds 'working closely together in distinct but complementary ways.'[184]

The 2009 White Paper had a strong internal messaging function. It served to reflect the senior management's intention to make the case internally for DFID's involvement in fragile states.[185] A military officer recalled that the 'reformers' within DFID were seeking outside alliances with the FCO and the MOD against the rest of DFID during the drafting of said document.[186] Civil servants in other departments further considered the timing of the 2009 White Paper as a strategic move employed by DFID to position itself within Whitehall ahead of the May 2010 general election, with a view to working under a conservative government (which was feared to put foreign assistance back under the Foreign Office's authority).[187]

[181] DFID, *Eliminating poverty: building our common future*, pp. 72; 78-9.
[182] Ibid., p. 81.
[183] Ibid., p. 73, para. 19.
[184] Ibid., p. 78, para. 37.
[185] UK_27, 2 September 2009.
[186] UK_30, 23 September 2009.
[187] UK_27, 2 September 2009; UK_28, 17 September 2009; and UK_30, 23 September 2009.

DFID's increasingly formal recognition of a conceptual link between poverty and conflict arguably rendered its engagement in Afghanistan less problematic. The country fit into DFID's 'fragile state' framework with regard to poverty levels and lack of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.[188] It therefore did not truly put to the test DFID's principled refusal to open programmes on the basis of security considerations alone. DFID's conceptual focus on institution-building further directed attention away from the security aspects of stability operations (i.e. the military's counterinsurgency campaign) and thus helped balance DFID's own departmental objectives with broader government policy.[189] The emphasis on capacity-building in the host country also attenuated the inherent tension between short-term stabilisation projects and the longer timeframes governing traditional development assistance. Overall, therefore, Afghanistan has not tested the organisation as severely as other interventions could (and Iraq with its considerable wealth in natural resources to some extent did). DFID has largely worked around the most contentious points implied by its mandate by delegating certain activities to other (external) institutions and insisting on host nation responsibility for others.

The 2010 practice paper noted that stabilisation was 'the "first step" towards progress on state-building and peace-building in very insecure environments,' and described it primarily in terms of short-term actions to establish 'good enough

[188] Bennett *et al*., *Country programme evaluation: Afghanistan*, p. vii, para. S4.
[189] The British development minister, for instance, emphasized in 2009 that the issue in Afghanistan was not merely the strength of the Taliban but the weakness of the [Afghan] government. Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State for International Development, 'Stabilisation and development on the eve of 2010', City Forum Symposium on Stabilisation, London, 5 November 2009.

security and stability.'[190] DFID thus conceptually separated stabilisation from peace- and state-building (its chief concerns), but nevertheless framed stabilisation as laying the ground-work for these longer-term processes. The document acknowledged potential tensions between stabilisation, development, and humanitarian activities – for instance between short-term service-delivery and long-term capacity building – but eschewed any further detail or suggestion on how to resolve them.[191] Instead, DFID referred to the tri-departmental Stabilisation Unit's planning capacity and guidance to support the development of cross-departmental strategies in fragile countries.[192] Hence, while the impetus to adapt its mode of operation (including project design, funding mechanisms, and analytical tools) arguably arose to a considerable extent from the political pressure put on DFID to participate in the CA, the organisation has thus far adapted to this context to a considerable extent within the framework of its own principles and values.

4. Chapter conclusion

The policy discourse in the UK government has revolved around the nexus between security and development as a rationale for close cooperation between the three D's, which are represented by three independent cabinet-level ministries. Rather than a formal model for coordination, an elastic policy construct under the label of 'stabilisation' has allowed for multiple interpretations to coexist and to some extent compete within the institutional architecture. Although the formulation of a 'Comprehensive Approach' by the MOD has been viewed with

[190] DFID, *Building peaceful states and societies*, p. 36-7.
[191] Ibid., p. 18; 36.
[192] Ibid., p. 36-7.

suspicion by the civilian agencies, they have not (yet) provided an alternative template. Primarily through practice, the loose template has become focused on a combination of leading and supporting roles among the different organisations that have led to frictions and tensions within the government bureaucracy.

Brief sketches of each organisation's historical trajectory and contemporary position within the government have added to the understanding of differences in how these three organisations perceive their engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq. The military approaches it from recent experience with civilian-military coordination in peace support operations in the Balkans and a longer-standing legacy of fighting so-called 'small wars', which has come under pressure in light of perceived setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. For the FCO, stability operations are but one concern in a wide portfolio of current and potential political crises around the globe. They are seen as calling for quasi-colonial skills and expertise that the organisation has consciously dissociated itself from. For DFID, finally, the vision of becoming the civilian wing of a British military campaign clashes not only with a lingering orthodox view of development policy, but also with an alleged renegade spirit and the strong commitment to a mandate centred on poverty reduction – both of which provided cohesion and a sense of purpose following the department's reconstitution as an independent government ministry.

This chapter has illustrated that the organisations behind the UK government's Comprehensive Approach face a variety of challenges in adapting their mandates, core competences and conceptual guidance to the demands of stability operations. Beneath the surface of an apparently shared emerging discourse, the three

organisations have each kept to their own vision of what the context is they are adjusting to. The chapter has further shown that a variety of factors – including external pressure and changes in leadership – have had an impact on the way in which these organisations have approached stability operations.

IV DEFENCE, DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

This chapter introduces the US government architecture as the second empirical case and takes a close look at the government agencies involved in the conduct of stability operations overseas. As William Olson notes, contemporary calls for the integration of defence, diplomacy, and development within the US government echo a longstanding concern with interagency coordination within the US national security system, which dates back to the National Security Act of 1947.[1] Coordination has remained a powerful mantra within the United States in spite of an enduring structural impediment to the consolidation and integration of decision-making power in the form of a system of checks and balances, which regularly frustrates attempts at closer cooperation among different parts of government.[2] One of the major systemic obstacles to coordination arises from the system of budget appropriations through a variety of different committees in Congress (in contrast to the Treasury in the United Kingdom), which turns resource allocation into a highly complex and politically charged bureaucratic process.[3]

After the widely documented failure of the Coalition Provincial Authority (CPA) to coordinate US civilian and military efforts in Iraq after 2003, interagency

[1] Olson, 'Interagency coordination', p. 222.
[2] Gabriel Marcella, 'Understanding the interagency process: the challenge of adaptation', in Gabriel Marcella (ed.), *Affairs of State: the interagency and national security* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2008), p. 44.
[3] Olson, 'Interagency coordination', p. 223. n. 6.

coordination remained a salient issue in US strategy and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.[4] Before long, the topic was embraced by the dynamic universe of policy think tanks in Washington, DC and elsewhere, which spawned countless proposals for organisational reform.[5] The ensuing debate within US policy and academic circles over America's role in so-called nation-building – including historical experiences with the reconstruction of Germany and Japan after 1945 and recent interventions in Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans – was marked by an underlying unease over the tension between the perceived need for rapid improvement in this area and deep reluctance to build capacity for what many considered a quasi-imperial endeavour.[6]

This chapter follows the same structure as the foregoing discussion of the British case. It starts by examining the assumptions and expectations that have informed the US approach to coordination. The second part portrays the key agencies

[4] Bernard Carreau, a former advisor to the CPA, noted that 'DOD favoured big-budget infrastructure projects, while State wanted to focus on governance and market liberalization and USAID wanted to focus on institution- and capacity-building. None of these things produced stability.' Cited in Michael P. Noonan, *Mind the gap: post-Iraq civil-military relations in America,* Conference report (Foreign Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC, January 2008). See also Ali A. Allawi, *The occupation of Iraq: winning the war, losing the peace* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); David L. Phillips, *Losing Iraq: inside the postwar reconstruction fiasco* (New York: Westview Press, 2005); Ricks, *Fiasco: the American military adventure in Iraq*.

[5] Samuel L. Berger and Brent Scowcroft, *In the wake of war: improving US post-conflict capabilities,* Report of an independent task force (New York: Council of Foreign Relations, July 2005); Jay W. Boggs and Joseph R. Cerami (eds.), *The interagency and counterinsurgency warfare: aligning and integrating military and civilian roles in stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2007); Patrick M. Cronin and Brian M. Burton, *Beyond borders: developing comprehensive national security policies to address complex regional challenges,* Working paper (Washington, DC: CNAS, December 2010); Ellen Laipson (ed.), *Improving the interagency process to face 21st century security challenges,* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, October 2005); James R. Locher (chairman of the board), *Turning ideas into action,* (Washington, DC: Project on National Security Reform, September 2009); Clark Murdock*, et al.*, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: defense reform for a new strategic era,* Phase I report (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2004); Joseph S. Nye and Richard Armitage, *A smarter, more secure America,* Report of the CSIS commission on smart power (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2007).

[6] Dobbins*, et al.*, *America's role in nation-building: from Germany to Iraq* ; Thomas S. Szayna, Derek Eaton, and Amy Richardson, *Preparing the Army for stability operations* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2007), p. xiii.

involved in stability operations in the US: the defence establishment comprising the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services, the State Department, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The final part of the chapter turns its attention to the way in which these agencies have approached stabilisation conceptually in the form of policy guidance and doctrine.

1. The policy discourse in the United States: 'the interagency' and its contribution to 'smart power'

As presidential candidate in the year 2000, G.W. Bush asserted that the United States were under no circumstances going to have a so-called nation-building corps of civilians moving in on the heels of military forces.[7] Yet, before the decade came to a close, the United States Congress appropriated funds for the creation of a Civilian Response Corps ready to engage in expeditionary stabilisation efforts at short notice.[8] In 2005, the State Department led an interagency process that culminated in the formulation of an *Essential Task Matrix* for stability operations, which identified five technical sectors: security, governance and participation, humanitarian assistance and social well-being, economic stabilization and infrastructure, and justice and reconciliation.[9] The document itself did not clarify roles or responsibilities but it illustrated the wide range of expertise that was deemed necessary for the conduct of stability

[7] Quoted in various news reports, e.g. Traci Hukill, 'Congress weighs creating nation-building agency', *National Journal*, 3 May 2004.
[8] The Civilian Response Corps was authorized by Congress in the war supplemental for Fiscal Year 2008 with $55 million in October 2008. The first regular (i.e. non-supplemental) budget appropriation for the initiative was made for Fiscal Year 2009 with $75 million. Samuel S. Farr, 'From idea to implementation: standing up the Civilian Response Corps', *PRISM* 2/1 (2010), p. 21.
[9] US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), *Post-conflict reconstruction: essential tasks,* April 2005.

operations, as well as the cross-cutting nature of many of the activities. While operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have dominated concerns over civilian-military coordination over the past decade, interagency coordination has equally become a major issue in the US response to natural disasters abroad, such as the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

The rationale for coordination

Successive National Security Strategies in 2002, 2006, and 2010 addressed threats to US national security that were held to arise from a dangerous combination of poverty, weak institutions, and poor governance within weak states, which made them ideal sanctuaries for global crime and terrorism.[10] Both the G.W. Bush and Obama administrations have insisted that the United States must actively address these threats as a matter of national security by drawing upon a diverse range of instruments. The vision of three complementary 'Ds' – defence, diplomacy, development – in the service of US national security interests is frequently traced back to the G.W. Bush administration's National Security Strategy of 2002. The document itself does not employ the language of the 'three D's', nor does it explicitly identify development as the 'third pillar of national security', as sometimes erroneously argued. The 2002 NSS singled out military power, law enforcement and intelligence as the primary tools for national security.[11] Yet it also contained a major commitment to the reform and expansion of overseas development aid.

[10] The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002 (NSS 2002); The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006 (NSS 2006); The White House, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010. (NSS 2010)
[11] NSS 2002, p. 3.

Over the past decade, the idea of a more balanced national 'toolkit' that would give equal if not greater attention to 'soft power' – including diplomacy and foreign assistance – alongside the military's 'hard power' increasingly gained traction in the rhetoric employed at senior policy levels and within influential commissions and think tanks.[12] During her nomination hearing in 2009, incoming Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, urged Congress that the US government 'must use what has been called smart power; the full range of tools at our disposal – diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural – picking the right tool, or combination of tools, for each situation.'[13] The Obama administration's National Security Strategy of 2010 further called on government to 'balance, update, and integrate all the tools of American power' in a whole-of-government approach.[14]

The sheer disparity in resources and manpower between the civilian and military sides of government in the United States is documented in numerous statistics, official statements, and academic work on the subject. Gordon Adams *et al.* for instance note that while the diplomacy and foreign assistance budgets have grown faster than the defence budget since 9/11 the capacity gap between the two remains massive. In 2008, one USAID employee overseas was matched by twenty-three colleagues from the State Department and six hundred civilian and military personnel deployed by the DOD; and in the same year the DOD spent

[12] E.g. Nye and Armitage, *A smarter, more secure America*.
[13] Hillary Clinton, nomination hearing to be Secretary of State, statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, 13 January 2009.
[14] NSS 2010, p. 14.

more on fuel than it cost to run the entire State Department.[15] The resulting militarisation of US foreign policy over the past decade evoked concerns that military engagement had 'begun to swamp civilian diplomatic and foreign assistance capabilities.'[16]

Tilting the balance towards greater civilian influence and capacity within the government apparatus was widely considered an imperative for the United States in order to enable a more holistic engagement with (and understanding of) world affairs, and to relieve the military of responsibilities that it was seen as shouldering by default rather than by choice.[17] In policy terms, this implied elevating diplomacy and development as primary tools of statecraft alongside defence. In material terms, it translated into calls for budget increases for both programmes and additional staff within these agencies.[18] The emphasis on building civilian capacity in the policy discourse reflected a widespread view (supported by budget realities) that the resource-starved civilian agencies were in no position to be a meaningful partner to defence.[19] For the civilian government

[15] For Fiscal Year 2010, US Congress provided $636.3 billion for defence and $50.6 billion for diplomacy and foreign assistance. Gordon Adams*, et al.*, *Buying national security: the lopsided toolkit,* 'The Will and The Wallet' [weblog] (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 26 February 2010).
[16] Ibid. In 2007, the Pentagon accounted for over twenty per cent of US official assistance. Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown, *The Pentagon and global development: making sense of the DoD's expanding role,* Working paper 131 (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, November 2007).
[17] Frank G. Hoffman, *Changing tires on the fly: the Marines and post-conflict stability ops* (Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2006), p. vii.
[18] The Center for US Global Engagement compiled a matrix of over twenty think tank reports on interagency reform published in 2007-08 alone, nearly all of which called for an increase in resources (programmes, operations, or both) for civilian government agencies. *Putting "smart power" to work: an action agenda for the Obama administration and the 111th Congress*, Report on reports (Washington, DC: Center for US Global Engagement, 2009).
[19] Joseph J. Collins, 'The perils of planning: lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq' in Boggs and Cerami (eds.), *The interagency and counterinsurgency warfare*, p. 114. See also Thomas D. Boyatt, prepared statement dated 24 September 2009, US Congress, Senate, Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs (S. Hrg. 111–404, 111th Congr., 1st sess., 2010), pp. 50-54; and Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, Letter to Chairman Harold Rogers, US Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, dated 14 February 2011.

agencies – primarily the State Department and USAID – this meant that they were called upon to act as both counterweight and effective partners to the military. Although both rationales point to greater investment in civilian capacity, they imply differences in policy that have not been widely acknowledged or debated yet.

The template: 'the interagency'

In contrast to the United Kingdom, where the template for coordination provided by the 'Comprehensive Approach' has never been formalized beyond a doctrinal note released by the MOD, policy guidance for interagency coordination in the context of stability operations within the US government has taken the form of executive orders by the White House.[20] As Dane Smith notes, the driving force behind the design and promotion of a template for interagency coordination was the National Security Council (NSC).[21] However, in spite of pressing concerns for coordination arising from the conduct of prolonged military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the most ambitious organisational reform decreed in the past decade was not originally intended to apply to ongoing operations.[22] National Security Presidential Directive 44 on the *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization* (hereafter NSPD-44) issued on 7 December 2005 by G.W. Bush instead aimed at organising US government capacity for the

[20] Respectively called Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) under the Clinton administration; National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) under the G.W. Bush administration; and Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) under the Obama administration.
[21] Dane F. Smith, *U.S. Peacefare* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010), p. 25.
[22] Ibid., p. 41.

future provision of foreign assistance and economic development to 'foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife.'[23]

The directive led to considerable debate within the civilian side of government over leadership in conflict prevention and assistance – not least because it codified the role of a newly established Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) within the State Department.[24] However, it shed little light on the larger issue of coordinating civilian and military roles. While the directive placed the Secretary of State in a leading and coordinating role with regard to US government efforts, it eschewed the question of command – or hierarchy – among the different components of an integrated approach and gave no indication as to the proper timing, mode and rationale for shifting from a military-led to a civilian-led process. Instead of outlining a general principle, the directive declared that lead and supporting responsibilities would be determined on a case-by-case basis and 're-designated as transitions are required.'[25] Crucially, the directive remained non-committal on the subject of integrating civilian and military contingency plans and efforts. It was left to the discretion of the Secretaries of State and Defence to develop 'a general framework' for the full coordination of activities 'at all levels *where appropriate*.'[26] Many of the responsibilities given to the Secretary of State were primarily anticipatory: early warning, contingency planning, and leading the development of future civilian response capacity. The formal

[23] NSPD-44, *Management of interagency efforts concerning reconstruction and stabilization* (The White House, 7 December 2005). This directive superseded PDD-56, *Managing complex contingency operations* (The White House, 20 May 1997).
[24] The establishment of S/CRS is discussed in more detail in chapter six of the thesis. See also Nora Bensahel, Olga Oliker, and Heather Peterson, *Improving capacity for stabilization and reconstruction operations* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2009), pp. 33-4.
[25] NSPD-44, p. 4.
[26] Ibid. Emphasis added.

definition of the military's role in stabilisation and reconstruction operations was left to the Department of Defense, which issued a directive to that effect in 2005 that will be discussed later on in the chapter.

In September 2008, Congress reiterated the State Department's leading role in the coordination of US *civilian* stabilisation efforts by codifying into law the mandate of S/CRS, which could hitherto not be dismantled without legislative action.[27] Yet each foreign crisis with a stabilisation component re-opened interagency debates over questions of leadership and division of labour, such as the interventions in Lebanon in 2006 and Haiti in 2010. Ambitious plans for an 'Interagency Management System' (IMS), which was intended to provide an integrated mechanism for interagency planning and implementation processes, failed to take hold within the bureaucracy.[28] It can be safely stated that the IMS has not achieved the recognition and influence within the US government architecture that would justify greater elaboration here.[29]

The notion of 'Whole of Government' (WoG), which is more frequently heard in the US policy discourse than in the United Kingdom, reflects the predominant

[27] US Congress, *Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act*, passed as Title XVI of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (S. 3001, P.L. 110-417, 110th Congr., 2008), signed into law 14 October 2008, section 7. For background see Nina M. Serafino, *Peacekeeping/stabilization and conflict transitions: background and congressional action on the Civilian Response/Reserve Corps and other civilian stabilization and reconstruction capabilities,* RL32862 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 17 February 2010), p. 12.

[28] A senior Pentagon official noted in 2009 that 'unfortunately, the IMS has never been activated, reflecting some fundamental challenges in its design and charter.' Janine Davidson, 'Making government work: pragmatic priorities for interagency coordination', *ORBIS* 54/3 (Summer 2009), p. 430. More recently, two experts at the Council of Foreign Relations straightforwardly stated 'as it stands today, S/CRS remains on the periphery of the policymaking process, and the IMS is defunct.' Andrew C. Miller and Paul B. Stares, *How new atrocity-prevention steps can work,* Expert brief (New York: Council of Foreign Relations, 15 August 2011).

[29] For more detail on the IMS, see Christopher J. Lamb, 'Redesigning White House and interagency structures', in Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin (eds.), *Civilian surge*, (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2009), p. 41.

focus on the US government system and its capabilities over multilateral approaches to stabilisation. 'The interagency' has become a policy buzzword in its own right – accompanied by occasional debates among policy-makers and practitioners whether the word should be understood as a noun, a verb, or an adjective. However, the formal nature of the template for coordination – which itself has not acquired a specific name comparable to the 'Comprehensive Approach' in the United Kingdom – stands in contrast with the view shared by many US government officials that the model is ultimately rather hollow.[30] Laura Hall, a State Department official writing in private capacity, argued that WoG did not stand for a strategy or doctrine for stabilisation, that it further described 'a supply rather than a demand,' and ultimately was no more than a 'phrase acknowledging that there are multiple actors whose skills may be applicable.'[31] Sarah Sewall, who served in national security positions under the Clinton and Obama administrations, equally complained that in the US interagency process 'competencies are catalogued, not assessed. No shortfalls are identified. The orientation is procedural (this is how we will plan), not substantive (these are our operating principles).'[32]

[30] The term 'comprehensive approach' is occasionally used in US policy documents but usually refers to either a broader institutional approach (which includes a variety of US federal agencies, non-governmental and international organisations, as well as private contractors), or to the different components – economic/development, political, security, information – of a counterinsurgency campaign without reference to specific agencies.
[31] Laura A. Hall, *Black box magic: whole of government coordination made easy! ,* 'The Will and the Wallet' [weblog] (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2 September 2010).
[32] Sarah Sewall, 'Crafting a new counterinsurgency doctrine', *Foreign Service Journal* (September 2007), p. 38.

2. Organisational identities in the US government architecture

This section provides short biographies of the organisations behind the labels of defence, diplomacy, and development in the United States at the dawn of the twenty-first century. It asks how the self-understanding of competences and core missions within these organisations relates to the tasks they have been entrusted with – or come to carry out by default – in stability operations, and examines internal tensions and debates over trade-offs that have emerged in the process.

Defence: the Pentagon and the military services

The US defence establishment – encompassing both the Pentagon with its mix of civilian and military staff, and the military services – experienced vast increases in spending and staff in the decade following the attacks on the twin towers on 11 September 2001. New offices staffed by newly promoted senior executives had mushroomed within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the defence agencies, and the combatant command staffs. Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, noted in 2009 that 'this expansion and its associated habits and attitudes was abetted by a near doubling of the defence base budget since 2001, and further enabled by a steady diet of supplemental war appropriations.'[33] New missions acquired in the wake of 9/11 accounted for much of the expansion in size and expenses. In Gates' view, the cornucopian conditions provided little incentive for 'setting priorities, making real trade-offs, and separating appetites from real requirements.'[34]

[33] Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, 'News briefing from the Pentagon', Washington, DC, 9 August 2010.
[34] Ibid.

The first decade of the twenty-first century thus saw a concern that the military was on a slippery slope to becoming America's default – and only – instrument for dealing with national security threats, in spite of the recognition that these threats had become increasingly complex and multifaceted. Admiral Mike Mullen, the Chief of the Joint Staffs, contended in early 2010 'we ought to make it a precondition of committing our troops, that we will do so only if and when the other instruments of national power are ready to engage as well.'[35] The Pentagon dwarfed its interagency partners in every conceivable measure of power and influence. It enjoyed privileged relationships with the executive and with Congress. Criticism of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq was seldom directed at the military itself, which was commended beyond its own perimeter for having adapted with impressive speed and resolve – and under the guidance of charismatic leaders – to the challenges faced.[36] In the whole-of-government context, defence had become the proverbial 800-pound gorilla, which sits anywhere it wants.

Mission and self-perception

The US defence establishment is often held to be characterised by a so-called 'big war' culture in terms of its broad institutional orientation.[37] It has been pointed out

[35] Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, remarks at the Landon lectures, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 3 March 2010.
[36] Outgoing Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, noted in early 2011 that 'the Army's ability to learn and adapt in recent years allowed us to pull Iraq back from the brink of chaos in 2007 and ... roll back the Taliban from their strongholds in Afghanistan.' Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, speech at the United States Military Academy, Westpoint, NY, 25 February 2011.
[37] For accounts of a 'big war paradigm' within the US military see Robert Cassidy, 'Winning the war of the flea: lessons from guerilla warfare', *Military Review* 84/5 (2004); Weigley, *The American way of war: a history of United States military strategy and policy*. These accounts have been challenged more recently, see Janine Davidson, *Lifting the fog of peace: how Americans learned to fight modern war* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2010); Brian McAllister Linn, *The echo of battle: the army's way of war* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2007).

by scholars that this (self-)identification with large-scale conventional warfare is rather anachronistic, given that so-called 'small wars' feature prominently in the history of American military engagement abroad.[38] The negative legacy of Vietnam is frequently identified as the key reason behind the collective rejection of the concepts of low-intensity or counterinsurgency warfare, as well as for the institutional amnesia with regard to the expertise built around it, within the US military until recently.[39] The decades preceding the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan furthermore saw an overvaluation of the technological dimensions of military force, which is documented in critical evaluations of the so-called revolution in military affairs (RMA) and Secretary Rumsfeld's 'military transformation' agenda.[40] This period affected the understanding of roles and missions throughout the defence establishment; as Frank Hoffman observes, 'the technophiliacs in the Pentagon were abetted by a military culture that since Vietnam had retreated to a narrow view of its professional domain. ... The Army didn't just ignore its Vietnam experience; it deliberately jettisoned the lessons learned and chose not to study it, or to determine what actually worked.'[41] Hew Strachan equally notes that the US military 'deliberately reconfigured itself physically as well as intellectually only to fight major war' after Vietnam.[42]

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[38] Schadlow, for instance, argues that 'virtually all of the wars in which it [the US Army] has fought have involved the problem of managing local actors in order to restore stability and basic order.' Nadia Schadlow, *Organizing to compete in the political terrain* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2010), p. 3. See also Max Boot, *Savage wars of peace: small wars and the rise of American power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

[39] David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith, 'Whose hearts and whose minds? The curious case of global counter-insurgency', *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33/1 (2010), pp. 82-3.

[40] Eliot Cohen, 'A revolution in warfare', *Foreign Affairs* 75/2 (1996); Lawrence Freedman, 'The transformation of strategic affairs', *Adelphi Paper* 379 (2006), pp. 13-5; Chris Hables Gray, *Postmodern war: the new politics of conflict* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[41] Frank G. Hoffman, 'The anatomy of the long war's failings', *Footnotes (FPRI newsletter)* 14/16 (2009).

[42] Hew Strachan, 'Strategy and the limitations of war', in Patrick Cronin (ed.), *The Impenetrable fog of war: reflections on modern warfare and strategic surprise*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security, 2008), p. 81.

Yet it is challenging to speak of a shared organisational narrative within the US defence establishment, which is divided internally between the civilian leadership in the Pentagon and the military brass within the services; the different military branches; and numerous subcultures arising from professional specialisations within the services. The shaping of the military's role in stability operations has thus taken place in a frequently tense dialogue between the civilian leadership of the Pentagon, the service chiefs, and commanders within the two services that have been most engaged on the ground – the Army and the Marine Corps (USMC).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Dane Smith notes that no other US government agency has gone through as many abrupt policy changes with regard to peace-building (which he uses as an umbrella term that includes stability operations) since the end of the Cold War.[43] The 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) mentioned neither stabilisation and reconstruction nor counterinsurgency as potential missions to prepare and equip the armed forces for. Only five years later, however, the next review written in the midst of a 'long war against terrorist networks' identified military support to 'Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction' (SSTR) as a core mission of the US military. The 2006 QDR thus envisioned that 'future warriors [would] be as proficient in irregular operations, including counterinsurgency and stabilisation operations, as they are today in high intensity combat.'[44] The 2010 QDR further emphasized that stability operations, large-scale counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations were not to be

[43] Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, p. 107.
[44] Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review report* (QDR), 6 February 2006.

considered niche challenges. Nor could they be delegated to a single military department.[45]

As Eric Olson notes, the US military has had an ambivalent relationship with post-war reconstruction efforts, which 'have been viewed as among America's greatest triumphs ... but also been reviled and repudiates as "nation-building" and ... held up by critics as an activity inconsistent with the American way of war.'[46] Institutional arrangements for peacekeeping and low-intensity conflict instated under the Clinton administration (including Presidential Decision Directive 56 on complex contingency operations) came under assault during Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's tenure at the Pentagon, who wanted to see these responsibilities placed under the State Department.[47] The shift in attitude that occurred within the US defence establishment after 2005 is remarkable, given the G.W. Bush administration's initial publicly stated disdain for so-called armed nation-building. In the summer of 2004, Rumsfeld was briefed on a study by the Defense Science Board on *Transitions to and from Hostilities*, which merely suggested that plans for stabilisation and reconstruction should be fully integrated with combat plans, instead of being treated as an annex or afterthought thereof.[48] The study nevertheless prompted the Defense Secretary to order work on a defence directive that would mark a watershed in US defence policy. DOD Directive 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations,* which was released with some delay in

[45] Ibid.
[46] Eric T. Olson, *Some of the best weapons for counterinsurgents do not shoot,* The Letort Papers (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, October 2010), p. 5.
[47] Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, p. 107; 10. See also Berger and Scowcroft, *In the wake of war*, p. 10.
[48] Smith points out that this process, which 'eventually resulted in a dramatic change at the Pentagon' did not originate within the Pentagon itself but followed from an initiative of the National Security Council. Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, p. 115.

November 2005, framed stability operations as a core mission for the US military and placed it on a par with combat operations.[49]

The directive reflected a balancing exercise between the pragmatic recognition of the limited capacity of civilian organisations and the desire to prevent the military from becoming the default provider for a large and vague list of tasks. While the initial directive released in 2005 required the military to be prepared to 'perform all tasks....when civilians cannot do so,' it was reissued as an instruction in 2009 that qualified this requirement by adding '*until such time* as it is feasible to transition lead responsibility to other US government agencies.'[50] A civilian Pentagon official noted that the significance of DODD 3000.05 was to be seen in the 'powerful process' that led to its approval rather than in the document itself, as the senior leadership within the military services (the Navy and Air Force in particular) was not convinced by the directive, but ultimately came around to follow Rumsfeld's lead.[51]

The crisis faced by the US military in Iraq, spurred by the development of a violent insurgency in the wake of the successful removal of Saddam Hussein from power in 2003, arguably acted as a powerful driver for institutional change. Thomas Rick's account of US military operations in Iraq, however, suggests that the shift towards a new strategy in late 2006 occurred with agonizing slowness. Belatedly, and 'over the objections of nearly all relevant leaders of the US military establishment,' a small group of military officials persuaded the sceptical

[49] Department of Defense, *Military support for stability, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations*, DOD Directive 3000.05, 28 November 2005; reissued by the Department of Defense as *Stability Operations* (DOD Instruction 3000.05, 16 September 2009).
[50] DODD 3000.05 and DODI 3000.05. Emphasis added.
[51] US_15, 20 September 2010.

and to some extent ignorant leadership within the Pentagon and the White House to change course.[52] Replacing Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense in 2006, Gates made it his mission to focus the defence establishment on current campaigns against what he saw as a predilection of the services to either prepare for the next war or fight the last one.[53] He saw no swift termination of the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan that would allow the military to return to 'business as usual'.[54] Gates' agenda for change envisaged both a conceptual reorientation of the military towards counterinsurgency campaigns as well as the institutionalisation of capabilities to fight them.[55]

Yet, in spite of strong messages from the top after 2005 and the accumulation of operational experience in stabilisation by military units rotating through tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, longer-standing organisational cultures within the US military have continued to shape perceptions and attitudes toward the military's role in stability operations. One US Army officer, for instance, admitted that he was glad to move on after spending three years of his career in the 'Stab Ops community', because he felt that there was 'no attention, no leadership, and no possibility to make a difference' in this area.[56]

[52] Thomas E. Ricks, *The gamble: General David Petraeus and the American military adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), p. 9.
[53] Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, remarks at the Naval War College, Newport, RI, 17 April 2009.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, 'Priorities of the Department of Defense in the new administration', statement dated 27 January 2009, US Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services (HASC 111–3, 111th Cong., 1st sess., 2010).
[56] US_44, 29 October 2010.

Internal tensions and debates

As stability operations were formally framed as a core mission for the entire defence establishment, they raised concerns over potential trade-offs among skills and competences. These debates played out differently within different services and branches of the defence establishment and can only be approximated here due to reasons of space. Arguments in favour of adapting force structures to the demands of stability operations through changes in equipment, training, doctrine and mindsets, as well as warnings against letting the pendulum swing too far in this direction, reveal a mix of concerns. From a bureaucratic perspective, increased institutional attention to 'low-intensity conflict' and special operations was likely to empower some services or branches within the military above others by providing them with an opportunity to capture resources. In terms of organisational cultures, the framing of stability operations as a core mission for the military challenged deep-seated understandings of what soldiering was about. The foreword to the widely regarded new field manual on *Counterinsurgency* (FM 3-24) for instance stated that 'soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation builders *as well as* warriors.'[57] FM 3-24 made clear that counterinsurgency required the military to 'be ready both to fight and to build' – sometimes in parallel and often in quick succession – and that it would be a mistake to consider nation building the exclusive responsibility of the Department of State and civil affairs personnel.[58]

[57] US Army and US Marine Corps, 'Counterinsurgency', Field Manual No. 3-24/Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army/ Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy/Department of the Marine Corps, 15 December 2006), foreword. Emphasis added.
[58] FM 3-24, para. 1-153.

Within the United States Army, debates revolved around immediate tradeoffs, as well as longer term implications, associated with organisational transformation according to the demands of stability operations. The DOD's Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review of 2009 reiterated the leading role that general purpose forces were asked to play in stability operations and COIN, and predicted a growing role for these forces in support of integrated civilian-military teams in so-called steady state (or peacetime) operations.[59] Among the most vocal critics of the Army's focus on counterinsurgency warfare, (retired) Army Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters argued that the Army was promoting an erroneous interpretation of classic COIN principles in order to secure greater resources and to expand its competences. In Peters' view, parochial interests led the Army to inflate the political nature of counterinsurgency emphasized in the literature 'to mean far more than intended, from lavish aid programs to social engineering.'[60] Concerns over the transformation of the Army into a 'COIN force' equally touched upon the training, skills and ultimately the morale of the troops deployed. Gian Gentile, a serving US Army Colonel, criticised FM 3-24 for 'removing the fundamental reality of fighting from counterinsurgency warfare,' and thereby downplaying the need for maintaining 'initiative, morale and offensive spirit among combat soldiers who will operate in a place such as Iraq.'[61] Arguments that the focus on counterinsurgency prompted a decline in either warrior spirit or combat proficiency were strongly contested by others. Andrew Exum, a former active duty US Army officer with operational experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, argued that 'anyone who thinks US soldiers sit around passing out Snickers bars

[59] DOD, *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review report* (QRM), January 2009, p.12.
[60] Ralph Peters, 'The COIN lies we love: dissecting the myth that the military has only a supporting role', *Armed Forces Journal* (April 2009).
[61] Gian P. Gentile, 'Eating soup with a spoon', *Armed Forces Journal* (September 2007).

all day as part of counterinsurgency operations needs to visit the Arghandab [a valley in south-eastern Afghanistan].'[62]

The perception that stability operations were counterintuitive to the military mindset and ethos was less pronounced in the second military branch that deeply engaged in stability operations throughout the past decade, the United States Marine Corps (USMC). Certainly within the Corps – but also to some extent among those who have worked with or alongside US Marines – one finds a strong sense of a distinct culture and ethos that sets the Marines apart from other fighting forces.[63] While limited space does not allow for a detailed account of the USMC's organisational culture, it can be noted that some elements indeed seemed to predispose the Marines for the type of engagement they were called upon to undertake in Iraq and Afghanistan.[64] Marines praise themselves for being exceptionally adaptable and able to excel in a variety of operational environments. This philosophy was encapsulated in Marine General Charles Krulak's famous concept of the three-block-war, which resonated with a wide audience of practitioners and scholars who were grappling with the complexity of the military's operating environment in the humanitarian crises of the 1990s.[65] A Marine reservist for instance felt that the COIN ethos was 'part of our DNA' and referred to the (widely credited) success of Marine brigades in applying

[62] Andrew Exum, *Afghanistan trip report, part I: BLUF,* Weblog (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 10 December 2010).
[63] A US civilian adviser jokingly referred to the Marine task force headquarters 'Camp Leatherneck' in Southern Afghanistan as 'Planet of the Marines' to emphasize how the USMC's distinct culture permeated the place. US_55, 30 November 2010.
[64] For a detailed study, see Terry Terriff, 'Warriors and innovators: military change and organizational culture in the US Marine Corps', *Defence Studies* 6/2 (2006), p. 216.
[65] Krulak described how soldiers were confronted by the full spectrum of operations ranging from humanitarian assistance to traditional warfighting 'in the span of a few hours and within the space of three contiguous city blocks'. General Charles C. Krulak, 'The strategic corporal: leadership in the three block war', *Marines Magazine* (January 1999).

counterinsurgency principles in Al-Anbar province, Iraq, as a 'strong ... legacy in our pockets that is institutionalised now.' [66] A senior Marine further argued that 'we don't see this as a flash in the pan, this is what we do' and explained that training in high-intensity combat was considered an integral part of 'doing COIN'.[67] Other interviewees, however, questioned the depth of the USMC's institutional embrace of irregular warfare and COIN, as well as the Marines' ability to translate institutional agility on the battlefield into success in multifaceted engagements with different stakeholders in the context of stability operations. Doubts concerned specifically the Marines' readiness to engage in non-combat related roles, as they were known to take pride in being associated with an aggressive approach to soldiering.[68]

In sum, the limited scope available for discussion in the thesis is unlikely to do justice to the kaleidoscope of views, opinions, and debates that have arisen within the US defence establishment in the context of stability operations over the past decade. The overarching sense, however, is one of widespread uncertainty over the longer-term implications of transformation away from a conventional, large-scale warfighting legacy, in spite of pressing operational imperatives.

[66] US_09, 15 September 2010.
[67] US_12, 17 September 2010.
[68] Francis 'Bing' West, who was embedded with a USMC battalion in Sangin, Afghanistan, argued that US Marines were able to move more rapidly and forcefully than anyone else 'because they are being aggressive and because the high command is letting them be aggressive,' cited in Paul Wood, 'Sangin: US Marines take fight to the Afghan Taliban', *BBC News UK*, 20 January 2011. See also Hoffman, *Changing tires*, p. v.

