Coordinating for Results

Lessons from a Case Study of Interagency Coordination in Afghanistan

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IBM Center for
The Business of Government

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Foreword

On behalf of the IBM Center for The Business of Government, we are pleased to present this report, *Coordinating for Results: Lessons from a Case Study of Interagency Coordination in Afghanistan*, by Andrea Strimling Yodsampa.

Over the past decade, the IBM Center has sponsored research on various facets of cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration. This report focuses on a close relative—interagency coordination. The differences are important, and public managers have to understand the distinctions and whether collaboration or coordination is most appropriate to use.

Dr. Yodsampa notes that collaboration implies co-equal relationships among agencies, whose participants jointly combine staff and resources to pursue a common objective. She distinguishes this from coordination, which occurs when agencies are not co-equal, may pursue different goals, and intend to maintain separate and distinct organizations with clearly defined boundaries and resources.

In developing this report, the author analyzed the interactions between U.S. civilian and military efforts in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009. She drew on many confidential and candid interviews with key players, including ambassadors and generals, to identify the challenges and successes of coordination between their institutions.

Dr. Yodsampa vividly describes examples of successful coordination on initiatives such as school and road construction and the 2004 Afghan national elections. These initiatives succeeded when the civilian and military institutions leveraged their joint funding sources and networks to achieve common goals. But she also observes instances where the lack of coordination resulted in the two institutions duplicating each other's effort, or at worst, inadvertently undermining the other's activities or goals.

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Dr. Yodsampa offers real-world examples of strategies that improve interagency coordination. She focuses on key elements for leaders to consider in coordinating across agencies, which helps to inform one of the key research questions that the IBM Center has posed around shared leadership as part of our current call for proposals.

We hope that federal executives find the lessons and recommendations in this report useful when they undertake coordination efforts with other agencies.

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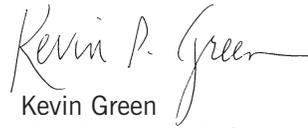
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Executive Summary

Interagency coordination is an essential element of effective public leadership. Few agencies have the funding, expertise, or influence to achieve their goals single-handedly. Moreover, complex problems require interdisciplinary—and hence interagency—solutions. To succeed, public executives and managers must leverage the financial, human, and organizational resources of multiple agencies. This requires coordination.

Coordination, however, is easier said than done. Agencies differ in their goals, priorities, and cultures. They compete for resources and turf. And they have different interests and concerns relative to coordination itself. Coordination also takes time and money; coordination processes must compete for resources with other mission needs and priorities. Compounding these challenges, executives and managers rarely have line authority over agencies and individuals with whom they must coordinate.

> ## Recommendations to Enhance Interagency Coordination
>
> - Co-locate and convene interagency teams.
> - Ensure regular, structured opportunities for information sharing and joint analysis and planning.
> - Designate experienced facilitators.
> - Delegate decision-making authority to the field, provide professional incentives to coordinate, and hold people accountable for results.
> - Articulate shared goals and priorities.
> - Pay attention to individual personalities and team dynamics when building interagency teams.

In the face of these challenges, how can executives and managers deliver consistent coordinated results? Those who have led or served on interagency teams often argue that coordination is driven by personalities and relationships. Personalities and relationships do matter, of course. Public executives and managers must pay careful attention to the composition of interagency teams. But they must not stop there. Attitudes and relationships are deeply affected by organizational factors. Therefore, public executives and managers must institutionalize systems and processes that foster the attitudes, relationships, and behaviors conducive to coordination.

This report identifies the organizational systems and processes necessary to deliver consistent coordinated results. It is based on a case study of U.S. stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009.[1] The case study illuminates concrete examples of successful coordination amidst extensive coordination failures. It then identifies the organizational systems and processes that made those successes possible.

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1.   The report is based on "No One in Charge: A New Theory of Coordination and an Analysis of US Civil-Military Coordination in Afghanistan 2001–2009," (PhD diss., Tufts University, 2011), available at http://gradworks.umi.com/3465447.pdf.

While the Afghan context was unique in many respects, the agencies on the ground faced many of the same challenges domestic agencies face in attempting to coordinate. The lessons about interagency coordination therefore are broadly relevant. By employing the strategies outlined in this report, public executives and managers can strengthen interagency coordination, enhancing effectiveness and efficiency.

Introduction

What is Coordination?

Coordination is defined by Merriam Webster as the "harmonious functioning of parts for effective results." Interagency coordination differs from collaboration and integration as follows.

- **Collaboration:** When agencies collaborate, they retain their independence but work side by side toward a shared goal.

- **Integration:** When agencies integrate, they transform their efforts or structures into a new, integrated whole.

- **Coordination:** Coordination can be understood as falling midway on the spectrum between collaboration and integration. When agencies coordinate, they maintain their organizational autonomy and independence of action, but align resources, capabilities, strategies, and implementation in support of shared goals.

This report focuses on coordination. It presents examples of effective coordination and identifies the organizational systems and processes necessary to achieve it.

What are Coordinated Results? Distinguishing Process and Results

Coordination processes absorb time, effort, and other resources. They only merit this investment if they deliver results. However, prior research has tended to conflate coordination processes and the results of those processes, often using the term "coordination" to refer to both and providing little guidance about how to identify or measure results.

This report distinguishes between coordination processes and the results of those processes. It identifies two types of coordinated results and two types of coordination failures.

Types of Coordinated Results

Effective coordination processes yield coordinated results. There are two types of coordinated results: complementarity and synergy.

- **Complementarity**. Complementarity is achieved when two or more agencies leverage complementary funding sources, expertise, networks, and/or capabilities to achieve shared outputs.

- **Synergy.** Synergy is achieved when two or more agencies' efforts contribute to the achievement of multiple strategic goals. Whereas complementarity is defined in terms of the outputs of activities, synergy relates to longer-term outcomes or effects. In Afghanistan, civilian and military leaders often referred to synergistic coordinated results as game changers, because they dramatically increased the effectiveness of U.S. interagency efforts.

It is worth noting a less tangible, but equally important, benefit of effective coordination processes. Well-designed processes foster strengthened relationships and mutual learning. These, in turn, serve as foundations for longer-term coordination and effectiveness.

Types of Coordination Failures

Inadequate or ineffective processes, by contrast, result in coordination failures. There are two types of coordination failures: negative interactions among activities, and duplication of effort.

- **Negative interactions**. Negative interactions occur when one agency's efforts inadvertently undermine those of others.

- **Duplication.** Duplication of efforts refers here to unintentional, wasteful duplication, often caused by inadequate information sharing.

What are the Challenges to Coordination?

Executives and managers face many challenges as they work to coordinate across agency lines. The most significant challenges include:

- **Competing goals and priorities.** Agencies differ in their goals, priorities, and timelines. This often makes it difficult to identify the shared goals upon which coordination depends.

- **Cultural differences.** Agencies differ in their organizational cultures, lexicons, operating principles, and norms. These differences can contribute to miscommunication, tension, and conflict.

- **Resource and power disparities**. Some agencies wield significantly more power and influence than others. Less powerful agencies often resist coordination out of concern that they might be co-opted.

- **Competition for resources and turf**. Agencies compete for resources and turf, and agencies that must coordinate often draw on overlapping resource bases. Thus, interagency coordination coexists with some degree of competition.

- **Different assumptions and expectations.** Agencies approach coordination with different assumptions and expectations about one another and the coordination process itself. If these differences are not addressed early in the process, they can cause confusion and conflict.

- **Lack of line authority.** Public executives and managers rarely have line authority over all of the agencies and individuals with whom they must coordinate. They must find ways to foster coordination that do not depend on direction from above.

Why Focus on Organizational Systems and Processes?

How can public executives and managers overcome these challenges and deliver coordinated results? Those who have led or served on interagency teams often default to the importance of personality. They argue that coordination depends almost entirely on who is in what position at what time, and their skills, attitudes, and relationships with counterparts in other agencies.

Individual skills, attitudes, and relationships do matter, and public executives and managers must pay careful attention to the composition and dynamics of interagency teams. But they must not stop there. Attitudes and relationships are deeply affected, if not conditioned by, deeper organizational factors. It is essential that executives and managers understand—and institutionalize—organizational systems and processes that deliver consistent coordinated results.

Case Study Identifies Systems and Processes Necessary for Coordinated Results

The next section of this report presents a case study of U.S. interagency coordination in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009. The case study brings into sharp relief the difficulties of coordinating in a high-visibility, high-priority, and high-stakes environment and shows that coordination is possible even in the most challenging contexts.

- Competing goals and priorities

- Cultural differences

- Power disparities

- Competition

- Different assumptions and expectations

- Lack of line authority over other agencies

Glossary

CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command		IRC	Interagency Resources Cell
CERP	Commanders' Emergency Response Program		ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan		JIATF	Joint Interagency Task Force
CIC	Coordination and Integration Chairs		LGCD	Local Governance and Community Development
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force		MPP	Mission Performance Plan
CMPASS	Civil-Military Plans and Assessments Sub-Section		NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
COMCFC	Commander of Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan		NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
			NSPD	National Security Presidential Directive
CSO	Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations		PDD	Presidential Decision Directive
DEVAD	Development Advisor		POLAD	Political Advisor
DCG	Deputy Commanding General		PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission		PSC	Private Service Contractor
DoD	Department of Defense		RC	Regional Command
DoS	Department of State		SAC	Senior Advisory Cell
EIPG	Embassy Interagency Planning Group		S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
FPO	Field Program Officer		UN	United Nations
GAO	Government Accountability Office		USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
GoA	Government of Afghanistan		USFOR-A	U.S. Forces-Afghanistan
ICMAG	Integrated Civil-Military Action Group		USG	U.S. Government
IED	Improvised Explosive Device		VETCAP	Veterinary Civil Action Program

The case study illuminates and explains concrete examples of coordinated results in U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. As reconstruction efforts evolved and the civilian and military leadership on the ground changed, new systems and processes were introduced that contributed directly to some significant coordinated results. However, coordinated results were achieved inconsistently, and there were many coordination failures. The analysis also illuminates coordination failures, identifying other systems and processes that were inadequate.

