

CIVILIAN RESPONSE

U.S. Department of State



EXTENDING THE U.S.
REACH IN SUDAN

pg 10

Contents

CIVILIAN RESPONSE

Background

Civilian Response is a quarterly publication of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction & Stabilization (S/CRS) in the United States Department of State.

This newsletter highlights the conflict prevention, response, and peacebuilding efforts of S/CRS, the Civilian Response Corps, and the interagency.

You can find previous issues of *Civilian Response* and more at:
www.state.gov/s/crs.

Staff

Michael Greenwald
Todd Calongne
Jeannine Ajello
Elizabeth Brandt
Adam Graham-Silverman

Submissions

If you are interested in contributing to *Civilian Response*, please email us at SCRS_info@state.gov with your name, title, agency, and proposed topic.

- 3 A New Chapter for Conflict and Stabilization Operations
- 5 Civilian Response Corps Member Profile: Mike Sunshine
- 6 Reintegrating Afghan Detainees: Civilian Response Corps Members Play a Crucial Role
- 8 Independent Study: Assessments Help Embassies Around the World
- 10 Extending the U.S. Reach in Sudan
- 12 Speaking the Language: Lessons in Local Media, From Kyrgyzstan to Sudan
- 14 A Better Peace, One E-Mail at a Time
- 16 Lessons from Bangladesh
- 18 Ready to Roll: The Corps's Vehicles Get in Gear
- 19 Photo Journal



Winter 2010-11 / Issue No. 12

State Department Publication: 11476, Released By: Coordinator for Reconstruction & Stabilization, Revised: December 2010

A New Chapter for Conflict and Stabilization Operations

Ambassador Loftis lays out the map for the post-QDDR era



I recently returned from the remote state of Bok, in Southern Sudan, where officers from the Civilian Response Corps and the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization work under very trying conditions. These officers, from the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), drive down dusty roads to sit with security and election officials to determine how to support the referendum for self-determination there. They are on the lookout for signs of violence in this territory, which saw 40 years of seemingly endless conflict before a peace agreement and the vote offered signs of hope. These officers are the very embodiment of the Secretary's vision of civilian power.

The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), released on December 15, outlines an ambitious agenda to ensure that the State Department and USAID can lead through civilian power and build a Department and Agency with capabilities fine-tuned for the challenges of the 21st century.

The Coordinator's office has served as an incubator for many of the concepts outlined in the QDDR. Where the QDDR calls for the State Department as a whole to become more expeditionary and operational, the Civilian Response Corps has been placing State officers and interagency partners in untried field locations, where they interact daily with villagers, provincial officials, civic groups and military organizations. Where the QDDR envisions integrated strategic planning linked to resources, increased

interagency training on operating in conflict environments, and strong international partnerships, our office and the interagency Civilian Response Corps community can proudly say we have built a foundation in these areas and are well placed to help build the further capacity that the Secretary calls for.

However, the QDDR goes even further. The Secretary has made a firm commitment to preventing violent conflict, and to a cross-government approach to the entire spectrum of operations in conflict and crisis, going beyond reconstruction and stabilization. She intends that conflict prevention and response become a core mission of the Department and USAID, a distinct discipline that must be learned, honed, trained, improved and fostered with care. As a result, the QDDR proposes expanding on the foundation that our office has built by creating a Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations, led by an Assistant Secretary and reporting to a new Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.

The QDDR recognizes that this new bureau must become the locus for institutionalizing conflict prevention and response as a distinct discipline and core mission. It also expands the role for the Corps, the group of experts across the government who stand ready to deploy to support these missions.

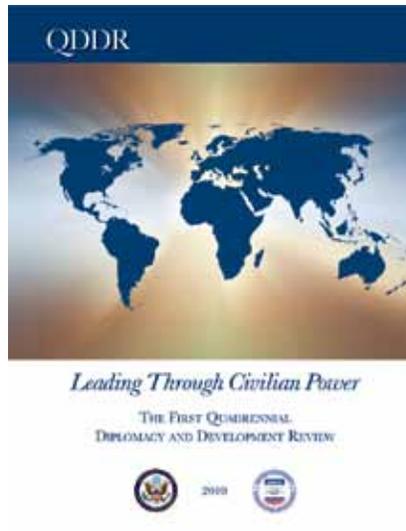
The QDDR sharpens our focus on creating new types

of deployable teams, sharing management systems with USAID, and placing a priority on monitoring and evaluation.