Diplomacy: the Department of State

Notwithstanding the lead role formally assigned to the State Department in the conduct of American foreign policy, the organisation has been fighting for influence and power within the government architecture over the past decade. The power discrepancy between State and DOD dates back to the early reforms of the modern national security apparatus in the United States between 1947 and 1960, which according to Douglas Stuart saw the Department of Defense as the primary beneficiary and the State Department as the primary victim.[69] Gabriel Marcella notes that this pre-existing condition was aggravated under the presidency of G.W. Bush, not least because of the logic underpinning the so-called 'war on terror', which prompted a 'tectonic shift of decision-making power from the Department of State to Defense.'[70]

Other agencies, often more specialised and operational, further challenged the State Department's place in the pursuit of US interests abroad prior to and outside the context of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.[71] As George F. Kennan noted in 1997, 'not only has the State Department been largely deprived of its traditional role as the spokesman for and coordinator of foreign policy, but hundreds of other areas of international relations have been abandoned to the desires and whims of the numerous forces on the Washington scene.'[72] Likewise, troubled relations

[69] Douglas Stuart, 'Constructing the iron cage: the 1947 National Security Act', in Gabriel Marcella (ed.), *Affairs of state: the interagency and national security*, (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2008), p. 87.
[70] Marcella, 'Understanding the interagency process', p. 26.
[71] US diplomats surveyed in 2000 feared that the embassy network would be relegated to a 'concierge function' for other agencies abroad. Stephanie Smith Kinney, 'Developing diplomats for 2010: if not now, when? Senior seminar report', *American Diplomacy* 5/3 (2000).
[72] George F. Kennan, 'Diplomacy without diplomats', *Foreign Affairs* 76/5 (1997), p. 206.

with Congress largely predate the twenty-first century.[73] A cohort of diplomats surveyed in 2000 referred to 'broad public scepticism about international engagement, State's poor relations with Congress, and the continuation of "thirty years running against Washington",' as major concerns regarding their organisation's vitality.[74]

With a change in leadership in the Pentagon in 2006, the State Department acquired a champion for its cause from perhaps unexpected but not entirely surprising quarters, given the military's own reluctance to engage in stability operations. In a bureaucratic role reversal that had become habitual, Secretary Gates complained in 2008 that 'America's civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long – relative to what we spend on the military, and more important, relative to the responsibilities and challenges our nation has around the world.'[75] Indeed, the lack of manpower and resources within the State Department acquired a salient dimension with large cuts to the foreign affairs budget after the end of the Cold War. Stagnating staff levels at a time when new embassies had to be established in Eastern Europe led to a shortfall in core diplomatic capacity.[76] This shortfall was filled neither by Secretary of State Colin Powell's 'diplomatic readiness initiative', which was 'quickly absorbed by the diplomatic surges in Iraq, Afghanistan and neighbouring countries,' nor by budget increases after 2004,

[73] Marguerite Cooper, 'How Congress views FSOs', *Foreign Service Journal* 75/1 (1998); Richard G. Lugar, 'State and Congress: can we talk?' *Foreign Service Journal* 78/5 (2001); Thomas D. Boyatt (assessment chair), *Secretary Colin Powell's State Department: an independent assessment,* Task force report (Washington, DC: Foreign Affairs Council, March 2003), p. 13.
[74] Smith Kinney, 'Developing diplomats for 2010'.
[75] Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, speech at the US Global Leadership Campaign, Washington, DC, 15 July 2008.
[76] Thomas D. Boyatt, *A foreign affairs budget for the future: fixing the crisis in diplomatic readiness,* Full project report (Washington, DC: The American Academy of Diplomacy; Stimson Center, October 2008), p. 7.

which went into infrastructure renewal and enhanced security rather than bolstering core staff.[77] The American Academy of Diplomacy warned in 2008 that America's diplomatic capacity had been 'hollowed out.'[78] That year, the military bands of the armed services together counted more people than the entire Foreign Service Officer corps.[79] In 2009, five former Secretaries of State called for resources to fix the personnel and financial shortcomings at the State Department and USAID as an urgent matter of national security.[80]

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the (self-) perception of the State Department was thus that of a resource-starved institution, dwarfed by the Pentagon's influence and assets, defending its relevance in the maintenance of America's global interests in the face of a sceptical Congress and American public. In a letter to incoming Secretary Colin Powell in the 2000, a group of career diplomats bluntly stated 'we are entering the uncharted waters of the 21st century in a rusted-out diplomatic hulk that is no longer seaworthy... The work of our diplomats from Nairobi to Beijing is every bit as crucial to the country's strategic defence and protection of U.S. vital interests as are military bases and installations.'[81]

Mission and self-perception

Doubts about the vitality and relevance of its core competencies made it harder for the State Department to define and defend its role in the eyes of other

[77] Ibid., p. 2; 9.
[78] Ibid., p. 1.
[79] Marcella, 'Understanding the interagency process', p. 37.
[80] Henry Kissinger*, et al.*, 'U.S. needs more foreign diplomats', *Politico*, 25 June 2009.
[81] Stephanie Smith Kinney, 'Open letter to the next Secretary of State: SOS for DOS', *American Diplomacy* 5/4 (2001).

government agencies, lawmakers, and domestic constituencies. In 2008, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Budget Project noted 'we all use simple code words like "State Department," "Foreign Service," and "diplomacy" to communicate much more complicated realities. In our budget work we have grappled with these definitional problems.'[82] Diplomacy is traditionally reactive; places a premium on observation, reporting and behind-the-scene negotiations; and is normally carried out in the restricted sphere of official relations among government representatives. These precepts increasingly came under pressure by calls for organisational reform within the State Department under the G.W. Bush administration. The notion of 'transformational diplomacy' introduced during Condoleezza Rice's tenure as Secretary of State envisioned a more proactive role for the State Department, which also called for the engagement of non-traditional actors.[83] In line with the administration's 'global war on terror', it contained growing expectations about the role of non-military tools of statecraft in the management of crises and instability abroad. A strategic five-year plan released in mid-2003 still framed the State Department's contribution to the maintenance of peace and security primarily within the realm of inter-state relations (through cooperation and 'support to multilateral institutions, alliances, and coalitions') and its approach to weak states in terms of prevention.[84] The subsequent strategic plan for 2007-2012, on the other hand, foresaw 'transformational assistance strategies' for the stabilisation of countries undergoing crisis – including the commitment to

[82] Thomas D. Boyatt, 'The Department of States' human capital needs', prepared statement dated 16 July 2008, US Congress, Senate, Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs (S. Hrg. 110–684, 110th Congr., 2nd sess., 2009), pp. 48-52.
[83] Barry M. Blechman and Thomas R. Pickering (co-chairs), *Final report of the State Department in 2025 working group,* (Washington, DC: Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy, 2008), pp. 3-4.
[84] US Department of State and USAID, *Security, democracy, prosperity* (Strategic plan fiscal years 2004-09, August 2003), p. 5.

develop the State Department's capacity in this area and the aspiration to assume a leading role in the coordination of a whole-of-government effort in the planning and conduct of stability operations.[85]

While the concept of transformational diplomacy died out with the change in administration in 2009, the State Department's inaugural *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (QDDR) conducted under Hillary Clinton's leadership in 2010 equally employed predominantly active verbs to describe the organisation's roles. Far from merely observing and reporting on events, it pictured American diplomats as *preventing*, *resolving* and *ending* conflicts; *countering* threats that could not be addressed through US military force alone; as well as *solving* global political, economic and security problems.[86] The QDDR embraced crisis and conflict prevention and resolution, as well as engagement in fragile states and in the aftermath of conflict as a core mission of the State Department.[87] It recognised that complex interventions abroad demanded 'a particular kind of diplomacy,' and emphasized the need for some degree of institutional reorganisation and restructuring. The expertise required to carry out these interventions, however, was largely held to exist already within the US government and its international partners.[88]

The State Department thus came to frame its role not merely as a coordinating or advisory one, but increasingly envisioned an operational dimension to its

[85] US Department of State and USAID, *Transformational diplomacy* (Strategic plan fiscal years 2007-2012, revised 7 May 2007), pp. 12-15.
[86] US Department of State and USAID, *Leading through civilian power,* Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), December 2010, p. 2. Emphasis added.
[87] Ibid., p. 123.
[88] Ibid., p. 130.

mandate, which differed from traditional representational and reporting functions overseas. In the QDDR the State Department pictured one of its diplomats, accompanied by a USAID colleague, 'with deep knowledge of the area's different ethnic groups ... on their way to talk with local councils about a range of projects – a new water filtration system, new ways to elevate the role of women in the community, and so on.'[89] Continued pressure on the foreign affairs budget, however, has largely relegated this operational dimension into the realm of aspirations (aside from USAID, which is discussed separately hereafter). Anton Smith, for instance, argued in 2007 that 'for now, as defined by the resources made available, State's primary job is to try to avoid situations of conflict that are the *raison d'être* of Defense.'[90]

In sum, the State Department's organisational narrative has been framed by the permanent struggle for resources and influence within the government architecture. A former Foreign Service Officer (FSO) argued that the State Department was 'culturally conditioned by its lack of resources never to aspire anything beyond dealing with immediate concerns.'[91] Difficulties in making its core competences valued, combined with pressures for change and transformation, posed a major challenge for the State Department in formulating its role within government. The competition for resources and influence arguably introduced a bias towards framing that role primarily within a national security perspective. The elevation of the status of women in the world beyond an issue of normative values to 'a matter of national security' in the QDDR can be seen as an

[89] Ibid., p. i.
[90] Anton K. Smith, *Turning on the dime: diplomacy's role in national security* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2007), p. 10.
[91] US_22, 6 October 2010.

illustration of the securitization of the State Department's agenda and mission.[92] The framing of women's rights as a national security concern reinforces the impression that throughout the past decade, America's top diplomats have tended to view the struggle for recognition and relevance of their organisation as a competition with defence within a discursive space that has been dominated by the latter. How uncertainty over the appropriate role of the State Department and the application of its core expertise has led to internal tensions within the organisation is the subject of the next section.

Internal tensions and debates

As one State Department official observed, the diplomatic working environment has traditionally been highly structured. 'Protocol is very clear. We are taught very strongly that you do not interfere in the internal affairs of the host nation. ... When we go into military action we tend to hand over everything to the generals, and the politicians will step in later.'[93] Scott Moore furthermore argues that – in contrast to European colonial administrations – there is no historical precedent for the State Department's role in places where no state authority exists on the ground. Historically, the US military ended up governing places like Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico on a temporary basis before transitioning power directly to indigenous authorities. US civilians on the ground would act advisers or were involved in the delivery of services in a private capacity, but were not officially in charge.[94]

[92] QDDR, p. 2.
[93] US_60, 10 December 2010.
[94] R. Scott Moore, 'Civ-mil operations: the historical battlespace', power point presentation (Fort McNair, Washington, DC: US Army Center for Military History, updated 21 August 2011), slides 23-27 (author's copy, publication forthcoming).

In the context of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, however, expectations shifted towards an increasingly operational role for diplomats on the ground. They were flying around in helicopters and lived in muddy, fortified bases instead of plush embassies. They were expected to act as mentors to local authorities at the sub-national level rather than attending receptions with their official counterparts in the capital. And in the theatre of operations, they were called upon to provide immediate advice on local socio-economic dynamics by their military counterparts rather than quietly sending their observations back to Washington.[95]

These changes raised questions within the diplomatic community over the nature of its core trade and the skills and attitudes required to carry it out. A town hall forum for the diplomatic corps convened by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2007 attracted much attention because of the outcry of some diplomats present over the Secretary's intention to direct personnel to so-called hardship posts. One diplomat was quoted exclaiming, 'if you forced-assign people, that is really shifting the terms of *what we are all about*.'[96] The opposition voiced during the town hall forum, however, stood in contrast to testimonies by State Department officials deployed on the ground in Iraq. One official deemed the assignment to be the most rewarding and 'real' work offered by the State Department. 'It has the attention of the world, and is under a magnifying glass from Washington.'[97] A colleague of his deemed that the Iraq posting was a perfect job for her, allowing

[95] US_52, 22 November 2010.
[96] Nathan Hodge, *Armed humanitarians: the rise of the nation builders* (New York: Bloomsbury (Advance Reading Copy), 2011), p. 173. Emphasis added.
[97] Horacio Ureta, Iraq provincial action officer, PRT al-Anbar, Iraq, 2007, quoted in Shawn Dorman, 'Iraq PRTs: pins on a map', *Foreign Service Journal* 84/3 (2007), p. 24.

her to make use of language, cross-cultural and interpersonal skills and offering 'an opportunity to make a difference and do *real* diplomacy.'[98]

Just as in the British case, opinions remain divided over the degree to which stability operations demand the cultivation of new skills within the State Department, and whether these should be mainstreamed across the workforce or delegated to specialist units. A report by the American Academy of Diplomacy in 2008 suggested that shortfalls in a variety of skills resulted from 'inadequate past opportunities for training, especially career-long professional education.' It further noted that these gaps also reflected 'the tendency of some officers to undervalue and thus avoid training.'[99] A survey conducted among one-hundred FSOs in 2000 stated that many of them believed that the traditional on-the-job professional apprentice system was no longer adequate to equip officers with the mix of issue-specific and resource management skills deemed necessary in the twenty-first century.[100]

Whether the demands of stability operations should be taken as a benchmark for organisational reform at Foggy Bottom – as a reading of the QDDR may suggest – is by no means a straightforward question. One State Department official, for instance, argued that mainstreaming stabilisation skills was not appropriate, given the relative insignificance of dealing with failed states and instability compared to broader challenges, such as the rise of China, relations with an increasingly integrated Europe, or Russia's future role on the global scene. 'If you decided that

[98] Angela Williams, Public diplomacy officer, PRT al-Anbar, Iraq, 2007, quoted in Ibid., p. 23. Emphasis added.
[99] Boyatt, *A Foreign affairs budget for the future*, p. 22.
[100] Smith Kinney, 'Developing diplomats for 2010'.

from tomorrow that the State Department would only hire people who would be effective at PRTs [provincial reconstruction teams] – how many of these guys are still going to be good at the consulate in Shanghai discussing a trade treaty?' he asked.[101] Or, as a retired diplomat noted in the State Department's in-house journal, 'expeditionary forays in war zones ... should not blind us to the many other challenges that demand much more of the Foreign Service than to be sidekicks, diplomatic wingpersons to the armed forces.'[102]

Development: the US Agency for International Development

The United States Agency for Development (USAID) was created in 1961 under the Kennedy administration following the passage of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) by Congress. Its history has been marked by continuous debate over the place of foreign assistance within US foreign policy and corresponding uncertainty within the agency over the degree of authority, independence, and support accorded to it by successive administrations. Perceptions both within and outside the agency converge on a legacy of quasi-mythical heydays in the 1960s, which are frequently evoked in contrast to its reduced capacity in the post-Cold War era.

The memory of USAID's purported glory days not only refers to an era of greater resource and staff levels but has also been used to deplore the loss of expertise, knowledge and initiative within the organisation.[103] In 2009, Secretary Gates

[101] US_60, 10 December 2010.
[102] Gerald Loftus, 'Expeditionary sidekicks? The military-diplomatic dynamic', *Foreign Service Journal* 84/12 (2007), p. 17.
[103] See Kristin Henderson, 'This is war: how USAID workers are trained for work and danger in Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, 4 July 2010. The term 'glory days' was also employed by

pointed out that merely two decades earlier, the organisation had been staffed by development experts 'who expected to be deployed' and knew how to do a variety of tasks from digging wells to building educational systems. In contrast, the 3,000 people left in USAID in 2010 were 'almost all involved in contracting.'[104] Moreover, large reductions in staff in the post-Cold War era raised concerns over the agency's ability to administer a growing volume of foreign assistance and development funding.[105] Written and oral statements by successive USAID administrators over the past two decades evoke the impression that the Agency has been under permanent pressure to reform and to streamline organisational structures and practices.[106]

Uncertainty over USAID's autonomy not only complicated the bilateral relationship with the State Department but also weakened its position *vis-à-vis* the Pentagon. Dane Smith notes that a push for greater direction by the State Department, which had marked the fluctuating relationship between the two components over time, accelerated further under Condoleezza Rice's tenure.[107] A reform of the foreign aid function under the Bush administration removed USAID's direct access to the Office of Management and Budget, which gave the State Department greater control over budget authority and diminished USAID's

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Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, remarks at the US Global Leadership Coalition annual conference, Washington DC, 28 September 2010.

[104] Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, remarks at the Naval War College, Newport, RI, 17 April 2009 (repeated nearly verbatim at the US Global Leadership Coalition annual conference, Washington, DC, 28 September 2010).

[105] In 2008, USAID had 2,200 direct hires to administer over $8 billion annually, whereas in 1990, nearly 3,500 personnel were assigned to administer approximately $5 billion of assistance per year. Boyatt, *A Foreign affairs budget for the future*, p. 2.

[106] J. Brian Atwood, USAID Administrator, spoken statement before the House committee on foreign affairs, 3 February 1994, PN-ABQ-599 (Washington, DC: USAID, 1994); Andrew S. Natsios, USAID Administrator, 'Fiscal Year 2006 budget', testimony before the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, 20 April 2005, PD-ACD-539 (Washington, DC: USAID, 2005); Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator, 'USAID: following the money', testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 11 May 2011.

[107] Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, p. 131.

influence in interagency negotiations.[108] Three former USAID administrators warned against this trend in 2008, and called for the transformation of USAID into a cabinet-level department or independent agency reporting directly to the secretary of state in order to restore the organizations autonomy and vitality.[109] Within the Obama administration's whole-of-government strategy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan, USAID lost further control over foreign assistance with the appointment of a Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) at the State Department, who was put in charge of all civilian operations.[110]

USAID's narrative at the start of the twenty-first century thus included a past record of excellence that had earned it the appreciation of the US military and a more recent experience of crippling budget and personnel cuts as well as an alleged loss of expertise. It nevertheless contained the promise – read into some of the White House's strategic documents by USAID's leadership and referenced occasionally by senior executives within State and Defense – for development to become elevated as a third pillar of national security on a par with defence and diplomacy.[111]

Mission and self-perception

Debates over the effectiveness of foreign assistance have prompted frequent shifts and reversals in development policy throughout the past fifty years within a range

[108] With the establishment of the State Department's Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance (F) in 2006, frequently referred to as the 'F Bureau'.
[109] J. Brian Atwood, M. Peter McPherson, and Andrew Natsios, 'Arrested development: making foreign aid a more effective tool', *Foreign Affairs* 87/6 (2008), pp. 128-9.
[110] US Congress, Senate, *Evaluating US foreign assistance to Afghanistan* (majority staff report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 112th Congr., 1st sess., 2011), p.7.
[111] Although frequently cited as a reference for the 'three Ds', NSS 2006 does not refer to development as the 'third pillar' of national security. It notes, however, that 'development reinforces diplomacy and defense, reducing long-term threats to our national security by helping to build stable, prosperous, and peaceful societies.' NSS 2006, p. 33.

of national and international development organisations. USAID is thus not alone in seeing the value of its contributions and the validity of its methods questioned at times. Within the US government architecture, however, challenges to USAID's *raison d'être* have occurred against the backdrop of a permanent struggle for autonomy and authority by the agency. The question whether and how development 'works' has thus taken on additional significance, which continues through to the expectations placed on USAID's contribution to stability operations. Unsurprisingly, it has been a constant feature of reports published by, and on, USAID from the sixties onwards.[112] The fact that its core mission is notoriously difficult to measure and evaluate has furthermore made it harder for USAID to demonstrate impact and prove its worth to congressional appropriation committees and US taxpayers. Flanked by his defence and diplomatic counterparts in a panel in 2010, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah thus went to considerable lengths to portray development as a discipline that could be done 'in a way that is smart, is results-oriented, [and] focused on knowing how to spend resources ... in environments where you get real results.'[113]

Historically, USAID has been integrated into the national security architecture from its very beginnings as an instrument in the battle of influence against communism during the Cold War. A government policy for overseas internal defence dating back to 1962 expected USAID's programmes to 'eliminate the causes of discontent on which the communist appeal breeds,' as well as to 'develop and implement civilian counter-insurgency programs, and to support

[112] USAID itself accounts for several policy shifts over time in terms of programme design, guiding principles, and means of delivery. USAID, *What we do and how we do it* (Primer, PDA-CG-100, revised January 2006).
[113] Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator, remarks at US global leadership coalition annual conference, Washington, DC, 28 September 2010.

military civic action as appropriate.'[114] With the vocabulary of counterinsurgency to some extent anchored in the agency's history, USAID's contribution to the US-led military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan did not challenge its mandate or provoke controversy to the same extent as in the case of DFID in the United Kingdom. USAID's Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination concluded in a working group meeting held six weeks after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 that foreign aid had a major role to play in a comprehensive response to terrorism and noted that the 'agency's experience includes a proud era of helping counterterrorism results' in South Asia in the fifties and sixties.[115] The same report suggested that USAID needed to reconnect with its tradition of a strong field presence by overcoming its reluctance to work in failed states. The working group nevertheless noted a concern that USAID's participation in the administration's counterterrorism agenda carried the risk of alienating some of its implementing partners as well as aid recipients.[116]

USAID's *Civilian-military cooperation policy* of July 2008 quoted a formal mission statement adopted on 24 March 2008 (of which no separate record appears to exist), which mandated the organisation to accelerate human progress in developing countries by 'reducing poverty, advancing democracy, building market economies, promoting security, responding to crises, and improving quality of life.'[117] This broad mandate leaves the agency considerable scope for

[114] 'US Overseas Internal Defense Policy', approved by the White House in *National Security Action Memorandum 182*, 24 August 1962, US Department of State, S/S-NSC Files: Lot 72 D 316, NSAM 182, p.20.
[115] James Clad, 'USAID's role in the War on Terrorism', Issue Brief 1, Synopsis of the initial meeting of USAID's working group on the impact of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on US foreign policy: foreign aid and the war on terrorism (Washington, DC: USAID Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, 26 October 2001).
[116] Ibid.
[117] USAID, *Civilian-military cooperation policy* (PD-ACL-777, July 2008), p.3.

interpretation, in contrast to DFID's explicit commitment to global poverty reduction. When asked whether USAID had a foundational mission (once again by reference to DFID) a senior USAID official exclaimed 'what a great question,' and after some musing noted that USAID's mission had 'probably shifted but not jerked' over the years.[118]

USAID's official discourse over the past decade tended to emphasize the agency's contribution to national security – arguably as a means to defend organisational interests – rather than seeing it as a threat to its mission or identity. In contrast to DFID's initially troubled relationship with the military, USAID repeatedly made explicit commitments to being an effective partner to the military and showed willingness to align its aid programmes accordingly. The agency released a primer in 2006, which noted that aid levels and programme content in so-called strategic states would mainly be determined by foreign policy concerns, rather than by development or fragility criteria.[119] A study group report produced by USAID in 2009 recognised that 'performing effectively in these strategic, high-priority settings [Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan] as judged by senior interagency/NSC officials, is critical to USAID's future and the future of a semi-independent foreign assistance agency.'[120] Administrator Shah assured Congress in 2011, 'whether we are working in Afghanistan or Zambia, we do so for one very clear reason: development is critical to our country's national security and economic prosperity.'[121] Senior executives within the State Department and USAID further made the case for a well-resourced development agency as a means to avoid

[118] US_48, 9 November 2010.
[119] USAID, *What we do and how we do it*, p.4.
[120] USAID, *Civilian-military relations study group: consensus report,* LTL Strategies report (PN-ADO-905, July 2009), p. 12
[121] Shah, 'USAID: following the money'.

costly military intervention, as well as to provide 'the best able, capable and effective partners to the military' in case prevention failed.[122]

Internal tensions and debates

A senior official described USAID as a 'sedimentary organisation' where new ideas took time to trickle down and were likely to be rejected by the rank-and-file until they settled into a new layer of the sediment. While the 'military and conflict stuff' was clearly the next layer, it had not quite settled yet, he noted.[123] In spite of explicit commitments to the conflict and stabilisation agenda contained in strategic documents and publicly stated by successive administrators, USAID harbours a number of internal tensions surrounding the agency's role in stability operations and more broadly in conflict zones. In 2009, an internal study group described competing visions within USAID as a central dilemma that pitched those who considered 'impartial, poverty reduction' as the primary purpose of the agency against those who privileged 'support of USG/whole of government objectives.'[124] Several USAID officials interviewed for the thesis noted that the different subcultures within the organisation loosely matched a generational pattern. The 'old guard', who identified more strongly with a 'basic needs' narrative that pictured foreign assistance as independent from strategic and political considerations, was seen as clashing with a newer generation of officers, who clearly perceived USAID to be part of the foreign service establishment and considered its programmes in Iraq and Afghanistan 'business as usual'.[125]

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[122] Ibid. See also Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, 'On development in the 21st century', Center for Global Development, Washington, DC, 6 January 2010.
[123] US_48, 9 November 2010.
[124] USAID, *Civilian-military relations study group*, pp. 13; 23.
[125] A former USAID employee for instance noted that there was a 'generational tinge' to these internal tensions. US_41, 28 October 2010.

Prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the latter mindset tended to be confined to a small office established in 1994 that held somewhat of a renegade status within USAID, the Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI). More flexible, rapid, operational, and accustomed to working alongside the military than the rest of the agency, members of OTI took pride in the 'cowboy' image that set the office apart from the rest of USAID.[126] While the first ten years of its existence were described as a 'psychosis based on constant fear that you get done away with,' the increased demand for its services in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan soon confronted the office with the opposite fear of 'losing its edge' with growing expansion and concurrent bureaucratization.[127] Starting around 2006, USAID began to require new staff to serve at least one year in a so-called critical priority country (CPC).[128] Yet, as a USAID official noted, while close to 70 per cent of staff had served in a CPC assignment by 2010, they were still often considered 'excursion assignments' and not taken seriously by people who did not consider them part of the main career stream. 'Many people on the ground are not career officers,' he noted, 'and some of the career people are undoubtedly sitting this out.'[129] A former USAID employee also argued that many FSOs saw Afghanistan and Iraq as assignments to 'check the box' before moving on to a preferential posting. 'The best career move after a deployment is staying in [Washington] DC and leveraging your experience,' he added.[130]

[126] US_47, 9 November 2010.
[127] Ibid.
[128] In 2006, USAID designated Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan as CPC countries. In 2010, Haiti was added to this list. USAID, *Statement by the Office of Inspector General: most serious management and performance challenges for USAID*, prefaced by a transmittal memorandum from Donald A. Gambatesa, Inspector General, dated 15 October 2010 (PD-ACQ-548, 2010).
[129] US_48, 9 November 2010.
[130] US_01, 30 August 2010.

More than a generational divide, however, different formative experiences appeared to shape individual perceptions and inform attitudes towards USAID's involvement in fragile states. The reforms introduced by Administrator Andrew Natsios (himself a veteran of the US Army reserves) between 2001 and 2005 brought a number of mid-rank and senior officials with a military background into the agency, who were valued for their knowledge of the DOD. At the same time, they were seen as insufficiently familiar with the workings of the USAID bureaucracy and as outsiders to the 'idea generation' within the organisation by long-serving officials.[131] With the creation of a Bureau for Conflict Mitigation and Management (CMM) under Natsios, USAID consciously sought to recruit and train 'a new cohort of development officers conversant with conflict and instability, willing to take risks, able to think in new ways about old problems, and willing to question whether the Agency is using US assistance as strategically as it might in high-risk environments.'[132] According to one official involved in its establishment, the new bureau did not have a hard time proving itself, as many within the agency saw it as responding to an urgent need for greater awareness of conflict dynamics.[133]

Natsios' reform programme, however, equally raised a number of concerns within the agency. Officials questioned how the conflict agenda would impact upon relations with USAID's implementing partners in the aid community. A senior State Department official noted that philosophical objections among implementing partners – who by no means agreed on the appropriate level of proximity or integration among civilian and military organisations – could have a

[131] US_45, 3 November 2010; US_41, 28 October 2010.
[132] USAID, *Conflict mitigation and management policy* (PD-ABZ-333, April 2005), p. 3.
[133] US_45, 3 November 2010.

direct impact on USAID's effectiveness.[134] A perceived lack of evidence that development actually 'worked' in conflict areas further led to fears that USAID was setting itself up for failure in these contexts. Resistance to involvement in fragile states could be found even among those who did not consider alignment with US strategic interests as problematic from an ideological point of view, but feared that this would draw the agency into places where local conditions held little promise for development to work effectively.[135] As one USAID official explained, the model within which USAID was most likely to be successful was 'Botswana' – a country with a high degree of need amongst the population and a government that was reform-oriented. 'This is where USAID wants to work,' he noted, 'like the DOD wants to fight the Fulda gap over and over again, because they got tanks and they are good at it.'[136]

These concerns were compounded by scepticism over the methods and approaches subsumed under the concept of stabilisation. A senior USAID official described stabilisation as an 'arcane discipline ... that we have created, which goes against everything the development community has learned over the past decades.' In his eyes, experience demonstrated that 'long time frames and small money' were more effective than a 'civilian splurge' [in allusion to the 'surge' in Iraq announced by the Obama administration in 2009].[137] Others disagreed, such as one senior official who argued that addressing the conditions of an insurgency required using traditional development tools in a different way, rather than

[134] US_20, 5 October 2010.
[135] US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for instance recognised that 'in some situations, we will invest in places that are strategically critical but where we are not guaranteed success.' Clinton, 'On development in the 21st century'.
[136] US_17, 28 September 2010.
[137] US_48, 9 November 2010.

abandoning them. Yet she further noted that these thoughts and ideas were not entirely accepted within USAID 'because they are so non-traditional, even "irregular".'[138]

3. Stability operations: framing the mission

The terminology employed in official US government documents to describe stabilisation reveals considerable uncertainty over concepts and definitions. Experiences accumulated by practitioners in the field appear to escape categorization in the midst of a burgeoning vocabulary that includes (complex) peace operations, reconstruction and stabilisation, counterinsurgency, irregular warfare, low intensity conflict, and (armed) nation-building. Public talks and conferences have seen participants resorting to generic references (e.g. 'these missions'), after acknowledging that semantics may well matter but ultimately distract from more pressing operational concerns. This section will focus on the sense-making that has occurred within the different agencies portrayed in the first half – DOD and the military, the State Department, and USAID – with a view to each agency's doctrinal output and other indicators of strategic thinking. As a senior USAID official noted, each of these organisations stands for a 'natural fundamentalism' with regard to what is considered 'business as usual'. These collective understandings have come under considerable pressure in the context of stability operations, and have informed mutual perceptions and expectations among organisations.

[138] Elisabeth Kvitashvili, 'Promoting stability and human security in the context of "irregular warfare"', *LIAISON* 4/1 (2008).

The Pentagon and the military: an 'irregular' core mission

The US military's focus on rapid and decisive operations – which capitalised on information superiority, precision strike, and rapid manoeuvre – prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been widely documented.[139] The conceptual basis for stabilisation within US defence was thus weak at the start of the twenty-first century. The subsequent writing of new US military doctrine against the threat of failure in Iraq was noteworthy in several regards. The process was unusually swift compared to the standard drafting of military doctrine and included a broad range of outside experts and non-military participants. David Jones and Mike Smith concluded that Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (FM 3-24), the product of this process, 'stands as probably the most comprehensive operational document for COIN operations ever produced.'[140] Indeed, FM 3-24 attracted attention far beyond military classrooms and training grounds and, as Hew Strachan observes, 'crudely put, took the place of a coalition strategy for Iraq in 2007.'[141]

The re-evaluation of doctrine and operations within the US defence establishment in 2005-06 has been described as no less than 'revolutionary', and as 'organizational catharsis', which led to an 'extraordinary renaissance of counter-insurgency thinking within US military institutions' in a process characterised by

[139] Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson (eds.), *Transforming for stabilization and reconstruction operations* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2004), p. xiii; Brian Burton and John Nagl, 'Learning as we go: the US Army adapts to counterinsurgency in Iraq, July 2004-December 2006', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19/3 (2008), p. 303.
[140] Jones and Smith, 'Whose hearts', p. 84.
[141] Strachan, 'Strategy or alibi?' p. 168. See also Jeffrey C. Isaac*, et al.*, 'The new US Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency field manual as political science and political praxis', *Perspectives on Politics* 6/2 (2008); Corri Zoli and Nicholas J. Armstrong, 'How U.S. Army doctrine is shaping national security strategy', *PRISM* 2/1 (2010).

'an uncommon level of humility and lack of chauvinism.'[142] The aim of this section, however, is not to recast the extensive scholarly discussion over the revival of counterinsurgency thinking within the US military. The focus will be on the doctrinal guidance developed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), and the military services – in particular the US Army and Marine Corps – regarding the nature of stability operations and the implications they have for the military's own role and its relation to other agencies within this context.

How 'irregular' are stability operations?

US military doctrine has in the past used unwieldy acronyms to describe operations that did not fit the conventional warfighting paradigm. While MOOTW (military operations other than war) pointed to a potentially unlimited set of activities held together by the common fact that they were somehow 'not war', the later introduction of SSTR (stability, security, transition and reconstruction operations) gave some indication of what the military expected to be doing in these missions. DODD 3000.05, which established stability operations as a core military mission, refrained from defining them other than in the broad sense of 'military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in states and regions.'[143]

The doctrinal wrangling that took place within the Pentagon over the definition of stability operations furthermore illustrates how terminology occasionally becomes

[142] Jones and Smith, 'Whose hearts', p. 84; Schadlow, *Organizing to compete in the political terrain*, p. 9; David Ucko, 'Innovation or inertia: the US military and the learning of counterinsurgency', *ORBIS* 52/2 (2008), p. 294.
[143] DODD 3000.05, p. 2.

a vehicle for bureaucratic power struggles over resources and influence. The broad definition retained in DODD 3000.05 left scope for opinions to diverge over the scope of these operations and their status within defence's overall mission. The new terminology of 'irregular warfare' (IW) introduced by the Pentagon in 2008 framed stability operations as but one option among others to (re-)establish order in fragile states, alongside counter-terrorism, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defence and counterinsurgency.[144] The broad range of activities subsumed under IW gave the officials in charge considerable leeway to determine the institutional importance of stability operations. A uniformed Pentagon official noted that the subordination of stability operations to the larger category of IW confined them to a narrow post-conflict lens and largely prevented a more expansive understanding of these operations as a continuum stretching from conflict into the steady state (military jargon for peacetime operations).[145] A US Army officer noted that the Pentagon office in charge of stability operations in 2007 was led until early 2011 by a senior official with a Special Forces and CIA background, who prioritised a counter-terrorism lens and 'basically killed stability operations.'[146]

The message conveyed by the new terminology both within the defence establishment and to its interagency partners was widely perceived as

[144] Department of Defense, *Irregular warfare* (DOD Directive 3000.07, 1 December 2008). Irregular warfare had first been introduced as a concept in the QDR 2006. A special study requested by the Joint Staffs in the same year rejected it as unfit for inclusion into joint doctrine, see Charles F. Shaver, *Irregular warfare special study* (Suffolk, VA: USJFCOM, 4 August 2006). In 2009, the Pentagon defined IW as 'a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations.' QRM 2009, p. 37.
[145] US_54, 29 November 2010.
[146] US_44, 29 October 2010. The individual in question, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (ASD, SO/LIC&IC), Michael Vickers, was appointed Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence in March 2011.

problematic. Within defence, the adjective 'irregular' could be taken as an indication that the military would continue to consider these activities as an aberration or distraction from their (conventional) core mission and associate them with a niche function carried out by special forces. In the interagency context, the concept offered scant opportunity find common ground with civilian agencies who refused to see their engagement cast as a contribution to any kind of 'warfare'.[147] Perhaps in recognition of these problems, the DOD's quadrennial review in 2010 only contained a single mention of 'irregular warfare' (in the chairman's assessment), and emphasized elsewhere that stability operations were not to be considered as either transitory or anomalous.[148]

The 'preferred' division of labour meets reality

Successive joint military and US Army doctrine provided definitions of stabilisation activities that revolved around a set of recurring characteristics. Stability operations were generally held to cover a wide spectrum from prevention to post-conflict operations; they inevitably required coordination with other instruments of power, as well as multilateral and local actors; and they were aimed at satisfying immediate security requirements with a view to preparing the ground for longer-term political processes.[149] The US Army and Marine Corps outlined their approach to stability operations in some detail in FM 3-24, which viewed them through the lens of population-centric counterinsurgency (COIN).

[147] Davidson, *Lifting the fog of peace*, p. 5; Kvitashvili, 'Promoting stability '.
[148] QDR 2010, p. 102.
[149] Department of Defense, *Military support to stabilization, security, transition and reconstruction operations joint operating concept*, version 2.0 (Suffolk, VA: USJFCOM, December 2006); Department of Defense, *Joint operations*, Joint publication 3-0 (Suffolk, VA: US Joint Forces Command, 17 September 2006, incorporating change 2, 22 March 2010); Department of Defense, *Stability operations*, United States Army Field Manual 3-07 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 6 October 2008); DODI 3000.05.

FM 3-24 thus expected stability operations to be conducted primarily by land forces with the aim to win the support of the populace through direct action as well as in support of other government agencies.[150]

The tasks these operations involved were expected to change over time – from the provision of security and essential services to governance and reconstruction – before the security environment would eventually allow for civilian organisations to relieve the military from carrying out these functions.[151] FM 3-24 noted that the *realistic* division of labour between civilian and military actors in COIN was unlikely to ever match a *preferred* division of labour.[152] Nominally 'civilian' tasks were somewhat tautologically described as political, social and economic activities 'most commonly and appropriately associated with civilian organizations and expertise.'[153] FM 3-24 referred to levels of violence – rather than to expertise – as the primary factor deciding whether military forces should carry out certain tasks. It acknowledged that the military often not only lacked the expertise to carry out these tasks but also that they tended to distract troops from doing other (military) tasks.[154] The manual explicitly subordinated expertise, and arguably considerations over appropriateness, to the imperative of delivery by declaring that 'effective implementation of these programs is more important than who performs the tasks. If adequate civilian capacity is not available, military forces fill the gap.'[155] The same logic applied to lead arrangements, which were expected to shift between military, civilian, and 'host nation' authorities. The

[150] FM 3-24, para. 2-22.
[151] Ibid., ch. 2, p. 1.
[152] Ibid., para. 2-42.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., ch. 1, p. 20; ch. 2, p. 9.
[155] Ibid., para. 2-5.

manual stated that 'the organizing imperative is focusing on what needs to be done, not on who does it.'[156] US Army Field Manual 3-07, *Stability operations,* released in 2008 also contained a list of 'essential stability tasks', which left the prioritization and sequencing of different activities to the commander's judgment. Apart from 'initial response tasks', which were seen as the primary responsibility of the military, the military's role was framed as an enabling one in the sense of setting conditions for other actors to operate.[157] The tasks in FM 3-07 did not specify what the military should *not* do – something the military leadership could not be convinced to include, according to one official involved in the drafting process.[158]

The State Department: civilian counterinsurgency doctrine

Unlike its military counterpart, the State Department does not have a hierarchically organised body of doctrine. Diffuse pressure on the department to adopt a more strategic and methodical approach to its operations throughout the past decade crystallized into a concrete demand for civilian doctrine in response to the military's widely regarded revival of counterinsurgency doctrine under General Petraeus. Hence, the State Department, with the support of the DOD, launched the 'Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative' (ICI) in the fall of 2006.[159] The initiative started out with a relatively broad remit that had the development of strategic guidance as a central aim. However, it arguably also

[156] Ibid., para. 2-13.
[157] FM 3-07, ch. 3, p. 7.
[158] US_31, 19 October 2010.
[159] One of the State Department officials involved in the launch of the ICI referred to US Army General David Petraeus and counterinsurgency experts John Nagl and David Kilcullen as the 'intellectual heavyweights' that helped getting the initiative rolling in the administration. Donna Hopkins, US Department of State, remarks during a panel on 'Addressing civilian agency capabilities', XIX Annual strategy conference, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 8-10 April 2008.

envisaged to address operational aspects, as evidenced in the proposal to identify roles, missions, resources, tools, and capacity gaps.[160] Even so, the subsequent process disappointed those who had expected the ICI to provide practical guidance for the civilian role in stability operations.

In reality, there has been little to no guidance on the role of diplomacy in stability operations at the operational and tactical levels to date. A US diplomat writing in private capacity expressed his dismay over the 'dearth of material written by and for the diplomat-counterinsurgent' in spite of the widely shared view that an insurgency was ultimately defeated through political, not military means.[161] Lessons learned on the ground by Foreign Service officers and diplomatic personnel deployed in stability operations have not taken the form of officially sanctioned policy guidance or doctrine. Occasionally at best, they make their way into the public domain via personal commentaries and articles published in online forums and journals addressed to a practitioner audience.[162]

Educating decision-makers about when to intervene, or telling government agencies how to do it?

The State Department embarked on the doctrinal journey towards a civilian complement to FM 3-24 through its Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (Pol-Mil). While Pol-Mil was not a particularly strong player compared to powerful regional bureaus, it entertained good working relationships with the DOD.

[160] US Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, *Counterinsurgency in the 21st century: creating a national framework*, 11 September 2006 [electronic source].
[161] Kurt Amend, 'Counterinsurgency principles for the diplomat', *ORBIS* 54/2 (2010), p. 216.
[162] Scott Dempsey, 'The fallacy of COIN: one officer's frustration', *Small Wars Journal*, 13 March 2011; Dan Green, 'The political officer as counter-insurgent: conducting tactical politics against insurgencies', *Small Wars Journal*, 9 September 2007; Dan Green, 'Counterinsurgency diplomacy: political advisors at the operational and tactical levels', *Military Review* (May/June 2007).

