

Changing the Business Model Part II: Integrating Civil Affairs as a Compass for Expeditionary Diplomacy

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Increasing the effectiveness of civil Affairs requires new mental models for integration. The CA Corps, the Army, and the Joint Force must be open to new paradigms that may seem paradoxical or counterintuitive to traditional methods of integrating military capabilities. The concept of Expeditionary Diplomacy, illustrated by the Syria Transition Assistance Response Teams – Forward (START-FWD) platform used in Northern Syria, provides a model through which CA can integrate with civilian agency partners and generate strategic effects to support the Joint Force.

Expeditionary Diplomacy can be best described a non-linear approach to diplomacy in that the engagements and dialogues are not conducted at the highest level within formal state enclaves, but rather at the lowest level of local government and occur often at the most austere outposts. CA forces are often the first USG elements present in a conflict zone. Through civil reconnaissance and engagements, these forces can develop an accurate picture of the civil environment to guide USG planning efforts, much like a compass guides an expedition.

A new model for integration based on Expeditionary Diplomacy can also meet the requirements of the conventional force in large scale combat operations. A potential framework for CA integration with linear conventional capabilities exists through Special Operations Forces – Conventional Forces Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence (SOF-CF I3). Key points from this concept are the need for new mental models, the use of supporting-supported relationships, and the importance of liaison elements. To achieve effects, CA forces must move away from linear alignment with conventional formations. This is counterintuitive to traditional military concepts of integration but will increase the effectiveness of CA for Joint Force commanders at all echelons. Ultimately, Joint Force Commanders require the effects delivered by civil affairs, they do not necessarily require the presence of CA units within their formations.