Since I arrived at S/CRS in September, it's been my goal to bring the organization through this transition and into the stronger, better equipped bureau that the QDDR envisions, positioned to expand coordination and promote a new approach to conflict across government. In the last three months, I've traveled to see all of our major deployments and met with our international partners. We've launched a civilian surge in southern Sudan, welcomed new partners like the Department of Energy, and conducted a review of our capabilities. These are all continuations of our existing work, but with the arrival of the QDDR, they are also part of our transformation.

The Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) will be institutionalized within the Department of State in a new way. In reporting to the Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, CSO will join with the other major operational bureaus in the State Department overseeing all assistance on civilian policing and law enforcement, refugee and humanitarian assistance, and human rights and governance programs. While a move from an office reporting directly to the Secretary to a bureau reporting to an Under Secretary may appear to be a demotion, it in fact better integrates this capability into the Department. The QDDR lays out a path to organize and integrate our activities to support Ambassadors in the field and the regional Assistant Secretaries, while pledging much stronger support to the integrated approach that S/CRS has worked hard to promote. The new structure also recognizes that what began as an experiment is now mainstream, and integral to our future foreign policy.

As the QDDR is implemented,



we will continue to build the Civilian Response Corps, which has proven the model of deploying specialized expertise to address conflict. In Sudan and Kyrgyzstan, we're supporting embassies to project civilian power into regions that would not have been reachable without our expeditionary platforms and personnel. Though we provide some very specialized skills that are not normally found within the State Department, we operate under the guidance of ambassadors and the regional bureaus that oversee each part of the world. We are very much team players, which plays to our strengths in Washington and in the field.

The QDDR also challenges us to create a state of the art center of applied knowledge, developing new ways to capture and share lessons in what works and what doesn't. We must do this in collaboration not only with our interagency partners but with leading domestic and international think tanks and academic institutions. And it asks us to expand those lessons to provide proactive, effective strategies and operations for preventing violent conflict. Regional bureaus and ambassadors have welcomed our analysis on preventing conflict and the planning process in the past. Now we will join operational

capacity with this analysis to provide new tools to chiefs of mission to target emerging violence and the political solutions that are needed for sustained peace.

As the world has become more connected and complicated, diplomats and aid workers – civilians, like those I saw in Sudan – must be the first face of American power. In many areas of the world, we ceded that role to the military. We are prepared to reverse that trend, working with, but not reliant on, our military partners. We are taking a lot more risks than we would have 15 or 20 years ago. Along with the risk has come the opportunity to harness our powers across government to step in and help. The creation of S/CRS was one of the responses to these trends, and now we are excited to evolve along with them. Judging by the top-caliber experts in this office, we're well placed to move ahead.

Ambassador Robert Loftis became Acting Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization on September 27, 2010. So far, he has flown more than 60,000 miles to meet with international partners and visit our engagement teams. Ambassador Loftis spent nearly 30 years in the Foreign Service before retiring in 2009. Previous positions that prepared him for the job of Acting Coordinator include leading the initial negotiations for the Status of Forces Agreement with Iraq in 2008, serving as Deputy Executive Director of the Implementation Planning Team for the creation of the Africa Command (AFRICOM) within the Department of Defense and teaching strategic leadership at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. From 2001 to 2004, he was Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. His last Foreign Service assignment was as the Secretary's Special Representative for Avian and Pandemic Influenza.



Civilian Response Corps

Member Profile



Civilian Response Corps member Mike Sunshine and a Basra University student who wrote articles for a newspaper that the U.S. Provisional Reconstruction Team there sponsored. The quarterly newspaper, dedicated to giving voice to women in southern Iraq, covered sensitive issues including forced marriage and female circumcision. The newspaper's editor teaches English at Basra University.

In 2004, Mike Sunshine sold his Atlanta advertising agency to his employees and set out on a new career in public service. Now, at the tender age of 67, he will soon deploy as an Active member of the Civilian Response Corps. After a two-year stint with a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra, Iraq, he is preparing to go to Afghanistan on his first mission with the Corps to work on civilian-military planning in a Regional Command.