The case study identifies a set of systems and processes necessary for consistent coordinated results. They are:

- **Co-location and convening of agency representatives.** Co-location and convening of agency representatives provide opportunities for face-to-face interaction that facilitate joint analysis and planning and foster relationship development and mutual learning.

- **Regular, structured information sharing and joint analysis and planning processes**. Joint processes enable participants to develop a shared assessment of the situation, identify common goals, and agree on a joint strategy and division of labor.

- **Facilitative leadership**. Facilitative leadership, or leadership without authority, is necessary to convene and lead effective joint processes.

- **Delegation of decision-making, professional incentives, and accountability for results.** Delegation of decision-making authority to lower levels is necessary for coordinated results, but it must be paired with professional incentives to coordinate and accountability for results.

Case Study: U.S. Civil-Military Coordination in Afghanistan, 2001–2009

To identify the systems and processes necessary for coordinated results, this report analyzes U.S. reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009, focusing on coordination among the U.S. Department of State (DoS), the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).[2]

Coordination failures in Afghanistan were ubiquitous; they have been well-documented and explained. However, there also were significant examples of successful coordination. This report illuminates concrete examples of coordinated results—both complementarity and synergy—and identifies the organizational factors that enabled those coordinated results to emerge.[3] The report also traces the significant learning that took place over the eight years studied, and the associated evolution in systems and processes that, in turn, further strengthened coordination.

The case study is divided into four phases, delineated by the tenure of the senior U.S. leadership team on the ground.
- Phase I: Fall 2001–Summer 2003
- Phase II: Fall 2003–Summer 2005
- Phase III: Summer 2005–Spring 2007
- Phase IV: Spring 2007–Spring 2009

Incoming civilian and military leaders faced a complex, rapidly evolving situation in Afghanistan, and they instituted changes in organizational systems and processes to address it. These changes, in turn, had direct bearing on coordination. The case study therefore offers a unique window on the effects of organizational systems and processes on coordination.

Phase I: Early Coordination Failures (Fall 2001–Summer 2003)

The early U.S. experience in Afghanistan reconstruction was dominated by coordination failures. Key reasons included the lack of a joint civil-military plan and inadequate information sharing on the ground.

Lack of Joint Analysis and Planning Undermines Coordination
The U.S. began Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001 with a plan that had been hastily prepared by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in the weeks following the September 2001 terrorist attacks. The plan focused almost exclusively on combat. It did not incorporate any serious interagency planning for the civil-military coordination that would be necessary to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan following a military victory.

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2.   The report is based on "No One in Charge: A New Theory of Coordination and an Analysis of US Civil-Military Coordination in Afghanistan 2001–2009," (PhD diss., Tufts University, 2011), available at http://gradworks.umi.com/3465447.pdf.
3.   The report focuses on coordination among a subset of the actors involved in Afghanistan reconstruction from 2001–2009. It does not directly take on the broader questions of U.S. or multinational effectiveness in Afghanistan.

Methodology

This report is based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 133 senior and mid-level officials who worked in or on Afghanistan between 2001 and 2009. Interviewees included:

- **U.S. civilians on the ground.** The four U.S. ambassadors to Afghanistan who served during the period studied, deputy chiefs of mission, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission directors, civilian political advisors (POLAD) and development advisors (DEVAD) embedded with the military.

- **U.S. military officers.** Both commanders of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) who served during the period studied, and military officers who served at multiple levels of decision-making.

- **U.S. policy makers.** Numerous public executives and managers from the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State, USAID, and the National Security Council, who worked on Afghanistan from agency headquarters in Washington, D.C.

- **Other officials.** Select senior officials from outside the U.S. government who had firsthand knowledge of U.S. interagency efforts in Afghanistan. These included officials who served with the government of Afghanistan, other U.S. multinational partners, NATO, the UN, and NGOs.

Interviews were confidential, in that no information has been attributed to specific individuals without their permission. Interview data was validated and supplemented through an extensive review of primary and secondary documentation.[4]

The lack of a joint civil-military plan reflected weaknesses in contingency planning within the George W. Bush administration. The administration had inherited a relatively robust interagency planning system—Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56. Early in its tenure, however, the administration had jettisoned PDD 56.[5]

Without a joint interagency plan, there was no point of reference to use in resolving the differences that inevitably emerged. Instead, personalities often drove interagency relations, and the contentious dynamics among National Security Council principals prevalent during this period carried over to their respective bureaucracies. A senior Defense official describes the relationship between the Departments of State and Defense at the time as toxic: "We wound up fighting with [the State Department] over everything, since they had an allergic reaction to anything DoD."[6]

On the ground, the lack of a joint plan had even more serious consequences. Without an agreed-upon strategy that articulated overarching U.S. goals, DoS, DoD, and USAID tended to define their missions along agency lines. General Dan McNeill, who commanded Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-180 in 2002, reflects:

> When I first arrived in Afghanistan … the guidance given to me, mostly from
> Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks … was that there were two lines of effort [for

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4.   Where the report attributes quotations or other information to specific individuals, permission was granted to do so. Other quotations are cited using a confidential numbering system. Interviewees spoke in their personal capacities, and their comments do not represent the official positions of any government, department, or agency.

5.   The Clinton administration issued PDD 56, Managing Complex Contingency Operations, in May 1997 in an effort to distill and institutionalize lessons from complex operations in places such as Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. The Bush administration did draft a National Security Presidential Directive to replace PDD 56. However, the draft was never issued, and it was not until 2005 that a watered-down version of the document, National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44, was finally signed. (Dobbins, James, and Carnegie Corporation of New York. 2008. *After the War: Nation-Building from FDR to George W. Bush.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Security Research Division.)

6.   Confidential interview 34.

the military]—capture or kill the extremists, and build the [Afghan National] Army [ANA]. Rumsfeld and Franks were explicit: We were not into nation building. When I arrived with (Ambassador) Robert Finn, I wanted to portray myself as part of the country team. He corrected that. He said, "You're here to fight a war." He didn't consider I was necessarily part of a country team … We worked closely on many issues … but if we collaborated on anything that looked like U.S. policy other than building the ANA, I can't recall it.[7]

Civilians and military alike understood themselves to be engaged in largely parallel efforts. This led to coordination failures. In one vivid example, a USAID official recalls his exchange with a U.S. military officer outside a provincial governor's compound. Then-interim Afghan President Hamid Karzai had insisted that all governors fly the Afghan national flag. When the USAID officer arrived at the compound, however, there was no flag flying. He described what happened when he raised the issue with a U.S. military civil affairs officer who was sitting outside at the compound.

> A guy attached to the civil affairs unit was sitting under a tree reading … I said, "You guys are funding his [the governor's] militia, living in his compound, and supporting him." He replied, "Our objective is to fight and kill Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Your objective is to build a democratic central government. Right now, our objective is number one, and the consequences of our actions will be your problems in six months." He knew exactly what I was talking about [regarding the flag], but there was a hierarchy of priorities. They [the military] wouldn't mitigate their actions to serve this other higher—or lower—objective.[8]

Thus, the lack of joint analysis and planning undermined coordination at all levels of decision-making, from policy making in Washington, D.C., to the tactical level on the ground.

Inadequate Information Sharing Causes Coordination Failures

Inadequate information sharing between military and civilians further undermined coordination. The most serious coordination failures involved negative interactions among activities, in particular the effects of U.S. Special Operations on parallel diplomatic efforts. A senior civilian official reflects:

> None of us knew in many cases what they [Special Operations Forces] were doing until an operation had already taken place. There was one really bad issue where Special Forces killed the wrong guys, and [the ambassador] had to explain that all to Karzai without even having known such an operation would take place.[9]

Another senior civilian explains:

> We didn't know what they [U.S. Special Forces] were doing … they bombed a wedding party; we heard about it way after the fact. If we had heard after the fact more quickly, we could have helped mitigate the effects … Things like that happen[ed] all the time.[10]

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7.   Interview with Dan McNeill, 2009, quoted with permission.
8.   Confidential interview 118.
9.   Confidential interview 88.
10. Confidential interview 85.

Interagency Plan Developed to Enhance Coordination

The problems on the ground were exacerbated by the fact that the military so clearly dominated U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. Early in 2002, the U.S. began to lay the foundations for an enhanced civilian presence on the ground. Interim Envoy Ryan Crocker was sent to Kabul to open the U.S. embassy and establish the basis for dealing with the new Afghan government. A few months later, newly appointed Ambassador to Afghanistan Robert Finn replaced Crocker at the embassy. While DoD continued to garner the majority of resources, the lack of progress in Afghan reconstruction led to an increased focus on civil-military coordination.

In 2002, Congress passed the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act, urging the president to designate a coordinator to develop a government-wide strategy for Afghanistan and ensure coordinated implementation on the ground. In May 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the end of major combat operations and directed the military to begin reconstruction in parallel with stabilization efforts.

The U.S. formally announced its first serious interagency plan for Afghanistan in September 2003. The plan, Accelerating Success in Afghanistan, established U.S. government-wide goals, designated a division of labor among agencies, identified metrics with which to measure progress, and specified budgets for the various lines of effort.[11] To back up the plan, the U.S. allocated an additional $1.76 billion for reconstruction in fiscal year 2004—more than twice the amount spent by all U.S. departments and agencies on reconstruction in fiscal years 2002 and 2003 combined.[12] The joint plan, combined with resources to implement it, set the stage for increased coordination.