Nevertheless, the choice of Pol-Mil evoked concerns over duplication and competition within other parts of the State Department, such as the newly established Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) or the USAID offices working in and on conflict (OTI, CMM, and OMA). Pol-Mil was entrusted with the ambitious task of convening a wide range of experts in order to 'produce an integrated national framework for countering insurgencies,' which would possibly provide the basis for an executive order.[163] The initiative embraced the terminology of counterinsurgency as a lens to 'explain to the nation what we are doing overseas and why we are doing it.'[164] The framework would 'focus on COIN like a laser' in order to maintain the specificity of counterinsurgency operations within the broader theme of stabilisation and reconstruction.[165]

A major component of the ICI was the drafting of a *Counterinsurgency Guide* (COIN guide), which was initially released as work in progress in October 2007. The final guide was published with considerable delay in January 2009 as a slightly awkward remnant of the G.W. Bush administration, signed by the senior executives of DOD, State, and USAID, of which only Secretary Gates remained in office.[166] The lengthy drafting process, which included several changes among the lead authors, as well as the bland and general nature of the end product, point to considerable disagreement and a lack of clarity within the bureaucracy over the new doctrine's main audience and chief purpose. This impression is further

[163] US Department of State, *Counterinsurgency in the 21st century*.
[164] Hopkins, 'Addressing civilian agency capabilities'.
[165] Ibid.
[166] US Department of State, *US government counterinsurgency guide*, preface by Eliot Cohen, January 2009.

substantiated by a comparison of intermediate drafts and work in progress that were circulated within the bureaucracy in 2007.[167]

Early on in the process, USAID prepared a draft that clearly stated the purpose of the guide as 'establishing a baseline understanding of insurgency and COIN for *all USG government agencies and departments* likely to be involved in COIN activities and to articulate the elements of an integrated national COIN effort for planning and *conducting* COIN operations.'[168] Successive drafts prepared by Pol-Mil, however, led to a shift in focus both with regard to the primary audience and the nature of the policy guidance offered. A Pol-Mil official commenting on the publication of the interim guide in September 2007 stated that the final product would offer an 'educational, *strategic*-level primer for *senior policymakers*.'[169] The final COIN guide indeed addressed decision-makers at the highest strategic level and had replaced most of the practical guidance on interagency planning and assessment with a lengthy section on taking the decision *whether* and *how* (i.e. through what means or processes) to engage in a counterinsurgency campaign, which had not featured in any of the previous drafts.[170] The final version carefully pointed out that the guide was to be treated as a 'visualization tool' and an 'aid to collaboration' rather than a template for action or an operational plan.[171]

[167] Electronic copies of various drafts were shared with the author by an individual involved in the drafting process, who asked not to be identified in the thesis, in May 2011.
[168] USAID, *United States Government guide for counterinsurgency*, Draft – working concept paper, 12 April 2007 (author's copy). Emphasis added.
[169] Quoted in Fawzia Sheikh, 'Effort inspired by Army-Marine Corps manual: new interagency COIN guide for policymakers expected in 2008', *Inside the Pentagon*, 13 September 2007. Emphasis added.
[170] US Department of State, *US government counterinsurgency guide*, pp. 37-44.
[171] Ibid., p. 18.

Imbalance between military and non-military efforts: a 'fact of life'?

Successive drafts of the COIN guide seemed to agree that counterinsurgency campaigns represented a 'special environment' – which required civilian agencies to carry out habitual tasks in 'dramatically different ways' and required some adaptation and innovation – but did not constitute an entirely new or different mission.[172] Neither the various drafts nor the final product offered substantive guidance on the division of labour between military and civilian agencies. The blanket observation that defeating an insurgency could not be achieved through military action alone was followed by the recommendation that civilian and military measures should be applied simultaneously wherever possible. In comments on an intermediate draft, DOD expressed its concern that the reference to non-military means should be carefully framed in order not to dismiss the importance of security (and hence the importance of the military instrument).[173] The draft prepared by USAID, on the other hand, boldly stated that 'civilian agencies cannot wait for the military to "create" security before acting.'[174] The final version opted for convoluted language ('military forces are, in a sense, an enabling system for civil administration') but straightforwardly asserted that it was 'simply a fact of life' that the military would have to step in where civilian agencies could not operate freely.[175]

The description of different agencies' roles in COIN operations occupied a central chapter in earlier drafts, whereas the interim guide of 2007 and the final product

[172] For final wording see Ibid., p. 16.
[173] US Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, *21st century counterinsurgency: a guide for US policy makers*, Draft – working concept paper, annotated, 9 August 2007 (author's copy), p.14.
[174] USAID, *United States Government guide for counterinsurgency*, p. 8.
[175] US Department of State, *US government counterinsurgency guide*, p. 15; 24.

relegated it to a short annex, which largely referred to external documents (such as FM 3-24) for further guidance. The final COIN guide seemed almost deliberate in its attempt to direct attention away from whole-of-government efforts by placing the 'affected government' (threatened by an active or nascent insurgency) at the centre of the institutional actors covered in the document and by emphasizing the role of international, non-governmental, and private sector organisations.[176]

It has been argued that 'the guide has languished in relative obscurity with little apparent impact on interagency planning, strategy, or operations in Iraq and Afghanistan or elsewhere.'[177] A retired senior US military officer further noted that the ICI had been 'no more than a head nod towards COIN by the State Department.'[178] The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) – a think tank funded by Congress through the State Department's annual budget – noted in the preface to its *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* published in 2009 that 'years after entering Afghanistan, civilian agencies of the US government still lack any comprehensive *strategic* guidance.'[179] While pointing out the importance of developing a political framework or strategy around which the different strands of an operation (security, development, capacity-building, and information) could be organized, the COIN guide offered scant guidance on how to get there.[180]

Whether the State Department's QDDR filled the conceptual gap with regard to diplomacy's role in stability operations (or 'complex political emergencies' as the

[176] Ibid., ch. 3, pp. 28-34.
[177] Raphael S. Cohen, 'A tale of two manuals', *PRISM* 2/1 (2010), p. 87.
[178] US_58, 8 December 2010.
[179] Beth Cole (ed.), *Guiding principles for reconstruction and stabilization* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), p. 1.3.
[180] US Department of State, *US government counterinsurgency guide*, p. 17; 24.

choice of terminology indicates) is questionable.[181] The QDDR acknowledged the need to define and execute a new approach to conflict prevention and response in fragile states as a distinctly *civilian* mission. It further noted that Afghanistan and Iraq were not considered 'the primary models for building civilian capacity to respond to crises and conflicts.'[182] However, much of the language employed in the document ultimately framed the civilian contribution as a force multiplier for the military, rather than outlining an alternative vision for a civilian-led undertaking.

USAID: targeting aid to 'fragile states'

Similar to the State Department, USAID's policy guidance is not organised within a uniform framework. Some documents are declared official policy while others may have been signed by the executive leadership but retain a less formal, if not necessarily less influential, status. The conceptualisation of USAID's role in so-called fragile states largely occurred within the framework of the Bush administration's declared global war on terror. The introduction of a conflict perspective and the reorientation of the agency's focus on fragile and failed states at the start of the twenty-first century were swift and sweeping.[183] In contrast to the reticence displayed by DFID's leadership in the early days of the Iraq war, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios pushed for strategic reform within his

[181] QDDR, p. 121.
[182] QDDR, p. 125. Emphasis added.
[183] USAID, *US foreign aid: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century* (White Paper, PD-ABZ-322, January 2004).

organisation within a vision that emphasized the key contribution of development assistance to US national security interests.[184]

Does development 'work' in fragile states?

USAID published a *Fragile States Strategy* in January 2005.[185] The rationale for the organisational reforms proposed by the new strategy was derived from a purported link between the terror attacks of 9/11 and the recognition of development's importance to national security (by reference to the National Security Strategy of 2002).[186] The strategy focused on USAID's presence in countries that were categorised as either 'vulnerable' or 'in crisis'. Both categories included weak or near-inexistent government structures, a lack of public service provision – including security – due to the government's inability or unwillingness, and a resulting lack of government legitimacy.[187] The reference to root causes of conflict, grievances, and instability echoed the terminology introduced by the literature that emerged around World Bank economist Paul Collier's research.[188] Following Collier's model, USAID's approach to failed states rested on the assumption that unresolved grievances inevitably held a potential for violence that was best kept under control by strong institutions and accountable leaders.[189] It thus placed a premium on institutions of governance and

[184] Already in 2002, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios stated in an influential report that 'foreign assistance will be a key instrument of foreign policy.' USAID, *Foreign aid in the national interest: promoting freedom, security, and opportunity (FANI)* (PD-ABW-900, 2002).
[185] USAID, *Fragile states strategy* (PD-ACA-999, January 2005).
[186] Ibid., p. v.
[187] Ibid., p. 1.
[188] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, *Greed and grievance in civil war* (Washington, DC: World Bank, Development Research Group, 2000). FANI commended USAID for dealing with root causes rather than merely dealing with the 'manifestations of trouble' like intelligence operations, law enforcement, conventional military force, or diplomacy. FANI, p. 1.
[189] FANI, p. 22.

rule of law.[190] As Mark Moyar notes, this conceptual framework put more emphasis on economic and social grievances than on political ones, and tended to view security and governance as facilitating conditions for longer-term development.[191]

Successive policy guidance after 2001 envisaged USAID in a monitoring and analytical role prior to and after the outbreak of a crisis, and in an operational role in addressing instability and insecurity through capacity-building and institutional reform. The *Fragile states strategy* suggested that USAID already possessed extensive experience in fragile states but urged for a more strategic approach and new ways of 'conceptualizing, delivering and evaluating the impact of assistance.'[192] Five years later, the QDDR attributed a distinct comparative advantage to USAID in the design of assistance programmes in unstable and violent states.[193] The QDDR further associated 'reconstruction operations' with a wide range of tasks spanning institutional reform, economic revitalization, education, security sector reform and basic services. The expertise USAID was expected to cover ranged from 'city management to crop rotation,' according to the review.[194]

Several of USAID's policy documents addressed potential tradeoffs arising from operations in fragile states and conflict zones. They urged for conflict-sensitive approaches to aid delivery and emphasized the need for in-depth knowledge of the

[190] USAID, *Fragile states strategy*, p. iv.
[191] Mark Moyar, *Development in Afghanistan's counterinsurgency: a new guide,* (McLean, VA: ORBIS Operations, LLC, March 2011), p. 2.
[192] USAID, *Fragile states strategy*, p. 11.
[193] QDDR, p. 130.
[194] Ibid.

local context in order to reduce unintended consequences.[195] This policy guidance did not, however, provide a convincing answer to the dilemma of short-term measures versus long-term sustainability. The QDDR simply called on development professionals to 'design short-term projects and programs in ways that will make it easier to transition to longer-term sustainable development.'[196]

An effective partner to the military

USAID's 2008 *Civilian-military cooperation policy* noted the absence of an agreed definition for stabilisation and defined it (for the sole purpose of the policy) as 'the process of making a country or territory less likely to descend into or return to a state of conflict or instability through the provision of a range of assistance tools that support sectoral interventions including provision of social services and public security to strengthening local governance.'[197] The policy made the case for close cooperation with the military on the grounds that development and security were intertwined and interdependent in many areas where USAID was engaged. It further referred to the need to redress the imbalance between military and civilian components in a whole-of-government effort.[198]

Rather than formulating strategic guidance for the role of development in counterinsurgency or stability operations, USAID developed a standardized diagnostic framework to assess the causes of instability at the tactical level within

[195] FANI, p. 22; USAID, *US foreign aid: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century*, p. 20; USAID, *Civilian-military cooperation policy*, p. 3, para. 4.1; QDDR, p. 106-7.
[196] QDDR, p. 130.
[197] USAID, *Civilian-military cooperation policy*, p. 1, n. 1.
[198] Ibid.

an area of operations.[199] The methodology and language employed in the *Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework* (TCAF) resembled the military's planning and decision-making tools (e.g. by using areas of operation as a basis for assessment and by building on situational analysis and measures of effectiveness) rather than offering a distinctly civilian conceptualisation of stabilisation efforts. The TCAF arguably fit within USAID's broader endeavour to portray development as a measurable, scientific discipline. When asked by the Commission on Wartime Contracting whether development could be done in a warzone, USAID Administrator Shah's answer was 'Absolutely. ... It requires using and deploying tools that are data-oriented, as we have, like the district-stability framework in Afghanistan.'[200]

USAID's conceptualisation of its role in stability operations thus appeared to privilege the notion of close partnership with the military over the defence of a distinctly civilian sphere of responsibility and approach. Beneath the official discourse, however, opinions within the agency diverged over the question of how to engage with the military (and to what extent). The creation of an Office of Military Affairs (OMA) in 2005 had been advocated for as a function of defence's growing involvement in foreign assistance by (then) Administrator Natsios. The new office grew fast and attracted an increasing share of USAID's resources, which implied a potential trade-off with other areas of activity. A senior USAID official contended that the senior leadership had failed to place any parameters

[199] USAID, *The Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework (TCAF)*, originally issued as a tri-fold brochure for a presentation by Dr. James Derleth, Ronald Reagan Building, Office of Military Affairs, Washington, DC, 5 January 2007 (PN-ADN-62, 2007). Modifications of the TCAF were used by a number of American and British military units deploying to Afghanistan.
[200] Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator, testimony before the Commission on Wartime Contracting, hearing on 'USAID and its future', Hart Senate Office building, Washington, DC, 1 April 2011.

around USAID's engagement with the military and OMA's mandate, which resulted in the new office 'spending too much time making the military our best friend.'[201] Rather than advocating closer working relationships with USAID, the new office had shifted its focus to enabling the military 'to do more things that they should not be doing in the first place' this official contended.[202] An internal study group equally noted in 2009 that 'significant numbers of USAID staff in Washington and in the field are uncomfortable and do not understand the rationale for a closer relationship with DOD and the changes in their responsibilities this will bring.' [203] It advocated further training and 'senior-level explanations of the rationale for developing this new set of relationships in Washington and in the field.'[204]

4. Chapter conclusion

The analysis of the 'three Ds' within the institutional landscape of the US government presented in this chapter has revealed a number of differences with regard to the British case. The search for interagency coordination occurs against the backdrop of a system of checks and balances inherent in the US government's design that discourages cooperation and introduces the role of Congress as a complicating factor. Over the past decade, the government architecture has been dominated by a powerful defence establishment whose influence and capacity stands in stark contrast to the under-resourced civilian agencies. Development is represented institutionally by an agency with a complicated (but throughout the past decade clearly subordinate) relationship to the Department of State. Like in

[201] US_45, 3 November 2010.
[202] Ibid.
[203] USAID, *Civilian-military relations study group*, p. 12
[204] Ibid.

the United Kingdom, the identification of so-called fragile and failed states as major security threats has been an important driver for an integrated approach among defence, diplomacy, and development. The policy discourse in the United States has taken a technocratic approach to the issue of coordination, which is reflected in the language of 'instruments' and a focus on building capacity on the civilian side to 'rebalance the national security toolkit'. While a template for interagency coordination has been formally adopted in an executive order, it has remained noncommittal on the relationship between the Departments of State and Defense.

In contrast to differences in the institutional 'hardware', the portrayal of the organisations behind the labels of defence, diplomacy, and development has revealed a number of similarities to the British case. The US military adapted to the demands of low-intensity or 'irregular' warfare with impressive speed. However, doubts over the tradeoffs implied by these changes and the longevity of the newly introduced (or resuscitated) counterinsurgency mindset persisted. Stability operations raised difficult questions over the scope of the military's role by pitching a 'preferred' division of labour with civilian actors against a realistic one, which requires the military to carry out a range of tasks that are not part of its core mandate. The US State Department struggled to fill the lead role it was formally assigned against the backdrop of limited resources and lingering doubts over its ability to take on a more operational role in the management of conflicts and crises abroad. The State Department's attempt to develop a civilian complement to the military's COIN doctrine ultimately failed to command significant attention within the government architecture. USAID, finally, had to

adapt its programmes for delivery in unstable and violent contexts, which led to important reforms in its policy guidance and organisational structures. Compared to their British counterparts, the civilian agencies in the US government have made stronger public statements about their willingness and commitment to partner with the military in stability operations. Yet the discussion of internal tensions and conceptual struggles within these agencies has shown that the pitfalls and tradeoffs implied by close civilian-military integration nevertheless continue to linger under the surface.

V OBSTACLES TO COORDINATION IN STABILITY OPERATIONS: BRITISH AND AMERICAN EXPERIENCES

This chapter analyzes obstacles to coordination among the government agencies portrayed in the previous chapters in the preparation for and conduct of stability operations. It synthesizes insights from the two cases with a view to highlighting common problems and significant differences. The empirical data upon which the below analysis is based was gathered between 2008 and 2011 in personal interviews with civilian and military practitioners in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The chapter covers a wide spectrum of actors, institutional processes, interagency dynamics and personal relationships. Any attempt to synthesize these complex interactions must sacrifice detail and depth in a number of areas. The decision to cover both the home institutional context and the operational dimension of stability operations inevitably broadens the scope of the inquiry. However, any discussion of the operational context is bound to raise questions over the institutional background of the different actors on the ground and the support provided by their home organisation prior to, during, and after deployments. Likewise, an analysis of institutional dynamics at the 'home front' inevitably leads to questions about implementation on the ground. While the corridors of bureaucracy in London and Washington DC are an altogether different reality from the dusty compounds in Iraq or Afghanistan, many practitioners continually

travel between these two worlds, struggling to make sense of the overall picture. This chapter follows in their footsteps.

The analysis is divided into in two main parts. The first half is concerned with interagency dynamics within the British and American government bureaucracies in London and Washington, DC. The second half takes the analysis to the theatre of operations in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars over the past decade. Each part begins with a narrative of the main issues that have arisen in the pursuit of interagency coordination. Each then turns to an analysis employing the theoretical framework outlined in chapter two.

A brief recapitulation of the framework recalls that the first layer conceptualises organisations as rational instruments. They are expected to adapt to external demands – such as coordination – over time. Friction is expected to arise from incompatible or unequal resources among agencies within the government architecture. Additional resources may be required to fill gaps or provide joint structures to facilitate coordination. The second layer is concerned with power struggles and inter-departmental turf wars over prestige and influence. It also draws attention to the pernicious side of bureaucratic organisation in the form of rigid standard operating procedures and routines. The main impediments to coordination identified by this layer arise from parochial interests and bureaucratic inertia. These may require either creating incentives for organisations to coordinate or empowering an entity with the authority to coerce them to do so. The third layer, finally, acknowledges the existence of shared frameworks of meaning and their impact on organisational behaviour. In this perspective,

coordination is hampered by clashes among divergent understandings of attitudes, skills, and values that are cultivated within different organisations and considered fundamental to their *raison d'être*.

1. The institutional level: organising the support structure

The vast majority of the roughly one-hundred American and British officials interviewed for the thesis felt that interagency coordination was considerably harder to promote within the home bureaucracy than among practitioners deployed in an operation on the ground. The structural separation into distinct ministries or departments was widely considered to reinforce narrow departmental concerns and provoke bureaucratic reflexes to defend one's turf. Interactions among agency representatives during deployments are conditioned by a number of factors – including spatial proximity, shared risk, and hardship – that are almost entirely absent from the institutional architecture. In contrast to operational pressures, which were held to force different agencies to converge around common objectives, concerns over resources, reputation, and influence were seen as driving them apart within the bureaucracy at home. In the words of a former USAID employee, 'it is not entirely impossible to foster a culture of coordination in Washington but it would require cultivating a network of people willing to share information in spite of elevated bureaucratic risk.'[1] A similar problem was noted by a British civil servant who found it 'frustrating that at the strategic level, we cannot share the lessons from the tactical-operational level because mistakes are not meant to get out.'[2]

[1] US_41, 28 October 2010.
[2] UK_08, 18 February 2008.

Agency objectives were held to trump shared goals within the government bureaucracy by default (or perhaps by design) in both case studies. A US official observed that there were few incentives for officials to help other agencies succeed as long as the different departments were conditioned to demonstrate success to Congress separately in order to secure resources.[3] A British government consultant observed that members of different government ministries in the British government did not consider themselves 'Whitehall players' but instead focused on 'delivering defence' or 'doing policy' in a more narrow sense.[4] Unsurprisingly, the heightened demand for collaboration and joint working within the government bureaucracy implied by the complexity of stability operations led to mutual frustration, misunderstandings, and occasionally accusations and feelings of betrayal among different agency representatives. A retired British Army general felt that the idea of a comprehensive approach had created 'competitive rather than creative tensions' among government departments and resulted in 'levels of bureaucracy that inhibited rather than encouraged adaptation.'[5]

'The "you bastards" conversation': managing expectations

Discrepancies in capacity among civilian and military organisations have been at the centre of concerns over joint structures and processes in both case studies. A retired US Marine recalled a conversation he had witnessed at an operational headquarters, where a commander was asked why he got his unit involved in local governance in the area of operations – in response to which the commander

[3] US_31, 19 October 2010.
[4] UK_33, 25 September 2009.
[5] Andrew Mackay and Steve Tatham, *Behavioural conflict - from General to strategic Corporal: complexity adaptation and influence,* The Shrivenham Papers, vol. 9 (Shrivenham: UK Defence Academy, 2009), p. 11.

retorted at the lone civilian representative in the room 'because you bastards never showed up.'[6] The 'you bastards conversation' – as the retired Marine termed it – had become a regular pattern in the tense debates over military and civilian responsibilities in stability operations. The glaring gap in logistics and manpower that separated civilian agencies and the military made it harder for civilian representatives to counter such accusations or question the reasoning that underpinned them. A USAID official noted, 'it is hard for USAID to legitimately critique the military for doing development poorly without being a participant ... it is incumbent upon us to generate internal capacity to be there where we are needed.'[7] Former UK Minister for International Development, Clare Short's exclamation that DFID did not have 'thousands of people who come marching in to do the humanitarian work like an army,' on the other hand, suggests that some civilian officials felt that managing expectations – not matching capacity – was the primary issue in civilian-military coordination.[8] In both cases, poorly managed expectations indeed left a legacy of accusations and feelings of betrayal that proved difficult to undo as the imperative for cooperation grew. Frustrations over discrepancies in capacity risked being reinforced by doubts over the readiness of individual agencies to dedicate their personnel and time to interagency processes and the planning of stability operations.

In the United States, the public discourse after 2002 increasingly promoted the image of diplomacy and development as 'equal pillars' to defence in the pursuit of US national interests. While embraced by the State Department and USAID in their quest for greater resources, this discourse risked feeding unrealistic

[6] US_19, 30 September 2010.
[7] US_17, 28 September 2010.
[8] Clare Short, Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, p. 53 (see also p. 12).

expectations about the civilian contribution within the military. A uniformed Pentagon official confirmed that his office was struggling to manage expectations within the military services. 'The COCOMS [combatant commands] have heard the message of "more interagency" loud and clear, and they request that capability now,' this official noted.[9] However, the role of congressional appropriation committees in the determination of agency budgets has arguably deflected part of the blame for the perceived weakness of the civilian contribution away from the agencies themselves in the United States. In 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, for instance, blamed Congress for turning a deaf ear to his civilian counterparts' budget requests and affirmed that 'the problem is not a lack of will on the part of civilian agencies. It is a lack of capacity.'[10]

In the United Kingdom, acrimonious debates over legal mandates and restrictions governing the disbursement of funds and the deployment of civilian personnel alongside British troops led to the impression that the civilian agencies – and DFID in particular – were trailing their feet for ideological reasons or in perceived nonchalance towards the nation's priorities. In 2008, a senior British diplomat concluded that years into the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, the UK government was 'still trying to fight two wars with a civilian administration which, despite some tinkering, is designed for conventional development cooperation and diplomacy and which is neither flexible nor hard-nosed enough to take advantage of a sometimes evanescent strategic space created by combat

[9] US_24, 7 October 2010.
[10] Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, remarks at the Naval War College, Newport, RI, 17 April 2009.

operations.'[11] While British military doctrine recognises that 'the covenant to undertake operations unquestioningly in conditions of mortal danger is unique to the Armed Forces' and that other departments 'will withdraw their personnel if they judge the situation too dangerous,' the motivations behind such judgment calls have given rise to debate.[12] Several British interviewees – both military and civilian – suggested that supposedly stringent 'duty of care' regulations (spelling out departments' legal liability for the safety of their staff) were a matter of interpretation rather than set in stone.[13] In military circles, DFID was perceived as hiding behind legal clauses in order to avoid participation in an endeavour that the organisation considered a distraction from its core mandate.[14] At the height of these tensions, a Conservative MP remarked during a debate in Parliament that DFID 'likes to remind us that it is charged by law with the hither purpose of poverty production.' He went on to relate the complaint allegedly voiced by a 'senior serving general' that DFID 'do not see themselves as part of our foreign policy.'[15]

'Throwing redundancy at the problem': gaps in funding, staff structures and manpower

The nature of budgets and funding mechanisms made it difficult for British and American civilian agencies to fill the agile, flexible, and delivery-oriented role they had been implicitly assigned in the implementation of a whole-of-government approach to stability operations. In the United Kingdom, the cost of

[11] Hilary Synnott, 'Afghanistan and Iraq cry out for brave civilians', *Telegraph (online edition)*, 8 January 2008.
[12] Ministry of Defence, *Campaign planning*, Joint Doctrine Publication 5-00 (JDP 5-00), 2nd edition, Supplement 2: 'Planning with other government departments', (Shrivenham, DCDC: December 2008), p. 2, para. 1e.
[13] UK_15, 28 February 2008; UK_08, 18 February 2008.
[14] See for instance Synnott, 'Afghanistan and Iraq cry out for brave civilians'.
[15] Adam Holloway, MP (Gravesham, Con), HC Deb 17 June 2008, vol. 477, cols. 177WH-178WH.

military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan was met from the Treasury's reserves and specialised equipment, such as high-mobility lightly armoured vehicles for the Army, was purchased under the urgent operational requirements (UOR) process.[16] DFID and the Foreign Office, on the other hand, had to fund their contributions from standing budgets until the creation of a (fairly modest) Stabilisation Aid Fund (SAF) in 2008, which was jointly managed by the MOD, FCO, and DFID.[17] Similarly, in the United States, the civilian agencies had no direct access to contingency funds for their contributions to stability operations until 2010, when Congress approved legislation for a (limited) contingency fund located at USAID to deal with 'unforeseen complex crises overseas'.[18] The military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to a series of temporary Congressional authorities allowing the military to transfer funds for stabilisation and reconstruction activities to the State Department and USAID under Section 1207 of DOD's authorization bill.[19] However, funding for civilian activities has remained far below the levels of US military spending in Afghanistan, as Anthony Cordesman shows on the basis of expenditure data collected from various sources.[20]

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[16] HM Treasury, *Meeting the aspirations of the British people*, Annex D8, p. 233.
[17] Ibid. The SAF was established with £269 million over the period covered by HM Treasury's 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.
[18] See Gordon Adams, *The end of section 1207? Boosting State/USAID contingency capabilities,* 'The Will and the Wallet' [weblog] (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 14 December 2009).
[19] Though only indirectly applied to stability operations Iraq or Afghanistan (via the training and equipment of coalition forces), another congressional authorization ('Section 1206'), which allows DOD to disburse funds – albeit with the concurrence of the State Department – for 'global train and equip programmes' has further animated the debate over the appropriate division of responsibilities between the Pentagon and the State Department. Section 1206 allocations for fiscal years 2006 to 2009 and congressionally notified plans for FY 2010 total over $1.3 billion. Nina Serafino, *Security assistance reform: "Section 1206" background and issues for Congress,* RS22855 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 11 February 2011).
[20] Anthony H. Cordesman, *Afghanistan and the uncertain metrics of progress,* Part four: "hold, build and transition": the challenge of development (working draft) (Washington, DC: CSIS, 9 June 2011), p. 3.

In addition to funding mechanisms, the staff profiles of civilian agencies poorly corresponded to an expeditionary role and – particularly in the case of development agencies – often did not match the military's expectations about their civilian partners' capacity to deliver impact on the ground. DFID's staff profile corresponds to that of a donor agency, which primarily works through local and multilateral implementation partners, rather than a delivery-oriented organisation.[21] As one interviewee observed, apart from a small cadre of highly experienced senior officials, DFID is mainly composed of junior staff members who act as project managers with little technical knowledge and rely on consultants and academics for specialist advice.[22] An exception to this is the Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE) within DFID, which has a more operational focus and specialises on rapid response capacity in a relatively narrow area of activities which is not automatically congruent with a stabilisation agenda.[23] In its 2008 *Civilian-military cooperation policy*, USAID portrayed itself as the US government's 'primary resource for expertise in international development,' which offered the comparative advantage of a field presence and 'a pool of skilled, experienced development and humanitarian assistance professionals.'[24] However, years of downsizing left the agency with a relatively junior workforce with little technical and oversight experience. USAID's reliance on non-governmental and commercial contractors in the implementation of aid programmes has been widely documented.[25] This practice

[21] A capability review of DFID in 2009 listed 1,602 home civil servants and 767 staff appointed 'in-country'. Cabinet Office Capabilities Review Team, *Department for International Development: progress and next steps*, p. 5.
[22] UK_19, 12 March 2008.
[23] UK_21, 31 March 2008.
[24] USAID, *Civilian-military cooperation policy*, p.3, para. 5.1.
[25] US Congress, *Evaluating US foreign assistance to Afghanistan*, p. 15; Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *At what risk: correcting overreliance on contractors in*

has been questioned in particular with regard to the tendering by USAID of large-scale 'signal' projects, such as the rehabilitation of the Kajaki Dam power plant in southern Afghanistan, or the rebuilding of the Kabul-Kandahar road.[26] Whereas the latter had been completed before the outbreak of the insurgency in southern Afghanistan, the Kajaki Dam project suffered from significant delays due to security concerns and raised a number of questions over USAID's oversight and control over its contractual partners.[27]

There is little doubt that the perceived failure of civilian agencies to 'show up' was partly due to a lack of resources and manpower in both case studies. The military's comparably greater capacity often made it impossible for civilian officials to match the attention dedicated to the planning and implementation of stability operations by their defence counterparts. As a British civil servant observed, 'the military will throw redundancy at a problem. Civilian organisations know they just do not have that amount of resources.'[28] Civilian input to the military planning machine was often limited due to these agencies' inability to keep up with the pace at which ideas were deliberated, turned over, and consolidated in formal planning processes on the defence side. An FCO civil servant observed, 'if you are good and quick at something you just default to what you are used to. The military is good at planning, so they will quickly be planning

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contingency operations, Second interim report to Congress (Arlington, VA: CWC, 24 February 2011).

[26] USAID called the completion of the latter project in 2003 a 'signal achievement', which would contribute to unity and security in Afghanistan through the internal development that it enabled. USAID, *Fragile states strategy*, pp. 13-14.

[27] See USAID, *Audit of critical power sector activities under USAID/Afghanistan's rehabilitation of economic facilities and services (REFS) program* (Audit report 5-306-07-004-P, Manila, Philippines: OIG, 21 May 2007). See also Christopher Shays, opening remarks at the Commission on Wartime Contracting, hearing on 'USAID and its future', Hart Senate Office building, Washington, DC, 1 April 2011.

[28] UK_09, 18 February 2008.

at high speed, unless someone tells them not to.'[29] A State Department employee noted that 'the military work at fast pace because that is what they know,' but added with a degree of scepticism that 'speed should not be confounded with content.'[30] Facing a fully staffed planning team, civilians found themselves marvelling at the fact that the military had the luxury to send junior officers to joint meetings with the sole purpose of taking notes for their superiors. Covering the issue as part of a broader regional or thematic portfolio for their agency, civilian representatives often found little time to prepare for or follow up on joint meetings. For them, attending a joint planning session or training exercise almost inevitably meant leaving desks unmanned and putting daily business on hold.

It is easy to see how the natural dynamism and manpower-intensive approach to doing business that characterises military establishments created the impression among civilian agencies that 'partnership', in reality, meant signing up to a military-led process – whether by default or on purpose. As one State Department official recalled, the Pentagon would readily say 'yes, we want to partner with you – here is the plan and here is your role.'[31] British military doctrine acknowledges that 'civilian planners often cite the sense of "unstoppable momentum" that characterises the military response to a new crisis,' and recognizes that the 'can do' spirit of the military must be balanced with the requirement to give civilian agencies a voice in the process.[32] On the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine how low or fluctuating levels of civilian attendance at joint planning sessions or exercises – to which civilian agencies were often explicitly invited to contribute –

[29] UK_05, 15 February 2008.
[30] US_21, 5 October 2008.
[31] US_58, 7 December 2010.
[32] Ministry of Defence, JDP 5-00, Supplement 2, p. 2.

fuelled perceptions among military staff that civilian organisations did not have their priorities 'in order' and hence could not be counted on as reliable partners.[33]

'Civilian agencies do not plan': the challenge of integrated planning

Experiences with joint civilian-military planning have varied in both case studies according to the level at which planning efforts took place. Planning at the strategic level has seen little formal integration in either London or Washington. Two uniformed Pentagon officials, for instance, noted that the State Department and USAID were increasingly involved in the review of DOD's plans at the strategic level. Yet there was still no single integrated civilian-military planning mechanism.[34] A senior official in charge of planning at the State Department argued that, while her bureau provided DOD planners with civilian expertise residing in State and USAID, they were not truly engaging in joint planning. A genuine whole-of-government process, she argued, would require multiple agencies to have an equal voice in the process and for them to be 'equally implicated by the concept of operation.'[35] In the United Kingdom, the MOD noted in 2010 that 'previous attempts at cross-government planning have failed to be truly comprehensive and resulted in a broad government strategy and a number of departmental plans beneath it.'[36] The British military's joint doctrine on campaign planning contains a tentative reference to a mechanism that is described as an

[33] UK_05, 15 February 2008.
[34] US_23, 7 October 2010.
[35] Donna Hopkins, US State Department, remarks in a panel on 'Addressing civilian agency capabilities', XIX Annual strategy conference, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 8-10 April 2008.
[36] Ministry of Defence, *A guide to JDP 3-40* (Shrivenham: DCDC, April 2010), para. 303.

'amalgam of both DFID and military planning approaches' for joint planning at the strategic level.[37]

In the theatre of operations, on the other hand, both American and British officials have recorded measured successes in elaborating joint civilian-military plans. In the United States, joint campaign plans have been elaborated in close cooperation between the military and diplomatic leadership in Iraq in 2007 and Afghanistan in 2009. Close partnership between US Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus – aided by an expert team drawn together from various organisational backgrounds – resulted in a campaign plan that outlined a common civilian-military mission in Iraq in detailed instructions and concrete steps.[38] General Petraeus attributed this success to close consultation and co-location, 'unshakeable commitment to teamwork at the top,' and shared accountability for the plan (including joint appearances by the two officials before Congress and the White House).[39] General Stanley McChrystal and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry elaborated an integrated civilian-military campaign plan for Afghanistan in 2009, which placed a premium on aligning civilian leadership positions with the military's command structure at various levels from the district up to the campaign headquarters.[40]

[37] JDP 5-00, Supplement 2, 2008, p.4.
[38] General David H. Petraeus, 'Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker: diplomat and partner extraordinaire', *Army Magazine* 61/4 (2011), p. 16; Christopher M. Schnaubelt, *What NATO can learn from "the surge" in Iraq,* NATO research division paper no.40 (Rome: NATO Defense College, October 2008), p. 4.
[39] General David H. Petraeus, 'Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker', p. 16.
[40] Embassy of the United States of America, Kabul and US Forces, Afghanistan, 'United States government integrated civilian-military plan for support to Afghanistan', sensitive but unclassified, 10 August 2009.

In the United Kingdom, joint planning efforts among the military, FCO and DFID in Afghanistan in 2005 ran into considerable difficulty at the level of the home bureaucracy. A member of the small team of experts hired to facilitate the process noted that the joint plan elaborated on the ground – which had eventually been signed by the senior leadership of each department – got 'torn to shreds' at the institutional level as individual departments simply picked out the pieces they felt comfortable with.[41] Functions that required true cross-governmental consensus – most prominently strategic communication – ultimately fell off the plan.[42] Moreover, failure to lock in the plan at the institutional level meant that the 'deal made with the military in the planning phase ... fell apart with the deployment of the next different brigade,' according to another member of the planning team.[43] Revisions of the initial plan, which were largely conducted by practitioners on the ground in 2008 and 2009 (the Helmand Road Map) were widely seen as an improvement.[44] The MOD nevertheless concluded in 2010 that there was 'currently no universal template for collaborative planning at the operational or theatre level.'[45] Hence, while integrated planning processes appear to have worked better in theatre, it has proven difficult to ensure institutional support for joint plans at the institutional level.

Interestingly, both British and American practitioners located the main gap in 'planning cultures' between diplomatic establishments on the one hand, and defence and development agencies on the other – rather than between civilian and

[41] UK_18, 10 March 2008; UK_44, 26 May 2010; UK_49, 27 January 2011. See also Gordon, 'Defence policy', p. 130.
[42] UK_15, 28 February 2008.
[43] UK_18, 10 March 2008.
[44] Farrell, 'Improving in war', p. 584; Farrell and Gordon, 'COIN machine', p. 21.
[45] Ministry of Defence, *A Guide to JDP 3-40*, para. 303-4.

military organisations. British officials pointed out that DFID was already fairly comfortable with long-term planning, detailed assessment, and integrated planning by virtue of its own work – although its traditional implementing partners in the donor community were far closer to the organisation's own ideological background than the military.[46] A civilian expert hired to facilitate joint planning in the context of the British campaign in Afghanistan observed that DFID and the military employed similar planning methodologies (e.g. logical framework analysis) and often 'just used different terms for the same things.'[47] USAID's approach to country-specific strategic planning, programming, and use of assessment and evaluation tools was likewise considered closer to the military's planning culture than to that of the State Department.