Sunshine is no stranger to conflict, however. He served in Vietnam and retired from the Army Reserve as a Colonel in 1995. After leaving his successful advertising firm, whose clients included General Electric, he worked to rescue victims of human trafficking at an Atlanta NGO. He then spent more than a year working as a public affairs officer to Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Peter Pace. Now he's chosen to go back into the field as part of our effort to help countries in turmoil.

More and more, people like Sunshine are deferring retirement to join the Civilian Response Corps and deploy on reconstruction and stabilization missions around the world. Retirees and spring chickens across the government who are interested in joining the Corps can visit www.civilianresponsecorps.gov for additional information.



Reintegrating Afghan Detainees

Civilian Response Corps Members Play a Crucial Role

A detainee plants spinach seeds in the greenhouse at the Detention Facility in Parwan. Detainees learn about different methods to grow crops more efficiently, which will increase their yield and profits. The agricultural program is designed to teach skills to rehabilitate detainees upon their release back into Afghan society. As detainees improve skill sets, such as how to use drip irrigation to gain a higher yield from their crops, they become less likely to return to the insurgency for economic reasons.

A detainee spins the pulley on a sewing machine to repair clothing during a tailoring class at the Detention Facility in Parwan. The tailoring course teaches detainees how to use sewing equipment to make clothing and, most importantly, to use those skills upon their release as a source of income by sewing clothing in their village. These reintegration courses help the detainees become successful members of their villages once released.



The Civilian Response Corps has played a key role in an innovative joint task force created to help Afghanistan reintegrate Afghan detainees into society. The goal of the group, first formed in 2009 by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, was to create meaningful changes in detainees' lives so that they return peacefully to their communities. Together, U.S. and Afghan partners developed an effective reintegration program that seeks to reduce detainees' motivators for violence and insurgency. The group, now known as Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 (CJIATF-435) oversees this innovative program to lower the risk that an individual will return to conflict.

The program began by assuming command, control, oversight, and responsibility for U.S. detention operations in Afghanistan. As it grew, it brought in Afghan citizens, coalition military partners, U.S. Embassy Kabul staff, and a mix of interagency Civilian Response Corps members. The task force faced many challenges: caring for detainees; implementing revised detainee review boards; developing educational programs and aligning U.S. operations and the Afghan criminal justice system. During its first nine months, the team designed a new reintegration process and built rehabilitation and re-entry programs.

The reintegration process begins by treating detainees with dignity and respect and ensuring they live in safe and humane conditions. The average detainee gains 30 pounds from balanced daily meals and all receive needed medical and dental care.

U.S. teams contract with an Afghan company to provide formal basic education and de-radicalization programs certified by the Afghan Ministry of Education. As 80 percent of the detainees are illiterate, Dari, Pashto and English literacy classes are extremely popular. The team built a farm plot to teach farming techniques, and tailoring and other vocational training courses are also available. Working closely with Afghan partners

ensures the programs are both sustainable and culturally appropriate. The team also helps with job placement for released detainees.

As a detainee's release date approaches, the detainee signs a statement renouncing violence, a council of elders from the detainee's home signs a pledge to monitor and support his peaceful return to society, and Afghan partners lead release ceremonies called "detainee release shuras." The U.S. team developed a questionnaire to evaluate released detainees, and holds periodic meetings among former detainees and their sponsors to check on their progress and demonstrate the Afghan government's continuing interest and support.

The task force will build on these efforts. The group is now working closely with the government of Afghanistan toward a transition of detention facilities and reintegration efforts to Afghan control.

By Civilian Response Corps member Mike Pannek, who comes from the U.S. Department of Justice International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program. Pannek served as the CJIAF-435 Reintegration Director from November 2009 until August 2010. Pannek, and the civilian-military team that he led, played a central role within the CJIAF to develop reintegration programs to support the national counterinsurgency strategy.



A detainee practices Dari during a literacy class at the Detention Facility in Parwan. Afghan educators, approved by the Afghan Ministry of Education, provide instruction to the detainees, who participate in the program on a voluntary basis. Detainees can take courses in Dari, Pashto and English.



A detainee pulls a piece of bread out of the tandoor oven at the Detention Facility in Parwan. The bread baking process is a traditional Afghan method, but detainees will eventually learn to bake bread in a conventional oven in the detention facility's kitchen. Once the oven is installed, detainees will bake their own bread, a skill they can take back to their villages once they are released.