Lessons from Phase I: Joint analysis and planning and regular information sharing are necessary for coordinated results. The lack of an interagency plan and an associated lack of information sharing undermined coordination in Phase I. Without an interagency plan that articulated shared, high-level goals, civilians and military tended to define their missions in terms of agency-level objectives. Without regular information sharing, they often worked at cross purposes, undermining one another's efforts.

Phase II: Co-Location at the Embassy (Fall 2003–Summer 2005)

U.S. civil-military coordination in Afghanistan entered a new phase in fall 2003. With the release of Accelerating Success in Afghanistan, the U.S. finally had a joint interagency plan to guide civilian and military reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The joint interagency plan reflected growing recognition in Washington, D.C., and at CENTCOM of the need for enhanced civil-military coordination.

Thus, when Lieutenant General David Barno arrived in Afghanistan in October 2003 to command Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A), he had an explicit mandate from General John Abizaid, Commander of CENTCOM, to strengthen civil-military coordination. U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad arrived six weeks after Barno with a parallel mandate that extended to President Bush. Together, the two leaders put in place systems and processes that strengthened coordination.

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11. A U.S. GAO study noted: "We found that most of the strategies that were published during fiscal years 2002–2003 lacked details on funding and other resources, measurable goals, time frames, as well as a means to measure progress … We cite the State Department's June 2003 Mission Performance Plan as meeting many of the requirements for a government-wide operational strategy" (U.S. Government Accountability Office. 2004. "Afghanistan Reconstruction: Deteriorating Security and Limited Resources Have Impeded Progress; Improvements in U.S. Strategy Needed." United States Government Accountability Office, GAO-04-403.2004).
12. GAO 2004.

Co-Location at the Embassy and in the Field Strengthens Coordination

The most visible and dramatic change in civil-military coordination on the ground was the co-location of the ambassador and senior military commander at the U.S. embassy in Kabul.

Shortly after arriving in Afghanistan, Barno moved his headquarters from Bagram Airfield, where his predecessor had been based, to the embassy. He set up his office next to Ambassador Khalilzad's office and lived on the embassy compound. Barno reflects on the benefits of co-location:

> I lived on the compound in a half-trailer about 50 feet from the ambassador, who lived in a double-wide trailer. I had an office 20 feet from his office. I started my day there every day, and I finished my day there every night. I saw him in the morning at a country team meeting, which for a long time we did five days a week … So, I spent the first two hours or so of every day with the ambassador … I would not infrequently see him in the evenings, too.[13]

According to Khalilzad, co-location enabled Barno to be fully integrated into the country team in a way that otherwise would not have been possible:

> With support from the President and SecDef [Secretary of Defense], we moved the commander to our embassy in the office next to mine … Barno was able to be part of the country team, to participate in the morning staff meeting. Being … so close facilitated more frequent interaction, not only by telephone. He lived on the embassy grounds. We saw each other on a regular basis, at meetings, at social events … at my residence … We made a commitment that what was important was the mission, that we were a single team.[14]

The daily interaction between principals facilitated the development of an exceptionally strong working relationship. A senior military officer who served with them explains:

> Co-location … was a physical manifestation of integrated machinery. It meant that they got on exceptionally well, were able to talk through issues. They didn't always agree, but the bond was so strong that they could work through any [issues] … They had a common purpose. Co-location isn't essential, but it bloody well helps.[15]

Co-location, of course, was not the only factor at play. The two leaders liked and respected one another from the beginning. But co-location enabled them to build on this foundation to closely coordinate implementation on the ground.

Co-location at the embassy also had symbolic value. Barno explains that this was deliberate:

> [Co-location] … was a huge, powerful way to both ensure that our efforts were connected and mutually supportive but also that we sent the message that we had a single, unified U.S. effort there between the chief of mission and the military operations.[16]

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13. Koontz 2008, 23. Koontz, Christopher N. 2008. *Enduring Voices: Oral Histories of the U.S. Army Experience in Afghanistan, 2003–2005.* Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army.

14. Interview with Zalmay Khalilzad, 2009, quoted with permission.

15. Confidential interview 91.

16. Koontz 2008, 23.

Co-location was not limited to the senior leadership. U.S. civilians and military also were co-located further down the respective chains of command. At the embassy, military planners detailed by Barno worked alongside their civilian counterparts in units explicitly focused on joint analysis and planning. At the brigade level, civilian political advisors and development advisors embedded with the military to facilitate information sharing and, in some cases, joint analysis and planning.

At the growing number of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in the provinces—outposts that quickly became a cornerstone of U.S. and multinational reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan— small communities of civilians lived and worked alongside their military counterparts.[17]

The co-location of civilians and military at the PRTs created new opportunities for coordination at the tactical level. Michelle Parker, a USAID officer who served at the PRT in Jalalabad in Nangahar Province, describes how co-location facilitated coordination. Following publication of an article accusing U.S. soldiers of flushing Korans down a toilet, riots had erupted in Jalalabad. Civilians and military at the PRT quickly organized a response. As Parker received reports of the crisis from USAID implementing partners, she fed them to her military counter-parts who, in turn, notified the appropriate Afghan authorities. According to Parker, co-location made the rapid, coordinated response possible: "I was living on the PRT. I knew the guys. Day in, day out, we were living together, so there was no need to do relationship building when the crisis hit."[18]

Co-location facilitated communication and relationship development, but it was not a pana-cea. There were significant hurdles to coordination, and co-located teams often faltered. Regular, structured opportunities for information sharing and joint analysis and planning also were necessary to achieve consistent coordinated results.

Information Sharing and Joint Analysis and Planning Yield Coordinated Results and Learning

Shortly after arriving at the embassy, Khalilzad and Barno stood up a joint interagency task force (JIATF) to facilitate information sharing and joint analysis and planning.[19] It included an embassy interagency planning group (EIPG) and an interagency resources cell (IRC).

The EIPG, including the military planners Barno had detailed to the embassy and their civilian counterparts, led the process to translate Accelerating Success in Afghanistan into a mission performance plan (MPP) and associated military campaign plan. It also identified metrics and monitored progress.

The IRC worked in concert with the EIPG to leverage different pots of money in support of shared goals. In building roads, for example, civilians and military divided up responsibility for various tasks and brought complementary financial resources to the table. The joint analysis and planning thus contributed directly to coordinated results.

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17. The PRTs were established to leverage limited resources in the provinces and facilitate interagency coordination at the tactical level.
18. Interview with Michelle Parker 2009, quoted with permission.
19. At the top of the JIATF sat the coordination and integration chairs (CIC)—the ambassador and commander of CFC-A (COMCFC). The CIC provided direction and final approval for any plans developed. A senior advisory cell (SAC), made up of the deputy chief of mission, USAID mission director, chief financial officer, and other senior officials at the embassy, reported to the CIC.

Coordinated Results: The 2004 Afghan Presidential Elections

The 2004 presidential elections were an example of both complementary and synergistic coordinated results. [20] The elections were run by the UN and involved many nations and organizations. Nevertheless, the U.S. played an important role, and civil-military coordination on the U.S. side fed into broader multinational coordination.

Complementarity. In preparing for and executing the elections, the U.S. military and civilians leveraged complementary resources and capabilities to support broader multinational efforts. The U.S. military, for example, assisted with planning, including rehearsal exercises; transported ballot boxes and other equipment to supplement civilian transportation systems; set up communications infrastructure; and provided a security perimeter on Election Day. USAID contributed expertise and financing, serving, for example, as a "personnel shop" and hiring experts to fill key roles throughout the preparation and conducting of the elections. [21]

A Department of State official, speaking in 2009, called the elections "the best example I've ever seen of coordination."[22] A military officer agrees, reflecting:

> The biggest example [of coordinated results in this period] without a doubt was the 2004 presidential elections. The level of cooperation among military forces, the UN, leveraging PRTs, using the expertise of State Department representatives, pulling in all the training and recruiting of local security forces was just amazing. [23]

Synergy. The elections also benefited from synergy among broader U.S. and multinational efforts. Dr. Marin Strmecki, who served as a high-level advisor to DoD, emphasizes the ways in which multiple lines of effort added up synergistically to create a context conducive to successful elections.

> The micro level [coordinated result] was the coordination of U.S. activities, the Afghan government, and the UN and the international community … It resulted in an election that went off well. The macro level was the 18-month effort before the election that was designed to create the best possible political conditions for the elections—which would ensure that Afghans could make a free and fair choice and that they saw the choice of a modernizing/moderate Afghanistan as possible and probable through cooperation with the U.S. and international community. The coordinated actions to create such conditions included, among others, the demobilization of formal militias, the buildup of national institutions, the completion of key milestones in the Bonn process … the bolstering of economic development … All of these efforts entailed coordinated action. [24]

Coordination enhanced effectiveness. The coordinated results highlighted above contributed directly to the effectiveness of U.S. and multinational efforts to prepare for and carry out the 2004 presidential elections. Eight-and-a-half million Afghans voted in a process that, while imperfect, was widely hailed as a success in terms of security, logistics, and legitimacy.

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20. In June 2002, an emergency *loya jirga* confirmed Hamid Karzai as interim president. In October 2002, the Constitutional Commission drafted a permanent constitution; selected delegates for a second, constitutional *loya jirga;* and approved the constitution with minor changes. Presidential elections were held on October 9, 2004. Karzai was declared president on December 7, 2004.
21. Confidential interview 59.
22. Confidential interview 16.
23. Confidential interview 114.
24. Interview with Marin Strmecki, 2009, quoted with permission.