In contrast, the foreign affairs ministries in both case studies were generally perceived as having little capacity for – and according to some interviewees little interest in – detailed planning. The FCO has traditionally invested little time and resources in planning or operations, partly due to a cultural tendency to dissociate policy formulation from implementation and delivery.[48] As one civil servant noted 'on the whole, the culture of the civil service has been that planning is about implementation – and implementation is done by organisations that are not civil service.'[49] Several interviewees, including members of the FCO, even straightforwardly asserted that 'the FCO does not do planning.' Though likely lacking in nuance, this observation reveals considerable differences between the reliance on formal planning methodologies within defence and development

[46] UK_32, 25 September 2009. Similar observations are reflected in JDP 5-00, Supplement 2, p. 2.
[47] UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[48] UK_07, 18 February 2008.
[49] UK_09, 18 February 2008.

establishments and the virtual absence thereof within the FCO. British military doctrine equally recognizes that 'diplomacy ... is a far more individual process than the task orientated activities carried out by either DFID or the MOD, requiring few formal strategies and plans.'[50] Hence, integrating the FCO in a joint planning process that revolved around the operational focus and formal methodology employed by its defence and development counterparts proved challenging. 'We tried to keep the FCO happy by providing space for political analysis,' noted a member of the expert team sent to facilitate joint planning in Helmand in late 2005.[51]

The State Department was also deemed to struggle with strategic planning. According to some officials, it had no planning culture altogether in the sense that it did not reward planning internally or give it much support.[52] A senior State Department official pointed out that her organisation simply lacked the resources to engage in extensive contingency planning, and that this in turn created a political problem: 'because we don't do a lot of planning it is highly sensitive ... if we are doing it, we must be doing it for a reason.'[53] Crisis planning was feared to send out a strong political signal, which in turn threatened to have a negative impact on diplomatic relations. An FCO civil servant likewise observed that – while there had been a push for greater contingency planning within the organisation (e.g. with regard to Sudan, Kenya or Somalia) – diplomats were 'generally wary of putting down options on a paper for fear of creating self-

[50] JDP 5-00, Supplement 2, p. 3.
[51] UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[52] US_15, 20 September 2010. Similar observations are made by Gordon Adams and Rebecca Williams, *Verdict? The jury is still out on QDDR's strategic planning and budgeting,* 'The Will and the Wallet' [weblog] (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 21 December 2010); Murdock*, et al.*, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, p. 61.
[53] US_27, 13 October 2010.

fulfilling prophecies.'[54] Another British civil servant further contended that planning on the basis of military planning tools or processes made little sense for civilian agencies, as they were dealing with a range of variables that were often little known or understood. Military planners on the other hand, he contended, based their assumptions on 'a variable – the enemy – that they know really well.'[55] A number of US diplomats nevertheless questioned the validity of such reservations to planning. Several State Department officials appeared to concur with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's insistence on the need for cultural change within the organisation, as they argued that concerns over the supposedly constraining or politically counterproductive effects of planning needed to be exposed as myths and dispelled.[56]

A number of interviewees recounted positive experiences with integrated planning but were quick to point out the costs involved. A British military officer, for instance, noted that 'the process is more painful, more challenging, and there is more confrontation involved. You get more buy-in for the product but the risk with interagency culture is that you keep deliberating and never finalize the product.'[57] A colleague of his added, 'when you do interagency planning or doctrine you end up with something that looks very different from military doctrine or your habitual six-step planning process – you don't get a checklist or a template, for instance.'[58] Joint processes further contained a potential for

[54] UK_08, 18 February 2008.
[55] UK_09, 18 February 2008.
[56] US_27, 13 October 2010; US_39, 21 October 2010. The State Department's QDDR, which explicitly mirrored the DOD's quadrennial review exercise, was according to Secretary Clinton aimed at 'mak[ing] sure that we start looking to the horizon; to plan, not just react.' Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, 'Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review', remarks at USAID town hall meeting, Washington, DC, 13 July 2009.
[57] UK_53, 25 May 2011.
[58] UK_54, 25 May 2011.

confusion and frustration if expectations were not addressed and managed openly. An FCO civil servant recalled that civilian officials, who had attended joint meetings to define stabilisation tasks under the impression that they were there to sound out ideas, subsequently came to be perceived by their military counterparts as 'promising' capacity that their organisations were unable to provide. He added, 'what we didn't appreciate – perhaps naively – that [the military] would then turn around and say, ok, so the tasks you don't expect us to do, but that need to be done, you are going to do them.'[59]

'Exercising stabilisation': joint civilian-military training and education

The previous chapters have suggested that the British and American militaries both experienced a sense of crisis and introspection in the course of fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In spite of some differences prompted by each organisation's respective historical trajectory, as well as by slightly different timelines in the two campaigns, the revision (or revival) of counterinsurgency principles and tactics led to changes in training and education in both armies. These in turn sparked an increasing demand for civilian participation in pre-deployment exercises, training simulations, and military staff courses. However, capacity-related limitations to joint planning unsurprisingly applied to training and education as well. Over the past decade, neither British nor American civilian agencies have had the luxury of maintaining a 'training float' – a permanent percentage of staff committed to the sole task of training for future operations.[60] Hence, the military's demand for civilians in the classroom and during exercises

[59] UK_08, 18 February 2008.
[60] In spite of a short-lived initiative to that purpose under Secretary of State Colin Powell in the United States in 2004, which was largely overtaken by the staffing needs that arose from the opening of new embassies in the newly independent states succeeding the demise of the Soviet Union.

was bound to remain above supply in spite of a growing interest in this type of exchange both in the United States and the United Kingdom. Prior to the creation of specialist coordination units within both institutional architectures, the lack of resources and the absence of agreed procedures for such requests elicited frustration on both sides. With regard to the military's invitation to participate in mission-readiness exercises (often based on role-playing), a former USAID employee noted 'I cannot pretend to work on issues when there are real issues out there.'[61] An exasperated DFID official noted, 'we get inundated by requests to participate in joint exercises by a variety of military units who, of course, all think they are the only one doing this.'[62] The absence of institutionalized arrangements further meant that the quality of joint training largely depended on the interest and personality of the military commander in charge.[63] Newly created coordination units on the civilian side not only provided a focal point for the military's requests but also additional capacity to establish agreed parameters for civilian participation in joint training.[64]

Limited time and manpower were not the only concerns with regard to joint training and education. In the eyes of a senior FCO official, the military's approach was to 'sign everyone up to the same way of doing things, learn the lessons and feed them back into the system, apply them and it will work out. That's not how stabilisation works.'[65] A retired US Army Colonel pointed out that the Army had 'a culture that believed in lessons learning' based on the repetition of standardized tasks (e.g. how to throw a hand grenade), which was of

[61] US_63, 24 February 2011.
[62] UK_17, 10 March 2008.
[63] UK_09, 18 February 2008.
[64] See chapter six.
[65] UK_51, 5 May 2011.

questionable use to civilian organisations.[66] This was echoed by a British Army Colonel who acknowledged that the military's tactically-oriented lessons learning mechanisms did not lend themselves equally well to evaluate policy or strategy.[67] By reference to the complex and diverse knowledge required, US military doctrine (FM 3-24) further acknowledges that 'many non-military aspects of COIN do not lend themselves to rapid tactical learning.'[68] Such concerns were confirmed by a British stabilisation adviser, who observed that the nature of the tasks he faced on the ground simply did not allow him to 'exercise' his role in the compressed timeframe of a 48-hours military exercise.[69] Training courses for civilian development and political advisers about to deploy in stability operations have become increasingly professionalized over the years. Curricula have expanded beyond basic hostility training to cover crash courses in host country culture and history, know-how to work the home bureaucracy, and immersion in military drills. Yet, as a civilian training expert at the United States Institute of Peace pointed out, even these ambitious programmes could not guarantee that new hires would know 'how to build capacity in their local counterparts.'[70]

In light of frequent staff rotations on the ground and the constant pressure on civilian agencies to hire additional personnel on short-term contracts to fill empty positions in the field, the institutionalisation of best practice through continuous joint learning and training has been a challenge for both governments. Initiatives aimed at establishing joint education opportunities for civilian and military officials in the longer term in order to develop a cohort of 'national security

[66] UK_59, 8 December 2010.
[67] UK_30, 23 September 2009.
[68] FM 3-24, p. x.
[69] UK_41, 27 April 2010.
[70] Cited in Henderson, 'This is war'.

professionals' have been pursued with more vigour in the United States than in the United Kingdom. British practitioners suggested that secondments to other departments were traditionally neither encouraged nor particularly valued within the FCO and only slightly more popular within the MOD, whereas development was generally perceived as a separate career-stream.[71] A civil service capability review mandated by the Cabinet Office in 2007 noted that 'insularity' presented a problem in all three departments. DFID in particular was told to 'accelerate the swapping, sharing and secondment of senior staff with other departments', but FCO and MOD were equally urged to open their doors to the movement of ideas and people.[72] American civilian and military interviewees, on the other hand, noted that secondments to other agencies had increasingly gained in recognition within their parent organisations.[73] A USAID official for instance remarked that a one-year course at the National War College was certainly 'no longer seen as a place where you park people' within the agency.[74]

However, even if civilian agencies came to recognize that that there was value in familiarizing officials with military culture and operations through secondments and liaison appointments, limited human resources meant that certain functions in the home organisation inevitably remained understaffed for the same duration. A senior USAID official thus questioned whether sending the agency's best people to US combatant commands as liaison officers was a smart use of civilian capacity.[75] A State Department employee further contended that sending civilians on a one-year secondment to the US Army's education centre at Fort Leavenworth

[71] UK_36, 2 December 2009; UK_38, 13 January 2010; UK_55, 11 May 2011.
[72] Cabinet Office Capability Reviews Team, *Capability reviews tranche 3*, p. 10.
[73] US_04, 4 September 2010; US_42, 28 October 2010; US_51, 19 November 2010.
[74] US_51, 19 November 2010.
[75] US_26, 12 October 2010.

would simply 'have them parrot military talk,' and worried that joint education would result in the creation of a military senior executive if the military remained the only organisation committed to it.[76] Other interviewees, however, pointed out that it was crucial for civilian agencies to send their best people to interagency and liaison assignments. The discrepancy in staff numbers among military and civilian agencies, they argued, acted like a magnifying glass with regard to the quality of a single individual, and shaped perceptions of the organisation as a whole.

2. Evaluation: material, procedural and cultural obstacles at the institutional level

The following evaluation of obstacles to coordination at the institutional level follows the three-layer structure introduced in chapter two. As previously outlined, the three layers are a tool to structure the analysis rather than a theoretical reflection of neat empirical distinctions. The final section thus highlights how the different layers are connected, and thereby provides a fuller picture of obstacles to coordination.

The material layer

The above analysis of obstacles at the institutional level highlights a number of different factors evident in the material layer of the framework. In both case studies, discrepancies in capacity between the defence establishment and the civilian side of government have made coordination harder to achieve in a number of areas. These include joint deliberation, planning, training, and education of staff. The comparative abundance of resources on the side of defence encourages

[76] US_60, 10 December 2010.

and supports manpower- and resource-intensive ways of doing business that civilian agencies find impossible to mirror. In terms of coordination, this has made it difficult to define the appropriate timing, pace, and modalities for joint efforts. Additionally, shared organisational structures – for instance to locate a joint plan elaborated by an interdepartmental team – were (at least initially) missing from the institutional architectures in both case studies. The co-location of cross-departmental teams at headquarters is time-consuming and the establishment of shared structures (e.g. office space, IT systems) implies transaction costs that are not budgeted for at departmental levels.

From a comparative perspective, it stands out that resources are more dramatically skewed towards the defence department in the United States than in the United Kingdom, although both countries have struggled with discrepancies in capacity between military and civilian agencies in the context of stability operations. The considerably greater infrastructure available on the defence side for planning, training, and education in both case studies has led joint efforts in these areas to gravitate towards military-led initiatives. Comments by interviewees have highlighted a number of reservations with regard to both the short-term utility and longer-term implications of relying primarily on existing infrastructure within defence for joint or interagency planning, training, exercising, and education.

The bureaucratic layer

The empirical data presented above suggests that there are indeed unequal incentive structures for departments to invest in planning, training, and education in the area of stability operations. In both case studies, practitioners widely

believed that the foreign affairs establishments in particular did not greatly value planning and thus failed to adequately resource and support planning efforts within their organisations. Defence and development, on the other hand, were perceived to share an operational focus that made it easier to find common ground in terms of planning. Practitioners' experience with joint exercises, training, and education further illustrate the difficulty of accommodating the needs and requirements of different organisations in these areas. The military's training and education modules were deemed to only partially allow for the civilian contribution to stability operations to be conceptualised, taught, and evaluated. Interviews with practitioners revealed doubts over the value of synchronizing civilian and military approaches. They pointed out, for instance, that this risked a reduction in quality due to pressures to conform to a dominant approach. There was also the risk of individual agencies losing comparative advantages when imposing a single, unified template. One FCO civil servant felt that civilian organisations 'kind of had to adopt military models in order to satisfy the market,' which in turn meant that civilian planning 'has not been of terribly good quality.'[77]

A comparison of the two case studies further reveals different strategies employed by organisations to protect their interests. In the United Kingdom, DFID's reluctance to align its mandate with a whole-of-government approach led to perceptions that the organisation was 'hiding' behind regulations governing the deployment of personnel and the disbursement of funds to stability operations in defence of an independent agenda. In the United States, by contrast, both the State

[77] UK_09, 18 February 2008.

Department and USAID appear to have signed up to the national security discourse and attempted to use it as a vehicle to accumulate greater resources and influence. As a State Department official observed, 'everything that is linked to security will give you resources.'[78] The bureaucratic reflex to defend mandates and secure influence thus played out differently in each case. Understanding these divergent organisational behaviours requires a better understanding of organisational mandates and their role in the consolidation of institutional identities.

The cultural layer

Difficulties in designing adequate models for interagency planning and deliberation as well as joint training and education point to the existence of a culture clash among organisations. This clash is shaped by deep-seated understandings of how to judge effectiveness and professionalism, in addition to divergent assessments of core competences and attitudes worth cultivating and protecting within the organisation.

Military organisations place great value on the ability of individuals to take decisions and to deliver collectively on agreed objectives. As Leonard Wong and Douglas Lovelace note, 'the adage of "Lead, follow, or get out of the way!" leaves little room for discussion or debate on the soundness of the decision. The military adores decisiveness, so the focus is on executing, not on consensus building.'[79] The expectation to operate under life-threatening conditions induces a preference for clear hierarchies and unequivocal orders, which is not shared by

[78] US_27, 13 October 2010.
[79] Leonard Wong and Douglas Lovelace, 'Knowing when to salute', *ORBIS* 52/2 (2008), p. 279.

non-military actors. Making definite calls is a vital skill to have for a military commander, as hesitation and ambiguity put troops' lives at risk.[80] Interviews with military officials largely confirmed these assumptions and further revealed a tendency to associate deliberation with indecisiveness, and argumentation or dissent with a lack of loyalty to the mission. Competence and leadership tended to be associated with the ability to reduce a complex situation to actionable decisions. The prevalent image of diplomatic establishments among military officials was that of a 'talking shop' where time-consuming sessions frequently ended without a tangible outcome. A British military officer described the diplomats he had worked with as 'wonderful but bloody frustrating ... because they couldn't lead the way out of a paper bag. Time and again, you wanted to say, "come on, let's just get something done".'[81]

Within foreign affairs and development agencies, on the other hand, the confrontation of views and deliberation of ideas are often recognized as an objective or outcome on their own, and diverging opinions are seen as a fact of life rather than a sign of failure. These organisations tend to attract people who seek the opportunity to voice their views and thrive in an environment that places emphasis on individual ideas and achievements. Based on the nature of issues and interlocutors they deal with, diplomats and development officials often consider models of interaction based on giving and receiving orders as inappropriate. A British civil servant for instance argued, 'when the military get upon a "truth", they believe that the way to persuade people is to talk about that truth over and over again. Diplomats recognise that they will have to describe the same thing in

[80] UK_05, 15 February 2008.
[81] UK_11, 19 February 2008.

different ways to different people at different times in order to get them to agree.'[82] Yet the flexibility that this official deemed crucial to build and entertain effective professional relationships may be considered fickle by a military interlocutor. Furthermore, diplomats take certain pride in their ability to work in a world of fluid and shifting variables that defy a rigid or standardized approach. A civil servant, for instance, noted that 'the military are bad at doing chaos whereas we *do* chaos,' and added that, while senior military officers were 'perfectly able to work without a plan,' the lower ranks were not.[83]

Connecting the layers

The problems of administering a cross-departmental approach to the planning and implementation of stability operations have often been collapsed together under the argument (illustrated above) that civilian agencies – and foreign affairs ministries in particular – simply fall behind due to a lack of capacity. In spite of variation among the two cases in terms of overall levels of capacity, the gap between military and civilian agencies with regard to the dedication of resources, manpower, and time to planning and training has been very similar, and thus made it harder to align different organisational processes and practices in both cases. Both British and American practitioners have expressed doubts over the ability of standardized models for planning, training, and education to cater to the needs and requirements of the different agencies involved. The cultural perspective has further suggested that certain modes of decision-making, planning, and human resources management are not just difficult to embrace for some agencies because of limitations in capacity – or because they require

[82] UK_08, 18 February 2008.
[83] UK_37, 2 December 2009.

changing ingrained practices – but because they clash with collective understandings of what is 'good' for the organisation and valuable to cultivate.

The tables below summarize interview data collected within both case studies. In terms of planning, the shaded areas indicate that the main gap is between the 'executive' or 'operational' arms of defence and development on the one hand, and the deliberative foreign affairs departments on the other. In terms of education and training, however, the differences are more closely aligned with a civilian-military divide. In each table, the lower half highlights differences in resources and methodologies, whereas the upper part indicates clashes at the cultural-conceptual level.

Table 2: Planning

	Defence	Development	Diplomacy
Competences valued	Operationalizing concepts	Operationalizing concepts	Conceptualizing problems
Outcomes sought	Actionable decisions; allocation of resources to tasks; command relationships	Programme design; allocations of resources to projects; contractual relationships	Wide range of options; flexibility, access and influence; buy-in and consensus
Institutional importance	High (by default)	Medium (on the rise)	Low (and contested)
Underlying assumptions	'In and out'; transition Hostile context	Long-term presence Benign context	Durable relationships Benign context
Approach; method	Cyclical process based on metrics; one central variable (enemy)	Quantitative approach based on metrics; set of recurring variables	No formal methodology; shifting and context-specific variables
Infrastructure; capacity	Extensive, focused on contingency planning	Medium, focused on project evaluation	Limited

The first table highlights that diplomatic and military actors do not automatically pursue the same goals or value the same outcomes in a joint planning process. While the military seeks to reduce complexity in order to narrow down a set of actions, the desire of diplomats to gain a fuller understanding of a situation and increase the range of possible reactions may well produce the opposite effect. Military planners seek to allocate means to ends and expect to establish clear responsibilities in the planning process. Diplomats tend to approach joint deliberations as an opportunity to generate consensus, secure buy-in from other actors, and sound out competing objectives. The nature of their trade, moreover, induces diplomats to more readily accept that tension, disagreement and ideological differences are part of the process, and not a negative element *per se.*[84]

While development agencies are generally closer to the structured approach preferred by the military, they share a common concern with diplomatic organisations for establishing a longer-term presence and durable relationships, as well as the basic assumption of a relatively benign operating environment for the majority of their operations. In a joint planning process, cultural dispositions towards investing time and resources in exploring of different views – and allowing for disagreement and complication in the process – thus have to be reconciled with the demand for rapidly actionable decisions over resources and for the clarification of command relationships emanating from delivery-oriented organisations. The differences in competences valued and outcomes sought highlighted in the table further suggest that there is neither an ideal, 'objective' approach to planning, nor a single mode of leadership within such a process, that

[84] UK_33, 25 September 2009.

are likely to command equal approval and recognition among these different organisations.

Table 3: Education and training

	Defence	Development	Diplomacy
Attitudes valued	Conformity, team spirit	Individualism	Individualism
Competences, expertise	Well-defined (specialist/all-purpose)	Well-defined (sectoral; specialist)	Vaguely defined (generalist skills)
Preferred approach	Standardization	Low standardization	Hostile to standardization
Nature of training	Mass-oriented, repetitive exercises	Short-term 'primers' in functional areas	'Learning the ropes on the job'
Institutional importance	High: creates trust and builds the team as well as the individual	Low: time-consuming, specialist skills to be acquired elsewhere	Low: time consuming, core skills can't really be taught
Acquisition of skills	No prior experience expected, education throughout career	External education and experience prior to joining	Education prior to joining, experience acquired 'on the job'
Infrastructure; capacity	Large-scale	Small-scale	Small-scale

The second table highlights differences in civilian and military approaches to education. Whereas the divergent attitudes highlighted in the top part of the table are to some extent already prevalent among individuals who seek to be part of a given profession – whether in a military, diplomatic, or aid community – they are likely to be reinforced and confirmed through education and socialization within each respective organisation. Military establishments start indoctrinating their staff at a young age and insert them into a constant cycle of exercising, training and education.[85] Much of the military's extensive training and education infrastructure is geared towards forming professionals from scratch and preparing

[85] Notwithstanding the fact that many British and American mid-career and senior officers read for post-graduate degrees at civilian universities.

them to succeed in a large scale, collective endeavour, which is expected to be carried out under life-threatening circumstances. Military organisations thus expect to prepare, train and educate their personnel for the majority of tasks they will face in the course of their career. Civilian agencies, by contrast, base their training on the assumption that the general nature of their work defies standardized training and preparation. As a result, they tend to expect new hires to either bring relevant expertise from prior experience, or learn it 'on the job'. As a former US career diplomat noted, 'you hire bright people and they will figure it out.'[86] The acquisition of technical skills or the inculcation of standardized behavioural reactions is given little attention and in some cases actively resented. A British civil servant for instance noted that the military's approach to force generation revolved around 'extensive training, extensive exercising, and everyone follows the plan' – a model he considered neither necessary nor desirable for the civilian agencies. In his words, 'I don't think you want to turn the FCO and DFID into deployable machines.'[87]

Civilian agencies, in contrast to the military, do not associate extensive training with building trust among officials or moulding leaders. In their promotion and evaluation systems, they tend to emphasize individual skills and accomplishments over collective achievements. Military officers acquire leadership skills in the sense of managing large groups of people early on in their career. It is not uncommon for Army captains in their mid-twenties to find themselves in charge of (and responsible for) one hundred troops. In the civil service, leading a team often means coordinating inputs from a much smaller group of people. 'In the

[86] US_22, 6 October 2010.
[87] UK_08, 18 February 2008.

military you see a natural deference to figures of authority that have risen through the ranks,' a British military officer noted. 'In a civilian environment, your experiences are mostly individual experiences. Civilian leadership figures are likely to be self-empowered, self-starters, technocrats in their domain, and not necessarily team players.'[88] Again, these insights point to the low likelihood that a single model for the preparation, training and education of practitioners for stability operations will be able to cater to the demands of each organisation involved.

3. The operational level: organising expertise on the ground

The vast majority of interviewees believed that coordination among individuals from different organisations is easier to achieve in the field. This observation is further backed up in accounts by practitioners published in weblogs, online commentaries, policy analyses, and parliamentary or congressional testimonies.[89] Operating in close proximity but at considerable distance from the home bureaucracy, representatives of different organisations quite literally found common ground, developing a sense of solidarity in the face of challenging conditions. Nevertheless, the operational context has equally given rise to a considerable number of obstacles to civilian-military coordination.

A US military officer described differences among agencies on the ground as 'an intellectual-philosophical debate over what you want to achieve and how' and

[88] UK_47, 1 July 2010.
[89] A prime source for this type of testimony is the electronic 'Small Wars Journal' and its associated weblog featuring commentary and opinion pieces from a large variety of military and non-military professionals at <www.smallwarsjournal.com>.

added that 'the best you can hope for is negotiated unity of effort.'[90] The small-print of this debate includes decisions over the means of delivery, the speed of implementation, the effects sought, and indicators of progress. Operational demands that dictate the pace and direction of the military campaign in theatre do not naturally fall in line with the civilian contribution. The latter sometimes depends on a set of very different variables, such as meteorological conditions affecting the crop season in the case of agricultural development projects. Accordingly, a seasoned Afghanistan correspondent for the *Washington Post* wrote in September 2010 that US Marines and British civilian advisers in Helmand province were 'quarrelling with each other' over the direction, modalities, and pace of the parallel combat and reconstruction efforts.[91] Rather than concentrating their efforts on protecting local communities, the Marines were pushing into sparsely populated areas to interdict the movement of insurgents and the trade of weapons and resources. This was considered to go against the tenets of a population-centric counterinsurgency campaign, which 'should take place where the population is, not where it once was,' according to a former USAID official.[92] The interviews conducted for the thesis, however, suggest that such rifts cannot simply be cast in terms of a British-American and/or civilian-military divide. The USAID official's comments point to similar divergences among American military and civilian representatives, and a senior British military officer equally noted differences in approach between British troops and the

[90] US_09, 15 September 2010.
[91] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'U.S. Marines, British advisers at odds in Helmand', *Washington Post*, 4 September 2010.
[92] US_01, 30 August 2010.

Marines' approach, with the latter taking the fight out to the insurgents because 'they saw this as something better to do than garrisoning population centres.'[93]

The fluid character of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan makes it hard to generalize about any aspect of the operation. Parameters such as threat levels, the nature of interlocutors, and local infrastructure and terrain can change dramatically from one tour to the next, from one province to another, and at any given moment in the campaign. Dynamics among practitioners on the ground nevertheless exhibit a relatively consistent set of features that are worth examining.

The discussion that follows does not retain the distinction between the operational and tactical levels of command introduced by military doctrine. It does, however, acknowledge that there are different interpretations among practitioners of what it means to be 'in the field'. Some civilians deployed as advisors at the district-level in Afghanistan did not consider their colleagues in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) as truly working 'in the field', whereas members of the PRT would contend that the embassy postings in Kabul and Baghdad had little to do with 'hardship', and argued that these places elicited much the same bureaucratic reflexes as the home bureaucracy. Due to limited space, the study combines observations made at different levels: in villages and districts, within the fortified compounds inhabited by civilian and military practitioners at the provincial level, and at the embassies and task force headquarters in the capital. Breaking down the analysis along these lines is more likely to reveal further nuances in degree rather

[93] UK_50, 14 April 2011.

than leading to fundamentally different insights into the dynamics among actors on the ground.

'Woefully under-resourced': logistics, security, and people

Logistics have featured prominently on the list of impediments to stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Hilary Synnott has rendered a devastating account of the civilian presence in Basra during his tour in late 2003 as Britain's senior civilian representative. Lacking in manpower, resources, secure communication, and even moderately secure accommodation, civilians not only 'had little to contribute to military strategic or tactical planning' but also fell woefully short of the military's expectation that the civilians would be their 'ticket out of Iraq.'[94] Likewise, during the early days of the British campaign in Afghanistan's Helmand province, the few civilians deployed lacked in everything – including secure communication lines with London, which further contributed to their sense of isolation.[95]

The British military faced its own resource problems – particularly regarding troop numbers as well as adequate transport equipment and combat gear – which led to a highly publicized political debate in the United Kingdom.[96] The operational implications of insufficient troop and equipment levels in the British campaign in Helmand have been the subject of a number of academic and

[94] Synnott adds that 'Even if the civilian teams had been adequately resourced, they could never have constituted the military's ticket home: both parts had essential roles to play.' Synnott, *Bad days in Basra*, pp. 140-1.
[95] UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[96] E.g. Richard Norton-Taylor, 'MoD betrayed troops in Afghanistan, says Coroner', *The Guardian*, 16 February 2008. See also testimonies to the UK Iraq Inquiry by Lt Gen (ret) Sir Graeme Lamb, 9 December 2009; and former Defence Secretaries Des Browne and John Hutton, 25 January 2010 <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/transcripts/writtenevidence-bydate.aspx> accessed 20 August 2011.

journalistic accounts. Theses vary in their attribution of causal significance to resource levels, lack of political guidance, commanders' decisions, or exogenous factors.[97] In the British case, limited resources thus led to doubts among civilian practitioners whether the military could provide sufficient security for them to engage in meaningful interactions with the local population; and to frustration on the military side over the limited ability – sometimes interpreted as a lack of initiative – of the handful of civilian advisers to leave the heavily fortified bases to carry out their work.[98] Asked in early 2007 whether some civilian agencies were demanding too high a standard of security before engaging, British Army General Sir David Richards replied 'some are,' and suggested it might be necessary to create 'an entirely new organisation that is prepared to accept more risk and work closely with the security forces in these situations.'[99] In a different interview a few months later, he noted that DFID had been 'guilty of not living up to our expectations and their own promises but we were guilty too, of not providing them with the security environment they wanted until quite recently.'[100]

Resource constraints were less salient in the case of the US but nevertheless led to similar problems in terms of civilian-military coordination. While the capabilities of the US military overall dwarfed those of its British coalition partner, these vast resources were not automatically made available for stabilisation purposes. A report published in 2005 suggested that US Civil Affairs units, which were meant to provide the primary staffing for the reconstruction effort in Iraq and

[97] Farrell, 'Improving in war', pp. 574-8; Fergusson, *A million bullets*, p. 329; Griffin, 'Iraq, Afghanistan and the future', p. 321; Anthony King, 'Understanding the Helmand campaign: British military operations in Afghanistan', *International Affairs* 86/2 (2010), p. 312.
[98] See also Fergusson, *A million bullets*, p. 207.
[99] Cobbold, 'RUSI interview with General David Richards', p. 28.
[100] Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Full interview: General David Richards', *The Guardian*, 27 January 2007.

Afghanistan, were at the start insufficiently equipped for the conditions encountered on the ground.[101] US civilians deployed in theatre equally suffered from a lack of equipment. According to US Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, the diplomatic mission in Afghanistan, had been 'poorly defined and underresourced' before a budget increase in 2009.[102] The initial lack of secure communication tools forced civilian advisers in provinces to relay their reports through the military's classified network or resort to private emails instead.[103] Limited access to transport in theatre further curtailed their independence by making their ability to carry out their functions dependent on hitching places on military convoys and helicopter flights. Nathan Hodge notes that the classification of 'space available' assigned to most civilians meant that 'they could be bumped from their seat on the aircraft by the lowest-ranking private or a pallet of bottled water.'[104]

For both the British and the Americans, protecting civilian staff – often by means of personal security details hired from commercial providers – was a costly endeavour, which occasionally raised questions about the value of pushing a civilian presence out into the field instead of relying on military units to carry out stabilisation. A report of the State Department's in-house journal in 2007 noted that 'even in the so-called garden spot of Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan, [Foreign Service] members cannot travel outside the secure compound without a personal security detail.'[105] This could elicit the perception within military circles that diplomatic and development experts in the field were a costly luxury to maintain.

[101] Michael J. Baranick, Christopher Holshek, and Larry Wentz, 'Civil Affairs at crossroads', in Hans Binnendijk (ed.), *Transforming the reserve component: four essays* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2005), p. 39.
[102] US Congress, *Evaluating US foreign assistance to Afghanistan*, p. 6.
[103] Hodge, *Armed humanitarians*, p. 176.
[104] Ibid., p. 92.
[105] Dorman, 'Iraq PRTs', p. 31.

An MOD official for instance noted that – while MOD civilians 'could simply hop onto a military vehicle' to get out of the base – the rigid security regulations applied to members of FCO and DFID required close protection in the form of at least two land-rovers and guards from a private security provider.[106] These perceptions were further fuelled by different housing standards applied to civilian and military officials within shared compounds. Recognising the constraint imposed on the mobility of civilian personnel by restrictive safety regulations, the US Departments of State and Defense signed an agreement in late 2006 that placed civilians who were co-located with US combat brigades in Iraq under the less restrictive security regulations of the DOD rather than those habitually applied to US embassy personnel.[107]

Even where security concerns were less of an issue – such as in Kabul and Baghdad or in relatively secure shared compounds in the field – large discrepancies in numbers between troops and civilian personnel posed a major challenge to coordination. The US embassy in Kabul, for instance, noted that 'on occasion, the disparity in size of military forces compared to civilian staff in a given location creates difficulties for those who are tasked to stretch their time to cover routine daily and weekly meetings in a military combat environment.'[108] This was echoed by a USAID officer who recalled that the sheer discrepancy in numbers and the pace at which information was generated by the commander's staff made it hard for the military to incorporate the few civilian advisers

[106] UK_39, 14 January 2010.
[107] See Robert M. Perito, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq,* USIP Peace Brief (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, February 2007).
[108] Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *SIGAR Audit 11-7 Contract performance and oversight/CERP,* Appendix III: comments from the US embassy in Kabul (Washington, DC: SIGAR, 27 January 2011), p. 6.

operating in the same province.[109] Confronted with the military's sophisticated planning machinery, civilian officials struggled to feed their expertise into the decision-making cycle in time to have an impact. A State Department official deemed it crucial to replicate the military's planning infrastructure at each level (from the district or province level to the regional command and main military headquarters) – 'even if this represents a waste of resources for the State Department.'[110] One of his colleagues insisted, 'if you are missing a civilian at one level there will be no civilian input to the plan ... if the structures are not fixed you can do all the training you want but the civilians will not be considered partners.'[111] Moreover, failure to keep up with the military's extensive meeting schedule not only meant that civilian expertise risked being sidelined or ignored but could generate negative impressions in the military community, which was culturally attuned to associate attendance with commitment and loyalty to the mission. As a Marine noted, 'once someone stopped showing up [at the daily planning meetings] they were marginalised ... there was a feeling that they no longer wanted to be involved.'[112]

'Money is ammunition': project funding and means of delivery

Many practitioners returning from Afghanistan and Iraq claimed to have witnessed a correlation between small-scale, local reconstruction projects and improvements in the local security situation. Oft-cited indicators thereof were the willingness of villagers to provide intelligence on the placement of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the decision by local parents to send their children to

[109] US_01, 30 August 2010.
[110] US_60, 10 December 2010.
[111] US_21, 5 October 2010.
[112] US_46, 4 November 2010.

school, or the reopening of local bazaars. An MOD civil servant noted, 'the effectiveness of these projects was demonstrated by the increase in the number of IEDs reported. It has worked time and again at a very low cost – a few hundred dollars to spare soldiers' lives.'[113] A British general testified before the British parliament in 2006 that these projects (initially termed 'quick impact projects' in the UK) were 'absolutely essential in terms of hearts and minds and force protection … they will make you friends and they allow you to have influence over the locals.'[114] Nathan Hodge's account of US stabilisation programmes in Iraq portrays a US Army reservist who, after spending roughly $1.6 million worth of emergency funds over the course of his six-month tour, eventually noted that 'attacks in the town were down to zero' as he handed over to his successor. Hodge notes, 'this approach was not about sustainable development or meeting the long-term needs of the population; it was about using money as a weapon.'[115]

USAID's activities at the provincial and district levels in Iraq and Afghanistan have often included job creation programmes, including so-called cash-for-work schemes.[116] Given the predominantly rural population in southern and eastern Afghanistan, these programmes were directed primarily at the agricultural sector.[117] A former USAID official described a USAID-funded programme in the district of Nawa (southern Afghanistan), which at its peak employed about half of the district's working age male population, as an immensely effective patronage system, which 'spurred an economic boom, and allowed the Marines to patrol

[113] UK_39, 14 January 2010.
[114] Major-General Andrew Stewart, British Army, oral evidence dated 23 March 2006, International Development Committee, *Conflict and development: peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction* (HC 2005-06, 923-II), p. 27.
[115] Hodge, *Armed humanitarians*, p. 116.
[116] In Iraq, USAID funded a program that explicitly focused on 'at-risk, unemployed males between the ages of 17 and 35.' See USAID, 'Assistance for Iraq: Community stabilization program, May 2006-August 2009' [electronic resource].
[117] US Congress, *Evaluating US foreign assistance to Afghanistan*, p. 10.

around the lush farmland relatively safely.'[118] According to a *Washington Post* report, the military regarded these schemes as a critical component of its COIN strategy, 'allowing the Americans to lure disaffected, unemployed young men away from Taliban recruiters.' [119] Concerns over the long-term sustainability of cash-for-work and agricultural schemes paid for by US funds – although present among USAID officials – were being overruled by the military's overwhelming presence on the ground.[120]

These projects came with an imperative for speed and 'efficiency' (viewed within a short-term perspective), which defied traditional development principles and challenged the templates and timeframes under which development agencies operated. A British parliamentary committee noted that DFID's practice of channelling funds through Afghan ministries (thereby responding to concerns over local ownership) rather than implementing projects directly would 'take away some of the direct and visible impact the military aim to achieve through these projects.'[121] A US Marine equally recalled that civilians in the field had often censored themselves from doing anything that did not put the host government in front, whereas the military was more inclined to say 'let's pressure them [local people] to do this – or let's do it for them.'[122] A senior Marine further recalled how civilian representatives felt uncomfortable about the Marines' approach in Afghanistan, which did not necessarily privilege government interlocutors but instead dealt with local strongmen if they were considered more

[118] Dempsey, 'The fallacy of COIN'.
[119] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, 'U.S. military dismayed by delays in 3 key development projects in Afghanistan', *Washington Post*, 28 April 2011.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Defence Committee, *The UK deployment to Afghanistan: government response to the committee's fifth report of session 2005–06* (HC 2005-06, 1211), para. 23.
[122] US_07, 10 September 2010.

effective.[123] Even where civilian agencies came around to working within shorter time-frames or applying unconventional methods of delivery, they often ran into bureaucratic strictures in the financing and implementation of projects.[124] Frustrations over the inability to respond to the expectations of both their local interlocutors and military counterparts were particularly pronounced among USAID employees, who struggled with their organisation's cumbersome bureaucracy in order to keep up with demands on the ground.[125] A number of British stabilisation advisers equally admitted that they had occasionally processed funding requests for small projects through the military's mechanisms for the sake of speed and flexibility rather than going through the standard processes.[126]

While frustration over bureaucratic red tape may have prompted civilian advisers to seek pragmatic – and from a development point of view less 'orthodox' – solutions to project funding on the ground, they remained wary of the large resources placed in the hands of the military for reconstruction and stabilisation purposes. Many civilian interviewees voiced concern over the military's enthusiasm for the idea of using cash as ammunition (a phrase famously used by US Army General David Petraeus) and the expectations raised thereby within local communities.[127] The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) in the United States has elicited a level of interest – both in terms of praise and

[123] US_12, 17 September 2010.
[124] See for example Ben Arnoldy, 'Afghanistan war: how USAID loses hearts and minds', *Christian Science Monitor* 28 July 2010.
[125] See for instance Amy Frumin, *Equipping USAID for success: a field perspective,* PCR project special briefing (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2009).
[126] UK_39, 14 January 2010; UK_41, 27 April 2010.
[127] US Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), Fort Leavenworth, *Commander's guide to money as a weapon system* (Handbook no. 09-27, April 2009); and General David H. Petraeus, US Army, 'COMISAF's counterinsurgency guidance', Kabul, Afghanistan, 1 August 2010.

criticism – far beyond similar debates in the United Kingdom over (considerably smaller) reconstruction funds spent by the British military.[128] CERP originated from a fragmentary order issued by the US military command in 2003, which authorized commanders to spend funds confiscated from Saddam Hussein's regime on reconstruction projects.[129] Baranick *et al.* argued that CERP funds in Iraq were initially 'under the control of manoeuvre commanders who often used them as "blood money" or bribes for actionable intelligence' and only later available to the Civil Affairs teams that manned most of the PRTs.[130] A State Department FSO described the effect of CERP funding in Iraq as 'creating a sugar high among the military,'[131] and a former USAID employee noted that the programme had become 'the U.S. military's de-facto development mechanism.'[132] One British military officer interviewed noted with envy how his US counterparts on the ground were 'simply handing out cash.'[133]

Criticism voiced by another British military officer, however, suggested that the controversy over using money as a weapon did not exclusively or automatically pitch civilian development officials against military commanders on the ground. In his eyes, USAID and the US military – through their respective programmes – were 'equally guilty at throwing money at the problem,' which in reality required a better understanding of the links between security and governance in order to

[128] CERP funds appropriated by the US Congress for Afghanistan since 2004 amounted to $2.64 billion in early 2011. Office of the Special Inspector General Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *Commander's Emergency Response Program in Laghman province provided some benefits but oversight weaknesses and sustainment concerns led to questionable outcomes and potential waste* (Audit 11-7 Contract performance and oversight/CERP, 2011).
[129] Hodge, *Armed humanitarians*, p. 106. See further Rebecca Patterson and Jonathan Robinson, 'The commander as investor: changing CERP practices', *PRISM* 2/2 (2011).
[130] Baranick, Holshek, and Wentz, 'Civil Affairs at crossroads', p. 39.
[131] US_55, 30 November 2010.
[132] Scott Dempsey, 'Is spending the strategy?' *Small Wars Journal*, 4 May 2011.
[133] UK_11, 19 February 2008.

target spending wisely – 'not just buying your way to victory.'[134] A growing number of reports are indeed suggesting that USAID may have channelled too much – rather than too little – funding into stability operations in Afghanistan over the past few years. This is deemed to have fuelled fraud and corruption and distorted local incentive structures.[135] Security constraints had at times prompted USAID's commercial implementing partners to concentrate their activities on a few (safer) districts, 'flooding them with cash and supplies,' in order to fulfil their contracts in the set timeframe.[136] A report by the Senate Foreign Relations committee noted that roughly 77 per cent of USAID's total resources for fiscal year 2009-10 were being spent in southern and eastern Afghanistan on short-term stabilisation – in accordance with the counterinsurgency model followed by the US military deployed in these areas – rather than longer term development projects.[137] The report further noted that the logic of annual budget cycles followed by Congress subordinated longer-term thinking to the shorter-term military strategy in Afghanistan, and thereby risked creating 'perverse incentives to spend money even when the conditions are not right.'[138]

'Let's not call it development': time-frames and objectives

The military's rotation cycles (six to nine months for British troops and nine to twelve months for US soldiers and Marines) have often been highlighted as problematic in the conduct of stability operations as they are held to induce a short-term mindset that clashes with the considerably longer timeframes indicated

[134] UK_50, 14 April 2011.
[135] US Congress, *Evaluating US foreign assistance to Afghanistan*, p. 12.
[136] Chandrasekaran, 'US military dismayed by delays'.
[137] US Congress, *Evaluating US foreign assistance to Afghanistan*, p. 8.
[138] Ibid., p. 14.

by governance and development related activities.[139] According to a British Army officer, any progress in terms of stabilisation likely to occur within a six-month rotation was bound to look like no more than 'baby steps' to the commanding officer, who would 'of course...want five or six achievements like that.'[140] Yet a former USAID employee contended that the military's attitude had evolved over time, as an increasing number of units went on their second and third tours in Afghanistan or Iraq and no longer conceptualised progress in the narrow time horizon of a single deployment.[141] Hence, the stereotypical clash between development experts clinging to twenty-five-year timeframes and military commanders bent on using 'money as ammunition' to win local hearts and minds has given way to a more informed debate among military and civilian professionals over the reconciliation of short- and longer-term objectives. A British Army officer noted that the military was sometimes looking for 'quick wins' that served the commander's aim of protecting the troops ('but let's not call this development') and argued that there were ways to enable this by reaching out to the local community 'in a way that supports long-term objectives.'[142] Civilian practitioners tended to downplay the force protection dimension of these projects (without denying it) by equating the military presence with the outreach and legitimacy of the host government. One FCO official, for instance, argued that it was widely understood among civilian practitioners that some kind of immediate benefit associated with the military presence had to be demonstrated to the local community (e.g. by clearing the rubbish or re-opening the market). 'But this is not

[139] E.g. Anthony King, 'A six-month command is not the way to beat the Taliban', *Parliamentary Brief*, 5 March 2011.
[140] UK_14, 28 February 2008.
[141] US_63, 24 February 2011.
[142] UK_15, 28 February 2008.

in the sense of consent-winning. We are trying to win support for the government, not for external troops.'[143]

Among practitioners on the ground it has become commonplace to note that stabilisation projects do not constitute development in a purist understanding. In the British case, this rendered DFID's engagement difficult, as a military officer noted with regard to his tour in Helmand in 2007-08: 'DFID were only talking development – that is their business. But we had a requirement to talk governance and stabilisation, and therefore there wasn't really a huge part to play for DFID in that.'[144] As Stuart Gordon observes, DFID's belief that there was no place for development where bullets were flying led its Afghanistan office to leave the ground to other agencies – such as the FCO (on rule of law, justice, and governance) and the newly created Stabilisation Unit.[145] Practitioners have come to associate stabilisation with a logic that is different from 'proper' development because of security concerns, low levels of host government capacity, and the priorities implied by a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency. Accounts by practitioners emphasize a difference not only in degree but also in kind between 'serious' development (as a decidedly civilian endeavour) on the one hand, and a hybrid (civilian-military) set of tasks prompted by the imperative of establishing stability in a volatile operating environment on the other. A British stabilisation officer noted, 'we talked about "stabilisation" in [a district in southern Afghanistan] – not "development". At times, I was the health service of this district, walking around with a bag full of medicine. That is not development

[143] UK_52, 5 May 2011.
[144] UK_14, 28 February 2008.
[145] Gordon, 'The UK's stabilisation model', p. 374.

but bottom-level service provision.'[146] Retired Marine Colonel Gary Anderson contends that '*serious* reconstruction should be civilian business or a civil-military partnership, but we need to remember to let the soldiers be soldiers, or Marines, if that be the case. They are preparing the ground for your work.'[147] The second part of Anderson's statement reflects an argument that has become popular in the policy discourse, namely that the two approaches are not incompatible but – if properly managed – may build on each other.