Independent Study: Assessments Help Embassies Around the World

Attention U.S. Embassies: is your host country facing potential conflict? Does its political system face governance issues? Perhaps our conflict prevention teams have a tool that you can use.

Using methods developed just for this purpose, an interagency team of State Department conflict prevention officers and Civilian Response Corps members can work with the country team to assess and describe factors affecting stability in the host nation. The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization has used this framework in over 20 countries already, resulting in new interagency alliances and leading some U.S. agencies to change the way they approach activities in the field.

These assessments offer U.S. Embassies a new and unique opportunity to elevate diplomacy and development alongside defense as part of our foreign-policy toolkit for conflict prevention. The systematic, whole-of-government approach enables better, longer-term analysis, giving embassies the rare chance to anticipate conflicts before they start. Peter Kranstover, a conflict prevention specialist, praised this specialized tool for its information gathering and cross-department communication. “The U.S. Agency for International Development used to do these types of assessments regularly,” he said. “Until now, there really hasn’t been a similar whole-of-government tool available in years.”

Here’s how it works: Conflict prevention experts from the State Department form a small interagency team, often including State Department desk officers and staff from USAID, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the regional combatant commands, and others, such as the Department of Justice or Department of Agriculture.

The team reviews existing country information and conducts a workshop in Washington, bringing together government officials and U.S. Embassy staff, as well as non-governmental, think tank, and academic experts. The workshop uses the tool, known as the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF), to explore the country’s strengths and challenges. Then, when possible, the interagency team travels to the country for several weeks, teaming up with U.S. officials there to fan out and interview hundreds of locals from all walks of life – filling in the gaps and testing assumptions made by experts in Washington. Together, the team and U.S. Embassy personnel analyze the

new data to inform the mission’s diplomatic, strategic planning, and defense portfolios, which lay the groundwork for more prevention programs. The whole process takes about five months in total, including two to three weeks in-country.

An illustrative Latin America example began when the USAID Mission and U.S. Embassy discovered they were both interested in a strategy to coordinate all of the U.S. offices working in the country. The ambassador requested an assessment of the country’s development needs as they relate to conflict, and the Office of the Coordinator formed a six-person interagency team based in Washington. The Washington workshop drew 50 experts on the country, including three members from the U.S. Embassy.

The Washington team, all Spanish speakers, then traveled to the country for two and a half weeks in November. After developing a standard questionnaire that asked citizens about their country’s strengths and weaknesses, the group enlisted workers from the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. military, USAID, and local staff to form five teams, which traveled to five different regions of the country.

Each team talked to a wide range of people in settings ranging from planned meetings with government, business, or religious leaders to man-on-the-street interviews conducted on the side of the road.

They ask: What are the biggest challenges to your community and country? What is working well? Teams meet and talk with anywhere from 300 to 1000 local people. Unemployment, poverty, and politicization of access to and distribution of state resources were the top concerns in this Latin American nation, confirming the team’s initial research on the drivers of conflict.

The analysis and reports inform U.S. Embassy and Washington-based policy making, planning, development portfolios, and, perhaps, budget requests and allocations.

Senior Conflict Prevention Specialist Cynthia Irmer summarized what the ICAF offers to U.S. Embassies with this thought: “Our hope is that the report and the experience give an embassy clear, concrete data that will explain the drivers of peace and stability. This perspective can support planning and operations. But in the end, we are here to support U.S. Embassy goals on the ground.”



In March 2010, SICRS led interagency teams in interviewing 1,000 Liberians as well as analyzing causes of conflict and sources of resilience. The detailed analysis led to the development of a \$12 million 1207 conflict prevention program focusing on resolving land disputes and expanding police training in two key counties. Here, two assessment team members from State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the United Nations Mission in Liberia, greet children in Bakedu, Liberia after conducting interviews of village residents.



Voters in Southern Sudan wait in line to register to vote in the January 9 referendum on self-determination. The Civilian Reserve Corps supported U.S. government efforts to monitor voter registration.