The joint processes also fostered learning. A senior USAID officer reflects on the transformation in attitudes and relationships:

> Ambassador Khalilzad asked a bunch of military planners to come in and do planning. The idea among USAID … staff that we'd have five colonels working with us to do our planning … was uncomfortable. But the more we got to know them, the more we respected their talent, skill, hard work … We realized we were on the same team. They pushed us, challenged us, made us think. Most USAID people never work with the military, so this whole experience was new.[25]

The changes at the individual level contributed to a broader improvement in civil-military relations. A USAID official explains:

> We developed a good relationship with the military, the uniforms on the ground. At one point, I … [told senior officials in Washington] that I thought we had a hell of a lot in common with the uniformed military, which was rebellious to say and stunned them. I said that they are operational, mission-oriented, have a command and control structure and chain of command, plan well and do strategies well, and we as USAID do all the same. This was shocking … USAID didn't work traditionally with the military.[26]

From an organizational perspective, the shift in attitudes was essential. A senior official reflects:

> An attitude shift … had to take place at USAID. Right after 9/11 when we were gearing up to go into Afghanistan … the buzz was that, in this environment, we needed officers able to work with the military. There was real resistance among old-timers, development theorists, to get[ting] involved with the military, and a bunch of people left.[27]

Outside of Kabul, structured information sharing and joint analysis and planning also enhanced coordination. The PRT in Jalalabad, Nangahar Province, established a planning cell, a model that was subsequently adopted by other PRTs. An official explains: "We started seeing the development of a board of directors' approach to PRTs, where DoS, USAID, and the [PRT] commander would sit down, develop their own plans together."[28] PRTs that instituted regular information sharing and joint analysis and planning found that the processes contributed directly to coordinated results.

Insufficient Delegation, Perverse Incentives, and Lack of Accountability for Results Undermine Coordination

Co-location, information sharing, and joint analysis and planning were necessary, but not sufficient, for consistent coordinated results. Three critical factors were lacking:

- Delegation of decision-making authority to the field.

- Professional incentives to coordinate.

- Accountability for the downstream results.

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25. Confidential interview 95.
26. Confidential interview 95.
27. Confidential interview 1.
28. Confidential interview 17.

Delegation of decision-making authority to the field was essential for coordinated results. Khalilzad was, by all accounts, a "super-empowered ambassador."[29] He had close personal relationships at the highest levels in Washington and Afghanistan and wide scope to make decisions on the ground. Barno likewise enjoyed significant decision-making authority. He had a strong working relationship with his boss, General Abizaid, and Abizaid trusted him to make decisions. Khalilzad and Barno also were able to present a unified voice to policy makers, which further enabled them to influence policy decisions and garner resources.

Because Khalilzad and Barno had decision-making authority and the resources to back up their decisions, they were able to achieve coordinated results in the efforts in which they were directly involved, including the 2004 presidential elections. At the levels below Khalilzad and Barno, the situation was more complex. USAID officers often had insufficient authority to coordinate effectively with the military. USAID's funding decisions were constrained by a combination of congressional authorities and USAID contracting mechanisms. When opportunities to coordinate with the military emerged, USAID officers often were unable to move quickly enough. One USAID official went so far as to refer to USAID's restricted funding authorities and lack of decision-making authority as a "fatal flaw."[30]

The problem was exacerbated by the centralization of USAID decision-making in Kabul. USAID's field program officers at the PRTs did not have the authority to allocate resources. Instead, they had to send project proposals to Kabul for approval. A USAID official explains:

> USAID had all the programs … coordinated by Kabul … The USAID person at the PRT was more an advisor, facilitator, but had no control of any resources. The PRT USAID person would identify an activity, put it on a nomination form, and send it to Kabul. Kabul would say "yes," "no," or "maybe."[31]

At PRTs where the civilian representation was relatively senior and experienced, such as the Jalalabad PRT in Nangahar Province, field program officers (FPOs) were able to use their relationships within the USAID bureaucracy to achieve de facto decision-making authority. At many PRTs, however, USAID was represented by private service contractors who did not have such relationships or experience within the bureaucracy.

Military officers at the PRTs, by contrast, had significant decision-making authority. The Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP), launched in 2004, gave PRT commanders authority to approve the use of up to $25,000 in CERP funds for reconstruction and development projects.

In theory, the delegation of decision-making authority to military officers allowed for rapid response to unfolding circumstances. In practice, however, there were two significant problems. First, the contrast with USAID's relative lack of decision-making authority at the PRTs caused tensions in the working relationships. As one USAID official explains, it "made it easier for the military to complain that civilians were not stepping up … USAID was building hundreds of schools, kilometers of roads, but we weren't visible and responsive [at the PRT level]."[32]

Even more problematic, the military's decision-making authority at the PRTs was not combined with incentive or accountability systems conducive to coordination. The incentive was to

29. Interview with David Barno, 2009, used with permission.
30. Confidential interview 71.
31. Confidential interview 11.
32. Confidential interview 11.

spend money quickly, rather than take the time to incorporate USAID's development expertise into decision-making. Moreover, PRTs generally were not held accountable for downstream results. A State official explains:

> CERP allowed commanders on the ground to spend some money without red tape. The concept was sound … but military folks were spending money, without understanding the development implications … At the end of the day, the money was the military's … Back then, the military's idea was: "We are fighting a war. Everyone else, get out of our way."[33]

This led to serious coordination failures. One military officer reflects: "The new PRTs were made up mostly of military, who had little experience in counterinsurgency operations. They were naïve, and this could be dangerous and often deadly."[34]

The accountability and incentive problems were not only on the military side. USAID also faced intense pressure to spend money quickly. A USAID official reflects:

> One challenge we had was there was always a tendency to compare what the military was doing with CERP money to what USAID was doing with community development projects … [There was] enormous pressure by the White House to spend money fast … Spending money quickly in unstable areas usually means unsustainable results.[35]

The pressure to spend money and get things done quickly worked against taking the time necessary to develop local, Afghan capacity, thus undermining prospects for long-term stability. A senior official explains: "There was a rush for speed … [People] talked about building capacity, but time pressure [worked against that]."[36] To the extent that USAID officials were held accountable for results, it was for contributions to USAID national programs rather than joint civil-military efforts.

Incentives also worked against coordination over time. Rotations in Afghanistan were short, and people on the ground generally focused on what they could accomplish before their tours concluded; there were few incentives to build on what had been done previously or lay the foundations for what would follow. One civilian official explains: "[US]AID people never saw themselves as getting ahead by implementing what their predecessors started … the traditional AID way to get ahead was to start your own project."[37] The same problems plagued military efforts, undermining opportunities to coordinate efforts over time.

Lessons from Phase II: Co-location, information sharing, and joint analysis and planning are necessary, but not sufficient for consistent coordinated results. Delegation of decision-making authority, professional incentives to coordinate, and accountability for results also are necessary. Co-location of the senior military and civilian leaders on the ground strengthened joint problem-solving and served as a powerful symbol of commitment to civil-military coordination. Co-location at the levels below them facilitated information sharing and joint analysis and planning, strengthened working relationships, and fostered mutual learning.

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33. Confidential interview 22.
34. Confidential interview 104.
35. Confidential interview 1.
36. Confidential interview 56.
37. Confidential interview 113.

However, co-location, information sharing, and joint analysis and planning were not sufficient to yield consistent coordinated results. Coordination, especially at the level of the PRTs, continued to be impeded by insufficient delegation of decision-making authority to USAID officers in the field; perverse incentives that encouraged civilians and military alike to spend money quickly, rather than take the time to coordinate; and the lack of accountability on the part of all involved for the downstream impacts of activities.

Phase III: Changes at the Embassy (Summer 2005–Spring 2007)

U.S. civil-military coordination in Afghanistan entered a new phase in mid-2005. The insurgency was gaining momentum at the very moment the U.S. was turning increased attention and resources toward Iraq. Moreover, the military structure on the ground was in flux. As the NATO/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) assumed responsibility for each of the regional commands, U.S. troops, with the exception of Special Forces, increasingly operated under the auspices of ISAF and in concert with other NATO and Afghan troops.

The growing insurgency, resource constraints, and changes in military structure posed new challenges for the civilian and military leadership on the ground. Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry arrived in Kabul in May to assume command of CFC-A. Ronald Neumann arrived several months later to serve as ambassador.[38] Neumann and Eikenberry instituted some changes in organizational systems and processes that had direct bearing on coordination.

Symbolic and Practical Effects of the Move out of the Embassy

The most visible and widely noted change was Lt. General Eikenberry's decision to set up his office at Camp Eggers, rather than continue the co-location of the senior military and civilian leadership at the embassy that had been the hallmark of the previous period.[39]

The move out of the embassy resulted in less frequent interaction between principals. Neumann and Eikenberry did meet at least weekly, but this was not the same as the hours of daily, in-person interaction in the prior period. A senior diplomat reflects:

> There was an office in the embassy for General Eikenberry, but he didn't seem to use it much. Proximity is everything. With the best will in world, if it takes a half hour to load a convoy, go through all barriers, it's not the same as going down the hall for a meeting. Even though there was this office, General Eikenberry didn't seem to want to spend as much time at the embassy … Ambassador Neumann did go to Camp Eggers from time to time, but communication was hampered by distance. [40]

Some suggested that Lt. General Eikenberry wanted to distance himself and his command from the civilian leadership. Others blamed Ambassador Neumann, arguing that he instituted changes at the embassy that pushed the military out.[41] Yet others portrayed the change in a positive light—as a move toward Eikenberry's command, rather than away from the embassy.

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38. Khalilzad had left several months earlier to serve as U.S. ambassador to Iraq. During the period between Khalilzad's departure and Neumann's arrival, the U.S. mission was led by Charge d'Affaires Maureen Quinn.

39. Co-location at the embassy was not completely eliminated during this period. Rather, the model was changed. Eikenberry appointed a deputy commanding general (DCG) for political-military affairs to represent him at the embassy and to facilitate information sharing and joint problem-solving. However, as one senior DoS official who served at the embassy puts it, "General Eikenberry designated a one-star [general officer] to … serve as liaison, but this was not the same as the two top dogs consulting periodically" (Confidential interview 62).

40. Confidential interview 62.

41. Confidential interview 68.

By being at Camp Eggers on a daily basis, Eikenberry was able to exert more immediate control at a time when the insurgency was growing.