Other comments by interviewees suggested that this middle-way perhaps papered over a number of persistent divisions between professional communities rather than reconciling them. A USAID official noted that – while the military increasingly understood that development projects had to evolve over time and 'that this is not a "ticking the box" exercise' – 'it does not mean they like the implications of this understanding.'[148] A civilian MOD official argued that 'handing out cash by the military is not conflicting with stabilisation aims as long as it is supported by strong intelligence. What needs to be understood is that this will not change anything in the long term.'[149] Yet many civilian practitioners remain suspicious of the military's involvement in stabilisation precisely because they fear that the military's limited understanding of complex political and socio-economic dynamics on the ground leads its actions to empower the 'wrong' stakeholders, usurp governance processes, or exacerbate existing grievances

[146] UK_55, 11 May 2011.
[147] Gary Anderson, 'The closers (part II): civilians in the clear phase of a counterinsurgency', *Small Wars Journal*, 8 February 2011, 7.
[148] US_45, 3 November 2010.
[149] UK_38, 13 January 2010.

among local communities.[150] A former USAID employee recalled, 'Afghan contractors have easily exploited commanders, flush with cash, and little institutional or cultural knowledge. This lack of information has ... result[ed] in the commander overpaying and distorted local economies.'[151] A British stabilisation officer further noted that assessment tools used by military units (such as the TCAF developed by USAID) only provided generic answers, which required further interpretation. If local villagers said their biggest concern was education, for instance, this could point to either a lack of infrastructure, a security risk to teachers, or cultural objections to the co-education of boys and girls. 'Your average soldier has no experience with this' this official argued.[152]

Some practitioners questioned whether *any* outside actor – civilian or military – could pretend to sufficiently understand local dynamics in order to engage in socio-economic and political engineering. In a scathing review of alleged stabilisation success stories in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, a former USAID officer notes, 'the turnover of diplomats and military have created a culture where short-term urgency trumps long-term vision ... Diplomats and military commanders alike have played "whack-a-mole" with their resources, with an urge to quantify accomplishments, thinking that funds can immediately correct deep-seated, long-term problems.'[153] Calls for a more robust civilian presence on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, however, are generally based on the assumption that local knowledge is more readily accessible to development and

[150] Stuart Gordon, 'Exploring the civil-military interface and its impact on European strategic and operational personalities: 'civilianisation' and limiting military roles in stabilisation operations?' *European Security* 15/3 (2006), p. 347.
[151] Dempsey, 'Is spending the strategy?'.
[152] UK_41, 27 April 2010.
[153] Dempsey, 'Is spending the strategy?'.

'stabilisation' experts than to the military – a view that has arguably been fuelled by the official discourse of development agencies (in particular USAID), which portrays development as a scientific, targeted and measureable intervention.

'More arrows in the battle space commander's quiver': expertise and competences

Frequent changeover of both civilian and military personnel on the ground made it difficult to build effective working relationships among representatives of different agencies on the basis of mutual understanding of roles and competences. In the eyes of officials with a longer-standing presence in the field – whether civilian or military – this could make cooperation look like a Sisyphean task. The former British Ambassador to Kabul, for instance, argued that each brigadier he had interacted with claimed to have understood the 'Comprehensive Approach' and pledged to cooperate with DFID and the FCO. However, 'each brigadier would launch one kinetic operation, before returning with his brigade to Britain after the best six months of his professional life. And then the whole cycle would start again.'[154] It was also noted by several interviewees that the comparably longer assignments served by civilian officials (twelve to twenty-four months) did not automatically translate into a more consistent presence on the ground. In reality, these longer assignments were frequently interrupted by compensation leave and prolonged gaps between replacements.

When asked about the rationale for having civilian government agencies in theatre, military interviewees almost unanimously pointed to the specialist expertise that these agencies were said to bring to the campaign. A US Marine

[154] Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, Supplementary written evidence dated 23 December 2010, Ev. 85.

described civilian advisers as 'more arrows in the quiver of the battle space commander' but noted that using these arrows effectively required a good understanding of what civilians were able to do.[155] Civilian expertise is often associated with a fairly generic understanding of 'governance' and rule of law, and – in the case of development agencies – with technical and sector-specific expertise such as health, education, or agriculture.[156] A US Marine noted that soldiers and Marines were generally at a loss of what to look for in terms of non-combat related activities at the tactical level and thus keen 'to bring the experts in.' In his view, 'the military don't understand economics, emerging democracies, or rural development – I mean*, that is what the civilians do*.'[157] Widespread frustration over the lack of civilian capacity on the ground has not prevented the military from cultivating fairly high expectations as to what the civilian agencies would be able to bring to the table – if only they showed up. A senior State Department official noted that 'the interagency' had become a sort of talisman among the military and 'I don't think they know what it means or what they get.'[158] A civilian stabilisation adviser argued that the US COIN manual (FM 3-24) had conditioned the military to think about 'delivering governance' in a technocratic way by suggesting that districts could be 'mapped' in order to 'tick off the boxes' by building schools, justice systems, and roads.[159] The same official recalled being told by a military commander that there would be 'a window of three weeks to deliver governance' in the wake of a military operation in a district

[155] US_12, 17 September 2010.
[156] US_27, 13 October 2010.
[157] US_46, 4 November 2010.
[158] US_27, 13 October 2010.
[159] UK_49, 27 January 2011.

in Afghanistan – a suggestion that looked wildly unrealistic, if not naive, from this practitioner's point of view. [160]

Many interviewees who had served as civilian advisers on the ground recalled that one of their primary concerns had been to keep military units from pressing forward in situations where they felt it was preferable to wait or do nothing – thereby acting as a counterweight to the military's perceived (hyper-)activism. A British senior civil servant noted that 'in combat, any decision is better than no decision, but in stabilisation, on the balance, not taking a decision is the safer bet.'[161] This feeling was shared by a USAID officer who felt that the military 'sprinted through their tours' whereas his job required him to focus on long-term consequences.[162] A US foreign service officer described this task as 'shifting the military mindset from focusing on the next hill to looking at the next mountain range.'[163] This would occasionally require persuading the commanding officer to hold off an operation in spite of available logistical capacity or perceived necessity. For example, a State Department representative explained that holding a *shura* [the term used for local council meetings in Afghanistan] made little sense as long as only few of the village elders were willing to attend. In his view, giving the other stakeholders some time to come forward reduced the risk of fuelling local tensions or creating new power imbalances.[164] Both British and American stabilisation advisers thus described their role in the field in terms of 'harnessing

[160] Ibid.
[161] UK_51, 5 May 2011.
[162] US_01, 30 August 2010.
[163] US_55, 30 November 2010.
[164] US_08, 14 September 2010.

the military's energy into the correct outcomes' and focusing the military's 'can do' attitude onto activities that guaranteed local buy-in and ownership.[165]

Making their professional expertise valued by military commanders, however, was not an easy task for the civilians deployed on the ground. The broad range of tasks subsumed within the notion of stabilisation meant that there was little agreement on the professional profile required to pursue it. In the words of one US Marine, if as a civilian 'you were there to joyride and take it for granted that you're a valuable person, you will fail.'[166] A State Department representative felt that the mentoring of local leaders was the most underrated role performed by civilian advisers.[167] Another FSO noted that the military also tended to underestimate the impact that diplomatic cables could have on the formulation of policy within the home bureaucracy. He further felt that it was important that a civilian official represented the voice of the US government to local interlocutors on the ground.[168] The oft-heard criticism that diplomats primarily work for a reporting agency with little expeditionary or operational expertise was contested by several interviewees. They contended that many tasks in the field required the exercise of traditional diplomatic statecraft at the district or provincial level (e.g. outreach, engagement, reporting). Yet as one of them acknowledged, 'things get tricky when it comes to building governance' and where programming skills were required in addition to political engagement.[169]

[165] US_01, 30 August 2010; US_08, 14 September 2010; US_63, 24 February 2011; UK_41, 27 April 2010.
[166] US_46, 4 November 2010.
[167] US_08, 14 September 2010.
[168] US_55, 30 November 2010.
[169] US_08, 14 September 2010.

In comparison to their diplomatic colleagues, development, agricultural, and stabilisation advisers benefitted to some extent from sector-specific and thus more readily identifiable professional profiles. Their technical expertise (e.g. in education or farming) helped to clarify their role on the ground and provided a more straightforward rationale for their presence in the eyes of the military. It was further noted by several US practitioners that the State Department representative at the provincial or district level in Afghanistan tended to be perceived by the military as the 'odd one out' compared to his or her USAID counterpart, who controlled comparably greater resources.[170] A senior British military officer equally contended that 'the civilian in the meeting gets respect because – and if – he or she has money to bring to the table, not simply because they are civilians.'[171]

In the absence of clearly defined spheres of expertise, experience was often rated higher than particular professional skills or knowledge. A British military officer for instance felt that there was 'a bit of a misunderstanding in Whitehall of what we are looking for ... essentially it is civil skills but there is no reason why civil skills shouldn't be lodged in military officers who got the right sort of experience.'[172] Another British military officer argued that governance was 'everybody's business' in a stability operation, and added 'I am as capable of putting on a suit and conduct diplomacy as a bloke from the Foreign Office.'[173] A State Department official observed that, 'if you start stacking up your average [Army] Captain who has been in Afghanistan for his third tour against a [State

[170] US_07, 10 September 2010; US_43, 28 October 2010.
[171] UK_50, 14 April 2011.
[172] UK_11, 19 February 2008.
[173] UK_50, 14 April 2011.

Department] FSO who cut his teeth against arms control policy in Europe, who is now on his first tour in Afghanistan, and is not allowed to get out and talk to people because of security restrictions, that Captain in the Army is going to look like a hell of a lot better stability operations officer and "warrior-diplomat".'[174]

Even in cases where civilian expertise was explicitly sought by the military commander, it could be difficult for political or development experts to provide 'useful' advice. A former USAID employee recalled a conversation with the commanding officer who wanted to know whether the local police chief was 'green, amber, or red'. While he was sufficiently immersed in military terminology by that time to understand the commander's question whether the police chief was to be considered friendly, ambivalent, or hostile, the civilian adviser nevertheless struggled to give a satisfactory answer. From the point of view of a stabilisation adviser, the police chief was 'a bit of everything' depending on the circumstances and thus defied the military's Manichean categorization.[175] A British stabilisation adviser equally pointed out that local stakeholders often played multiple roles, which made the difficult task of persuading the military to show restraint and discretion in the targeting or arrest of certain individuals because of the potential political consequences all the more crucial.[176]

[174] US_27, 13 October 2010.
[175] US_01, 30 August 2010.
[176] UK_55, 11 May 2011.

4. Evaluation: material, procedural and cultural obstacles at the operational level

The material layer

The foregoing discussion has illustrated a range of material obstacles to civilian military coordination at the operational and tactical levels. These include the lack of compatible and secure communication equipment, and insufficient transport and protection arrangements. Some equipment shortages have been addressed over time but nevertheless continue to strain relations among actors on the ground in both case studies. The limited capacity of civilian staff to gather information and build relationships outside secure compounds and embassy walls have raised legitimate questions among military units regarding the value added by these so-called experts. Civilian advisers in turn have been critical of the military's ability to provide a sufficiently stable security envelope for local governance and development efforts to take root.

Interviews with practitioners further revealed that it was sometimes not a lack of capacity or equipment that posed an obstacle to coordination but perceptions associated with the use of resources. It was noted by both British and American practitioners, for instance, that the use of secure communication equipment may be as much a question of habit as of technical availability. The comment of a civilian MOD official who suspected that some members of the FCO had insisted on using land rovers and private security for reasons of 'status' (rather than out of necessity) is telling in terms of the interplay between resources and perceptions.[177] A British civilian adviser suspected that the outcry over the lack of space

[177] UK_39, 14 January 2010.

available on helicopter flights by some of his colleagues was sometimes more of a 'symbolic complaint about being controlled' [by being dependent on the military's schedule] rather than an indicator for the necessity of such flights in order to get the job done.[178]

Interestingly, practitioners with operational experience often displayed a pragmatic attitude with regard to the imbalance in capacity on the ground. A State Department FSO, for instance, argued that 'the military complaining about civilian underperformance is beating a dead horse – good officers recognise the challenge and work with it.'[179] This view was echoed by a British military officer who felt that the military should learn to work with (or around) the restrictions their civilian counterparts were operating under and that any changes to the latter 'should come from the civilian agencies themselves, not from the military.'[180] There was further a tendency among practitioners to downplay the importance of numbers, which stands in contrast to the calls for 'civilian surges' and more 'deployable civilian experts' in the official discourse of both governments. A Civil Affairs officer argued, for instance, that the civilian contribution was 'not a volume business' and that there was no need for a 'platoon of development experts' but instead for skilled individuals who were able to develop meaningful relationships with local interlocutors.[181] A senior British official equally argued that civilian surges were a flawed solution: 'you don't need battalions of civilians ... because the ultimate objective is building local capacity.'[182] This was echoed by a former USAID employee who argued that three hundred more civilians

[178] UK_55, 11 May 2011.
[179] US_08, 14 September 2010.
[180] UK_47, 1 July 2010.
[181] US_09, 15 September 2010.
[182] UK_51, 5 May 2011.

would only provide 'more bodies but not more expertise.'[183] However, as the foregoing account has illustrated, stark discrepancies in numbers could pose a challenge to civilian-military coordination in terms of ensuring that the civilian voice was heard in an environment so clearly dominated by the military. Consequently, to some extent the objective of pursuing an integrated civilian-military approach to stabilisation and the overarching goal of creating stability on the ground did not automatically call for the same type of civilian footprint.

The bureaucratic layer

Different regulations and SOPs governing the allocation of resources and modes of operation on the ground have led to friction among representatives of different agencies. In both case studies, the civilian contribution has been hampered by SOPs (e.g. safety regulations and project templates) that were oriented towards a predominantly safe and benign operational environment. This led to perceptions that the deployment of civilian advisers was costly and cumbersome and that civilians were unable to contribute to the stabilisation effort in a timely and efficient manner. While the advantages of the military's more rapid and flexible disbursement mechanisms were recognized by civilian practitioners, unease remained over the longer-term implications of the projects implemented thereby.

Agency-specific SOPs, as well as organisations' parochial interests, were further seen as disrupting a sense of unity that was held to emerge otherwise on the ground. A British civil servant, for instance, noted that 'there are some fantastic individuals who really get all this really well, but it is difficult organizationally for

[183] US_63, 24 February 2011.

them to share it.'[184] A British stabilisation adviser described the different legal and administrative frameworks governing transport, security, leave, reporting etc. as 'imposed tensions' flowing from the bureaucracy at home to the field. He added that – while deployed individuals may have well considered themselves part of a common endeavour on the ground – they still reported to their parent institution back home.[185] Many practitioners who had served on the ground placed greater faith in *ad hoc*, innovative, and flexible solutions worked out in the field than in the interagency processes at the institutional level. A British military officer for instance recalled that in the early days of the war in Afghanistan, 'there was nothing happening back in London to tell me and [his colleague from DFID] how to cooperate – we simply realised that we achieved much more by working together and sharing information that we gathered.' He added regretfully that eventually 'the London bureaucracy arrived and all the sudden you had to fill out a 26-page project application form to get money for something.'[186]

Practitioners described a sense of unity that emerged in the particular context of a deployment as individuals let go of 'agency hats' and focused on pragmatic solutions to the problems they encountered on a daily basis. This preference for pragmatism at the implementation level stood in contrast to deeper-seated controversies over ways and means at higher levels within the institutional architecture. Pushing for rapid implementation, for instance, could greatly enhance the standing of civilian development advisors in the eyes of their military counterparts. At the same time, it required ignoring the principles and values cultivated by their home institution, such as local ownership and sustainability.

[184] UK_09, 18 February 2008.
[185] UK_44, 26 May 2011.
[186] UK_12, 20 February 2008.

Claiming greater independence from the home bureaucracy could mean that officials were considered as having gone 'rogue' or 'native' by their own institution. A US Marine recalled that the USAID and State Department officials he had worked with in the field 'constantly had to ask for permission from Kabul or Washington,' which in his view greatly reduced their effectiveness.[187] An MOD official who had worked in Afghanistan noted that in order to go out and talk to the locals, civilian stabilisation advisers basically had to breach the FCO's duty of care regulations, which 'some wanted to do, and others did not.'[188] A US FSO, who had been highly valued by his military counterparts (as other interviews revealed) described his last assignment in Afghanistan as being 'one step away from subordination.'[189]

The cultural layer

Reflecting the observations made in the previous layer, certain cultural divisions that are evident at the institutional level tend to blur in the context of operations. In many cases, it is difficult to strictly label practitioners who have been deployed in stability operations as either 'civilian' or 'military'. Many of them have worn multiple hats in their career, combining previous military experience with a civil servant background or – in the case of reservists – bringing substantial 'civilian' experience from ordinary day jobs to the field in a military outfit. A remarkable number of interviewees, who had deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan as 'civilians', had prior experience of serving in the armed forces. There were numerous instances where a military interviewee remarked in passing that the shared

[187] US_07, 10 September 2010.
[188] UK_39, 14 January 2010.
[189] US_55, 30 November 2010.

experience of serving in the force (however fleeting) had made it easier to find common ground with a 'civilian' counterpart.

Beneath the veneer of shared operational concerns, however, practitioners' accounts have revealed clashes of deep-seated understandings of what it takes to lead, to be effective, and to show commitment within different organisations. Military units engaged in stabilisation efforts have found it difficult to accept that 'doing nothing' was sometimes the best course of action and that 'achievement' would often look partial and incomplete in their eyes. Several interviewees argued that a quick solution was preferable to 'no solution' under any given circumstances. A British Army officer further observed that it was bred into every military officer from the start that 'a wrong decision now is better than a right decision too late.'[190] Planning for the long-term was deemed of little use if it meant that nothing got done in the short-term. As a retired senior US Army officer noted, 'if fifty out of a hundred schools that we built are operating a year later, we have tried at least.'[191] The stereotypical military 'can do' culture is often quoted to explain the military's gravitation towards a 'vacuum' purportedly left by the absence or inaction of its civilian counterparts. A US reservist further observed that the combination of short, intermittent combat engagements and long periods of garrisoning that has characterized deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan posed a challenge for the morale of troops. 'The military want to get out as soon as they are done, *or find other things to do*. A bunch of eighteen- to twenty-year olds sitting around idle is not good.'[192] A British military officer's statement echoed

[190] UK_22, 3 April 2008.
[191] US_50, 18 November 2010.
[192] US_33, 19 October 2010. Emphasis added.

this observation: 'When military forces on the ground run out of people they can fight they will stray into reconstruction and relief because they see the need.'[193]

From a civilian perspective, the military's activism could seem misplaced, or even naive, given the magnitude of the challenges involved in stabilising a country. As a British civil servant noted with some disbelief, 'there was a real sense on the military side that "we can just get on and do this," whereas, in reality, seven thousand troops stuck in Helmand are not going to sort out the problems of Afghanistan.'[194] Although the vast majority of civilian officials interviewed for this thesis held their military colleagues in high regard, many of them recounted struggling in one way or another with the dynamism and delivery-oriented focus that characterised interactions with the military. Civilian advisers on the ground thus often found themselves challenged to prove their worth in an environment shaped by the dominant military presence. A British Army officer, for instance, exclaimed 'the worst [civilians] are those who are present but not delivering. They are undermining the effectiveness of their organisation.'[195] In the context of a 'can do' culture, restraint or caution urged by civilian experts risked being interpreted as signs of a lack of initiative or commitment. A US Marine noted that 'leadership 101 in the military is that if you bring up a problem and you do not have a solution, it is not a legitimate problem ... We are all told in our education not to be that person.'[196] The concern of an FCO civil servant that civilians were constantly running the risk of looking like they were saying 'no' to anything by default confirms this clash of cultures. 'If you say "no" too many times, [the military] will

[193] UK_01, 1 November 2007.
[194] UK_08, 18 February 2008.
[195] UK_47, 1 July 2010.
[196] US_46, 4 November 2010.

just go on and do their thing,' this official explained, and added that it was extremely difficult to play the 'check function' to the military in a culture that favoured activism.[197]

Being valued as 'effective' partners by their military counterparts was widely considered a prerequisite for civilian advisers to have any influence on decisions taken in the field. Yet, as one civilian expert noted, it was crucial for civilian advisers to provide a different, and sometimes contrary, perspective to the military 'because this is the only advantage you can bring to them.'[198] Doing their job thus required civilians to find a balance between these competing agendas. According to the aforementioned official, it was just as crucial to 'learn how to respect the military, the way they do things, and to be open to be influenced by them to some degree.'[199] A former State Department representative noted that it was tempting for a lone civilian adviser deployed with a large military contingent to 'go native' in order to maintain good relationships, but equally underlined the importance of retaining some degree of distance and professional independence.[200]

Connecting the layers

The foregoing analysis suggested that tensions among representatives of different agencies on the ground arise from a combination of material, bureaucratic and cultural factors. These touch on mobility, funding mechanisms, timelines, modalities of delivery, and priorities – but also on deeper-seated understandings

[197] UK_52, 5 May 2011.
[198] UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[199] Ibid.
[200] US_55, 30 November 2010.

of effectiveness and a lack of consensus over the expertise required in the conduct of stability operations.

As previously stated, the different layers overlap in some aspects. The military's logistical, financial, and human resources favour an approach that is based on trial and error rather than lengthy evaluation. To some extent, the military's activism is enabled by its logistical infrastructure, which allows it to decide swiftly on a course of action, wait for a reaction, and manage the consequences by making necessary adjustments later on. This material reality translates into a cultural aversion to 'sitting around idle' and makes restraint, inaction, or indirect means of seeking influence hard to square with the notion of 'soldiering' that has been at the core of military training and education, and informs military SOPs and performance evaluations.

For civilian practitioners, the desire to be effective on the ground – or at least be perceived as such – could enter into tension not only with bureaucratic regulations but also with expectations and values cultivated within their home institution (and to some extent within larger professional community it represented). Civilian organisations tend to spend more time on assessment and project design as their funding is often rigidly tied to timeframes and conditional upon so-called earmarks identified by donors or Congress. It is thus much harder for them to shift resources between projects or change course halfway through. Limited manpower makes it more difficult for civilian agencies to show commitment through participation in meetings within the military's 'battle rhythm', which they may furthermore not identify as a priority. Safety regulations and cumbersome project

funding mechanisms not only slow the civilian contribution down but also prevent officials from executing their role in a highly visible manner. Moreover, they may not strive for an overly 'executive' role because one of their main objectives is to promote the accountability and capacity of local stakeholders. In the context of interagency relations, cultural attributes do not naturally point to a strong executive or leadership role either. As one State Department official noted, 'as diplomats, it is in our nature to be accommodating, negotiating and consensus-seeking. We are actually more comfortable *just being the adviser*.'[201] The table on the next page summarizes the observations drawn from different layers of the framework:

Table 4: Implementation

	Defence	Development	Diplomacy
Competences valued	Proactive, decisive, taking charge	Proactive, sensitive to local partners' needs	Reactive, flexible, accommodating
Outcomes valued	Tangible, visible impact; action trumps inaction	Tangible, but indirect (local capacity)	Often intangible; influence trumps action
Immediate concerns	Protection of troops, 'bring the boys home'	Spend allocated funding in given timeframe	Fulfil reporting requirements
Time frames	Transitioning as soon as possible	Transitioning over medium/long term	Establishing durable relations
Predominant approach	Direct; manpower- and resource-intensive	Indirect (contracting); focus on institutions and systems	Reactive (observing); focus on key individuals
Method	Trial and error; flexible due to logistics	Assessment and evaluation; rigid due to funding	No formal method
Resources	Large expeditionary capacity	Limited expeditionary capacity	No expeditionary capacity outside capitals

[201] US_60, 10 December 2010.

Hence, what it means to be 'effective' on the ground is by no means merely an objective assessment of material capacity and the legal procedures governing its use. In practice, it is equally conditioned by a set of values and beliefs that are inculcated and reconfirmed through social interaction within different organisations. As several interviewees noted, their engagement in stabilisation missions had little to do with defence, development or diplomacy in a traditional sense. It forced them to reconcile values and principles held within the professional communities they belonged to with the desire to contribute to tangible improvement on the ground.

5. Chapter conclusion

The chapter has synthesized empirical evidence from two case studies – the United States and the United Kingdom – on obstacles to interagency coordination in the preparation for and conduct of stability operations. As the previous chapters have illustrated, the British and American governments differ in terms of overall capacity and funding available for stability operations. However, there are considerable commonalities among the two cases in terms of obstacles to coordination both within the institutional context and on the ground. At the institutional level, British and American government agencies alike have found it difficult to align different approaches to planning and human resources management within a joint approach. On the ground, different objectives, priorities, and methods of implementation proved challenging to reconcile both without formal command arrangements and with uncertainty over roles and competences among military and civilian actors.

The evaluation of obstacles within the three-layer framework outlined in the beginning of the thesis has revealed the multifaceted nature of the problem of interagency coordination, which defies single-factor explanations or solutions. The analysis presented in this chapter thus suggests that addressing obstacles to coordination is not merely a question of designing joint organisational mechanisms or providing more resources. Rather, it is important to view obstacles to the coordination of civilian and military contributions to stability operations in connection with the support structure at the institutional level. At the same time, the analysis has shown that dynamics among agencies and their representatives can change considerably between these levels. There are understandable reasons for practitioners to focus on the joint implementation of stabilisation projects rather than second-guessing each other's motives or letting ideological differences get in the way. There are few signs, however, that the temporary unity of effort that emerges within a shared desire to see improvement on the ground travels back easily to the home bureaucracy, where agency divides are deeper and incentives for coordination lower. The next chapter will evaluate the mechanisms and forums that exist for the promotion of interagency coordination at different levels and examine to what extent these mechanisms have mitigated some of the obstacles described in this chapter – or why they failed to do so.

VI INSTITUTIONAL REMEDIES

The discussion of obstacles to coordination in the previous chapter raises the question of how to overcome them, or at least mitigate the constraints they place on the collaborative efforts of different agencies. This chapter offers a comparative analysis of mechanisms and measures for the coordination of defence, diplomacy and development in the United States and the United Kingdom. It has been suggested throughout the thesis that the coordination problem is not simply a matter of resources. It is thus unlikely to be resolved by increases in capacity alone, or, as several interviewees put it, 'by throwing more money and people at it.' This chapter asks what solutions existing mechanisms for interagency coordination have offered to address material, bureaucratic and cultural constraints on a whole-of-government effort. Some of the institutional mechanisms discussed in this chapter have specifically emerged in the context of post-911 stability operations and in response to perceived shortcomings in their conduct. Others have been part of the government architecture as tried and tested coordination mechanisms in other areas prior to the advent of stability operations. Some mechanisms function primarily as platforms or forums for different agencies to come together, while others have taken the form of independent institutional entities with a distinct identity and emerging organisational culture.

Coordination mechanisms are usually introduced with the objective to harmonize different approaches, and thereby almost inevitably call for change, or at least

adaptation, of established ways of doing business within the government bureaucracy. In this, they confront a number of dilemmas. First, de-centralized and non-intrusive mechanisms run the danger of simply mirroring the rifts within the interagency community they are meant to serve by reproducing them at a different level. Centralizing and empowering a new mechanism, on the other hand, makes it more likely to provoke stiff resistance and non-cooperative behaviour among established players, who see their respective agendas threatened. Second, joint decision-making requires scope for consensus and buy-in from different actors but thereby risks leading to a diffusion of authority and accountability. In turn, implementation and delivery suffer from the absence of top-down direction and leadership. Third, the complexity and urgency of a crisis intervention calls for issue-specific mechanisms that are costly to maintain during the status quo. If these mechanisms are viewed as merely temporary by established institutional actors, however, incentives to invest in coordination or adapt longstanding practices remain low.

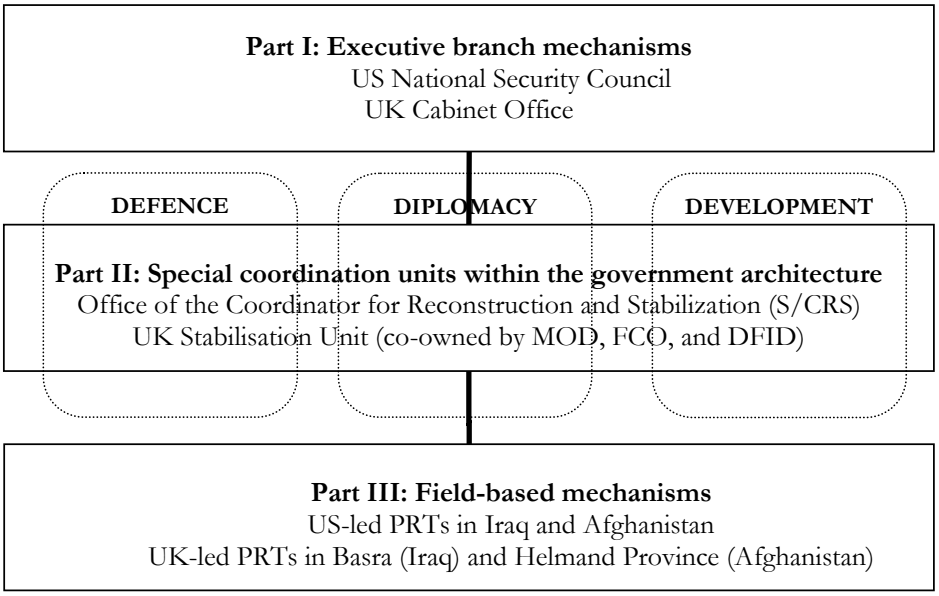
The challenge of addressing policy issues that cut across departmental boundaries within a government structure, which is functionally divided into specialized agencies that each have their own mandate and resources, is not unique to the twenty-first century, or indeed to the conduct of stability operations. The above-mentioned dilemmas can be found in complaints about the workings of both the American and the British government apparatuses that reach far back in their history. More recent examples in both case studies further illustrate a desire to coordinate action across departmental boundaries in a variety of issue areas. In the United Kingdom, the Blair government announced an ambitious strategy for

'joined-up government' in the late 1990s to tackle public sector reform.[1] In the United States, recent attempts to improve interagency coordination include the quest for centralization within the intelligence apparatus after 9/11, and the reform of the disaster relief system after hurricane Katrina.[2] The generic difficulties of cross-departmental coordination are thus well recognised and will not be further elaborated on. It is useful, however, to highlight the different functions that the mechanisms introduced to coordinate efforts among the 'three Ds' have been expected to fulfil.

While insufficient coordination is often attributed in the first place to the failure of communication across agency lines, experience has shown that joint deliberation and information sharing alone do not lead to a unified effort in stability operations.[3] Additional requirements highlighted in policy and scholarly analyses include the definition of command relationships and hierarchies; the design of processes for the integration of different visions; and the identification of ways and means to compel agencies to commit to and invest in a joint endeavour. Hence, coordination mechanisms are at once expected to facilitate a range of processes and to fulfil additional functions that are missing in the institutional architecture. The elaboration of joint civilian-military plans and policy guidance requires forums for joint deliberation and arrangements for joint decision-making and resource allocation. Capacity for stability operations furthermore often resides

[1] See for instance Tim Clark, 'New Labour's big idea: joined-up government', *Social Policy and Society* 1/02 (2002); Gordon, 'Defence policy'; Dennis Kavanagh and David Richards, 'Departmentalism and joined-up government', *Parliamentary Affairs* 54/1 (2001).
[2] Richard K. Betts, 'The new politics of intelligence: will reform work this time?' *Foreign Affairs* 83/3 (2004); United States Government Accountability Office, *Actions taken to implement the post-Katrina emergency management reform act of 2006,* GAO-09-59R (Washington, DC: GAO, 21 November 2008); Amy B. Zegart, 'September 11 and the adaptation failure of U.S. intelligence agencies', *International Security* 29/4 (2005).
[3] See Lamb, 'Redesigning', p. 55.

in separate 'stove-pipes' within the government, which leads to a demand for mechanisms to pool expertise and funding. Additional capacity may have to be created and transaction costs arising from joint action managed. Agreeing on a division of labour among different government agencies requires a framework for acculturation, mutual learning and the building of trust. Finally, the implementation of stabilisation activities requires mechanisms for oversight and evaluation, and arguably produces a number of lessons that should ideally be captured and fed back into plans, doctrine or policy, and training. It seems illusory to expect a single mechanism to cover all of these functions. Unsurprisingly, the quest for interagency coordination has sparked initiatives at different levels and led to the institutionalization of a variety of mechanisms. They will be reviewed in this chapter as illustrated in the diagram below.



The chapter is thus divided into three distinct parts. The first part briefly evaluates executive-branch coordination mechanisms in order to illustrate why a demand for additional coordination tools has arisen both within the institutional architecture (in the form of specialised units) and in the theatre of operations. Parts two and

three each start with a brief survey of the respective mechanisms created in the United States and the United Kingdom. Different factors affecting the functioning of each mechanism or unit in the two empirical cases are then discussed in a comparative perspective. Each part closes with a more extensive evaluation, which is guided by the three theoretical layers of the framework introduced in chapter two. Following the distinction among material, bureaucratic-procedural, and cultural factors, the following set of questions will be examined: Do these mechanisms offer ways to allocate existing material resources or build additional capacity? Do they help to harmonize different standard operating procedures, or provide incentives for agencies to privilege joint objectives over parochial concerns? Finally, do they address clashes among different organisational cultures and provide room to negotiate roles and mandates, and to reconcile divergent values?

1. Executive branch mechanisms in the United Kingdom and the United States

Executive branch mechanisms situated in the centre of government and in close proximity to the head of state seem natural candidates for the coordination of national security policy and the provision of oversight for joint planning and implementation processes. Coordination from the top is expected to counter the effect of 'stove-piping' (the division of efforts along agency boundaries) by providing an authoritative mechanism for decision-making and by ensuring ownership of cross-cutting policy issues at the senior executive level. Close proximity to the supreme decision-making power of the president or prime minister is further expected to provide the authority to 'bang heads together', if

necessary, in order to overcome bureaucratic resistance and prevent so-called turf wars from stalling joint efforts. The reality, however, looks different. A brief survey of the Cabinet Office (and incipient NSC structure) in the United Kingdom and the NSC in the United States suggests that the degree of consensus, leadership, and authority offered in the context of stability operations by these bodies has been rather weak.

The UK Cabinet Office

Parker *et al.* argue that the UK Cabinet Office derives its power from its centrality but equally maintain that the centre of the British government is small and 'in some respects surprisingly weak' when compared to other industrialized countries.[4] A survey conducted by Parker *et al.* and a separate study carried out by two consultancies in 2010 concur in their assessment of persistent uncertainty among civil servants within the British government over the role of the Cabinet Office and its value added to the work of line ministries.[5] While Richard Teuten and Daniel Korski attribute an effective coordination role to the Cabinet Office in the pursuit of a common understanding of UK priorities in Afghanistan, they equally quote a number of officials, who expressed uncertainty over the Cabinet Office's willingness to adopt a decisive role, as well as over its ability to oversee implementation of joint decisions.[6] Interviews with government advisors and practitioners from different departmental backgrounds conducted for this thesis fall in line with these concerns. Uncertainty over the leadership role of the Cabinet

[4] Simon Parker*, et al.*, *Shaping up: a Whitehall for the future,* (London: Institute for Government, February 2010), p. 12.
[5] Institute for Government (IfG) and Libra Advisory Group, 'Who does UK national strategy?', written evidence dated August 2010, Public Administration Select Committee (HC 2010-11, 435) pp. 72-76; Parker *et al*., *Shaping up*, pp. 12; 22.
[6] Richard Teuten and Daniel Korski, *Preparing for peace: Britain's contribution and capabilities,* Whitehall Paper no.74 (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2010), p. 38.

Office appears to have prevented it from effectively leading British policy in the area of stabilisation in spite of able staff.