EXTENDING THE U.S. REACH IN SUDAN

Men and women in surprising numbers have been walking hours or even days to register to vote in Southern Sudan's upcoming referendum on self-determination. Despite potential hurdles, voter registration proceeded mostly peacefully. For the last several months, the Civilian Response Corps has been on hand to help the Consulate General, USAID, and the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan make it happen. Corps teams on the ground will now become part of the broader U.S. government effort to understand the local dynamics and advance conflict prevention.

"Our stabilization teams comprised of Civilian Response Corps members are truly the eyes and ears of the U.S. across Southern Sudan, travelling to all state capitals and many smaller localities on a regular basis to be in contact with local officials, members of civil society and a wide variety of private citizens, U.N. officials and third-country officials," said Roger Moran, the Deputy Principal Officer and a member of the Civilian Response Corps from State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

The referendum in Southern Sudan stems from a peace agreement between North and South signed in 2005 after decades of civil war. It gave the South autonomy for six years leading up to the January 2011 vote on self-determination. During the momentous referendum process, the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) and the Corps are carving out a new role, extending the U.S. reach in the country and providing invaluable insights from the field, all in support of the Special Envoy, Consulate General and U.S. Embassy chief of mission.

The team includes Civilian Response Corps members from S/CRS and the Departments of Commerce and Justice, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development. These experts in rule of law, security sector reform, and conflict mitigation, working in a truly interagency effort, have increased U.S. engagement with the government of Southern Sudan. The mission is an example of how a conflict prevention team drawn from across the government can work together to augment existing U.S. civilian capacity.

“One of the real, direct benefits that we’re providing to the Consulate in Juba and the U.S. Government is expanding their understanding of Southern Sudan, which is a place where we just haven’t had much of a presence for a long time,” said Paul Turner, head of the Corps’ analysis team in Juba.

In 2011, the Office of the Coordinator plans to set up stabilization teams in five states in Southern Sudan, plus two mobile teams based in Juba. The teams may be in place for at least a year, during which time they will watch for signs of new violence and try to prevent its outbreak. “As we build up our stabilization teams, I think they will find more than an occasional anecdote during their interactions with local populations,” Turner said. “These one-on-one conversations can shed light on factors affecting instability and help to identify sources of resiliency within Sudanese society. This type of information will help to inform conflict prevention and mitigation efforts.”

The U.S. government is also working with other countries and international organizations on the ground, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and a forum of more than 100 nongovernmental organizations. The team in Juba – 24 people, including 19 Corps members, as of Dec. 7 – has started sharing information with others in this international community.

Ambassador Robert Loftis, the Acting Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, notes the unique, expeditionary aspect of the Civilian Response Corps’s work in Sudan: “Not only have we put a fairly substantial diplomatic presence in Juba, where we haven’t had one before, more importantly we are putting stabilization teams out in the state capitals to monitor the progress toward the referendum and to assist in identifying conflict areas – and hopefully to resolve them. This also requires that we put people into places where we normally don’t operate as diplomats – places where we have to provide our own transportation, our own housing, far away from normal support structures. It’s quite a challenge but it’s also quite a fascinating and interesting time to be doing this.”





Speaking the Language

Lessons in Local Media,
From Kyrgyzstan to Sudan





As the Civilian Response Corps has expanded its deployments, it has also ramped up communications as an important component of its in-country activities. From Afghanistan to Kyrgyzstan and Sudan, the Corps is helping to explain the importance and effectiveness of U.S. government actions.

Each environment presents its own evolving challenges, including linguistic, cultural and economic barriers. In some countries, evaluating local opinions toward the United States is a necessary first step in designing broader efforts. Elsewhere, public diplomacy work promotes U.S. programs that are under way or completed. The Corps has showcased its flexibility in adapting to these situations and providing new communications skills to U.S. Embassies.

In Afghanistan, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and the Civilian Response Corps helped the U.S. Embassy set up and staff its first strategic communications office. At the direction of the Embassy Public Affairs Section, the office drafted a plan to effectively allocate the \$170 million that the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan had provided for strategic communications. The plan has four focuses: countering extremist voices, expanding media engagement, building Afghan capacity, and strengthening people-to-people ties. The Corps has now sent its fourth rotation of members into this office.

The office supports projects like rebuilding television capabilities in Kabul and building mass communications infrastructure on U.S. Forward Operating Bases. These projects mean that Afghans can use mobile phones freely for business and communication without interference.