Regardless of the motivation, the symbolic fallout from the move was significant, both in Washington and on the ground. An official who served on the ground during this period explains, "When he moved out of the embassy, it sent a signal."[42] A senior DoD official in Washington agrees:

> The coordination began to deteriorate after Khalilzad and Barno left … What I saw was when General Eikenberry came in and Ambassador Neumann came in … we could see that the embassy and command were not as linked up as earlier … When the command moved to Camp Eggers, it meant that persistent contact … was disrupted. When we had them on SVTC [secure video teleconference], we could see that they were not as linked up as we would like to see. There was one [discussion about] an augmentation of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. I remember thinking the two sides didn't seem to be too coordinated … It wasn't personal tension between the two principals, both of whom would assert that the relationship was just fine … just the physical separation.[43]

Despite the impression some had of tensions at the top, Neumann and Eikenberry quickly forged agreement on priorities for civil-military efforts, including roads and electricity, and aligned their efforts to deliver coordinated results. As one policy maker in Washington explains: "Eikenberry and Neumann started saying, 'Where the road ends, the Taliban begins …This is our strategic priority—building roads and power.' So we scrambled for resources for roads and power. It was a coordinated approach."[44]

Sector-Based Joint Analysis and Planning Make Coordinated Results Possible

Ambassador Neumann changed the joint analysis and planning systems at the embassy. The EIPG that Khalilzad and Barno had stood up continued to function early in this period, but subsequently was shut down.[45] According to one official, this was a significant loss:

> Khalilzad had … left in place the planning cell [the EIPG]. So there were still a couple of military officers at the embassy … USAID worked closely with them on budget at strategy formulation and metrics … It was a very productive partnership, [some of the USAID officers'] first opportunity to work that closely with the military … That cooperation went well … Then … the planning cell was shut down, so there was very little regular day-to-day contact at the embassy … in 2005 and 2006.[46]

Nevertheless, Neumann and Eikenberry invested in joint analysis and planning for priority sectors, including roads and electricity. This enabled them to deliver concrete coordinated results in both areas.

Joint analysis and planning were equally important at the PRT level. The commander of the Jalalabad PRT in Nangahar Province, for example, convened regular meetings of military and civilians to share information and ideas and coordinate projects. A USAID representative explains that the joint planning at the Jalalabad PRT made coordinated results in local road construction possible.

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42. Confidential interview 74.
43. Confidential interview 36.
44. Confidential interview 30.
45. Confidential interview 71.
46. Confidential interview 71.

> They [the military] had their roads and contractors. We had ours. Road building was happening everywhere. So we established a roads working group. It was very productive … a mapping exercise largely. What are you doing here? What's the status? Who is your contractor? What's your thinking? Let's go around the table on a daily basis.[47]

The joint analysis and planning at the Jalalabad PRT, combined with the relatively senior civilian presence noted earlier, contributed to coordinated results and enhanced the PRT's effectiveness.[48] At most PRTs, however, there was no system for joint analysis and planning, and coordination suffered as a result.

Insufficient Delegation, Perverse Incentives, and Lack of Accountability Continue to Undermine Coordination

The centralization of USAID decision-making in Kabul continued to undermine civil-military coordination. USAID policy makers were aware of the need to delegate decision-making authority to the field. In 2006, they established the Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program, which was intended to make the agency "more flexible and responsive."[49] However, LGCD suffered from continued centralization and time delays and did little to enhance decision-making in the field.

Meanwhile, the military's relatively high level of delegation to the field, combined with perverse incentives to spend money quickly and limited accountability for downstream results, continued to foster a go-it-alone attitude. This contributed to coordination failures and wasted resources. A senior military officer cites as an example a school the military built without consulting civilians: "When we went to check on it, there were goats throughout the building. Why? They needed a goat barn! We never got buy-in from the [local Afghan] people that they needed a school."[50]

Senior military officers increasingly recognized that delegation of decision-making authority could be counterproductive when not combined with incentive and accountability systems conducive to coordination. When Major General Jason Kamiya assumed command of Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76) in spring 2005, he temporarily restricted the PRT commanders' authority to allocate CERP funds. Instead, he required them to coordinate funding proposals with civilians and then submit the proposals to him for approval. Kamiya explains:

> I asked the PRT commanders to coordinate funding proposals with their civilian developmental partners, to identify the systems that needed to be developed, and how individual projects contributed to a specific system or set of systems … Instead of funding piecemeal projects that represented only the military view, we began funding complete systems that were representative of the best collective judgment of the military and civilian leadership at the sponsoring PRT.[51]

A PRT commander who served under Kamiya reflects: "[The change] forced coordination, because if … the [US]AID representative hadn't had a vote, when it got to brigade, that AID representative at the brigade wouldn't [support the project]."[52]

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47. Confidential interview 116.
48. The PRT did not work in a vacuum. The strong Afghan leadership in the province was repeatedly cited as a major factor in the overall effectiveness of development efforts.
49. Confidential interview 11.
50. Confidential interview 83.
51. Interview with Jason Kamiya, 2011, quoted with permission.
52. Confidential interview 109.

Coordinated Results: Road Construction

Early road construction efforts were constrained by the lack of an interagency plan and the military's associated unwillingness to take on anything they considered nation building. As time went on, however, civilians and military increasingly recognized the importance of road construction to advance diplomatic, development, and security goals.

Ambassador Neumann and Lt. General Eikenberry agreed early on to prioritize road construction and invested in focused joint analysis and planning to coordinate efforts. This, in turn, made possible the coordinated results achieved—both complementarity and synergy.

Complementarity. While the overall record on roads was mixed, there were numerous examples of complementarity. In some cases, civilians and military leveraged different funding sources, with complementary authorities and restrictions, to build different segments of road. For example, USAID built roads in the lower end of the Panchir Valley, while the Panchir PRT used CERP funds to build roads in the upper end of the valley.[53]

In other cases, the military provided the funding, while USAID provided the in-house engineering expertise to direct and monitor construction.[54] In yet other cases, the military supplemented civilian contractors' security, enabling them to proceed with construction.

In building the road from Kandahar to Tirin Kot, for example, a USAID officer credited the military with providing essential security support:

> We couldn't have built the road without direct military support. We had military guys up and down the road patrolling it, flyovers. We were sharing intel [intelligence] offline. This couldn't have been built without that level of [military] involvement.[55]

Complementarity in U.S. road construction efforts in this and subsequent phases contributed to the development of a vast road network across Afghanistan. One USAID official cites the extent of the road network constructed as evidence of the impact of coordination: "The U.S. has completed around 2,300 km of paved roads—the equivalent of a road from Washington, D.C., to Kansas City, under bad conditions and in a short time, so it was effective."[56]

Synergy. Road construction also was a prime example of synergy, as roads had the potential to enhance development, security, and governance. Sometimes, for example, the military would build segments of a road, and USAID would then establish schools and clinics along the road.[57] A military officer describes the synergy:

> We didn't just do clear-hold-build. Sometimes, we did preemptive reconstruction to avoid having to clear and hold … In Paktika Province … a tribe was there, using a route back and forth … We moved in February–March 2006, put up a school, paved roads by the market, lighted poles with solar energy … I went with the provincial governor … boys and girls going to school for the first time in years, the market now lit at night … They swore to all of us, "We won't support the enemy." We never had to fight. It was preventive … governance, reconstruction, security—each begat the others, inextricably.[58]

Road construction also was linked strategically to clear-hold-build operations. One official cites the following example involving Operation Mountain Lion:

> We had a tough patch of road in Kunar and Nuristan Province … enemy ambushes, etc. Two days after we launched Mountain Lion, we began a major road project—the Pesh Valley Road—to give jobs, change the environment. You should see the road now—unbelievable—mom-and-pop shops, rest stops, gas stations … We built wells, schools … you name it, we built it to have an immediate impact.[59]

In these ways, road construction often interacted synergistically with other efforts, advancing development, security, and governance goals simultaneously.

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53. Confidential interview 55.
54. Confidential interview 24.
55. Confidential interview 24.
56. Confidential interview 24.
57. Confidential interview 24.
58. Confidential interview 83.
59. Confidential interview 83.

Several months later, confident that he had firmly established expectations regarding coordination, Kamiya reauthorized PRT commanders to allocate CERP funds. Thus, a temporary reduction in decision-making authority was used to establish clear expectations and incentives to coordinate.

Lessons from Phase III: Co-location has both practical and symbolic effects. When co-location is eliminated, especially at the top, the symbolic fallout can be significant. Joint analysis and planning make coordinated results in priority sectors possible. However, delegation of decision-making authority, professional incentives to coordinate, and accountability for results are also necessary for consistent coordinated results. The agreement of the ambassador and senior military commander on priorities for civil-military efforts combined with joint analysis and planning at the embassy and in the field contributed to coordinated results, including the complementarity and synergy achieved in road construction. However, the elimination of co-location at the embassy had negative symbolic fallout, creating the impression of problems at the top. The continued centralization of USAID decision-making authority in Kabul, combined with perverse incentives on the part of both civilians and military level to spend money quickly, and a lack of accountability for downstream impacts, continued to undermine coordination.

Phase IV: New Joint Analysis and Planning Processes (Spring 2007–Spring 2009)

Ambassador William Wood arrived in Kabul in April 2007. In addition to a growing insurgency, he faced a new structural challenge. United States General Dan McNeill had arrived in February to command the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and U.S. forces on the ground, with the exception of special forces, reported up the chain to McNeill. However, they reported to him in his capacity as ISAF commander. McNeill did not wear a U.S. "hat" during this period. Since there was no senior U.S. military officer other than McNeill to whom all U.S. forces on the ground reported, Ambassador Wood did not have a direct U.S. military counterpart with whom to coordinate.