The establishment by the coalition government elected to power in May 2010 of an NSC as a new Cabinet committee (with an empowered secretariat headed by a National Security Advisor) is too recent to allow for conclusions as to its efficiency as a coordinating body for the planning and implementation of stability operations. Cautious initial assessments of its overall performance suggest, however, that it may eventually suffer from similar problems. The House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee, for instance, noted that 'the evidence to date ... is that the NSC functions more as a clearing house than as an organ of critical assessment.'[7]

The US National Security Council

Unlike the British system, the US government has possessed an executive branch mechanism dedicated to national security affairs since 1947 – the National Security Council (NSC).[8] I. M. Destler and Ivo Daalder note that the NSC benefits from half a century of legitimization as a coordinating body for the President's national security agenda, which has been further strengthened by the increasing complexity of foreign affairs and deeper partisan divides in the recent past.[9] At first sight, the NSC Principals Committee, which includes the Secretaries of State and Defense, offers a premium forum for joint deliberation at the senior policy

[7] IfG and Libra, 'Who does UK national strategy?', p. 18.
[8] For more detailed information on the NSC and its workings, see the National Security Council Project at Brookings, directed by Ivo Daalder and I.M. Destler, http://www.brookings.edu/projects/archive/nsc/overview.aspx. See further Lamb, 'Redesigning', pp. 46-8; 50-2; Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, pp. 37-46; 51-4.
[9] I.M. Destler and Ivo H. Daalder, *A new NSC for a new administration,* Policy brief no.68 (Washington, DC: Brookings, November 2000).

level, which arguably depends on the use made of it by the administration at any given time.[10]

In spite of its legacy as a well-established policy coordination mechanism at the centre of power, the NSC has only provided limited guidance in terms of coordinating the contributions of different agencies to stability operations. Christopher Lamb, for instance, argues that the NSC tended to paper over diametrically opposed perspectives between the Pentagon and the State Department by 'fudg[ing] the issue when writing up the results of an interagency meeting, allowing both departments to believe that their positions were accepted.'[11] The NSC further appears to have wrestled with questions over leadership and division of labour in stabilisation much in the same way as the different agencies amongst themselves. One official involved in these deliberations argued that the military's outsized role in the planning process had 'acted like a giant magnet – everything gets sucked into what exists, which is the military plan.'[12] Dane Smith further notes that there was disagreement within the NSC over whether stabilisation fell into the realm of foreign assistance rather than peace and security, and argues that regional directors within the NSC were unwilling to cede control over decision-making to the newly created Director of Stability Operations.[13]

Limitations of executive-level mechanisms

The brief survey of executive-level mechanisms within the British and American governments suggests that interagency coordination at this level suffers from a

[10] Smith for instance argues that the coordination mechanisms within the NSC inherited from the Clinton administration were largely sidelined under G.W. Bush. Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, p. 37.
[11] Lamb, 'Redesigning', p. 37.
[12] US_27, 13 October 2010.
[13] Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, pp. 42-3.

number of limitations that have led to calls for additional mechanisms in both cases. First, high-level deliberations risk reflecting divisions among agencies rather than leading to joint solutions.[14] As a former British civil servant put it, 'people in the Cabinet Office will come with all the baggage from their home organisation and will import the problem rather than solving it.'[15] Consequently, agreement tends to take the form of the lowest common denominator that ultimately pleases none of the actors involved. Second, the broad portfolios covered by these entities means that there is limited time for deliberation on a specific issue – such as stabilisation – which means that so-called joint strategies often amount to little more than individual departments' plans or policies stapled together. As a result, unresolved questions over trade-offs and policy dilemmas are handed down to mid-level officials in charge of operationalizing policy at the interagency level. In spite of their purportedly cross-cutting nature, policy questions are thus again divided along departmental fault-lines during implementation. Finally, the position of these coordination bodies at the centre of power means that electoral cycles and partisan politics threaten to interfere with a long-term vision for a joint approach, and arguably reduce incentives to admit failures and share lessons openly.

The limited ability of the centre to coerce and cajole independent government agencies into cooperation led to the exploration of other means to promote cross-departmental coordination within the British government, which in turn caught the attention of the Secretaries of State and Defense in the United States. In 2001, the UK Treasury introduced the 'Conflict Prevention Pools', which pooled existing

[14] See for instance Gordon, 'Defence policy', p. 132.
[15] UK_13, 26 February 2008.

programme funding within MOD, FCO, and DFID and provided additional funding for an innovative structure that required tri-departmental decision-making.[16] Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown note that the pools initially incited departments to pursue 'a number of legacy activities, with an effort to justify these on whole of government grounds.'[17] Over time, however, the pools increasingly socialized the three departments into more coherent joint decision-making – albeit with significant transaction costs attached.[18] The funds allocated through the pools remained negligible compared to the size of departmental budgets and had to be renegotiated each year. This led to a feeling among officials that the 'complex and cumbersome nature of the decision-making process was out of proportion with the resources managed.'[19] The beneficial impact of the pools on inter-departmental coordination was further hampered by unresolved tensions between immediate stabilisation requirements in Iraq and Afghanistan, on the one hand, and Britain's long-term investments in multilateral conflict prevention and peacekeeping efforts in other parts of the world, on the other.[20] Interviews with British government officials conducted by Teuten and Korski in 2010 reveal suspicion among different departments that each would seek to negotiate the protection of its top priorities, or try to 'raid the pools for new issues' (with the British engagement in Iraq mentioned as an example thereof).[21]

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[16] FCO, DFID, and MOD, 'The Global Conflict Prevention Pool - a joint UK Government approach to reducing conflict', written by Louise Bell (London: FCO, August 2003).
[17] Patrick and Brown, *Greater than the sum of its parts?*, p. 20.
[18] Ibid. See also International Development Committee, *Conflict and development: peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction*, p. 23.
[19] Interviews with UK government officials cited by Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, p. 59.
[20] The global conflict prevention pool (GCPP) had a global budget of approx. £245 million between 2004/05 and 2006/07, 46 per cent of which was allocated to Iraq and Afghanistan. An external evaluation of DFID's Afghanistan Programme in 2009 noted that 'expenditure on these two countries [Iraq and Afghanistan] has dwarfed all other GCPP outlays.' Jon Bennett *et al*., *Country programme evaluation: Afghanistan'*, p. xi.
[21] Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, pp. 58-9.

US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, expressed his interest in exploring joint civilian-military budget authorities in an unclassified memorandum to his counterpart at the State Department in late 2009, and publicly in a *Foreign Affairs* article in the summer of 2010.[22] However, the compartmentalised budget authorisation structure in Congress (where multiple committees oversee the defence and foreign affairs budgets) puts considerable bureaucratic obstacles in the way of such initiatives. Moreover, the skewed distribution of manpower and resources between defence and foreign affairs in the US institutional architecture led observers to worry that decisions taken under joint authority would remain dominated by the Pentagon. Hall and Adams noted that the Pentagon's overture provided 'the mirage of easy money' but warned against the strings attached. In their view, 'shared pools between unequal partners cannot guarantee State's foreign policy leadership when DOD will likely still provide the majority of funds and staffing.'[23] To what extent this innovative measure can be reproduced on a larger scale and among a greater number of actors, which the US institutional architecture inevitably implies, remains uncertain. While joint budget mechanisms may indeed lead to joint deliberation, they are likely to require additional coordination efforts to ensure accountability and follow-up in the subsequent implementation stages.

The realization that interagency coordination with regard to operations in Iraq had overall been poor and largely *ad hoc* provided an impetus for reform in the United

[22] Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, *Recalibrating security sector assistance: a "shared responsibility, pooled resources" option* (Memorandum for Secretary of State, unclassified, The Pentagon, 15 December 2009); Robert Gates, 'Helping others defend themselves: the future of US security assistance', *Foreign Affairs* 89/3 (2010).
[23] Laura Hall and Gordon Adams, *Relying on the kindness of others: a risky partner-building strategy,* 'The Will and the Wallet' [weblog] (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 13 May 2010).

States and the United Kingdom alike. Unsurprisingly, the concept of a single 'lead agency' for stabilisation failed to command much support among departments that were naturally reluctant to relinquish control over the employment of their staff and resources. The idea of smaller, lighter 'tools' with a specific, yet limited, mandate to facilitate coordination among established agencies both within the government architecture and on the ground was more acceptable and thus held greater promise. Unlike the mechanisms described above, which had been part of the regular government architecture prior to the advent of stability operations, the organisational structures described in the next two sections owe their existence largely to perceived shortcomings in the conduct of stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their trajectory has thus become shaped by the problems identified in these operations to a significant degree.

2. Specialized coordination units within the government bureaucracy: S/CRS and the PCRU/SU

Created roughly at the same time, both the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, located within the State Department, and the Post-conflict Reconstruction Unit, co-owned by MOD, FCO and DFID struggled to carve out a role for themselves over the past six years. Both units suffered from the lack of a champion for their cause within the bureaucracy, in particular on the civilian side of government, which greeted them with a mix of hostility, suspicion, and curiosity at best. As the following overview will show, aside from common challenges faced by these new entities, differences between the two case studies have partly arisen from the institutional context, but equally from strategic choices made by the senior leadership within the two units.

The State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS)

The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) was established within the State Department in July 2004. Dane Smith described the deliberations that took place over the creation of S/CRS in mid-2003 as 'interagency conversations, in which the State Department stressed the multi-faceted nature of post-conflict reconstruction and the Defense Department emphasized planning.'[24] NSPD 44 formally authorized the Secretary of State to task the 'coordinator' with a range of functions, and called upon other executive departments and agencies to collaborate. 'It seemed like you had this wonderful, clear authority for the whole operation,' a senior State Department official recalls, 'but in the real world, these declarations had only limited impact.'[25] Another official involved in the office's early days pointed out that – in the absence of resources – the formal mandate ultimately meant little. 'If you have to wave your mandate it means you don't have one,' this official argued, 'you only have a mandate if you can deliver on it.'[26]

While the impetus for a coordinating body had arisen from frustrations over the course of reconstruction efforts in Iraq, the first head of S/CRS, Ambassador Carlos Pascual, was told that his office would be involved neither in Iraq nor Afghanistan. Rather, S/CRS was expected to prepare the US government for 'the next Iraq' by organising the civilian side of government and by building a civilian

[24] Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, p. 39.
[25] Author interview with Ambassador John Herbst, National Defense University, Washington, DC, 2010 (exact date omitted in conformity with the coded reference system used elsewhere in the thesis).
[26] US_27, 13 October 2010.

surge capacity for use in such operations.[27] Pascual had an ambitious vision for S/CRS that rested on an understanding of coordination as taking charge of operations in a crisis and directing the efforts of other players in the bureaucracy.[28] His successor, Ambassador John Herbst, deemed this large vision impracticable when appointed as coordinator in 2006. According to Herbst, the agreement finally reached on the role of S/CRS within the bureaucracy (at assistant secretary level) in January 2007 would not have been possible had he continued to push for a large mandate.[29] This was echoed by an S/CRS official who described the early rhetoric as 'powerfully crippling – it made nobody want to work with us.'[30] The concept followed by Herbst after 2006 rested on three pillars: the development of so-called surge capacity in the form of a database of officials who could be deployed to a crisis at short notice; cross-departmental planning; and the development of doctrine, tools, and best practices.

After the deadlock of the early days, S/CRS became involved in Afghanistan in 2007, where it deployed planners to facilitate the development of integrated civilian-military planning cells within the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, as well as in a regional US military command and in the US embassy in Kabul. However, uncertainty persisted within the bureaucracy over the role of S/CRS, as one State Department official noted: 'the only place where you got really solid consensus is in supporting these military deployments [Iraq and Afghanistan],

[27] Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, p. 41.
[28] See for instance Ambassador Pascual's remarks in US Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, 'Ambassador Carlos Pascual, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization on the signing of a Presidential Directive to improve management of U.S. efforts for reconstruction and stabilization', On-the-record briefing, Washington, DC, 14 December 2005.
[29] Author interview with Herbst, 2010.
[30] US_61, 10 December 2010.

everything else is kind of mushy.'[31] In the search for access to resources, S/CRS ran into stiff resistance by USAID over the control of funds from the defence budget made available for civilian reconstruction. At the operational level, S/CRS ran the risk of being sidelined by the more powerful regional bureaus within the State Department. For instance, although the US government declared it a reconstruction operation, the Lebanon crisis in summer 2006 was dealt with through the Near East Bureau. When President Obama appointed the late Richard Holbrooke as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP), the new office initially did not reach out to S/CRS, and months were lost in the effort to draw expertise together that partly already existed within S/CRS.[32] In spite of its growing expertise in the area of conflict and crisis response, S/CRS was at first only given a limited role in the State Department's major strategic review exercise (culminating in the publication of the QDDR in December 2010) and collided once more with USAID's interests and ambitions.[33] The QDDR suggested subsuming the office in a new Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations, which was intended to serve 'as the institutional locus for policy and operational solutions for crisis, conflict, and instability.'[34]

The UK Stabilisation Unit (originally 'Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit')

The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) made its entrance into the British government bureaucracy in late 2004 as a light structure with few resources and little authority, and with three parent departments that found themselves considerably at odds over foreign policy and the deployment of British troops. In

[31] US_27, 13 October 2010.
[32] US_27, 13 October 2010.
[33] US_39, 21 October 2010.
[34] QDDR, p. 135.

September 2004 the three Secretaries of State for Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development officially announced the intent to establish an inter-departmental Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit, which would have both a policy and operational role, by the end of the year.[35] A consultation note circulated by the government in autumn 2004 to solicit input on the new concept noted that 'the PCRU ... is initially being developed to be used primarily where significant UK forces are engaged.'[36] PCRU reached full operating capability in mid-2006.[37] Its rebranding as UK Stabilisation Unit (SU) in 2007 reflected a conceptual shift in the British policy discourse from a separate 'post-conflict' phase to 'stabilisation' understood as continuum from prevention to conflict management and institution-building.

The SU is generally presented as a tri-departmental structure, which is co-owned in equal parts by its three parent departments. However, a former head of the unit, Richard Teuten, noted that DFID acted as *primus inter pares* 'in that the head of the unit is managed by a DFID director, who also chairs the tri-departmental board, and is accountable to the DFID permanent secretary for management of resources.'[38] DFID covered most of the cost associated with the original establishment and the subsequent operation of the unit, including staff positions and infrastructure.

[35] Hilary Benn, UK Secretary of State for International Development, 'Post-conflict reconstruction unit', HC Deb, 16 September 2004, vol. 424, col. 173-4WS.
[36] The original PCRU website <www.postconflict.gov.uk> is no longer available. The note is reprinted at <http://www.niwep.org.uk/id108.html> accessed 14 August 2011.
[37] Richard Teuten, 'Stabilisation and post-conflict reconstruction', speech at the Royal United Services Institute, London, 31 January 2007.
[38] Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, p. 124.

The impetus for the creation of a specialist unit dedicated to post-conflict reconstruction issues had arisen from the British deployment in Basra, where the lack of deployable civilian experts was identified as a major shortcoming.[39] A DFID official observed that 'PCRU was established as the great Whitehall idea after a haphazard and rushed deployment to Iraq. It was politically necessary to be seen as manning the desks in Baghdad.'[40] Unlike S/CRS, the PCRU was expected to have a more immediate impact on operations. In a session of the House of Commons Defence Committee in early 2005, an MOD official testified that his organisation was 'very keen that [the PCRU] is a Unit which actually delivers effect on the ground when it is needed.'[41]

The (now defunct) initial PCRU website suggested in 2004 that the unit understood its role to include the development of strategy for Britain's contribution to post-conflict stabilisation, as well as the planning, implementation and management of such efforts.[42] In 2007, the Treasury's *Comprehensive spending review* formally acknowledged the SU's responsibility to provide civilian capability in UK operations in insecure environments and its role in facilitating cross-government assessment and planning, and entrusted it with a lessons learning function for future stabilisation activities.[43] Over time, the SU became chiefly responsible for deploying civilian experts to Afghanistan.

[39] Major-General Nick Houghton, British Army, testimony dated 9 February 2005, Defence Committee, *Iraq: an initial assessment of post-conflict operations* (HC 2004-05, 65-II), p. 121, Q643.
[40] UK_21, 31 March 2008.
[41] Martin Howard, Director General, Operational Policy, Ministry of Defence, testimony dated 26 January 2005, HCDC, *Iraq: an initial assessment*, p. 57, Q310.
[42] 'Post conflict stabilisation: improving the United Kingdom's contribution', consultation on United Kingdom strategy and practice and establishment of a Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit, originally posted on <www.postconflict.gov.uk> in August 2004, reprinted at <http://www.niwep.org.uk/id108.html>, accessed 19 July 2011.
[43] HM Treasury, *Meeting the aspirations of the British people*, p. 29, para. 7.88.

However, it was never given overall responsibility for the management of the joint civilian-military platform (the Helmand PRT), contrary to what parliamentary statements in 2004 and 2005 may have suggested.[44] In settling for an enabling role, the SU 'ended up being responsible for people, but not for the outcome,' according to a senior official.[45]

By 2010 the SU had entrenched itself sufficiently in the bureaucracy to survive the change in government unscathed. In spite of a number of proposals for stabilisation to be placed more squarely into the military realm, the SU survived as a civilian coordination entity.[46] The incoming Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, however, showed little interest in giving the unit greater institutional clout or making any changes to the tripartite mechanism through which it was represented at the Cabinet level.[47]

A tale of two units: SU and S/CRS in a comparative perspective

While more detailed accounts of the workings of S/CRS and the PCRU (respectively SU) have been published elsewhere,[48] the central question that arises from the comparative survey is to what extent these units have addressed obstacles to coordination in the three dimensions identified in the conceptual framework. In other words, did these units fill a resource gap? Were they able to

[44] Richard Teuten, former Director of the UK Stabilisation Unit, 'Civilian-military collaboration: the Stabilisation Unit coming of age?' speech at Royal United Service Institute, London, 4 February 2010.
[45] UK_42, 5 May 2010.
[46] For instance reflected in the intention to 'create a new Stabilisation and Reconstruction Force to bridge the gap between the military and the reconstruction effort'. HCDC, *Government response to the House of Commons Defence Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2009-10*, p. 2.
[47] Ibid., p. 7.
[48] Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin (eds.), *Civilian surge: key to complex operations* (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 2009), pp. 98-109; Smith, *U.S. Peacefare*, pp. 84-106; Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, pp. 35-6.

navigate around countervailing bureaucratic interests of their parent departments in order to provide common standard operating procedures? Finally, did they provide answers to questions over expertise, professional identities, and roles and responsibilities in stability operations?

Institutional reactions: 'bureaucratic antibodies'

The two units share a legacy of fighting for recognition and influence in the government bureaucracy, which reacted with predictable hostility to the arrival of a potential competitor for resources and authority in each case. A senior State Department official noted that, as soon as S/CRS was created, 'the bureaucratic body of the U.S. government – including the State Department itself – began to send out antibodies to kill or limit the organisation.'[49] A senior British official likewise described his involvement in the unit's early days as an 'extremely toxic' experience.[50] In both case studies, a similar pattern divided the institutional architecture into a supportive terrain on the side of defence, on the one hand, and troubled relationships with the civilian government agencies, on the other. Both the Pentagon and the MOD welcomed what they saw as additional civilian capacity, which would help relieve the military of functions it had never wanted to carry out in the first place. The new units further carried the promise of providing the military with a single point of contact to liaise with the civilian side of the bureaucracy. The diplomatic and development establishments, on the other hand, saw in the newly created mechanisms a potential competitor that would either draw scarce resources away from them, or waste them by duplicating existing capacity.

[49] US_39, 21 October 2010.
[50] UK_34, 25 September 2009.

While S/CRS was placed under the authority of the Secretary of State, a member of S/CRS noted that 'the majority of the State Department did not know what to do with us.'[51] USAID initially acknowledged the creation of S/CRS as a 'strong step in the right direction,' and stated that 'the Agency is likely to serve as a principal operational arm for the office' (but not without pointing out that USAID retained a much broader mandate in the area of fragile states).[52] Five years later, however, USAID's civil-military relations study group urged USAID to develop its own planning capacity for crisis response.[53] Although both S/CRS and USAID's bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Affairs stood for a new and somewhat controversial approach to intervention in other states, the lack of clarity over respective spheres of responsibility led them to behave like rivals rather than allies in the face of 'hostile neighbours', as one official noted.[54] In interviews conducted for the thesis, current and former USAID officials accused S/CRS of 'trying to take credit for programmatic impacts'[55] and 'trying to act as a gatekeeper.'[56] The unit was further referred to as a self-declared 'elite squad' attempting to plan the US government's response to conflict,[57] and its (former) director as an 'empire builder.'[58]

The main author of the MOD's doctrinal note on the 'Comprehensive Approach' described the PCRU as the 'illegitimate child that its parents seem oddly reluctant to recognise and promote.'[59] According to a government official, the civil service

[51] US_21, 5 October 2010.
[52] USAID, *Fragile states strategy*, p. vi; 2.
[53] USAID, *Civilian-military relations study group*, p.21.
[54] US_61, 10 December 2010.
[55] US_41, 28 October 2010.
[56] US_47, 9 November 2010.
[57] US_48, 9 November 2010.
[58] US_41, 28 October 2010.
[59] Rear Admiral Chris Parry, 'The Comprehensive Approach', p. 55.

displayed a 'schizophrenic' attitude towards the new unit, as it expected the PCRU to develop expertise in the area of stabilisation, but at the same time refused to acknowledge that its very existence pointed to deficiencies and shortcomings within the parent departments.[60] Both FCO and DFID had internal structures that were meant to deal with conflict and crises.[61] Hence, they tended to view PCRU as a tool to be 'taken off the shelf' if and where specialist expertise was needed.[62] PCRU's early engagement in cross-government planning in 2005 was perceived as an attempt to claim a greater policy role and fiercely resisted by both DFID and FCO.[63]

Conceptual uncertainty with regard to the division of labour among the three Ds in the area of stabilisation translated into the newcomers' struggle to become a natural part of the institutional fabric in both case studies. Relationships with established departments remained fraught by suspicion over the new units' ambitions and mandates, and left them to be perceived as the 'right idea in the wrong place' by the rest of the government bureaucracy.[64] Hence, bureaucratic politics rather than operational demands or conceptual considerations threatened to shape their mandates. A British official, for instance, contended that 'the SU has been so badly hacked about that we forgot what it is for.'[65]

[60] UK_44, 26 May 2010.
[61] The FCO's Conflict Issues Group and DFID's Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department.
[62] UK_28, 17 September 2009.
[63] UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[64] US_59, 8 December 2010.
[65] UK_44, 26 May 2010.

Operational contributions: the 'body shop' syndrome

The definition of a mandate for both S/CRS and the PCRU (and later SU) revolved around the question of whether these units should focus on specialist expertise in order to fill skill gaps within the government, or whether they should primarily assume a coordinating role in the design of a whole-of-government approach. In light of the bureaucratic reactions described earlier, it is not surprising that the capacity-building function proved easier to pursue than the convenor role in both case studies.

The creation of an expeditionary civilian capability for stabilisation and reconstruction was the primary driver behind the establishment of S/CRS. It continued to define the unit's mandate in spite of reluctance by Congress to fund the 'Civilian Response Corps', a combination of active duty and reserve stabilisation experts, which the office was supposed to build.[66] The capability developed by S/CRS under severe funding constraints included a small corps of experts and the equipment, vehicles, communications gear, and resources to fund air transport in order to support their deployment on the ground. Yet, rather than simply providing regional State Department bureaus, overseas embassies, or combatant commands with additional human and material resources, S/CRS was keen to deploy its services as a 'package' that including planning and coordination functions.[67] A senior State Department official explained, 'if all we do is create more people who can move faster, without the other functions, we will be increasingly less *ad hoc* – but that is about it.'[68] Herbst recalled that he had vowed 'to go down the comprehensive route' in terms of S/CRS's mandate for at least

[66] Serafino, *Peacekeeping/stabilization and conflict transitions*.
[67] US_22, 6 October 2010.
[68] US_27, 13 October 2010.

some time before resigning to turn the unit into a mere provider of human resources – adding 'and we succeeded.'[69]

Within the UK government, supporting the operational function of the Stabilisation Unit offered a convenient way for both FCO and DFID to relieve some of the pressure to send their staff to the field in support of British military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. An FCO civil servant noted that, while the FCO had recognized the need for deployable civilians, 'we looked elsewhere, to the Stabilisation Unit, to provide that for us.'[70] The SU gradually built a database of so-called deployable civilian experts (DCEs) and a smaller cadre of civil servants ready to deploy at short notice.[71] In contrast to the model adopted by its American counterpart, the SU opted for the development of a stand-by capability (paying people only for the time of their deployment) rather than a standing cadre of experts (paid full-time).[72] The expert database initially built on DFID's existing rapid deployment database. The public announcement of a one-thousand strong stabilisation cadre by (then) Prime Minister Gordon Brown in 2008 led to hasty hiring in order to inflate numbers, and thorough vetting was required thereafter to revise the database and improve its quality.[73] Many of the experts on the database were drawn from the humanitarian world and had limited knowledge and understanding of Whitehall politics and the workings of the SU's parent departments.[74] A British stabilisation adviser contended, 'there is a question

[69] Author interview with Herbst, 2010.
[70] UK_08, 18 February 2008.
[71] For a detailed account see Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, p. 104.
[72] UK Stabilisation Unit, *Responding to stabilisation challenges in hostile and insecure environments: lessons identified by the UK's Stabilisation Unit* (November 2010), pp. 18-19.
[73] UK_56, 6 June 2011.
[74] The lessons identified by the SU in 2010 regarding the development of the database highlighted the need to carefully identify roles and skill-sets and to have rigorous quality assurance from the outset. Ibid.

whether civil servants in London think that DCEs can actually do things. At the end of the day we are independent consultants, no institutional affiliation or further responsibility.'[75] SU core staff (based in London), on the other hand, risked lacking an understanding of conditions on the ground, as one official observed.[76] The SU acknowledged in one of its publications that 'a capability is more than just a database ... It is a network or community of civilian experts with skills and experience relevant to stabilisation.'[77] However, the SU's approach towards managing the database (including points of contact, training opportunities, and a shared web portal) pointed more towards the maintenance of a loose network than to the formation of a professional community.

The focus on deployable capability was in some regards a poisoned chalice for the newly created units. It bought them the goodwill of some players within the bureaucracy – in particular the foreign affairs establishments, which hardly objected to the creation of additional capacity to fill hardship posts overseas – but at the same time risked turning them into mere 'body shops' for other agencies. If the new units were to do more than just provide additional 'bodies' on the ground, they would have to deploy their staff as coherent teams. Individual secondments to other government departments risked not only failing to provide the experts with strong institutional links but moreover re-inserted bureaucratic separations into the planning effort along the very fault-lines the units were intended to bridge.[78]

[75] UK_41, 27 April 2010.
[76] UK_44, 26 May 2010.
[77] UK Stabilisation Unit, *Responding to stabilisation challenges*, pp. 18-19.
[78] UK_49, 27 January 2011.

One S/CRS official noted that – in order to be treated as a team – the experts had to be trained as a team. If, on the other hand, they were stepping out of the airplane as 'two guys from AID, one from State, and one from Justice' the embassy was likely to send them off to different parts and once again use S/CRS as a 'body shop'.[79] A British stabilisation adviser equally noted that 'for the SU to really make a difference and not just "provide good people" they have to come up with the analysis, the planning system and the plans, the monitoring system and the reports, [and] the organisational structure.'[80] Pressures to rapidly build a database and deploy experts to the ground in current operations – combined with other departments' tendencies to treat the new units as 'body shops' – arguably constrained these units in the strategic development of a stabilisation agenda and corresponding professional profiles. An S/CRS official further pointed out that the mandate to generate deployable staff for hardship postings and the objective to build a learning organisation were to some extent competing agendas. In practice, knowledge acquired during deployments was often 'rotated out' as officers left the organisation upon their return from the field.[81]

Conceptual contributions: the fine line between guidance and direction

While generating deployable capability was the least contentious activity for these units, it required greater resources than the conceptual functions that equally featured in their mandates. However, greater engagement in planning, lessons learning, and the development of expertise was bound to trigger bureaucratic reflexes by other bureaus and agencies keen to defend their turf in these areas.

[79] US_60, 10 December 2010.
[80] UK_40, 24 April 2010.
[81] US_60, 10 December 2010.

Contingency and crisis planning represented an opportunity for S/CRS to become active in spite of limited operational resources. A former USAID official pointed out that planning and implementation were 'really not that far from each other' and that S/CRS's planning efforts had raised suspicion within USAID that the unit would seek to interfere with or control project implementation.[82] Powerful constituencies within the State Department further disapproved of S/CRS's growing involvement in military planning processes, arguably 'for fear of sending out the wrong signals,' according to one official.[83] Under Herbst's leadership, S/CRS profiled itself first and foremost as a convener and facilitator. The planners provided by the office would absorb information and direction from the bureaus or agencies they were serving and add value by synchronizing different policy components within a unified package, rather than imposing their own vision. S/CRS' mission statement further included a reference to the development of doctrine and concepts. Quite ambitiously, the unit was envisioned to formulate 'core principles and best practices for the structures, processes, and systems that guide how the US Government organises and operates in reconstruction and stabilisation efforts.'[84] Again, the role outlined by Herbst focused on drawing together civilian expertise and providing the government with 'formalized, collaborative, and institutionalized foreign policy tools' for stabilisation.[85] Policy itself would remain firmly in the hands of the different bureaus, departments and offices calling upon S/CRS's services.

[82] US_41, 28 October 2010.
[83] US_39, 21 October 2010.
[84] US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, 'What we do: doctrine and concepts' <http://www.crs.state.gov> accessed 15 August 2011.
[85] John Herbst, *Smart power in action,* DipNote (US Department of State official weblog) (Washington, DC: US Department of State, 1 March 2010).

PCRU equally provoked a bureaucratic backlash through its early engagement in cross-departmental planning in the wake of the deployment of British troops to southern Afghanistan in 2005.[86] However, the planning team put together by PCRU saw themselves as facilitators rather than as managers of the planning effort. They focused primarily on providing a common language and method; managing inter-departmental tensions and building trust; and shouldering the transaction costs of joint planning.[87] This facilitator role arguably gave the unit a stake in subsequent revisions of the civilian-military plan (including the more detailed Helmand Road Map of 2008 and its revisions in 2009 and 2010).[88] In terms of planning, therefore, the SU settled for the provision of expertise without seeking control over the process or authority over the product. One of the unit's publications acknowledged that the SU was 'not an executive organisation and cannot own plans' and emphasized that the final product 'must be owned and led by FCO, DFID, MOD or Cabinet Office.'[89] Any doctrinal or policy aspirations by the unit were bound to provoke a reaction from the FCO.[90] A senior FCO official argued that the PCRU 'had wasted three years of its life trying to do doctrine,' and only started to be taken seriously 'once it was delivering in practice.'[91] In 2007, the unit's senior leadership assured a Whitehall audience that 'one of PCRU's strengths comes from not having a policy role or particular position on any issue.'[92] The SU declared its conceptual focus to be the identification of lessons learned from stabilisation for the benefit of all government departments. It was slow, however, to develop this function due to limited core staff and more

[86] UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[87] UK_18, 10 March 2008, echoed in UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[88] Farrell and Gordon, 'COIN machine', p. 21; Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, p. 79.
[89] UK Stabilisation Unit, *Planning for stabilisation: structures and processes* (December 2009).
[90] UK_06, 18 February 2008.
[91] UK_51, 5 May 2011.
[92] Richard Teuten, 'Stabilisation and post-conflict reconstruction'.

pressing operational demands.[93] A member of the unit described the absence of formal policy responsibility as a 'blessing in disguise', which allowed the unit to focus its attention on effective, field-based lessons learning instead of 'sitting in Whitehall and dreaming up strategy.'[94] The limited, technocratic approach adopted by the SU to the development of concepts and ideas, however, was deplored by another member, who contended that the unit was 'a tool but not a strategy or doctrine – it is a spanner but the mechanic and the manual are absent.'[95]

Evaluation of the contribution made to coordination by the two units

The above survey of S/CRS and SU suggests that their role is not a particularly attractive one: they are expected to coordinate without assuming authority; to facilitate plans without having any control over implementation; and to learn lessons without interfering with the formulation of policy. Unsurprisingly perhaps, established departments feared that these limitations were unsustainable in the long term and sought to curtail the role of these units from the start. The question is to what extent the struggle for institutional survival and relevance prevented these units from fulfilling an effective role in facilitating interagency coordination in the planning and implementation of stability operations, and continues to do so.

Herbst's strategy consisted in selling S/CRS as a service organisation. 'The principle that I established in reaching out to other bureaucratic players was

[93] UK_38, 13 January 2010.
[94] UK_32, 25 September 2009.
[95] UK_44, 26 May 2010.

"S/CRS is going to take over no responsibilities currently managed by someone else",' he explained.[96] In the absence of tangible support from the senior executive and Congress, S/CRS sought to win over 'converts' in the State Department by completing individual deployments upon request from heads of mission or bureau chiefs. 'We did whatever the people who were in charge of the mission were giving us permission to do,' Herbst recalls, 'but we always insisted that we had something to offer beyond people in a crisis.'[97] The objective to conquer and defend institutional space within the bureaucracy through individual assignments, however, implied a trade-off with regard to the coherence of S/CRS's overall mandate. One S/CRS official noted that by trying to satisfy all sorts of demands placed upon the new office, S/CRS ultimately satisfied none: 'it would have been better to pick a model and say "this is who we are".'[98]

Contrary to its US counterpart, PCRU started with a small mandate and few ambitions to take on a leading role in the British government's response to conflict and crises abroad. In its early days (under the leadership of an MOD civil servant), PCRU focused on building capacity for the promotion of stability and order in a post-conflict environment, such as policing and immediate reconstruction needs. The default position was that the unit would work in countries at the request of its parent Departments and the Cabinet Office. The SU's current website embraces the role of a service provider in declaring that 'the planning product is generally *owned by the client* and we work closely with our

[96] Author interview with Herbst, 2010.
[97] Ibid.
[98] US_60, 10 December 2010.

clients to design and implement planning activities.'[99] Richard Teuten, who headed the unit from 2006 to 2010, noted halfway through his tenure that the unit would not 'become the body that some wanted us to be – leading UK engagement in determining policy as well as undertaking all civilian operations in crisis countries,' and argued that this had never been a realistic goal in the British institutional context. [100] The core funding provided by DFID freed the unit from the burden to fight for institutional survival, and led Teuten to declare in 2007 that his organisation 'no longer suffered from existential angst.'[101] An official interviewed in 2010 questioned whether the SU's growing acceptance was a sign that its parent departments were increasingly willing to acknowledge their own deficiencies – or whether it meant that the unit had given up its 'revolutionary nature' and increasingly became part of the establishment. Unfortunately, he concluded, it was likely to be the latter.[102]

The tale of the two units suggests that the attempt at mitigating interdepartmental tensions and bridging entrenched bureaucratic divides by means of creating new organisational mechanisms was only partly successful. These units are themselves bureaucratic creatures faced with the imperative of securing resources and finding a voice in the marketplace of ideas and influence within government. Hence, both S/CRS and SU turned into corporate entities at the service of their 'clients' rather than the coordinating authorities they initially aspired to become. Moreover, the struggle for institutional survival drove them towards tactical 'deals' in order to

[99] UK Stabilisation Unit, 'About us: more about the Unit' <http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk> accessed 8 May 2011. Emphasis added.
[100] Richard Teuten, Head UK Stabilisation Unit, 'Challenges in building sustainable peace: the evolving role of the UK Government's Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit', intervention at a Brookings Institution roundtable, Washington, DC, 1 November 2007.
[101] Ibid.
[102] UK_44, 26 May 2010.

secure support in the short term, which may well have hampered the strategic development of a coherent stabilisation mandate in the long term. In order to challenge entrenched practices and promote new – and possibly uncomfortable – ways of doing business within the bureaucracy, these units may need to retain a somewhat renegade character.[103] As the experience of S/CRS and SU show, the likely price to pay is to remain at the margins of the institutional playing field.

Both S/CRS and SU nevertheless contributed to mitigating resource-related obstacles by shouldering transaction costs for coordination functions (meetings, briefings, notes of guidance); through the provision of planning experts and tools; and by recruiting, training, and deploying staff for the civilian contribution to stability operations. Interviews with members of both units furthermore suggested that SU and S/CRS provided an institutional home of sorts to an emerging hybrid professional community associated with stabilisation activities. Although this observation is not yet backed up by sufficiently broad empirical data, the interviews point to the development of an institutional culture both within the SU and S/CRS, which built on the plurality and diversity of practitioners' backgrounds. Consistent with the brevity of their institutional existence and their specialist orientation, the two units promoted attachment to the 'cause' or the 'mission' rather than to a set of professional practices and traditions. A member of the SU felt that, in order to work for the SU, 'you have to be quite detached with regard to your own convictions, priorities, or culture.'[104] A member of the S/CRS described the commitment the office inspired in terms of 'S/CRS – the movement'

[103] Schear and Curtin argue that S/CRS was 'cast in the role of a "constructive irritant" acting to promote new patterns of collaboration and change.' James A. Schear and Leslie B. Curtin, 'Complex operations: recalibrating the State Department's role', in Binnendijk and Cronin (eds.), *Civilian surge*, p. 104.
[104] UK_38, 13 January 2010.

versus 'S/CRS – the job', and added that 'nobody comes to this office just to get a pay check.'[105] This new organisational culture took hold to different degrees with core staff (permanent employment) and among the experts contracted through secondments, short-term hiring authorities, or through a database. In that sense, S/CRS possibly built a stronger institutional culture than the SU because of its reliance on a larger cohort of permanent staff in Washington.[106] However, the creation of a distinct stabilisation community may ultimately risk leading to further isolation within the bureaucracy and complicate relations with other agencies. A former USAID official, for instance, wondered whether the relationship between S/CRS and USAID would have been less fraught if the two organisations had exchanged staff (through secondments) rather than having S/CRS build a new community through civil service hires, 'who began to identify with S/CRS rather than with their home agency.'[107]

3. Coordination mechanisms in the field: American and British Provincial Reconstruction Teams

The concept of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) as tools for civilian-military integration in Iraq and Afghanistan has attracted considerable attention over the past years.[108] It is not the aim of this section to recast the existing

[105] US_60, 10 December 2010.
[106] The SU had around 30 core staff in 2009, which doubled in the following year to about 60 London-based staff. S/CRS core staff doubled from around 40 in 2005 to 80 in 2007, and numbered ca. 200 in mid-2010. *Source*: Author's copies of S/CRS power point presentations by Melanie Anderton, March 2005; Oscar, DeSoto, 'A whole-of-government approach to preparing for and responding to conflict', Seminar on Training and Dispatching Civilian Peacebuilders, Tokyo, 31 October 2007; Mary-Ann Zimmerman, 'The civilian architecture for peace and stability operations: S/CRS' approach', Experts workshop, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, 15 July 2010.
[107] US_41, 28 October 2010.
[108] See Christoff Luers, 'Provincial Reconstruction Teams: a literature review', *PRISM* 1/1 (2009). On British PRTs, see Gordon and Jackson, 'Rewiring interventions? UK Provincial Reconstruction

scholarship on the history of their creation, the reaction they provoked within the humanitarian and aid communities, or the comparison of different PRT models among NATO member states. The focus stays squarely on the question of whether PRTs have mitigated obstacles to coordination among British and American military units and civilian government agencies in the conduct of stability operations on the ground. Both nations have established PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan, albeit on a different scale and with certain differences in approach that will be further explored below.

While the PRT model was intended from the beginning to support so-called soft or non-kinetic (non-combat related) effects in the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, there has never been a set formula for the mix of civilian and military personnel required for the staffing and leadership of such teams. The original intent behind the establishment of 'joint regional teams' (as they were initially named) in Afghanistan in 2002 was to extend the reach of the central government into the provinces, which were still largely controlled by warlords and local strongmen. The idea has been credited to (then) Colonel Nick Carter of the British Army, who found a supportive partner within the Pentagon in the newly appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations. Nathan Hodge describes these early PRTs as 'a more muscular version of the Civil Affairs teams already on the ground,' which numbered around 200

Teams and 'stabilization'". On US PRTs, see Binnendijk and Cronin (eds.), *Civilian surge*, pp. 15-16; Carlos Hernandorena, 'US Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, 2003-06: obstacles to interagency cooperation', in Joseph R. Cerami and Jay W. Boggs (eds.), *The interagency and counterinsurgency warfare: stability, security, transition and reconstruction roles*, (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2007); Michelle Parker and Matthew Irvine, 'Civil-military integration', in Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney (eds.), *Understanding counterinsurgency: doctrine, operations, and challenges*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 231-9; Robert M. Perito, *The US experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: lessons identified,* Special report 152 (Washington, DC: USIP, October 2005).

specialists by late 2002.[109] The engagement of these teams in building schools, drilling wells, and mounting clinics – initially conducted in civilian clothing – led to an outcry among relief agencies over the blurring of lines between military and humanitarian spheres, as well as to concerns within the aid community over the sustainability of such projects.[110] These concerns gave further weight to the call for more civilian experts – mostly deployed through civilian government agencies – on the ground in order to advise the military on governance- and development-related aspects of operations. Over time, PRTs became the prime institutional mechanism to integrate civilian and military efforts in stability operations.