In Kyrgyzstan, U.S. government assistance more than doubled during the course of fiscal year 2010, given an influx of humanitarian and crisis-related assistance. The USAID office in the capital of Bishkek is now funding an awareness campaign to explain how that money is helping the people of Kyrgyzstan, with a particular focus on education, health, economic growth, job creation, and emergency and humanitarian assistance. The communications team in Kyrgyzstan worked with the U.S. Embassy to identify key audiences and their awareness and perceptions of U.S. assistance.

A Kyrgyz media firm plans to implement the project through television, radio, and social media and will help navigate sensitive linguistic issues. The country's official languages are Russian and Kyrgyz, but, along the western border, many speak Uzbek or Tajik.

"Gaining a strong voice in this media universe will

require unique responses in each medium, tailored to specific, rapidly changing audiences," said Rick Marshall, a Standby member of the Civilian Response Corps from the U.S. Agency of International Development who recently spent time in Kyrgyzstan supporting strategic communications efforts.

The U.S. also has a potentially great communications resource in the exchange programs it has run in Kyrgyzstan since just after independence. Almost 20 years later, an impressive group of alumni are able to apply for U.S. Embassy public affairs funding designated for community development projects. There is also a growing cadre of tech-savvy students. "Bishkek is full of universities and students who are plugged in, and global in outlook," said Marshall.

Southern Sudan presents an entirely different communications environment, but it remains important to explain the changes that a U.S. presence may bring. It comprises a huge territory with few roads or developed communications networks. Civilian teams are traveling to provincial capitals to report on political, economic and security developments surrounding the area's referendum on self-determination, building networks vital to supporting a peaceful future. The Corps is supporting these teams and providing a unique, up-close view of the issues facing people in far-flung parts of the country. That valuable information, sent to the capital of Juba and to Washington, will help inform the Consulate General's efforts to explain U.S. government support for the fair conduct of the referendum. Corps efforts are already supporting long-term USAID programs that are disseminating information about the southern political process and U.S. involvement, addressing economic and security concerns, and working to prevent and mitigate conflict.

The communications environment in these countries and others will continue to evolve, posing ongoing challenges for public diplomacy. With the insights gained from each deployment, the Civilian Response Corps is in an ever improving position to support solutions in diverse environments.

A Better Peace, One E-Mail at a Time

A new online community connects stabilization experts around the world

Many challenges face peacebuilding groups around the world as they look to recruit and hire civilian experts. Now, there is a forum available for web-based collaboration, discussion, and sharing of lessons learned among the many international stabilization actors that can create new opportunities for meeting these challenges.



ISPI, the International Stabilization and Peacebuilding Initiative, recently launched an e-discussion, calling on government offices, NGOs, think tanks, and aid workers in the field to participate. The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) participated in the launch of this tool, which allows for immediate feedback and exchange of ideas in real time. The ideal result of this new form of collaboration will be better outcomes for countries in which governance and stability are threatened.

As the United States seeks to bolster cooperation with its allies around the world, this effort to expand channels of discussion marks a potentially significant step.

Already, the broad and diverse online stabilization community has begun sharing information and working together online, discussing how peacebuilding actors around the world can better coordinate and improve their efforts.

This online community of practice, or CoP, is an outgrowth of ISPI's informal effort to improve communication and share best practices among multilateral institutions and bilateral partners, including S/CRS. ISPI, which started up in late 2009, now has 21 members drawn from nations and multilateral organizations with civilian stabilization response capabilities.

The CoP, however, welcomes anyone from the broader peacebuilding community to its

online portal. Launched on Oct. 26, 2010, it has quickly grown to over 700 members.

"The CoP, with its vast diversity of individuals, working in different sectors and different regions of the globe, gives real insight into all issues pertaining to civilian capacities in peace and stability operations and often proposes new, innovative ways to look at them," said Hannelore Valier, the project manager for the portal, who works at the German Centre for Peace Operations. "I hope that the portal will be the platform where all those ideas will come together and inspire decision makers at all levels."

Little more than a month after launching, the group is already seeing positive results: Its first online discussion led to a report that will inform the United Nations in its current Review of Civilian Capacities. And if all goes as planned, this group will serve as a resource for field workers and a consultancy for the issues that fall under S/CRS's umbrella.