The Bagram Process: Convening, Facilitative Leadership, and Joint Analysis and Planning

In part because of the change in military command structures, and in part because of the initiative of individuals at levels beneath those of Wood and McNeill, the center of gravity for civil-military coordination shifted to Bagram Airfield.[60] Bagram, located just outside of Kabul, was the base for Coalition Joint Task Force-82 (CJTF-82), the senior coalition military headquarters for Regional Command East.

Shortly after Major General David Rodriguez assumed command of CJTF-82, he and senior members of his command met with civilian officials from the embassy. Together, they initiated a series of monthly, full-day coordination meetings at Bagram Airfield. Neither Rodriguez nor his civilian counterparts had line authority over all of the individuals whose participation was necessary for the success of the process. Therefore, they had to rely on facilitative leadership—or leadership without authority—to convene and lead the process.

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60. This process began toward the end of the prior period, gained momentum early in this period, and continued when responsibility for Regional Command (RC) East transferred from CJTF-82 to CJTF-101. Major General David Rodriguez served as Commander of CJTF-82 from February 2007 to April 2008. Major General Jeffrey Schloesser assumed command of CJTF-101 in April 2008.

The meetings were jointly led by the civilian deputy chief of mission, the USAID mission director, and the deputy commanding general (support) of CJTF-82. Meetings began in plenary, providing opportunities for updates and information sharing. Participants then broke out into working groups for information sharing and joint analysis and problem-solving for specific technical areas, including infrastructure, education, water, and energy.[61]

Civilian technical experts often led the working group discussions. Although they were not in formal leadership positions, they too exercised facilitative leadership, helping to keep the sessions focused and productive. At the end of the day, the full group reconvened in plenary.

The Bagram process had an explicit learning function. Information sharing was interwoven with joint analysis, including dialogue about underlying goals and assumptions. Both civilian and military participants clarified their goals, interests, and concerns. In building roads, for example, different priorities led to different approaches to construction. While USAID often wanted to pave roads, the military participants explained to them that building roads to gravel standards made them less susceptible to improvised explosive devices (IEDs).[62]

The military asked USAID to educate them on basic development principles. One of the most important lessons USAID shared was the importance of coordinating with local Afghan actors. A military officer reflects:

> We learned that many projects, although well intended, could not be resourced or maintained in the long term by the GoA [Government of Afghanistan]. Schools needed teachers and maintenance. Hospitals and clinics needed health care professionals, supplies, power, and maintenance … Through USAID, CJTF-82 began coordinating its larger projects with the GoA to ensure long-term resourcing was available. Additionally, we needed to ensure our projects were in line with GoA plans. It was pointless in executing projects that were not in compliance with GoA plans, programs, policies, and strategies.[63]

The benefits of the joint analysis and planning were not limited to learning. Participants repeatedly achieved concrete coordinated results. Many involved identifying and mitigating coordination failures—both wasteful duplication and negative interactions among activities. In one case, participants discovered that USAID was building a road through an airstrip that was being paved with the military's CERP funding. They quickly corrected the problem: "We managed to get construction stopped and rerouted around the airstrip before it was built."[64] In another case, USAID and the military aligned their road building standards to reduce susceptibility to roadside bombs.[65]

USAID also convinced the military to stop providing free veterinary services in several local communities. The Veterinary Civil Action Program (VETCAP) had inadvertently undercut USAID's capacity-building efforts. A State official explains:

> USAID had embarked on a program to build up veterinary service capacity among Afghans. It had been training veterinarians and vet technicians in the country and region. There was a huge need for this in Afghanistan since it is an agricultural economy. When the military comes in with VETCAPs, which provide the service for free, it completely undercuts the ability of these people who have been painstakingly trained

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61. Confidential interview 99.
62. Confidential interview 11.
63. Confidential interview 108.
64. Confidential interview 81.
65. Confidential interview 11.

by USAID to make a living because farmers are not willing to pay for local services if they can wait and get free services. The military were responsive. They don't want to waste precious resources in places where there are other options.[66]

These and other coordinated results enhanced U.S. effectiveness. A military officer credits the Bagram process with making possible "better synchronization" among U.S. agencies and with Afghans:

> The primary results were better synchronization of U.S. government developmental efforts in Afghanistan that were more in line with the GoA developmental strategy and goals. Additionally, through the CJTF-82/USAID coordination with the government of Afghanistan, USG [U.S. government] development projects were better focused on GoA priorities, versus executing projects that local officials wanted that may or may not have been in line with ministerial priorities or supportable with GoA-provided resources. Other results were project collaboration, maximizing on the strengths of the different funding lines between DoD and USAID, and allowing for synergistic effects in both the short term and long term.[67]

As evidence of the improvement, the officer pointed to changes in how schools were being built and equipped to avoid wasteful duplication and leverage complementary resources:

> At some point in time, USAID stopped building schools. There was news of too many schools being built that weren't coordinated with the GoA. But they didn't withdraw from education. We teamed with them on education. After coordinating with the Ministry of Education, we would use CERP funds to build schools. USAID would use their education program money to train teachers and supply resources—teaching materials and school supplies.[68]

Thus, the regular convening of civilians and military at Bagram for joint analysis and planning, combined with facilitative leadership, made possible concrete coordinated results and promoted the relationship development and mutual learning upon which continued coordination depended.

The Integrated Civil-Military Action Group (ICMAG): Facilitative Leadership and Joint Analysis and Planning

While the Bagram process enhanced coordination, it stopped short of the formal, multi-level joint planning that many considered necessary. In 2007, the military leadership at Bagram, with the cooperation of their counterparts at the embassy, initiated a process of joint planning that resulted in the establishment of the Integrated Civil-Military Action Group (ICMAG.)

Again, facilitative leadership played a key role. Two civilians from the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) led the ICMAG process.[69] They facilitated planning meetings at each U.S. PRT and drafted a plan for feedback and correction. By the end of the process, each PRT had a joint civil-military plan that articulated shared goals and a joint strategy.

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66. Confidential interview 58.
67. Confidential interview 108.
68. Confidential interview 108.
69. S/CRS was established in 2004 to "lead, coordinate, and institutionalize U.S. government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations" (Herbst, John E. 2010. Ambassador John Herbst, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization on S/CRS 2009 Year in Review. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State.)

The individual PRT plans were a significant step forward, but they were not yet integrated into a coherent regional plan. In 2008, the S/CRS team was invited back to help develop a plan for all of Regional Command East (RC-East). They began the planning process at the regional command level, met with each brigade combat team, and then returned to the PRTs in an iterative "roll up and roll down" planning process that enabled them to link plans across units and levels.[70] The result was an integrated strategic plan for RC-East, as well as joint implementation plans for specific areas and activities. According to one official:

> From the problem-solving side, there were very visible results: The Nangahar, Inc. implementation plan, the border implementation plan, the Torkham Gate strategy, the Kyber Pass strategy … Civ-mil guidance was given out for first time in an integrated way from Kabul …[71]

As with other joint planning processes, the ICMAG's value went beyond its tangible outputs. The military had a long tradition of rigorous multi-level planning, but they had less experience with joint civil-military planning. As the ICMAG process unfolded, the military's commitment to joint planning grew. Civilians, meanwhile, developed greater appreciation of the importance of formal, multi-level planning. A State official describes the impact:

> When it [the ICMAG process] began, the word I got from the embassy was if the military really wants to do this multilevel planning—we don't think it is very useful, but if military wants it badly—we're okay with it … We did one full planning cycle, from Kabul/Bagram to the brigade level to the PRTs, then back to the brigade and back to Kabul/Bagram. Now the embassy doesn't want to let go of this. Now we're doing it in RC South.[72]

The planning process also fostered mutual understanding. Chris Dell, who chaired an executive working group in his capacity as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy, explains:

> The challenge is to speak a common language. To get to systemic or by-project coordination, you need to make the various civilian and military processes mutually intelligible. Our singular achievement over the last 18 months is the process moving us to that state—the ICMAG. The ICMAG is the heart of the way ahead.[73]

The ICMAG process was so successful that, in November 2008, the ICMAG was formally stood up as a new unit at the embassy. By spring 2009 it had become a full-time group of co-located civilians and military, including the two S/CRS staff who facilitated the process, military planners from Bagram and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, representatives of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, and USAID technical experts.[74]

Lessons Learned from Phase IV: Regular convening of agency stakeholders, combined with structured joint analysis and planning, enhances coordination and promotes relationship development and mutual learning. Facilitative leadership is necessary to convene interagency processes and keep them focused and on track. The monthly convening of civilians and military at Bagram provided opportunities for regular, face-to-face information sharing and joint analysis and planning. These, in turn, enabled participants to directly avoid negative interactions

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70. Confidential interview 103.
71. Confidential interview 103.
72. Confidential interview 16.
73. Interview with Chris Dell, 2009, quoted with permission.
74. The Executive Working Group, chaired by Chris Dell, sat above the ICMAG and served as a type of deputies committee, identifying questions that arose in the planning process for resolution.

among activities, reducing wasteful duplication and leveraging complementary resources and capacities. The process also fostered mutual learning. The Integrated Civil-Military Action Group (ICMAG) built upon the experience at Bagram, providing for rigorous civil-military planning that was then integrated across levels of decision-making. Facilitative leadership, including convening stakeholders and facilitation of joint analysis and planning processes, played an important role in the success of both the Bagram and ICMAG processes.

Epilogue

By the end of 2009, U.S. civil-military coordination in Afghanistan had improved significantly. The almost complete absence of coordination following the 2001 intervention had given way to a growing commitment to coordination and an associated investment in key systems and processes, including co-location and joint analysis and planning at various levels on the ground.