British PRTs: a multilateral 'civil-military mission'

The UK initially established two PRTs in the north of Afghanistan (Mazar-e-Sharif and Meymaneh) in 2003, which came under Swedish and Norwegian leadership, respectively, when British forces moved south in the course of the expansion of NATO-led operations. The deployment of roughly 3,000 British troops to Helmand province in southern Afghanistan in the spring of 2006 was intended to bolster the hitherto small PRT established by the Americans in the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, of which the UK assumed responsibility in May. From the start, civilian-military coordination was given a prominent place in the mission of these PRTs, which were jointly managed by MOD, FCO and DFID

[109] Hodge, *Armed humanitarians*, pp. 84-5.
[110] Nellie Bristol, 'Military incursions into aid work anger humanitarian groups', *The Lancet* 367/9508 (2006); Gordon, 'The UK's stabilisation model'; Gerard Mc Hugh and Lola Gostelow, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and humanitarian-military relations in Afghanistan,* (London: Save the Children, 2004); Peter Runge, *The Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: role model for civil-military relations?,* Occasional paper IV (Bonn: Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), October 2009); Victoria Wheeler and Adele Harmer, *Resetting the rules of engagement: trends and issues in military-humanitarian relations,* Research report no.21 (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, 2006).

representatives under overall military command.[111] The military headquarters of Task Force Helmand was co-located with the PRT within the first year of its existence.[112] The overall effort came under civilian lead in 2008 with the appointment of a senior FCO civil servant, who formally outranked the one-star brigade commander. By the end of 2010, the Helmand PRT had evolved into a 'UK-led multinational platform' with roughly 50 per cent civilian and 50 per cent military staff drawn from a variety of nations including the US, Denmark and Estonia.[113]

In Iraq, the UK operated a PRT in the southern province of Basra from May 2006 until the end of British combat operations in spring 2009.[114] The Basra PRT had a decidedly multinational outlook and received no direct funding from the British government. An MOD representative reminded members of parliament in 2006 that the Basra PRT was 'about oiling wheels, brokering solutions and establishing relationships, but above all acting as a conduit for international engagement in Basra.'[115] Supported by coalition forces, the PRT housed members of DFID, FCO and the British Armed Forces alongside American and Danish staff (funded by their respective governments). The United States and Denmark also provided project funding through a mix of civilian and military channels, whereas DFID

[111] Robert E. Perito (workshop leader), *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: lessons and recommendations,* Annex E: United Kingdom's Provincial Reconstruction Teams (by Jonathan Gandomi and Nealin Parker) (Princeton, NJ: The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, January 2008), p. 44.
[112] Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, p. 80.
[113] British Embassy Kabul, 'UK in Afghanistan: overview of Provincial Reconstruction Team', <http://ukinafghanistan.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/working-with-afghanistan/prt-helmand/overview-prt-helmand> accessed 15 August 2011.
[114] Oliver Wright, 'From Basra to Bari, Britain's diplomats to close their doors', *The Independent*, 3 May 2011.
[115] Roger Hutton, Director, Joint Commitments Policy, Ministry of Defence, testimony dated 20 June 2006, Defence Committee, *UK operations in Iraq* (HC 2005-06, 1241), Ev. 9, Q39.

remained reluctant to fund projects in a country that did not meet its priorities for global poverty reduction.[116]

In spite of these differences, the literature has occasionally identified a distinctly British PRT model, which has been praised for its emphasis on civilian-military and multinational collaboration.[117] An American official deemed the civilian-military partnership that characterised the Helmand PRT to be the 'correct model', but equally pointed out that it was highly labour and resource intensive.[118] The British-led PRTs have nevertheless faced a variety of challenges with regard to the coordination of civilian and military efforts. Teuten and Korski highlight in particular the lack of a clear division of responsibilities and trust among departments in the Basra PRT, and difficulties to staff the Helmand PRT with qualified personnel.[119] A civilian adviser deployed to the Helmand PRT contended that he had never seen a staffing plan, terms of reference for key posts, or any analysis of the skills and competences needed within the PRT.[120]

American PRTs: 'An answer in search of a question'?

In Afghanistan, the US PRTs were initially a tool at the hands of the military commander on the ground to engage with a variety of local and international (UN

[116] HCDC, *UK operations in Iraq*, p. 12.
[117] Markus Gauster, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan,* Occasional paper 16 (Washington, DC: George C. Marshall Center, 2008), p. 28; Carter Malkasian and Gerald Meyerle, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: How do we know they work?,* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2009), p. 6; Mark Sedra, *Civil-military relations in Afghanistan: The Provincial Reconstruction Team debate,* Strategic Datalink no. 126 (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, March 2005), p. 4.
[118] US_08, 14 September 2010.
[119] Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, p. 88.
[120] UK_40, 24 April 2010.

and non-governmental) stakeholders in the provinces.[121] Over time, they evolved into coordination platforms, which further gained in importance with the deployment of 30,000 additional troops under the Obama administration in the summer of 2009 and an accompanying 'civilian surge'.[122] The launch of a PRT programme in Iraq in late 2005 under the auspices of the State Department followed upon the realization that the demise of the Coalition Provisional Authority in summer 2004 had deprived the military of civilian support in the provinces.[123] The mission statement for the Iraq PRTs called them a 'priority joint Department of State/Department of Defense initiative' in support of an ambitious range of military, political, and economic objectives.[124] After lengthy negotiations, the Departments of State and Defense eventually came to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in early 2007 to clarify their respective responsibilities for funding and provision of security for the Iraq PRTs.[125] While US PRTs in Afghanistan were primarily focused on infrastructure and reconstruction, the main – or even sole – objective in Iraq was to build governance capacity in the provinces. According to the State Department official charged with setting up the Iraq PRT programme, the use of the same term in both

[121] Center for Humanitarian Cooperation, *Civil-military cooperation conference,* Summary report and findings (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 16 January 2003), p. 4.
[122] The number of State Department and USAID civilians on the ground in Afghanistan increased from 531 in 2009 to around 1,300 in 2011. US Congress, *Evaluating US foreign assistance to Afghanistan*', p. 6.
[123] W. Haven North, *Iraq PRT Experience Project,* Interview no.3 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace/Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 21 February 2008).
[124] The full mission statement reads 'The PRT program is a priority joint Department of State (DOS)/Department of Defense (DOD) initiative to bolster moderates, support U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, promote reconciliation, shape the political environment, support economic development, and build the capacity of Iraqi provincial governments to hasten the transition to Iraqi self-sufficiency.' [124] US Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), Fort Leavenworth, *PRT playbook: tactics, techniques, and procedures* (Handbook no. 07-34, September 2007), Annex C, 'Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams', p. 61.
[125] US Army, *PRT playbook*, Annex C, Appendix 1 'Extract of the Department of Defense/Department of State Memorandum of Agreement on Iraq PRTs', pp. 73-9.

theatres of operation was unfortunate, as the term 'reconstruction' raised expectations among Iraqis that the US would 'provide money to build with.'[126]

The US PRTs in Afghanistan were (at least initially) seen as primarily military organisations, whereas the ones in Iraq were intended to be civilian-led from the start.[127] The State Department official in charge of rolling out the PRT model across Iraq in 2005 noted that the desire to place them under overall civilian leadership stemmed from the feeling that this 'demonstrated the right concept to the Iraqis,' and that civilian leadership was in line with the presidential directive that had given the State Department the overall lead in stabilisation and reconstruction (NSPD-44).[128] The US Army's PRT handbook for Iraq stated that the 'multiagency, multidisciplinary' team was normally led by a State Department officer, assisted by a senior military representative who acted as deputy leader and chief of staff.[129] Authority over security and transport remained with the military leadership.[130] The announcement of a military surge in Iraq by the Bush administration in 2007 in the midst of a gravely deteriorating security situation led to the creation of so-called embedded PRTs (ePRTs) under the command of US brigade combat teams. In a congressional hearing, the Deputy Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction argued that 'every PRT is really an ePRT, to some extent,' as there was 'no way that a PRT could do its work without having the military supporting their operations.'[131]

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[126] North, *Iraq PRT Experience Project*.
[127] See Perito, *US experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, p. 2.
[128] North, *Iraq PRT Experience Project*.
[129] US Army, *PRT playbook*, Annex C, 'Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams', p. 66.
[130] Ibid., p. 71.
[131] Ginger Cruz, Deputy Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, testimony dated 5 September 2007, US Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, *The role of the Department of Defense in Provincial Reconstruction Teams* (HASC 110-86, 110th Congr., 1st sess., 2008), p.4.

A comprehensive study carried out under the auspices of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) in 2008 noted that neither the relevant departments in Washington, nor the military command responsible for both theatres of operation (US Central Command) had articulated clear objectives for the US PRTs. Hearings held before the HASC had highlighted major problems in the areas of 'leadership, funding, staffing, measuring effectiveness, and leveraging partnerships.'[132] Testimonies by returning PRT officers collected by the United States Institute of Peace equally suggested that the civilian effort initially had little consistency and that overarching goals or strategic guidance were lacking.[133] The director of the study observed that, in the absence of prior interagency agreement on roles and responsibilities, 'it took time and trial and error to achieve a common understanding of mission priorities.'[134] This impression was echoed by a State Department official, who described the PRTs as 'almost an answer in search of a question,' and recalled receiving scant guidance before his first deployment to Afghanistan in 2005. 'The military's plan was to be out of Afghanistan by 2006. So people told me to go out and "do good things" because they didn't know what else to tell me to do ... it was sort of "find your own way".'[135]

Civilian-military platforms: British and American PRTs in a comparative perspective

The establishment of PRTs as joint organisational platforms for civilian and military agencies held a number of promises in terms of coordination. With regard to the different obstacles outlined in chapter five, shared institutional

[132] US Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, *Agency stovepipes vs strategic agility: lessons we need to learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan* (HASC Committee print 8, 41-409, April 2008), p.18.
[133] Perito, *US experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*. See also USAID, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan – an interagency assessment* (PN-ADG-252, June 2006).
[134] Perito, *US experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, p. 11.
[135] US_61, 10 December 2010.

arrangements in the theatre of operations could potentially clarify command relationships, provide a joint forum for the reconciliation of divergent priorities and standard operating procedures, and facilitate cultural learning and communication. As the following section will show, PRTs have indeed mitigated some of the problems encountered by civilian and military practitioners deployed in stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will be argued, however, that some of the solutions or lessons offered by PRTs are contingent upon the specific context of operations and thus of limited applicability and durability.

Command relationships

Deploying with comparably negligible resources in an environment in which their security and ability to move around depended heavily on the military's logistics, many British and American civilians perceived the nature of the civilian-military partnership as highly biased: they would by default remain the junior partner. A British adviser argued 'it is hard to be comprehensive when it is so clear who the dominant workforce on the ground is.'[136] A USAID official noted 'two AID people in a PRT are going to go where the military wants them ... If you send thousands of troops you cannot expect a civilian solution. Once you are there you conceded the strategy.'[137] A former USAID officer felt that the military and the civilians in his PRT had formed 'a real team'. Yet he also admitted that 'ultimately the military made the decisions ... we did not own the relationship. The military's attitude was "this is a Marine Corps world but we let the guy in because he's got advice".'[138] This was echoed in the observations of another USAID employee who noted 'we did not negotiate with the military, we were

[136] UK_45, 1 July 2010.
[137] US_43, 28 October 2010.
[138] US_01, 30 August 2010.

informed about the plan and asked how we could contribute ... but we had some influence over how our piece would be implemented.'[139] A British military officer equally contended that 'the civilian effort on the ground has not really been geared up to have an argument with the military about whether they should focus on fighting insurgents or providing security for governance and development efforts.'[140] An FCO civil servant voiced similar concerns, and noted that 'the civilian head is chairing discussions but has no authority over resources. This arrangement works out fine as long as they do not disagree.'[141]

There was strong agreement among all interviewees that personalities were the main factor shaping interagency relationships within the PRTs, irrespective of any formal arrangements in place. Raising the status of civilians on the ground by giving senior civilians a rank that was above, or equivalent to, that of their military counterpart could at best level the playing field. Interviewees unanimously emphasized, however, that it did not provide civilians with an opportunity to 'pull their rank' in order to impose a decision on the military leadership.[142] While the right combination of personalities could compensate for the absence of formal arrangements, the reverse was not true. A USAID official argued 'a lot has been said about "civ-mil" but the systems and structures don't do much to foster partnership. Where it works it does so because of personalities.'[143] A senior British official equally contended that 'formal authority means nothing.

[139] US_42, 28 October 2010.
[140] UK_14, 28 February 2008.
[141] UK_08, 18 February 2008.
[142] UK_51, 5 May 2011; UK_52, 5 May 2011. See also Henry Nuzum, *Shades of CORDS in the Kush: The false hope of "unity of effort" in American counterinsurgency,* Letort paper (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2010), p. 33.
[143] US_47, 9 November 2010.

You have to build the personal relationships and build a team.'[144] The personality-dependent nature of these professional relationships further meant that many cooperative arrangements depended on the initiative of individual leaders and risked disappearing upon their departure. Occasionally, measures introduced by individual team leaders or commanders (e.g. joint civilian-military evening briefs with everyone around table) proved sticky enough to become standard operating procedures in spite of frequent rotations.[145]

Anecdotal evidence from both case studies suggests that the relationship between British military officers and their civilian advisers on the ground was slightly more equal than in the case of their American counterparts, and that British soldiers were on average more comfortable with the idea of being managed by a civilian.[146] One civilian adviser, who had worked with the British military felt that the commanding officer (CO) had treated him as an equal partner, rather than as an 'adviser'. He argued that the order coming down from the CO had enabled him to manage (but not quite control) an integrated civilian-military team at the district level.[147] However, a British Army officer returning from Helmand in 2010 noted that 'the UK PRT has so far not driven the agenda – it has shaped it and contributed to it but has not come up on its own with projects. At a bigger level, the PRT is military-driven.'[148]

The overall positive account of the British PRT stood in contrast to the very negative experience recounted by a US civilian expert who argued that '[civilian]

[144] UK_51, 5 May 2011.
[145] UK_14, 28 February 2008.
[146] UK_41, 27 April 2010; UK_52, 5 May 2011; UK_55, 11 May 2011.
[147] UK_41, 27 April 2010.
[148] UK_46, 1 July 2010.

experts were expected to bless the plan,' and felt that they had been lied to by the military leadership at times, when their advice went against the grain of the military projects or timelines.[149] Though rather extreme, this experience is to some extent backed up by other reports. Henry Nuzum notes that the lack of formal guidance for interagency relations within US PRTs usually led the military commanders to assume that they had 'de facto control over the team, and that this system work[ed] harmoniously.'[150] A report published by the State Department's in-house journal in early 2007 equally noted that '[State Department officials] felt "cut off," and were not given clear instructions on their role or on how the chain of command between military and civilian members was to be defined and function.'[151] While the anecdotal character of these accounts does not allow for generalizations, they support the view voiced by the vast majority of interviewees that the quality of civilian-military cooperation on the ground depended heavily on personalities.

Standard operating procedures and agency divides

In addition to the clarification of command relationships, the integrated nature of the PRTs potentially offered an opportunity to harmonize different SOPs and bridge agency divides. Yet many interviewees regarded the organisational structure provided by the PRT as fairly ineffective – and in a few instances even as counterproductive – in terms of mitigating bureaucratic reflexes among agencies. It was noted that organisations tended to hold on to their analysis, systems, monitoring, and reporting in spite of shared headquarters. The short-term

[149] US_53, 24 November 2010.
[150] Nuzum, *Shades of CORDS*, p. 32.
[151] Dorman, 'Iraq PRTs', p. 23.

and temporary nature of assignments within the PRT moreover meant that entrenched professional habits frequently prevailed.

The organisational structure of the UK-led PRT in Helmand became increasingly aimed at building functional clusters that reached across agency divisions. Civilian subject-matter experts (serving slightly longer tours than the military's six-month rotations) were placed in charge of thematic cells, which the military could then 'plug into'.[152] However, joint organisational structures did not stop strong agency cultures from asserting themselves, thereby threatening to import bureaucratic 'stovepipes' to the field. The reluctance of Whitehall departments to convey greater authority to the cross-departmental Stabilisation Unit – which was responsible for the recruitment and training of experts, but not the management of the PRT – meant that departmental divisions were often reproduced on the ground. A stabilisation adviser in the Helmand PRT described the PRT as a 'mixed beast of different organisations' and noted that 'at times of stress or stretch people revert to home department style.'[153] Another stabilisation adviser argued that prior professional experiences and allegiances were far more important in shaping perceptions than the PRT itself, which 'does not add much while one is there.'[154]

The MOU signed between the State Department and the Pentagon stipulated that the (civilian) PRT and the (military) brigade combat team would 'function as one team' but equally maintained that each PRT member would remain subject to the

[152] A civilian official working within the PRT pointed out that this arrangement did not quite mean that the military was actually being 'led' by civilians. US_08, 14 September 2010.
[153] UK_40, 24 April 2010. Private email correspondence between PRT staff in February 2010, shared with the author by an official who requested to remain anonymous.
[154] UK_55, 11 May 2011.

regulations of his or her department.[155] This turned dispute resolution within the PRT into a sensitive matter, which inevitably involved different chains of command. A State Department official returning from a PRT in Afghanistan recalled that conflict resolution mechanisms had been absent or inadequate in the case of disagreements between civilian and military representatives.[156] Complaints travelled up the hierarchy faster on the civilian side (which had no intermediate levels between the field, the local embassy, and Washington) than within the complex military chain of command, which in turn could lead to the perception of 'backstabbing' and undermine trust at the PRT level.

A USAID official contended that mandating people to collaborate – such as in a PRT framework – would inevitably provoke a reflex to separate and to defend one's turf. Rather than to formal structures, he attributed the degree of cooperation experienced during a deployment in Iraq to a 'shared sense of duty' among civilian and military staff, and to the fact that the civilians in his area were not dependent on the military for anything (e.g. security and transport).[157] Another civilian expert deployed to a PRT in Afghanistan noted that coordination lost its effectiveness when it became a chore in the eyes of the military. In his experience, '"civ-mil" simply became another box for the military to check on their list,' without leading to true coordination.[158]

[155] US Army, *PRT playbook*, Annex C, Appendix 1, 'Extract of the Department of Defense/Department of State Memorandum of Agreement on Iraq PRTs'.
[156] US_61, 10 December 2010.
[157] US_47, 9 November 2010.
[158] US_53, 24 November 2010.

'A mixed bag' – culture clashes and acculturation within the PRT

Over time, the PRT structure in Iraq and Afghanistan brought together an increasingly diverse mix of civilian and military personnel from different agency backgrounds. Both British and American PRTs further housed short-term hires and contractors who were not subject to the same evaluation mechanisms as regular civil servants. They had limited insight into departmental practices or diplomatic experience; they sometimes operated under different security regulations; and they often earned double the salary of their civil service counterparts.[159] Against the backdrop of these variegated communities, both military and civilian practitioners suggested that co-location provided strong incentives for co-operation and comprehensiveness. A British civilian official observed that 'the organisational piece boils down to co-location, not just in the same camp but in the same room.'[160] US Army Lieutenant-General David Barno, commander of the Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005, described the co-location of his headquarters with the US embassy as an important philosophical change that had a major impact on coordination (but was not continued by his successor, (then) Lieutenant-General Karl Eikenberry).[161] Co-location provided an opportunity for mutual learning and cultural exchange but also brought along its own set of challenges. As a British military officer cautioned, 'co-location should not be too quickly mistaken for integration.'[162]

In addition to core staff deployed by the MOD, FCO and DFID, the British PRT in Helmand became the primary destination for a group of civilian stabilisation experts and members of a newly formed Military Stabilisation Support Group

[159] Dorman, 'Iraq PRTs', p. 37. Also echoed by a British civil servant, UK_52, 5 May 2011.
[160] UK_51, 5 May 2011.
[161] In Schadlow, *Organizing to compete in the political terrain*, p. 6.
[162] UK_15, 28 February 2008.

(MSSG).[163] They formed integrated military-civilian teams at the district level and cooperated closely in the administration of stabilisation projects within villages and communities. According to the MSSG commander, the group's mandate illustrated a fundamental shift in the military's approach to stabilisation. 'My people ... are actually doing stabilisation,' he argued, pointing to the relationships with local communities and the direct involvement of the MSSG in stabilisation activities.[164] This stood in contrast to the MSSG's predecessor – the Joint CIMIC Group – which, according to one military officer, had been associated with 'the fluffy civilian stuff that the Army doesn't like to do.'[165] The rebranding of the MSSG not only involved a new denomination but also an upgrade of the commanding officer's rank, and tighter recruitment criteria 'in an attempt to remove the stigma of career foul' that had previously kept qualified officers away from applying for similar functions within the Army.[166] As military commanders became more attuned to 'understanding the importance of this population thing' over time – as the MSSG commander put it – it became easier to find common ground among military units and their civilian counterparts within the PRT.[167]

[163] Rather than representing a separate career stream within the military, the MSSG recruits staff for a service of two years only (of which roughly half is spent on deployment). For a description of the MSSG, see Tristan Kelly, 'MSSG: building bridges in Afghanistan', *Defence News*, 12 August 2010; Teuten and Korski, *Preparing for peace*, pp. 107-8.
[164] Colonel Greville Bibby, Commander MSSG, quoted in Tristan Kelly, 'Stabilisation in Afghanistan: winning the population from the insurgent', *Defence News*, 4 August 2010.
[165] UK_43, 5 May 2010.
[166] Ibid. According to another interviewee, a fairly senior position within the MSSG had attracted tenfold the average number of applications in 2010 (UK_48, 1 July 2010). A member of the MSSG noted that the company commander he had worked for had received the Distinguished Service Order with a reference to the opening of a school and engaging with locals, which he took as a sign for a 'massive change of attitude' within the British military. Warrant Officer Class 2 Chris Davis, a Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers vehicle mechanic, deployed with the MSSG in March 2009, quoted in Kelly, 'Stabilisation in Afghanistan: winning the population from the insurgent'.
[167] Ibid.

The US Army has a specialised branch for Civil Affairs, which provides a natural focal point for many tasks that fall into the broad scope of stability operations. The US PRTs thus brought representatives of civilian agencies into close contact with military reservists and Civil Affairs units, who often brought skills from their civilian professions to the field with them.[168] While this may have provided opportunities to find common ground, as described above, it occasionally also led to tensions over roles and expertise. A US Army Civil Affairs officer, for instance, complained that the whole-of-government logic that had brought civilian agencies into the field led to the marginalization of Civil Affairs forces by relegating them 'to little more than contract managers as other responsibilities have been usurped by other agencies.'[169] A State Department official, on the other hand, noted that many of his colleagues had found themselves working alongside Army reserve officers, who considered reconstruction and local engagement to be their (exclusive) sphere of expertise and thus treated their civilian counterparts with indifference or suspicion.[170] Other civilian interviewees, however, expressed great appreciation for the skills sets and attitude brought to the mission by reservists and Civil Affairs units. A former USAID employee noted that these officers 'really sounded like development practitioners.'[171] A Foreign Service officer commended the vast experience and background of his Civil Affairs

[168] Civil Affairs are made of about 90 per cent reservists who bring skills from their civilian occupations to the service. Most reserve CA officers are provided by the US Army and assigned to the US Army Special Operations Command (SOCOM). According to Baranick *et al.* more than 75 per cent of all CA personnel had been deployed at least once to Iraq or Afghanistan by 2005. Baranick, Holshek, and Wentz, 'Civil Affairs at crossroads', p. 31.
[169] Greg Grimes, 'Civil Affairs reset', *Small Wars Journal*, 4 June 2011.
[170] US_61, 10 December 2010.
[171] US_41, 28 October 2010.

counterparts, who 'hadn't spent their entire career camping in the woods in Fort Bragg' and thus knew to value the contribution made by civilian advisers.[172]

However, in contrast to the perceived upgrade of stabilisation roles within the British military (at least among those directly involved), the Civil Affairs officers and reservists sometimes struggled to gain recognition for their role in the eyes of regular Army and Marine units. Henry Nuzum argues that a combat (or 'manoeuvre') bias within the US military at large led deploying brigades to downplay the importance of the reconstruction mission and, by extension, the validity of the service of those responsible for it. This could lead not only to resentment but constrain the work of Civil Affairs officers who depended on the protection and transport provided by regular troops. According to an officer quoted by Nuzum, the dominant military culture within the PRT still favoured 'the "kinetic", finding and engaging bands of enemy fighters, over mundane stabilization.'[173] Robert Perito equally observed in his survey of PRTs in Afghanistan that 'in some cases, combat units ... treated their CA teams and National Guard units as "not real soldiers" who required protection' and that such tensions had *in extremis* precluded cooperation.[174]

Evaluation of the contribution made to coordination by the PRT model

In terms of material obstacles in the form of funding and logistics, the PRT structure has indeed provided a number of helpful mechanisms. Both American

[172] Fort Bragg, a US military installation in North Carolina, is home to the US Airborne and Special Operations forces. The interviewee most likely referred to the 82nd Airborne, a parachute infantry division headquartered at Fort Bragg, which repeatedly deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq.
[173] Nuzum, *Shades of CORDS*, p. 29.
[174] Perito, *US experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, p. 8.

and British PRTs have allowed for the pooling of different funding streams.[175] The combination of different sources – small, rapidly available funds and larger sums governed by more complex regulations – provided PRT staff with a flexible instrument to bridge the gap between immediate needs and longer-term projects.[176] Provided that joint decision-making processes were in place, the PRT structure thus facilitated the efficient allocation of resources as well as the implementation, oversight, and evaluation of stabilisation projects. Civilian experts further benefitted from the transport and security arrangements provided by the military. PRTs also considerably facilitated the logistics of civilian-military coordination where they were used as joint headquarters. As a State Department official explained, the military's geographical division of Afghanistan into areas of operation was not congruent with the provincial structure that defined where the State Department's political interlocutors were located. In the case of separate headquarters, this meant that the sole purpose of placing a State Department official at the brigade headquarters was 'to try to keep the military under control – and that is very frustrating and arguably kind of a waste of a resource.'[177]

In terms of bureaucratic obstacles, the empirical evidence gathered from the two cases suggests that the ability of the PRT model to mitigate obstacles arising from divergent operating procedures and agency interests should not be overstated. It has been noted that agency cultures tended to assert themselves within the PRTs in spite of shared premises and joint structures. As the previous chapter has highlighted, different organisational approaches and priorities at the PRT-level

[175] For a breakdown of different sources of funding within US-led PRTs, see US Congress, *Agency stovepipes vs strategic agility*, p. 23.
[176] See for instance Perito, *US experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, p. 10.
[177] US_61, 10 December 2010.

clashed in particular with regard to the military's demand for rapid and visible local reconstruction projects in the area of operations, on the one hand, and the long-term, indirect (locally-led) capacity-building approach advocated by development experts, on the other. The latter was moreover often aimed at the provincial or national levels, rather than following the military's geographical division of the terrain.

At the Helmand PRT, this clash was reflected in the debate over so-called quick impact projects (QIPs), which – initially at least – pitched the British military and DFID against each other. Stuart Gordon argues that a shift from a primarily infrastructure-oriented to a governance-led approach under a new joint civilian-military plan (the Helmand Road Map) elaborated in 2008 reduced these tensions.[178] Gordon further contrasts this with US PRTs in eastern Afghanistan, which continued to channel significant resources into service delivery to the detriment of governance-related programmes.[179] It is possible that the explicitly cooperative approach adopted by the Helmand PRT facilitated this shift in emphasis from the military's concern with reconstruction and service delivery towards a civilian-led approach to governance. However, the difference between the British and American approaches noted by Gordon is likely to follow from broader differences in approach among British and American civilian agencies (in particular DFID and USAID), which have been analysed in chapters three and four.

[178] Gordon, 'The UK's stabilisation model', p. 377.
[179] Ibid.

While the PRTs provided platforms for intercultural exchange and learning among representatives of different organisations, the overall context was undoubtedly shaped by the predominant culture of the military. A US civilian adviser reflecting on his experience in Iraq urged colleagues in the State Department to start learning military acronyms and ranks and noted 'you'll not be living alongside a military culture; you'll be living *in* the military.'[180] A British civilian official contended that the PRT must in some regards be run in the image of a military headquarters for coordination to function well.[181] Yet, the minority status that the structural reality in most PRTs imposed on them was not always perceived as a disadvantage by civilian practitioners. A number of civilian interviewees recounted how they had gained influence on the ground precisely because they had operated outside the military's formal chain of command.[182] Wearing civilian clothes or standing out as a woman in a predominantly male environment were highlighted as factors that had facilitated access to the commanding officer; bought a few (precious) additional minutes of attention from troops; or allowed civilians to challenge assumptions and bring in new ideas in an otherwise highly structured environment.[183]

The discrepancy in numbers, however, could equally reinforce the attention that the civilian minority's behaviour attracted within the military community, especially when its conduct was seen to deviate from the prevailing (military)

[180] Horacio Ureta, Iraq Provincial Action Officer, PRT Anbar embedded with a Marine Forward Operating Base north of Ramadi, Iraq, 2007. Quoted in Dorman, 'Iraq PRTs', p. 24.
[181] UK_51, 5 May 2011.
[182] US_07, 10 September 2010; US_55, 30 November 2010; UK_49, 27 January 2011.
[183] The experience of a female university graduate contracted by USAID to serve in a PRT in Afghanistan is described as follows by Hodge: 'As a woman she felt no peer pressure, no need to fit in with the "band of brothers" culture of the military. She would never be part of the boys' club ... she could do her job without feeling as though she had to toe the military's line.' Hodge, *Armed humanitarians*, p. 95.

conventions and rules. An MOD civil servant noted that having two tremendously different cultures living and working together – with different accommodation standards, working hours, regulations for clothing and drinking – did not automatically foster mutual understanding but could also lead to resentment and reinforce stereotypes.[184] Examples of culture clashes that were highlighted by interviewees included an instance where civilians were enjoying a day off with a game of volleyball, seemingly unaware that the troops were mourning the loss of one of theirs, or female civilians 'strolling around the compound in flowing skirts and sandals.'[185] Whilst these examples are anecdotes, they indicate that the link between co-location and civilian-military acculturation within the PRT structure was neither straightforward nor automatic. This is not to say, however, that the co-location of different agencies within the PRT structure had no beneficial impact in terms of mutual learning and building trust.

Finally, the cultural acclimatisation among representatives of different agencies that occurred within the PRT structure had a number of distinctive features that are worth listing. First, a common sense of belonging appears to have arisen from the shared desire among practitioners on the ground to make a difference and to see that 'things are better when we leave than when we got here first.' As an FCO official noted, 'there are important differences in approaches – the "how" – but everyone wants things to get better. Reminding everyone of this shared goal was a way to calm things down when discussions became heated.'[186] Tangible and fairly immediate objectives thus provided a stronger basis for common action than formal 'end states' or 'strategic narratives', which were often evoked in the

[184] UK_39, 14 January 2010.
[185] UK_51, 5 May 2011.
[186] UK_52, 5 May 2011.

official discourse of both the British and American governments but remained politically contested, fragmented, and subject to change. Second, as already noted, personalities and personal perceptions dictated the nature of interagency dynamics in the absence of formalized structures or ingrained practices. Combined with frequent staff rotations, this reality introduced a high degree of fluidity to the quality of interagency relations and meant that the acculturation occurring on the ground was likely to be short-lived.[187] Third, the shared cultural space among PRT members was sometimes constructed in a negative fashion, in other words, by defining what the PRT culture was *not* about. Frustrations in dealing with the London or Washington bureaucracies, or even with line managers locked up in secure embassies or compounds in the host nation capital, provided common ground among those in the field.[188] Shared disdain for the petty bureaucracy at home and the desire to escape micro-management and 'get on with the job' created a sense of commonality that bridged the cultural gap commonly assumed to exist between humanitarian-minded aid workers and enemy-focused troops. The British senior civilian representative in Basra described this as 'solidarity in adversity [which] was accentuated in practice by a shared disappointment at the perceived failure of parent departments to respond and adapt to such an unusual situation and to deliver what those on the ground considered was needed.'[189]

These features raise doubts over the possibility of replicating the sense of common purpose promoted within the PRT structure at other levels – such as within the home bureaucracy – in terms of structures, procedures and mindsets. A

[187] Dorman, 'Iraq PRTs', p. 28.
[188] An FSO who desired to remain anonymous is quoted as saying 'There is a huge disconnect between Embassy Baghdad and the field ... and an even larger disconnect between Washington and the field' in Ibid., p. 33. See also Perito, *US experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, p. 5.
[189] Synnott, *Bad days in Basra*, p. 133.

British Army officer, for instance, noted that 'the PRT in Basra was a plug looking for sockets to plug into [back in London] but it was like the PRT was on European configuration when all the sockets were American.'[190] Moreover, in spite of growing efforts to administer joint civilian-military pre-deployment training and education, it is uncertain whether a sense of unity can ever be promoted prior to the actual arrival of practitioners (and the almost inevitable clash of cultures) on the ground. Depending on the length of individual tours, initial friction and the requirement for cultural adaptation may take up the better part of the joint experience of a given combination of military and civilian practitioners within a PRT. Longer deployments pose yet a different challenge from the point of view of cultural acclimatisation. Several civilian interviewees described how they had fought temptations to 'go native' with the predominantly military culture that surrounded them, or how they had become overly focused on the needs of a single district to the detriment of understanding the larger picture.[191] It is to some extent a paradox of an integrated approach that too much harmony and alignment among representatives of different agencies risks removing the initial *raison d'être* of a mixed civilian-military approach, which is to combine *distinct* viewpoints.

4. Chapter conclusion

The chapter has provided an overview of organisational structures and mechanisms for coordination that currently exist in the British and American institutional architectures. It has briefly portrayed the creation and evolution of

[190] UK_15, 28 February 2008.
[191] UK_41, 27 April 2010; UK_52, 5 May 2011; US_55, 30 November 2010.

different mechanisms before analyzing in more detail to what extent they address obstacles to coordination, as identified in the previous chapter. It has been argued that coordination from the top in the form of executive-level mechanisms has not been very effective in either of the two cases. By contrast, the specialised units established in the United States and the United Kingdom to facilitate interagency coordination in reconstruction and stabilisation missions – both within the home bureaucracy and on the ground – have shown a more positive, but overall mixed record.

Both S/CRS and the Stabilisation Unit responded to an obvious weakness in the government architecture (i.e. the lack of deployable civilian capacity), which allowed them to secure enough institutional support to survive and expand. The bias towards operational functions to the detriment of conceptual ones, however, meant that these units ended up directing most of their energy towards fixing a problem that had not been properly thought through at the interagency level in the first place. The service-provider mentality adopted by both units arguably made it harder to develop a coherent long-term strategy for their mandate, and for the professional profile associated with it. Forced to settle for a facilitator role in cross-departmental deliberations by the imperative to secure institutional survival, these units had scant authority to propose solutions in the case of political and philosophical disagreements among departments. In a comparative perspective, the Stabilisation Unit appears to have fared slightly better with a relatively narrow mandate, modest ambitions, as well as core funding provided by one of its parent departments. The struggle to secure funding absorbed much of the early years of S/CRS's existence, which had further started out with an inflated vision of what

the coordination mandate entailed, and therefore encountered stiff resistance to its mandate within the bureaucracy.

Field-based mechanisms in the form of PRTs, finally, provided a number of benefits for coordination in both case studies, including the allocation of resources and the breakdown of cultural stereotypes among members of different organisations. Interviews with practitioners nevertheless highlighted the limits of the PRT model in terms of interagency coordination. While PRTs offered a platform to institutionalize joint arrangements, the extent to which civilian advice and expertise entered the military's decision-making process still depended largely on the willingness of commanders to hear such advice in the first place. In spite of the proximity and mutual exposure promoted by the PRT structure, the degree of cohesion that emerged often remained shallow, compared to longer-standing agency and service cultures. The comparison of the two case studies suggests that resource constraints on the British side may have supported a more inclusive and collaborative PRT model from the start, whereas the comparatively larger capacity on the American side allowed for a trial and error approach to the development of PRTs, which gravitated towards a predominantly military-led model.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the challenge of coordinating civilian and military efforts in the context of a so-called whole-of-government or comprehensive approach to stability operations. The empirical analysis has focused on British and American attempts to implement an integrated civilian-military strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade. Guided by an analytical framework, which is grounded in organisation theory, the thesis has unpicked the policy discourse within the UK and US governments. It has done so by paying close attention to the organisations behind the labels of defence, diplomacy, and development. Empirical data has been gathered through personal interviews with a wide range of practitioners and in-depth study of official documents released by the various agencies involved over the past decade. Together, these have provided the basis for a fine-grained analysis of obstacles to interagency coordination.

As stated in the beginning, the research design first and foremost reflected an empirical interest, rather than serving the purpose of theory testing. Similarities among the obstacles to civilian-military coordination identified in each case outweigh the differences that set the two institutional contexts apart. Rather than stark contrasts, the thesis thus revealed interesting nuances between the two cases. A similar set of problems and comparable attempts to fix them were identified in both cases, regardless of varying levels of capacity and different legal and institutional arrangements. This finding supports the emphasis placed on

organisational cultures in the thesis, as opposed to relying on material or procedural explanations alone.

The puzzle at the heart of the thesis asked why coordination among civilian and military agencies in the conduct of stability operations has been difficult to achieve, in spite of widespread agreement on its necessity. In contrast to many existing policy reports and analyses, the thesis consciously avoided jumping to the search for solutions to fix 'the coordination problem' and instead focused on the question of why it arose in the first instance. Through a combination of empirical observation and theoretical analysis, the thesis has offered a nuanced explanation of why the apparent consensus over closer integration among the 'three D's' has not readily transformed into unity of effort within government bureaucracies and in operations on the ground. Specifically, the thesis has established a theoretical framework that helps distinguish between material, bureaucratic and cultural dimensions of obstacles to coordination. This in turn allowed identifying organisational cultures as a crucial force behind government agencies' reluctance to sign up to, and invest in, an integrated approach. Hence, the thesis concludes that the provision of material incentives or the enactment of formal decrees does little to improve interagency coordination as long as the roles and expectations implied by a joint approach clash with organisational identities and self-perceptions.

As noted in the introduction, the problem of coordination among different institutional actors is hardly an understudied one. Even so, this thesis has explored a reality that is insufficiently acknowledged in the contemporary policy discourse

and has received relatively little attention in academic writing on the subject until very recently. Its contribution to the existing research can be summarized in four key points. First, the thesis' conclusions caution against an overly procedural or mechanistic approach to coordination and institutional reform, which is discernible in many policy debates and proposals for reform. Second, the analysis has revealed important limitations in the means and mechanisms employed to foster interagency coordination by two governments that have been at the forefront of pursuing integrated approaches to security over the past decade. Third, the thesis has illustrated how interagency dynamics within the home bureaucracy and in the theatre of operations are intertwined but also how the factors that drive or inhibit coordination vary between the two contexts. Fourth, the thesis has highlighted a number of key areas where a 'clash of organisational cultures' among different government agencies has particular implications for coordination. These include notions of leadership, understandings of effectiveness, and expectations over desirable outcomes and what it takes to achieve them.