The first discussion topic for the community centered on gaps and bottlenecks in recruiting and deploying civilian experts for peacebuilding. It brought 35 responses over several weeks from thoughtful, high-caliber sources at the State Department, the United Nations, Hiroshima University, and Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others.

Sarah Soroui, a member of S/CRS who co-facilitates the CoP discussions, helped turn those ideas into a report that went on to the UN Civilian Capacities Review Team. The team's director, David Harland, was the other facilitator of the discussion, which was cross-posted to a similar list at the UN Peacebuilding Support Office. "We're not trying to have these discussions just for the sake of having them," Soroui said. "The idea is to have them tie into or inform a bigger policy question."

Cedric de Coning, a research fellow at the African Center for the

Constructive Resolution of Disputes and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, wrote to the group that the U.N. review represents a key moment of focus on this set of issues, making the discussion particularly valuable. "This means that we only have a limited window in which to meaningfully address these issues - perhaps only the next 6 to 12 months - before our collective attention shifts to the next important topic," he wrote.

As for the discussion, several contributors mentioned a U.S. and UN recruiting process that can take up to a year and offers salaries below similar private sector jobs. Others countered that the best people are often those who are willing to serve despite these drawbacks. "This kind of motivation, combined with one's professional level of knowledge and skills, should be the criteria to identify the 'best,'" wrote Valier and her colleague Anita Janassary at the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF). S/CRS's Richard Ponzio argued that civilians' leadership skills and commitment are often more important qualities than the training and methodology used to inform their activities.

Others identified a need to seek out expertise in the local population. "Any major new initiative that aims to strengthen international civilian capacities for peacebuilding should be explicitly linked to 'knowledge and skills transfer' at the national level," wrote Necla Tschirgi, a professor at the Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego.

As for the CoP, Soroui hopes that it will evolve so that field workers send in technical questions to which the community provides rapid response. She predicts that the group is headed for more than 2,000 members soon. "If you have a technical platform and people hear about it, people will join," she said.

Lessons from Bangladesh

Thanks to help from the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, the U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh has adopted a whole-of-government approach to planning and programs that has resulted in strengthened cooperation among all the U.S. agencies and departments present in Dhaka. After using their whole-of-government plan as a guiding framework over the last two years, the plan and the process have been integrated into the Embassy's daily operations - much to the benefit of the mission. U.S. Embassy Dhaka Political and Economic Counselor Jon Danilowicz sat down with Civilian Response to discuss the impact of this approach.

Q: Can you describe what the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) provides in terms of strategic planning?

A: It starts with doing a deliberate assessment of the environment, then identifying what the U.S. goals are in the country, analyzing where things would likely go without U.S. government involvement, and seeing what we can do with our resources. It's a management tool. The focus is still what the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. government is doing in Bangladesh.

It's a much more robust, dynamic process than normal State Department planning. It has caused people to challenge some assumptions about what it is that diplomats do, to look toward a more operational State Department and Foreign Service.

Q: How has the planning process changed the way the Embassy works?

A: After two years it's become almost second nature to the Embassy. It's assumed that when we're working on an issue or set of issues that we're going to approach it from an interagency perspective. We're going to do it with an overarching goal in mind, and we're

going to bring to bear the resources and comparative advantages of the U.S. government.

What we've been able to do is see planning as more of a continuing process, and to very much align our Embassy operations with the plan. For example, every two weeks, each of our Embassy working groups meets and basically assesses what we're doing to achieve objectives. What the plan then becomes is not just something on a shelf but the framework on which the Embassy operates on a normal basis.

Q: Bangladesh is not immersed in an active conflict or a major disaster. Why was it still a good candidate for this type of work?

A: The process focused on conflict prevention. I think for all of the success that it's had over the years, Bangladesh is in many ways still a fairly fragile democracy. Bangladesh is a unique environment where we have a lot of development actors. The U.S. is trying to identify a leading role for itself in trying to move the broader donor community behind a country-led strategy to address these fundamental issues.

I think the goal that we've set out for ourselves — a democratic Bangladesh that is more prosperous and playing a positive role regionally and globally — is something that will impact the lives of the average Bangladeshi.

Q: Why do you think that the Embassy has embraced this approach and kept it going for two years?