Nevertheless, ongoing coordination failures continued to plague U.S. and multinational reconstruction efforts, and virtually every analysis, policy document, and speech about Afghanistan emerging from the U.S. policy community emphasized the need for enhanced civil-military coordination.[75] General David Petraeus, CENTCOM commander, in his 2010 testimony to the Armed Services Committee, argued: "Instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan poses the most urgent problem set in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility and requires complementary and integrated civil-military, whole-of-government approaches."[76]

The late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, in a January 2010 press briefing with the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and the administrator of USAID, described the directions given to staff on the ground: "We have issued an edict—don't identify yourself as AID International or USDA. You are U.S. Mission. The motto out there—I know it's corny, but the motto is "One team, one mission."[77]

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates repeatedly emphasized the need for enhanced "3-D" coordination among defense, diplomacy, and development. President Obama, in his public remarks about the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, "pledged to better coordinate our military and civilian efforts."[78]

The crescendo of calls for enhanced coordination reflected recognition that, in spite of improvements, coordination failures had seriously undermined reconstruction efforts. By 2009, the U.S. had invested $32.9 billion in Afghan reconstruction. While the U.S. was only one among many nations involved in Afghanistan, it was by far the largest and most powerful. The lack of coordination on the U.S. side undermined the achievement not only of the U.S., but also of broader multinational goals in Afghanistan. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton acknowledged this failure, calling the massive investment in Afghanistan without adequate results "heartbreaking."[79]

Over the next few years, the U.S. government continued to make changes to its coordination infrastructure. The State Department's Office of the Special Coordinator for Afghan Reconstruction (S/CRS), established in 2004 to "lead, coordinate, and institutionalize U.S. government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations" was replaced by the Bureau of Conflict

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75. Enhanced coordination within the U.S. government was broadly recognized to be a necessary part of enhanced coordination among the many governmental, nongovernmental, expatriate, and local actors involved in Afghanistan.

76. BBC News. 2010. "U.S. Gen Petraeus Urges Unity to Tackle Afghanistan War." July 3, 2010, sec South Asia.

77. Richard Holbrooke, January 7, 2010, "Briefing on U.S. Agriculture Programs in Afghanistan," U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC. http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2010/01/20100108102957eaifas0.5268213.html#axzz2gUBDx3s5.

78. Barack Obama, December 1, 2009, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," United States Military Academy, West Point, NY. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan.

79. "Clinton Calls Years of Afghan Aid 'Heartbreaking' in their Futility." *Washington Post.* March 3, 2009. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/30/AR2009033002479.html.

and Stabilization Operations (CSO). CSO did not have the explicit coordination mandate its predecessor had.

On the ground, there also were changes to the civil-military landscape. The ICMAG, for example, morphed into the Civil-Military Plans and Assessment Sub-Section (CMPASS) at the embassy. CMPASS was charged with both coordinating among the embassy, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) and supporting planning and assessment for the U.S. mission.[80]

In June 2011, President Obama announced that the U.S. military would withdraw 10,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year, 23,000 more in 2012, and the remainder by 2014. The goal was to leave the Afghan people "responsible for their own security."[81] As U.S. troops prepared to leave, however, coordination problems continued to challenge transition planning and execution.

80. Maria Stephan, "Navigating Civil-Military Relations in Kabul." The Simons Center. http://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/IAJ-3-1-pg23-30.pdf

81. Jim Sciutto, Mary Bruce, and Devin Dwyer. June 22, 2011. "Obama Orders Start to US Troop Withdrawal From Afghanistan." abcnews.go.com. http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/president-obama-orders-start-us-troop-withdrawal-afghanistan/story?id=13908291#.UJM-8473V4U

Findings and Recommendations

The U.S. experience in Afghanistan demonstrates that coordination is possible even in the most challenging of contexts. Civil-military coordination in Afghanistan was immensely difficult. The Department of Defense, Department of State, and USAID differed not only in their priorities and timelines, but also in their organizational cultures, lexicons, and operating norms.

Power disparities, reflected in DoD's overwhelming financial and human resources on the ground, contributed to long-standing mistrust and tension between civilians and military. Add to this the fact that they were working seven days a week in complex, volatile, and often dangerous conditions, and a perfect storm for interagency conflict and competition ensued. In such a context, it is not surprising that coordination often floundered.

What is significant is that civilians and military on the ground delivered some important coordinated results. These coordinated results, in turn, advanced agency missions, saved resources, and contributed to the achievement of U.S. and multinational goals in Afghanistan.

What factors distinguished the successes in interagency coordination from the failures, and what enabled coordinated results to be achieved? Many of those interviewed for the case study initially defaulted to individual and idiosyncratic explanations, arguing that coordinated results depended almost entirely upon the luck of the draw: who was in what position at what time, and their attitudes and relationships. Clearly, there was ground truth to these explanations. But what were the deeper structural factors underlying these individual and idiosyncratic factors?

The case study shows that when coordinated results were achieved, it was because civilians and military put in place organizational systems and processes conducive to coordination. When coordination failed, it was because critical factors necessary for consistent coordinated results were lacking. While these lessons emerged in a unique context, they are relevant to public executives and managers seeking to enhance coordination in any issue area or context.

Findings: Systems and Processes to Enhance Coordination

Finding One: Co-location and convening provide opportunities for face-to-face interaction that facilitate joint analysis and planning and foster relationship development and mutual learning.
Co-location of civilians and military at the U.S. embassy in Kabul and at various levels of the military structure in the field, including the provincial reconstruction teams, facilitated information sharing and joint analysis and planning and enabled civilians and military to learn from one another and develop a greater appreciation of each agency's comparative advantages. Co-location of the senior civilian and military leaders at the embassy in the second phase also served as a powerful symbol of high-level commitment to coordination, reverberating to lower levels of their respective chains of command.

When co-location was not possible, convening of civilians and military provided opportunities for regular, in-person interaction and thus facilitated information sharing, joint analysis and planning, relationship development, and mutual learning.

The benefits of regular convening were evident in the Bagram process. As one military officer puts it: "The process worked very well because it put the embassy, USAID, [and the military] in the same room, at the same lunch table, working the same things. The synergy from doing that, versus talking with someone you don't know on the other end of the phone, paid huge dividends."[82] Another official agrees: "Before you can collaborate, you must coordinate. Before that, you must know the names of people. Before that, you must break down some barriers so that you're not separate vessels.[83]

Finding Two: Regular information sharing and joint analysis and planning enable participants to develop a shared assessment of the situation, identify common goals, and agree on a division of labor.

The experience in Afghanistan shows that regular, structured opportunities for information sharing and joint analysis and planning are necessary to develop a shared assessment of the situation, identify common goals, and agree on a division of labor that leverages complementary resources and capabilities in support of shared goals.

In the early stages of U.S. reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, the lack of a joint interagency plan and associated lack of information sharing caused numerous coordination failures, including situations in which civilians and military inadvertently worked at cross-purposes, wasting resources and undermining effectiveness.

As time went on, civilians and military instituted systems and processes for joint analysis and planning. Examples include the Joint Interagency Task Force established at the embassy, the focused planning for priority sectors that contributed to coordination in road construction, the Bagram process, and the Civil-Military Action Group. These systems and processes made possible concrete coordinated results. They also fostered mutual learning and the development of strong working relationships, creating foundations for enhanced coordination moving forward.

Finding Three: Facilitative leadership is necessary to convene and lead effective joint analysis and planning processes.

One of the most significant challenges public executives and managers face in coordinating across agency lines is lack of line authority over many of the stakeholders involved. To be successful, executives and managers must exercise facilitative leadership, or leadership without authority.

In Afghanistan, civilians and military reported up different chains of command. Facilitative leadership was the glue that held the joint analysis and planning processes together and enabled them to succeed. In some cases, it was people in formal leadership roles who exercised facilitative leadership. Rodriguez, for example, had direct authority over military officers who served under him, but not over the many civilians involved in the Bagram process. To be effective convening and leading that process, in concert with his civilian counterparts, he had to exercise facilitative leadership.

The military is an intensely hierarchical system, and directive leadership is the norm. Thus, it is telling that a number of senior military officers who served in Afghanistan emphasize their

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82. Confidential interview 99.
83. Confidential interview 67.

learning about the importance of facilitative leadership. Lieutenant General Robert Durbin, who commanded Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, reflects:

> When I arrived in Afghanistan, I was focused on command and control [referred to as C2 within the military], ownership, directing activities. I quickly found that I owned very little, controlled very little, could direct very little … The new C2 was about cooperation and collaboration, not command and control; influence, not direction. We had to create forums, bring key stakeholders to convene, so we could collaborate.[84]

Facilitative leadership need not be limited to people in formal leadership positions. Interagency processes are complex, and facilitation of joint analysis and planning processes is necessary to keep the dialogues focused and on track. During the technical working group breakout sessions at Bagram, civilian participants selected to serve as ad hoc facilitators were credited with contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of the process.

While having participants themselves facilitate sessions worked at Bagram, having participants be dual-hatted as facilitators can be problematic. For one thing, it is difficult to focus simultaneously on content and process—and effective facilitation requires careful attention to process. For another, participants may not be perceived as impartial stewards of an interagency process, especially if they are seen to have organizational "equities" at stake. Finally, people trained and experienced in facilitation often are able to navigate challenging situations, including conflicts, more effectively than people without facilitation training and experience.

For the reasons highlighted above, public executives and managers should consider investing in expert, third-party facilitation of joint analysis and planning processes. The experience with the ICMAG in the fourth phase demonstrated the value of such an investment. The S/CRS team that facilitated the ICMAG was made up of experienced facilitators who were able to focus their full attention on the joint planning and establish credibility as impartial stewards of the process. This, in turn, contributed directly to the effectiveness of the joint planning.

Finding Four: Delegation of decision-making is essential, but it must be paired with professional incentives to coordinate and accountability for results.
The case study shows that delegation of decision-making authority to the field, combined with incentives to coordinate and accountability for downstream results, is necessary for consistent coordinated results.