These findings and their significance for future research in this area will be substantiated in more detail in the remainder of this chapter, which is structured in four parts. The first part offers a summary of key insights from the empirical data covered in chapters three to six of the thesis. The second part highlights the strengths of the three-layer framework for analysis (introduced in chapter two of the thesis) and discusses the implications arising from the identification of organisational cultures as key obstacles to coordination. The third part puts the thesis' findings in perspective with the contemporary policy discourse on

interagency coordination, before the fourth concludes the thesis with an outline of avenues for further research.

Summary and key insights from the empirical inquiry

Chapters three and four of the thesis have analyzed the assumptions that underpin the policy discourse on civilian-military coordination in the United States and the United Kingdom. These chapters have demonstrated that the conceptual basis for stabilisation in both cases was weak at the start of the twenty-first century, and that the roles implied by the templates for coordination clashed with traditional understandings within organisations of their core missions and competences.

Aside from an obvious difference in scale, the two cases differed in terms of the formal organisation of the three D's, which saw a trilateral-set up in the United Kingdom contrasting with a bilateral relationship between the Pentagon and the State Department in the United States. Levels of capacity were skewed towards the military in both institutional contexts, but more dramatically so in the United States. In both cases, the rationale behind calls for greater integration among defence, diplomacy, and development revolved around the threat to national security posed by weak and failing states. Differences in nuance between the British and American policy discourses can be squared with the material reality of different levels of capacity, which encouraged a multilateral outlook in the United Kingdom while leading to a greater focus on national capabilities – accompanied by the concern over an imbalance among military and civilian tools of statecraft – in the United States.

Beneath variations in form the substance of the templates for coordination that emerged in each case suffered from a similar mismatch of roles and organisational identities. Conceptualisations of a division of labour among military and civilian agencies in stability operations clashed not only with material realities but with longer-standing organisational cultures. The templates tended to relegate the civilian contribution to an uncomfortable spot between a formally recognised overall lead on policy, on the one hand, and the expectation of an operational or 'expeditionary' role that civilian agencies struggled to fill for various reasons, on the other. The military's logistical and numerical superiority in the planning and implementation stages of stability operations further influenced expectations regarding the organisational arrangements required in a joint effort. Hence, delivery tended to trump influence in the evaluation of effectiveness; leadership was often identified with the pursuit of (largely illusory) unity of command; and immediate demands for rapid and visible effects competed with concerns over sustainability in the longer term.

Tensions resulting from a mismatch between expectations and organisational self-perceptions played out in slightly different ways within the two institutional architectures. Within the US government, the State Department and USAID embraced the policy discourse that called upon them to become effective partners to the military as a means to protect their budgets and request additional resources. The UK government, by contrast, saw greater friction among MOD, FCO, and DFID over the nature of stabilisation activities and appropriate ways to implement them. Hence, the policy discourse in the US took a rather technocratic turn by focusing primarily on capacity-related problems. The UK's

'Comprehensive Approach', on the other hand, provided greater scope for substantive discussions over rationales for stabilisation, which led to acrimonious exchanges among different agencies on occasion. Organisational cultures have provided the key to understanding these different reactions to the call for greater integration within the two government architectures. Attention paid to different historical legacies and variations in the interpretation of core missions within the two institutional contexts further shed light on the ways in which organisational cultures affected the behaviour of these agencies.

The analysis of two different institutional contexts has illustrated that stabilisation remains a contested discursive field within which organisations compete over definitions and expertise. In the midst of the noise generated by countless task force recommendations, opinion pieces, and 'lessons learned', there is ultimately little agreement or authoritative guidance on how to evaluate the performance and conduct of different institutional actors in stability operations. Definitional struggles and sprawling terminology reflect this conceptual uncertainty among and within organisations over the mission they are engaging in. Military and civilian organisations alike have grappled with a multitude of competing concepts – COIN, stabilisation/stability operations, counter-terrorism, peace support, and irregular warfare – that appear to defy clear hierarchies and separations. The countless graphs and power point slides that have emerged from the military's attempts to organise the battle space into lines of operation (e.g. security, governance, reconstruction and information) in both cases often seem easier to commend for their sophisticated graphic design than for providing greater clarity. On the civilian side, doctrinal developments in the realm of stabilisation and

counterinsurgency were more forcefully pursued in the United States, albeit with very limited success. In the United Kingdom, the FCO and DFID increasingly left conceptual matters to the newly established cross-departmental Stabilisation Unit. This arguably allowed them to retain a perspective in their own policy guidance that fit more comfortably with their respective mandates.

The thesis has further illustrated the institutional soul-searching over professional profiles and expertise that was prompted by growing pressure on traditional understandings of core missions and competences within different organisations. While small pockets of practitioners embraced new 'ways of doing business' within each of the organisations studied, the broader professional communities that surrounded them remained divided over the tradeoffs and risks implied in doing so. Interviews with practitioners conducted for this thesis suggest that some of them came to identify with a 'maverick', 'renegade', or 'cowboy' image that created a sense of belonging in opposition to the mainstream. Some of them were influential (and perhaps lucky) enough to move from the margins to the centre of institutional attention – as in the case of General David Petraeus in the US Army – and had a discernible impact on collective understandings. The thesis has found, however, that hybrid civilian-military professional profiles in the area of stabilisation often resulted from unconventional career choices made on the basis of personal convictions rather than from systemic incentives.

Chapter five has examined obstacles to coordination within the British and American government architectures and in operations on the ground. At the institutional level, organisations struggled to harmonize modes of planning,

education, and training for stability operations. Evident discrepancies in material capacity were compounded by – and to some degree distracted attention from – deep-seated cultural differences among agencies. These included considerations over appropriate modes of interaction, decision-making, and human resources management. On the ground, military units' inherent dynamism propelled them into action where civilian agencies were purportedly failing to 'show up'. This led the military to perceive a 'vacuum' that proved difficult to square with its stereotypical 'can do' spirit, which fulfils an important function in the military profession. Civilian advisers deployed in the field struggled to prove their value and to make their voices heard in a highly delivery-oriented environment. They were further caught between the need to find pragmatic solutions in the short-term and concerns over long-term implications of their actions inculcated by their professional background.

The analysis has illustrated the importance of seeing obstacles to coordination in perspective with the institutional context – understood here as comprising both material infrastructures and intersubjective meanings – that surrounds and permeates organisations brought together in the conduct of stability operations. The home institutional and operational contexts are intrinsically linked in the pursuit of a comprehensive approach but inter-organisational dynamics differ between the two levels, as shown in the thesis. Chapters three and four have thus provided the basis to understand some of the dilemmas faced by practitioners with regard to values and practices cultivated within their home institution as they become exposed to different worldviews and ways of doing business in an interagency setting. Chapter five has shown that in light of uncertainty over roles

and missions, and persistent disagreement over the conceptual meaning and value of stabilisation, culture clashes among different organisations made it hard to establish legitimate bases from which to evaluate, criticise and improve processes of decision-making and implementation. This challenge was further compounded by uncertainty over hierarchies among different institutional actors, which resulted from the tension between an ideal or 'preferred' division of labour that sees civilians in the lead, on the one hand, and material realities that inevitably put the military in charge, on the other.

Chapter six has analyzed existing and proposed institutional mechanisms for cross-departmental cooperation in the two cases. The evaluation of different coordination mechanisms both within the government architecture and on the ground led to the conclusion that existing arrangements were limited in their ability to promote cooperation among different organisations. The weakness of centralised, top-down mechanisms, which was evident in both empirical cases, raised expectations with regard to specialised coordination units within the bureaucracy at home and additional field-based mechanisms to foster coordination at the planning and implementation levels. The survival of newly established coordination units within both governments can be taken as a sign that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have given momentum to initiatives that may outlive the specific context that prompted their creation and provide a basis for the future integration of civilian and military efforts. The evolution of PRTs from primarily military-led enterprises to multiagency platforms for cooperation in the field further supports this measured optimism. These new institutional tools provided a focal point for different professional communities to interact and a mission to

identify with and thereby offered ways to transform individual experiences into more coherent institutional approaches. Albeit in a limited fashion, they helped capture, promote, and spread new ideas and practices that had arisen largely *ad hoc* in the conduct of stability operations. However, they appeared limited in their ability to facilitate conceptual developments in the realm of stabilisation – in contrast to operational functions, such as the establishment of a civilian expert cadre – and ultimately contributed little to the clarification of roles and responsibilities among established institutional players.

The growing activism of the UK Stabilisation Unit in the realm of lessons learned and doctrine over the years suggests that these mechanisms have a better chance at contributing to conceptual developments once their institutional survival is established and no longer consumes most of their energy and resources. It can be argued that the Stabilisation Unit occasionally served as a safety valve for inter-departmental tensions within the UK government. For instance, by increasingly taking over the responsibility for stabilisation tasks in Afghanistan, it allowed DFID to steer clear of certain controversies related to its participation in stability operations (and the disbursement of development funds for these efforts). In order to fulfil such a function, however, specialised units have to become sufficiently empowered within the institutional architecture, which in turn may reduce their acceptance among established departments and offices and remove one of their original advantages by adding more layers of bureaucracy.

The value of a multi-layer framework for analysis

The theoretical foundations of the three-layer framework have been outlined in chapter two. This chapter has further made the case for integrating a cultural perspective on organisations with material and bureaucratic politics explanations rather than seeing them compete for explanatory power in a zero sum game. The resulting framework has shown that obstacles to coordination defy single-factor explanations by highlighting how the different dimensions are interconnected. Rather than dismissing the insights gained from an analysis of material realities and bureaucratic impediments, the thesis has suggested that coordination is hard to achieve not only because of inadequate institutional structures but because of deeper disagreements over roles, objectives and how to pursue them. Hence, the focus on organisational cultures has provided the missing piece in the analysis rather than contradicting other theoretical approaches.

The identification of separate layers in the framework has primarily served to structure the analysis of the empirical evidence gathered. It has been demonstrated that the layers are in reality interconnected and overlapping. Material factors raise deeper questions that touch upon the very *raison d'être* of the organisations involved in stability operations. Some of these questions entail cost-benefit analyses, such as the considerable investments required to field a large civilian presence in a hostile environment. Others are political, such as determining the level of risk that civilian government employees can be exposed to on the ground. And some are philosophical, such as the question of whether development assistance has any role to play in an environment where bullets are flying, or

whether negotiations with local power brokers over socio-economic reforms should be carried out by officials in uniform.

Resources and formal procedures reflect expectations and assumptions about appropriate conduct, which are embodied in organisational cultures and form a collective sense of identity. These cultural values are replicated in organisations' recruitment, training, evaluation, and promotion schemes. They inform decisions within organisations over the skills and competences that are worth cultivating, as well as over the acquisition of equipment and resources. Disagreement among organisations over appropriate means of delivery, modes of decision-making, or measures of effectiveness is thus not a merely procedural or resource-related problem. It touches upon deeper cultural differences, which are reflected in different understandings of appropriateness and collective expectations about what constitutes an achievable and desirable objective for a given organisation.

Cross-departmental structures may be necessary in order to provide the technical facilities for joint deliberation among organisations. Yet mechanisms alone cannot guarantee that the ideas discussed and measures decided therein will receive political buy-in at the level of individual organisations – in other words, that they will command agreement *within* each organisation that they are worth investing in. How well new ideas and modes of operation settle into the cultural sediment of the organisation – and in what timeframe – depends not on simply on resources, decrees, or organisational reforms but on the degree to which new roles and functions resonate with standing organisational cultures. The thesis has further highlighted underlying doubts within organisations over potential long-term

consequences of some of the reforms that have been proposed in the areas of joint planning, training, education and organisational mandates in the contemporary policy discourse.

The analysis offered in the thesis leads to the conclusion that the cultural layer is the most inert one – in the sense of a sediment or 'nucleus' – and consequently the most difficult to change. Depending on availability, new resources can be injected into the institutional architecture in order to promote coordination. Formal structures and mandates can be changed by decree. Organisational cultures, however, are hard to capture and manipulate. They act as constraints on coordination by informing the readiness with which organisations buy into shared structures and joint processes. At the same time, it has been argued in the second chapter that culture not only constrains action but also enables it by providing shared meaning. Organisational identities are enacted and sustained through interaction with others but they can also become transformed in the process. This argument has implications for the nature of cultural change and organisational adaptation.

The analysis has shown that the main drivers of institutional change identified in the academic literature have indeed played a role in the two empirical cases. For instance, both the impact of influential leaders and a sense of crisis created by the threat of impending failure arguably spurred a revision of American and British military doctrine on the back of the wars fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. While notable in terms of adaptation and change *within* military institutions, the ensuing changes equally affected expectations over the nature of civilian-military

coordination through the conceptualisation of a civilian role in the 'hold' and 'build' phases of a counterinsurgency campaign. The importance of leaders is further reflected in the lasting legacy of a charismatic, yet controversial, figure at the head of DFID in the organisation's formative years. Marked improvements in relations between the Pentagon and the civilian side of government following the arrival of a new Secretary of Defense in 2006 equally illustrate the importance of leaders in setting the tone for collective attitudes within the bureaucracy.

Yet the thesis' findings suggest that organisational change may equally occur in a more gradual and incremental fashion, through contact with and prolonged exposure to hitherto unfamiliar concepts, ideas, and people. Within both British and American government organisations, internal cultural fragmentation created fissures where new ideas could enter and challenge collective self-understandings of what it meant to be a soldier, a development professional, or a diplomat. Crucially, however, these processes did not occur at the same speed in the context of operations on the ground and within the institutional architecture at home. The operational context favoured interchange and acculturation to a degree that appeared impossible to replicate within the home bureaucracy. This finding helps explain the frustration expressed by many practitioners over the contrast between positive experiences with cooperation at the individual level and the apparent breakdown of trust and solidarity at the institutional level. The analysis of intra-organisational tensions in the thesis cautions against overstating the significance of the convergence observed among practitioners on the ground. Widespread conceptual uncertainty points to deeper philosophical disagreements that may be

temporarily eclipsed in the midst of operational pressures and at a distance from the home bureaucracy but persist at the institutional level.

The thesis has shown that in the face of strong traditions, proponents of cultural change risked being marginalised by their home institution unless they found themselves in a position of leadership that allowed them to pursue their ideas more forcefully and on a broader scale. Yet even in the absence of charismatic leadership – or, in DFID's case perhaps in spite of it – the accumulation of experience by a growing mass of practitioners over time arguably led to shifts in attitude and helped to attenuate misunderstandings and tension among different organisations. The quasi-generational nature of this process, however, qualifies the prospects for achieving change in the short term through organisational restructuring by decree or through so-called 'surges' in manpower and resources.

If shared experience and mutual exposure to cultural differences are indeed primary pathways to better coordination, the processes involved are unlikely to comply with the compressed timeframes implied by electoral cycles and operational pressures. New ideas require time to trickle down before they reach the cultural sediment of an organisation. This process can be accelerated to some extent by means of doctrine, changes to training and education modules, and alterations to promotion schemes and career structures within organisations. However, the thesis has also highlighted the limits of each of these measures in a whole-of-government context. These observations lead to the discussion of the implications for policy arising from the thesis.

Implications for policy

The policy imperative for the United States and its coalition partners to 'get it right' in Iraq and Afghanistan arguably peaked around 2006-07 and 2009, respectively, and is now rapidly waning. The contemporary political context is marked by limited appetite for costly interventions abroad in the face of pressing concerns over budget cuts on both sides of the Atlantic. A decade of experimenting with 'stabilisation' has come to a close and the prospects for similar missions in the future remain highly uncertain. Yet, even if history is to judge these interventions as ill-fated, hubristic adventures, they are likely to inform understandings of what civilian-military coordination within Western democracies may look like in the years to come. Stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan not only spurred academic and policy debates over the past decade, they have also been the formative experience of a cadre of military and civilian officials, who are moving up the ranks to occupy senior decision-making and policy positions.

The experiences of the past decade do not hold objective lessons for civilian-military coordination that wait to be detected and distilled into so-called best practice. Policy debates over roles and responsibilities are animated by a range of different arguments and considerations, including political and financial cost-benefit calculations; disagreements over appropriate ways, means and ends; and, last but not least, normative concerns over the balance among military and civilian instruments and influence. The definition of roles and responsibilities among

civilian and military agencies is an ongoing conversation of which the last decade is but one interlude – though a significant one.

The thesis' findings strongly caution against a purely procedural approach to solving the problems that have emerged in the pursuit of a comprehensive approach to stability operations. It has been demonstrated in the thesis that the concept of stabilisation raises difficult questions for organisations with regard to core competences and missions. Development agencies are confronted with the challenge of adapting the provision of foreign assistance to unstable and violent contexts. Foreign affairs ministries have been pushed towards a more 'operational' role that implies transformative action in addition to observation and reporting. Militaries have been faced with the political dimension of their conduct in so-called 'wars amongst the people'. In spite of the clear imperative for coordination that has arisen from the multifaceted and complex nature of stability operations, the challenges raised thereby require introspection and conceptual debate *within* each contributing organisation as much as in a joint forum. While communication across agency lines is crucial in the pursuit of coordination, some of the contentious debates over roles and missions that have arisen in the context of stability operations may be more effectively solved at the level of individual organisations.

The contemporary policy discourse often appears to unquestioningly assume the superiority of integrated processes without paying sufficient attention to possible tradeoffs. Hence, many proposals for reform have emphasized large-scale reorganisation and considerable investment in joint arrangements. A more

selective approach to integration, which singles out areas where the benefits of integration outweigh the costs – both in terms of investment into joint processes and with regard to the tradeoffs implied – seems preferable in light of the conclusions reached by the thesis. The thesis has furthermore shown that some of the standard mechanisms employed within different organisations for the development and maintenance of professional expertise do not lend themselves automatically to a joint approach. Processes for decision-making, deliberation, planning, implementation, training, education, and performance evaluation that work well within the context of a single organisation may fail to produce the desired outcomes in an interagency setting or come with unintended side effects and thus require critical evaluation and careful adaptation.

While outcomes of joint processes are likely to command greater consensus in the interagency community there is a risk that the utility of the resulting product diminishes in the eyes of its primary audience. In the case of military doctrine, increasingly broad and inclusive drafting processes have led to documents that are exemplary in their holistic treatment of the challenges at hand, but at the same time suffer from a lack of operational guidance for units deployed in the field. The thesis has also shown that a single, integrated model is unlikely to cater to the needs of each individual organisation to train and exercise its functions and roles in a stability operation (some of which may defy exercising altogether). Based on a careful evaluation of obstacles to coordination, the thesis has indicated areas that have to date not been sufficiently taken into account in the design of joint institutional arrangements. These include differences among organisations in terms of how they understand leadership, how they approach the generation and

retention of expertise, what type of outcomes the value in joint deliberations, and how they perceive and measure effectiveness.

Many practitioners have furthermore emphasized the need to push decision-making authority in stability operations down the chain of command and 'out to the field' in order to provide those who are immediately concerned with operations with greater flexibility to react to local developments. The thesis has illustrated the tendency towards pragmatic accommodation among representatives of different agencies in the theatre of operations, which allows individuals to collaborate in spite of agency divides within the home bureaucracy. Yet it has also drawn attention to tensions that arise between support structures within the home bureaucracy and practitioners on the ground. Field-based arrangements may look more attractive because of their distance to the bureaucratic circus at home with its turf wars and ideological rifts. Consensus emerging *ad hoc* among individuals on the ground under considerable operational pressure and natural convergence around immediate concerns may fail to hold up when evaluated in light of longer-term implications for the different agencies involved. In that sense, parallel interagency deliberations at the institutional level – however slow and painful – may well be necessary in order to agree on joint arrangements that are sustainable in the long-term.

Hence, this thesis has not unlocked the secret to interagency coordination in stability operations – contrary to the hope expressed by many interviewees that 'someone will figure out how to make this work.' Some of its findings point in a direction that may not be palatable to decision-makers and officials under pressure

to show results in the compressed timeframe of an electoral cycle or a tour of duty. By offering a careful analysis of obstacles to coordination and the implications of measures designed to overcome them, the thesis has nevertheless offered a number of insights for future arrangements for civilian-military coordination. The conclusion that organisational cultures slow down processes of institutional adaptation that are prompted by calls for greater coordination or integration is not altogether bad news. Ultimately, a clash of organisational cultures is at the core of the idea of a comprehensive approach to security and stability. A technocratic approach to coordination, which views disagreement and contestation as inherently negative, fails to honour the original intent behind the call for integration. The combination of a range of skills and expertise from different professional fields is required precisely because they stand for *distinct* perspectives on the problem at hand.

A narrow understanding of the requirement for interoperability among different organisations has sometimes led to the belief that the different components of a comprehensive approach must mirror each other materially and in procedural terms in order to allow for meaningful collaboration. The analysis has shown that discrepancies in capacity indeed pose an obstacle to coordination. However, it has also emphasized the need to understand how individual agencies approach decision-making, planning, and implementation before making large investments in joint structures. Attempts to flatten cultural differences among civilian and military organisation through the standardization of approaches and terminology ultimately risk missing the point by framing coordination as the ultimate objective rather than seeing it as a means to achieve a set of policy goals. In any given

constellation of military and civilian instruments, a balance has to be found between the demands for effective leadership, decision-making, and delivery, on the one hand, and the maintenance of a diversity of skills and approaches, on the other.

Avenues for future research

The thesis has highlighted an important obstacle to the coordination among defence, diplomatic and development establishments in the form of clashing organisational cultures. The conclusions reached naturally raise the question of whether, and how, this obstacle could be overcome. Additional research within other institutional contexts – including coordination within the United Nations system, between the EU and NATO, or within less closely related areas like business and management – not only stands to benefit from the cultural perspective highlighted in the thesis, but equally holds the potential to contribute further to a better understanding of the problems highlighted. Three distinct, but related, avenues for further research stand out specifically.

First, the thesis has argued that the current policy discourse papers over a conceptual void around the notion of stabilisation. This indicates a requirement – and opportunity – for further research on the *substance* of a common approach in addition to problematising its modalities. Some of the most salient questions that arise in this context have been outside the scope of the thesis, such as the question of whether (and how) development activity contributes to security on the ground. Many of the assumptions that currently underpin evaluations of the effectiveness

of both military and non-military actors in stabilisation missions remain unsubstantiated by scholarship and sound analysis. Further research is required to corroborate or refute the manifold claims about causal links between actions and outcomes that have informed debates among civilian and military practitioners in the context of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade. Recent academic work that has taken a critical stance towards the purported links between state weakness and international security, or poverty and violence, is a step in this direction.

Second, regardless of the ultimate assessment of the nature of these relationships, the basic recognition that governance, development, and security are *somehow* linked will continue to raise the question of how to translate this insight into institutional realities. Ready-made policy mantras, such as the call to use 'all instruments of power', fail to convey an adequate sense of the difficulty of designing institutional approaches for the simultaneous and concerted delivery of political and security effects. The thesis has suggested that the means and methods traditionally employed in the military to build tightly-knit teams of professionals, including extensive training, are not easily transferred into a whole-of-government context. It has further highlighted the difficulty of writing doctrine that speaks to a broad 'interagency' audience, but nevertheless retains its value in terms of distilling experience into lessons that can be taught and applied by practitioners within a given organisation.

Future research into ways for sharing information among different professional communities and building trust among practitioners – objectives that are

frequently subsumed in the call for 'unity of effort' – will have to be more innovative and broad in approach than existing proposals for organisational reform. Many past proposals have insufficiently taken into account trends that affect government more broadly, such as the impact of electronic media and communications or changes in human resources management and career streams. Rather than waiting for heavy bureaucratic reforms to take place, practitioners may be encouraged to form networked communities and thereby overcome some of the capacity-related and bureaucratic obstacles that have hampered joint planning and training in the past. The three-layer framework applied in the thesis offers a way to evaluate the potential of such approaches but equally to identify limitations and tradeoffs.

Rather than continuing to chase the holy grail of interagency coordination, future research should focus on how to achieve sound outcomes in a context where integrated structures and unified authority remain largely elusive. The inquiry should build on the core assumption that continued friction among different participants is not necessarily negative, but even desirable to some extent. As a consequence, the primary research objective shifts from identifying measures that promote integration among different agencies towards finding ways that allow them to do things *together* but *differently*. Again, reaching out to other academic disciplines, including sociology, business and management, and possibly the exact sciences, could help design innovative courses of inquiry.

Third, it has often been argued that 'whole-of-government' should be at the most an intermediate stage in the journey towards better integration of civilian and

military contributions in complex operations. It has been suggested, therefore, to extend coordination to a broader array of institutional actors, including intergovernmental, non-governmental and private entities. Based on the empirical research conducted for this thesis, it appears difficult to see how obstacles to joint decision-making, planning, and implementation within a single government could be overcome more readily in a broad coalition of governmental and non-governmental organisations. Material and political incentives, which encourage coordination and compensate agencies for the transaction costs incurred within a joint approach, are likely to be lower. The continuous contact and exposure that gradually builds trust and increases mutual understanding are arguably harder to sustain within a broader institutional setting. Goal displacement in the sense that coordination becomes the all-encompassing and time-consuming objective that overtakes the initial purpose of a comprehensive approach (as described earlier) appears an even higher risk within a larger group of actors. However, further research on interagency coordination within a different constellation of actors, as well as within different fields of intervention (e.g. natural disasters), stands to benefit from the theoretical framework applied in this thesis and is likely lead to additional insight on the role of organisational cultures.

In conclusion, parallel organisational discourses on 'how to do security' in the twenty-first century are likely to coexist in the future. Beneath the ebb and flow of policy constructs such as Bush administration's 'global war on terror', competing conceptualisations of security (e.g. centred on the state versus the individual) continue to inform the formulation of strategy and the allocation of resources within governments. The imposition of a single paradigm may not only prove

illusory but counterproductive. The slow pace of change within the government bureaucracy and its tendency materialize more readily in the form of adjustment at the margins rather than sweeping organisational reform are frustrating from a practitioner perspective. Yet in light of the relative paucity of open debate about tradeoffs behind contemporary templates for civilian-military coordination – and with a view to long-term implications of some of the changes to organisational arrangements and processes proposed – these hesitations do not seem entirely negative. If the ultimate objective is indeed a shift in attitudes and mindsets within the government architecture at large, these may prove more sustainable if achieved through continuous exposure to new ideas and interchange among organisations. Such sustained dialogue is bound to create friction and frustration, but these may well be a sign that a truly 'comprehensive' approach is actually at work. The challenge is to provide a context – not only in terms of structural arrangements but also with regard to ideas and practices – which allows for the resulting clash of organisational cultures to have a productive rather than a paralyzing effect.

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VII Author interviews

Given the sensitive content of their remarks in the context of inter-departmental relations, the majority of officials interviewed for this thesis requested to remain anonymous. In conformity with the coded reference system used throughout the thesis, all interviewees are listed alphabetically hereafter, including professional affiliations (held at the time of the interview unless otherwise indicated) and the location where the interview took place, but excluding the date of the interview (which is part of the code). The key to the code system has been made available to the two examiners of this thesis but is not bound with the final copy deposited at the Bodleian Library.

Interviewee	**Interview held at**
Reza Afshar *FCO, Afghanistan Desk*	FCO HQ
Michael Anderson *Colonel, US Army; Chief, Operational Integration Division, PKSOI; Strategy and Policy Officer, OSD (Policy)*	US INSCOM
Jonathan Bailey *Major-General, UK Army (ret)*	Oxford
David Barno *Lieutenant-General, US Army (ret); Commander US and Coalition Forces, OEF, Afghanistan (2003-04)*	CNAS Washington, DC
Richard Barrons *Brigadier, UK Army; Assistant Chief of Staff (Commitments), HQ LAND Command*	London
Andy Bearpark *Director, UK Association of Private Military Companies (BAPSC); ex-DFID, Director of Operations and Infrastructure, CPA, Iraq, (2003-04)*	London
Mark Beautement *Stabilisation Unit, Political officer, Sangin, Afghanistan (2010-11)*	Oxford
Christopher Beaver *Captain, UK Army; OMLT Southern Afghanistan (2007-08)*	Oxford
Anthony Benesch *US State Dept, Foreign Service Officer, Liaison to US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA

David Benest *Colonel, UK Army (ret), Strategy Director*	UK Defence Academy
Tim Bevis *Colonel, Royal Navy; Deputy Commander, ISAF, Regional Command-South, Afghanistan (2006-07)*	Oxford
Greville Bibby *Colonel, UK Army, Commanding officer, Military Stabilisation Support Group (2010)*	Warminster
Larry Brady *Professor, International Development, US Army War College/USAID*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA
Jonathan Brasher *Lieutenant-Colonel, UK Army; Commanding officer, Military Stabilisation Support Group MSSG (2009-10)*	MOD HQ
Ryan Brewster *US Dept of Agriculture, Agriculture Advisor*	USDA HQ
Reuben E. Brigety II *US Dept of State, Dep. Assist. Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration*	US Dept of State HQ
Scott Buchanan *DOD, Strategist, Office of Force Transformation, OSD*	The Pentagon,
John Buzbee *US Dept of State, Foreign Service Officer; US Embassy Baghdad (2008-09); Deputy Governorate Coordinator, Tikrit (2004)*	Washington, DC
Richard Byess *USAID, Senior Program Advisor*	USAID HQ
Stephen Camacho *Captain, US Navy; Director, Stability Operations and Civil Support Abroad OSD(P), SOLIC&IC, Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations Pentagon*	The Pentagon
Nick Carter *Major-General, UK Army, Commander ISAF, Regional Command-South (2009-10)*	Warminster
Joseph Collins *Colonel, US Army (ret); Professor of National Security Strategy, National War College; DOD, Dep. Assist. Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations (2003-04)*	Washington, DC
Alexa Courtney *USAID, Conflict Specialist and Civil-Military Advisor, CMM*	Washington, DC
David Couzens *Lieutenant-Colonel, UK Army, DCDC, Thematic Doctrine 2, MOD*	DCDC, Shrivenham

Tim Cross *Major-General, UK Army (ret)*	London
Janine Davidson *DOD, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Plans, OSD(P)*	The Pentagon
Kirkpatrick Day *USAID, Director, Field Programs Division, Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)*	USAID HQ
Scott J. Dempsey *USAID, Foreign Service Officer (2009-2011), Field Program Officer, Helmand Province, Afghanistan (2009-10)*	Washington, DC
Robin Dorff *Professor of National Security Affairs, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA
Ralph Doughty *Major-General, US Army, Chair of Interagency and Multinational Studies, CGSC, CAC Fort Leavenworth*	Washington, DC
Mark Etherington *Stabilisation Unit/PCRU, Senior Advisor*	DFID HQ
Gordon Ettenson *US Airforce, Director, Irregular Warfare*	The Pentagon
Rob Fern *MOD civil servant; served as political advisor (POLAD) in Helmand, Afghanistan.*	HM Treasury
Gerard (Jerry) Fischer *Colonel, USMC Reserve, 2d MEB G-9 / Deputy Head, Helmand PRT (2009-10)*	Washington, DC
William J. Flavin *Doctrine, Concepts, Education Training, US Army Peacekeeping Stability Operations Institute, US Army War College*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA
Amy Frumin *USAID representative to the US PRT in Panjshir valley, Afghanistan (2006-07)*	London
Tom Galloway *Stabilisation Unit, Head, Lessons and Plans; Chief of Staff/Deputy Head UK PRT Helmand (2006-07)*	DFID HQ
Mal Green *FCO, Head, Military Operations, Defence Industry and Exercises Team, Security Policy Group*	FCO HQ
Gilbert Greenall *The Rt Hon; Government Adviser on Humanitarian Affairs, ex-DFID/ODA*	Ledbury
	Washington, DC

David Greenlee *US Dept of State, Ambassador (ret), Senior advisor, S/CRS*	
Laura Hall *US State Dept, Foreign Service Officer; Training and Doctrine Division Chief, S/CRS (2008-9); Director for Stability Operations, NSC (2006-8)*	Washington, DC
Thomas X. Hammes *Colonel, USMC (ret)*	Washington, DC
Marlin Hardinger *US Dept of State, Foreign Service Officer, Afghanistan Desk; Senior US Officer at Helmand PRT (2007-10)*	Washington, DC
Kay Harris *FCO, Deputy Team Leader, Military Operations, Security Policy Group*	FCO HQ
John E. Herbst *Ambassador (ret); Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction, S/CRS (2006-2010)*	NDU, Washington, DC
Andy Hill *Major, UK Army, OC Team C, Joint CIMIC Group*	Gibraltar Barracks, Camberley, Surrey
Bruno Himmler *Commander, US Army, MD, USPHS, Health and Humanitarian Assistance Advisor*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA
Frank Hoffman *Lieutenant-Colonel, USMC Reserves (ret); Senior Director, Naval Capabilities and Readiness, Dept of the Navy*	Washington, DC
Peter Holland *FCO, Head, Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit (ADIDU)*	FCO HQ
Justin Holt *UK Liaison Officer, Pol-Mil, US Dept of State (2008-09); Stabilisation Unit, Operations and Capability Manager (2006-08)*	London
Donna L. Hopkins *US Dept of State, Foreign Affairs Officer (Bureau of Political-Military Affairs)*	Washington, DC
Matthew Jackson *Lieutenant-Colonel, UK Army, Commanding Officer, Joint CIMIC Group*	Gibraltar Barracks, Camberley, Surrey
Minna Järvenpaa *PCRU, Stabilisation Advisor (2004-05)*	Oxford
Steven Jermy *Commodore, Royal Navy; Strategy Director, British Embassy, Kabul (2007-08)*	Oxford
	USAID HQ

Thomas Johnson *USAID, PSSD-7 Liaison; QDDR/PSD-7 Task Force*	
Jack Jones *DFID, Humanitarian Project Manager, Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE)*	*Phone interview*
Sepideh Keyvanshad *USAID, former Senior Development Advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan*	Washington, DC
Mike Killion *Colonel, USMC; Operations Officer (G-3), Task Force Leatherneck Helmand province, Afghanistan (2009-2010)*	The Pentagon
Robert M. Klein *Lieutenant-Colonel, US Army; Strategy and Policy Officer, OSD*	The Pentagon
Elizabeth Kvitashvili *USAID, Deputy Assistant Administrator, DCHA Bureau (2007-09)*	*Phone interview*
Jason Ladnier *US Dept of State, Deputy Director of Planning, S/CRS*	Washington, DC
Emilie Lemke *US Dept of State, Afghan Engagement Lead, CRC-A, S/CRS*	Washington, DC
Neil Adlai Levine *USAID, DCHA, Director, Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management (CMM)*	USAID HQ
Sarah-Ann Lynch *USAID, former Program Office Director USAID/Afghanistan*	Washington, DC
John E. Malapit *Colonel, US Army, and Senior Military Advisor to the Coordinator S/CRS, US Dept of State*	Washington, DC
Dayton Maxwell *USAID (ret), Senior Foreign Service Officer; Chief, CPA Policy, Planning & Analysis Unit, Iraq (2003-04)*	Arlington, VA
Barney Mayhew *UK government consultant (independent)*	London
Michael McNerney *DOD, Principal Director for Plans, OSD Strategy, Plans, and Forces*	The Pentagon
Paul T. Mikolashek *Lieutenant-General, US Army (ret)*	Washington, DC
Siddharth Mohandas *US Dept of State*	US Dept of State HQ

John Mongan *US Dept of State, Deputy Director, Active Response Corps, S/CRS*	Washington, DC
Scott Moore *Deputy Director, Center for Complex Operations, National Defense University*	NDU, Washington, DC
Caroline Mulcahy *FCO, 2nd Secretary UK PRT Helmand, and UK liaison to USMC TF HQ Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan (2009-10)*	FCO HQ
Craig C. Mullaney *USAID, Senior Advisor Afghanistan/Pakistan*	USAID HQ
John Nagl *President, Center for a New American Security*	CNAS, Washington, DC
Lawrence E. (Larry) Nicholson *Brigadier-General, USMC; Commanding General, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Afghanistan (Feb 2009 to May 2010)*	The Pentagon
Graeme Olley *Lieutenant-Colonel, UK Army; SO1 International, MOD; responsible for establishing a Coalition CIMIC Presence in Kabul (2001-02)*	Oxford
Debbie Palmer *Stabilisation Adviser, UK PRT, Helmand, Afghanistan (2007-08)*	*Phone interview*
Imogen Parsons *UK Stabilisation Unit, Lessons Learning Team*	DFID HQ
Celestino Perez Jr. *Lieutenant-Colonel, US Army, Strategist, Assistant Professor, Department of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations, US Army CGSC*	Washington, DC
Louise Perrotta *Stabilisation Unit, Senior Governance Advisor*	DFID HQ
William Pierce *Colonel, US Army (ret), Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), US Army War College*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA
Adam Potter *Captain, USMC (ret), Marine Special Operations Company - Alpha, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion*	Washington, DC
Matt Pottinger *Captain, USMC; Council on Foreign Relations Edward R. Murrow Fellow*	New York City
Nick Pounds *Stabilisation Unit, Operational Management and Support Function Manager*	Warminster

Hugh Powell *FCO, Senior Civil Servant; Head, UK PRT Helmand, Afghanistan (2008-09)*	Cabinet Office
Ian Purves *Stabilisation Advisor, Garmsir and Nawa districts, Helmand Province, Afghanistan (2009-10)*	Oxford
Emma Rae *Major, UK Army, Military Stabilisation Support Group*	Warminster
Babu Rahman *Stabilisation Unit, Head, Planning and Countries Team; previously Conflict Team Leader, International Security and Institutions Research Group, FCO*	FCO HQ
Nick Randle *Air Commodore, RAF; Director, Defence Leadership & Management Centre, Defence Academy*	UK Defence Academy
Andrew Rathmell *Director, LIBRA Advisory Group*	*Phone interview*
Allen (Dwight) Raymond *US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA
Ian Rigden *Colonel, UK Army; Assistant Head, Thematic Doctrine, DCDC*	DCDC, Shrivenham
Nadia Schadlow *Senior Program Officer, Smith Richardson Foundation*	Phone
Bob Schmidt *Lieutenant-Colonel, US Army, USSOUTHCOM Military Rep to the Office of Military Affairs, USAID*	USAID HQ
Paul Schulte *MOD, Senior civil servant (ret), Director, UK Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (2004-05)*	London
Clare Scudder *MOD, Head, Nuclear Department, CMT, UK Defence Academy; Head, J-8, TF HQ Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan (2009)*	UK Defence Academy
Hamish Shepherd *Major, UK Army, Military Stabilisation Support Group*	Warminster
Mary Shockledge *FCO, Team Leader, Conflict Prevention Section, Conflict Group*	FCO HQ
Oscar de Soto *US Dept of State, Foreign Service Officer (ret); Director of Planning, S/CRS (2006-8)*	NDU, Washington, DC

Ken de Souza *DFID, Team Leader, Conflict Policy Team, Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE)*	DFID HQ
Rupert Steptoe *Major, UK Army, SO2 G5 PLANS (A)*	London
Tim Strabbing *DOD, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict*	Washington, DC
Richard Teuten *DFID, Senior civil servant (ret), Head, UK Stabilisation Unit, 2005-2009*	London
Rob Tinline *FCO, Head, Near East Group; Deputy Consul General and Head of the UK PRT in Basra (2007)*	FCO HQ
Harry Tomlin *Colonel, US Army (ret), Professor of Strategic Art, USAWC*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA
Emily Travis *DFID, Afghanistan Desk*	*Phone interview*
Colin Vaudin *Lieutenant-Colonel, UK Army; SO1 Func Doc 3, DCDC, MOD*	DCDC, Shrivenham
Pia M. Wanek *US Dept of State, PRM, Office of Policy and Resource Planning, Pro-telligent Support Contractor*	Washington, DC
Amy Wendt *US Dept of State, PRM, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran Program Analyst*	Washington, DC
J. Kael Weston *US Dept of State, Political adviser to the USMC, Afghanistan (2009-2010)*	Washington, DC
Isaiah Wilson III *Lieutenant-Colonel, US Army, Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, West Point*	Washington, DC
Scott Wuestner *Colonel, US Army, Center for Strategic Leadership, USAWC*	USAWC, Carlisle, PA