A: The Ambassador from the beginning made it clear to everyone that it was something that he valued, was important, a living tool for guiding the Embassy forward. Part of it is to give responsibility and ownership to those people most directly involved in implementing the programs that fall under each of the objectives.

As we enter an era of diminishing resources, we're going to be under pressure to defend and justify where we're spending, both at the beginning to make the case for resources, but then afterwards to show we've had some impact. Unless you've had some framework under which you can do this, then it's all going to be seen as ad hoc.

Q: Teams from the Office of the Coordinator have returned to Bangladesh to revisit your work, most



recently in November. How do these visits help you?

A: Each successive deployment has been useful in giving us an opportunity to pause and reflect on what’s changed in the environment since we last sat down to address the plan. We saw a lot of value in having different working groups talk with each other to find cross-cutting issues, both in terms of what’s happening in Bangladesh, but, equally important, what’s happened in the U.S. government and our policy priorities.

Q: Have some of your successes made their way back to Washington and informed work we do here?

A: It seems that some of the practices that we’ve developed have very much made their way into the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). For example, an emphasis

on national[-level] planning on a multi-year basis, getting away from the State Department tradition of planning one year at a time. Another example is how to integrate different agencies or a whole-of-government approach, how a development strategy fits within a whole country. The focus in the QDDR on strengthening that interagency coordination overseas has been something that we’ve been doing throughout.

Q: How would you explain to colleagues in other embassies that this is worthwhile?

A: If you do this right, the investment you make up front more than pays for itself over time. I think the key thing is to recognize that planning is a discipline that is in some ways new to the State Department. What S/CRS has done is develop the methodologies and tools that can be useful to achieve the

mission. The Office brings to the table individuals who have the expertise and the training to carry out the planning process.

There may be some fear at Embassies of losing control, that a team might come from Washington and tell the Embassy what it’s supposed to be doing. I think what we found is that it’s actually the opposite. We’ve retained ownership of the plan. It reflects what the people at the Embassy believe is important. What the team from Washington has done is acted more as a facilitator, helped bring out a vision of where we want to go, and helped identify what the tools are.



Armored Chevrolet Suburbans loaded up for deployment.



Ready to Roll

The Corps's Vehicles Get in Gear

The Civilian Response Corps's Deployment Center recently deployed new armored vehicles to enhance U.S. capability to work in conflict-prone environments. The Center has sent two fully armored Chevrolet Suburbans to Kyrgyzstan, where the Corps, through the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek, has set up a temporary post. Two Toyota 76 Model fully armored vehicles are also on their way to support the U.S. Embassy's outreach efforts in Southern Sudan.

The gas-engine Suburbans seat seven and feature automatic transmissions and trailer hitches to tow additional equipment. The Toyotas seat six, run on diesel and have five-speed manual transmissions. Some Toyotas will have steering wheels on the right, depending on the situations where they're needed. The Toyotas are lighter, shorter and narrower than the Suburbans, which makes them more suitable for deserts, wet conditions, and rough roads.

The Deployment Center also deployed a Mobile Information Program Center (MIPC), which is a collection of IT and communications equipment, to Sudan. The small, two-way satellite system allows access to the Internet, classified communications, and video teleconferencing and has printers, scanners, and networks that can support several hundred users. The Center can also supply deployments with a variety of commercial off-the-shelf mobile satellite and radio communications systems.

More broadly, the Center supplies critical gear to missions and to the Civilian Response Corps. It provides vehicles, personal protection equipment, and communications gear, so that this burden does not fall on U.S. Embassies when the Corps comes to town. Equipped Corps members also serve to extend the reach of the Embassies where they serve. The Center, part of a commitment to protect those who serve, is equipped to support the deployment of up to 250 people.

Photo Journal

The Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines contains the largest number of graves of U.S. military dead from World War II, a total of 17,202, most of whom lost their lives in operations in New Guinea and the Philippines. The manicured grounds give way to soaring skyscrapers, a vision of both the past and future of the country, and a reminder that conflict can give way to stability and progress.

Photo by Nicole Goodrich, S/CRS Conflict Prevention Officer



CIVILIAN RESPONSE

United States Department of State
Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction & Stabilization
Washington, DC 20520

www.state.gov/s/crs