In Afghanistan, the lack of decision-making authority on the part of many USAID officers in the field undermined coordination. Without the ability to make decisions and allocate resources, USAID officers were unable to respond quickly and in concert with their military counterparts to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Delegation of decision-making authority without the requisite incentives and accountability systems, however, was counterproductive. In Afghanistan, military officers in the field were authorized to allocate significant amounts of money to development projects in the provinces under CERP. However, incentives emphasized spending money quickly, rather than taking the time to coordinate with civilians, and military officers were rarely held accountable for the downstream effects of their spending. The high level of decision-making authority, combined with perverse incentives and insufficient accountability, led to a go-it-alone attitude at many PRTs that resulted in wasteful duplication of efforts and working at cross-purposes with civilians.

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84. Interview with Robert Durbin, 2009, quoted with permission.

The military was not alone in struggling with perverse incentives and insufficient accountability. USAID officers in the field also faced pressure to spend money quickly. And, civilians, like their military counterparts, were not held sufficiently accountable for the downstream effects of their decisions. The vast flow of resources to civilian and military efforts in Afghanistan, the incentive to spend money quickly, and the lack of accountability for downstream results led to ongoing coordination failures, wasting resources and undermining the effectiveness of U.S. and multinational reconstruction efforts.

Recommendations to Enhance Interagency Coordination

The findings above translate into concrete recommendations for executives and managers working to enhance coordination in other agencies and policy arenas. The first four of the six recommendations below focus on the organizational systems and processes necessary for coordinated results. The final two recommendations address key factors that maximize the effectiveness of those systems and processes.

Systems and Processes for Effective Coordination

Recommendation One: Co-locate and convene interagency teams.
Given resource constraints, it is tempting to rely on information technology to communicate across agency lines, rather than invest in face-to-face communication. However, regular opportunities for in-person interaction are necessary for effective interagency coordination.

In Afghanistan, co-location at multiple levels of decision-making made possible regular joint analysis and planning and facilitated relationship development and mutual learning. Co-located teams also served as symbols of their agencies' commitment to coordination. When co-location was not possible, convening of agency representatives ensured regular opportunities for face-to-face joint analysis and planning.

Executives and managers should ensure opportunities for interagency teams to meet regularly and in person. If possible, they should co-locate interagency teams on a full or part-time basis. If co-location is not possible, executives and managers should convene interagency meetings as often as geography and resources allow. Investing in in-person meetings early in the interagency process can lay the foundations for subsequent electronic communication. Occasional opportunities to reconvene in person, once coordination processes are underway, can help air and resolve any tensions or conflicts that may emerge.

Recommendation Two: Ensure regular, structured opportunities for information sharing and joint analysis and planning.
Regular, structured opportunities for information sharing and joint analysis and planning are essential for effective interagency coordination. They enable agency representatives to develop a shared understanding of the situation, build consensus on overarching goals, develop a joint strategy, and identify a division of labor that leverages complementary resources and capacities.

In Afghanistan, the initial lack of a joint interagency plan contributed to early coordination failures. As civilians and military became increasingly aware of the need for enhanced coordination, they instituted systems and processes to ensure regular information sharing and joint analysis and planning. The Joint Interagency Task Force that was stood up at the embassy in Phase II, the focused joint planning for priority sectors in Phase III, and the Bagram process and Integrated Civil-Military Action Group (ICMAG) in Phase IV contributed directly to coordinated results and helped transform attitudes and relationships.

Executives and managers should institute regular, structured information sharing and joint analysis and planning processes. They should encourage participants to challenge their own and others' assumptions as they work together to define problems and develop potential solutions. Participants must have opportunities to identify and build on common ground, as well as acknowledge and deal constructively with the differences that often remain. For teams not experienced with joint analysis and planning processes, executives and managers should consider investing in joint training at the outset, to ensure a shared foundation of skills and expectations.

Recommendation Three: Designate experienced facilitators.
Experienced facilitators play key roles in effective joint analysis and planning processes. In Afghanistan, the State Department's Office of the Special Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization designated two full-time facilitators to lead the ICMAG. Their active, experienced facilitation helped to keep the process focused and productive.

Executives and managers should designate skilled facilitators to guide interagency processes. Even among teams experienced with joint analysis and planning, facilitators can increase effectiveness and efficiency. Experienced facilitators ensure that all participants have opportunities to provide input and participate in decision-making and help resolve problems or conflicts that may emerge. To be effective, facilitators must be perceived as impartial. Thus, whenever possible, executives and managers should consider bringing in third-party facilitators who do not have organizational equities at stake.

Recommendation Four: Delegate decision-making authority to the field, provide professional incentives to coordinate, and hold people accountable for results.
Delegation of decision-making authority to the field is essential for interagency coordination. However, delegation of authority can be counterproductive if not paired with incentive and accountability systems conducive to coordination.

In Afghanistan, the centralization of USAID decision-making in Kabul undermined USAID field program officers' ability to respond quickly and in concert with their military counterparts to emerging challenges and opportunities. Military officers at provincial reconstruction teams, by contrast, were authorized to allocate substantial resources. However, the incentive was to spend money quickly, rather than taking the time to coordinate, and they were rarely held accountable for the downstream impacts of their spending. Civilians likewise had perverse incentives to spend money quickly and were not held sufficiently accountable for results. As a result, coordination suffered.

Executives and managers should delegate as much authority as possible to their subordinates to share information about goals, approaches, and resources; engage in joint processes; interpret high-level guidance at the operational level; and allocate resources necessary for coordinated implementation. They also should ensure that professional incentives emphasize taking the time to coordinate and achieving overarching interagency goals. They should work with their interagency counterparts to align incentive systems and consider establishing joint evaluation processes in which counterparts from other agencies provide input into professional evaluations.

Executives and managers also must hold subordinates accountable for results. They should give their subordinates responsibility for identifying metrics and monitoring progress, ideally in concert with their interagency partners. This fosters buy-in to and understanding of interagency goals. It also provides early opportunities for interagency team building, as people from different organizations work together to develop a shared set of metrics that are acceptable up their respective chains, to measure the effectiveness of their efforts, and to learn and adapt accordingly.

Maximizing the Effectiveness of Systems and Processes

Recommendation Five: Articulate shared goals and priorities.
Executives and managers must provide clear guidance to their subordinates about the goals and priorities for interagency efforts. This ensures that coordinated implementation will be in the service of agreed-upon goals.

In Afghanistan, the interagency agreement on goals and priorities reflected in Accelerating Success in Afghanistan laid the foundation for the agreement on priorities Khalilzad and Barno forged on the ground. They then charged the EIPG with translating the high-level agreement into joint plans with metrics to evaluate progress. Neumann and Eikenberry likewise agreed on priorities for civil-military efforts in Afghanistan, built support for those priorities in Washington, D.C., and charged civilians and military below them with developing detailed plans. In each case, the agreement of the senior leadership proved critical to achieving coordinated results.

Executives and managers should work with their counterparts in other agencies to articulate shared, high-level goals to interagency teams. This does not mean that executives and managers can, or even should, agree on all goals and priorities. Indeed, it is essential to recognize and deal with different interests, agendas, and priorities. But executives and managers must work together to identify and communicate a set of shared, high-level goals to motivate and sustain coordination. Then, as emphasized above, they must empower their subordinates to make the decisions necessary to achieve those goals.

Recommendation Six: Pay attention to individual personalities and team dynamics when building interagency teams.
Executives and managers should pay careful attention to team composition, dynamics, and continuity. Interagency systems and processes, however well-designed, depend for their success on the interactions among individuals.

In Afghanistan, team composition often was left to chance. In some cases, team dynamics worked well from the outset. In others, joint analysis and planning processes fostered working relationships and attitudes conducive to coordination. In yet other cases, ongoing tension and miscommunication undermined coordination. In addition, frequent rotations of personnel undermined continuity.

While well-designed systems and processes do foster attitudes and relationships conducive to coordination, careful attention to team dynamics at the outset can make a significant difference. In putting together interagency teams, executives and managers should strive to balance personality types and expertise, ensuring that at least some people on the team have prior interagency experience and consensus-building skills. Executives and managers also should maximize continuity in agency representation. Finally, they should consider investing in joint training. In addition to building skills necessary for coordination, joint training can serve a team-building purpose, generating a sense of common purpose, establishing shared expectations, and addressing concerns and preconceptions.

About the Author

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Dr. Strimling Yodsampa is a social scientist, practitioner, and consultant specializing in interagency, civil-military, and public-private cooperation. In addition to her work at Tufts University, she serves as a consultant and senior social scientist on DoD-sponsored "innovative research" efforts on interagency assessment and planning.

Dr. Strimling Yodsampa served for over a decade as a commissioner with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS). She led international conflict resolution programs in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe and directed FMCS' Inter-Organizational Cooperation Program, working with leaders from the U.S. Departments of Defense and State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to strengthen interagency, civil-military, and public-private coordination. She played a leadership role in the establishment of the Alliance for Peacebuilding (www.alllianceforpeacebuilding.org), a Washington-based NGO dedicated to interagency cooperation in peacebuilding, and served for two years as Chairperson of the Board.

Dr. Strimling Yodsampa has taught negotiation, mediation, conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, civil-military relations, and interagency coordination in the U.S., Asia, Africa, South and Central America, and Eastern Europe. She has guest lectured at numerous educational institutions, including the Harvard Kennedy School, Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, University of Milwaukee Wisconsin, Syracuse University, U.S. Institute of Peace, U.S. Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, U.S. Marine Corps University, and National Defense University. She served as a pre- and post-doctoral research fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, International Security Program. Other research awards include a Smith Richardson Foundation World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship; a Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School Graduate Research Fellowship; and a Fulbright Senior Scholarship in South Africa. She holds a BA from Dartmouth College, a Master of Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School, and a PhD in International Relations from the Fletcher School, Tufts University.

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