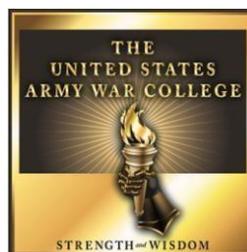# Strategy Research Project

Program Management Approach to Stability Operations

by

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Class of 2017

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			*Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188*

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1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 01-04-2017	**2. REPORT TYPE** STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Program Management Approach to Stability Operations			**5a. CONTRACT NUMBER**
			5b. GRANT NUMBER
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Adrian A. Marsh United States Army			**5d. PROJECT NUMBER**
			5e. TASK NUMBER
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Professor Ryan McCannell			**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			**10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)**
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. To the best of my knowledge this SRP accurately depicts USG and/or DoD policy & contains no classified information or aggregation of information that poses an operations security risk. **Author:** ☒ **Mentor:** ☒

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5893

14. ABSTRACT

Stability operations involve a wide range of inherently complex tasks, the planning and monitoring of which are not core competencies of standard military planning and management processes. Consequently, the Army's tools manage stability operations are inadequate when compared to the accredited, professional program management best practices employed by private firms, non-government organizations, and civilian agency partners. Applying program management processes to the execution of stability operations -- specifically to manage activities along intermediate objectives of various lines of effort -- will enable more systematic synchronization of activities required to transition an operation to civil authorities. Given the many similarities between the management of stability operations and the skills and processes used to manage acquisition programs, the Army should deploy program managers and employ program management processes to improve the execution and management of stability operations.

15. SUBJECT TERMS Interagency Operations, Project Management, Capacity Building, Framework, Whole of Government

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES** 33	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT UU	**b. ABSTRACT** UU	**c. THIS PAGE** UU	UU		**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(w/ area code)*

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8/98), Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

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(5893 words)

Abstract

Stability operations involve a wide range of inherently complex tasks, the planning and monitoring of which are not core competencies of standard military planning and management processes. Consequently, the Army's tools manage stability operations are inadequate when compared to the accredited, professional program management best practices employed by private firms, non-government organizations, and civilian agency partners. Applying program management processes to the execution of stability operations -- specifically to manage activities along intermediate objectives of various lines of effort -- will enable more systematic synchronization of activities required to transition an operation to civil authorities. Given the many similarities between the management of stability operations and the skills and processes used to manage acquisition programs, the Army should deploy program managers and employ program management processes to improve the execution and management of stability operations.

Program Management Approach to Stability Operations

In her recent work, *War and the Art of Governance*, national security policy researcher and author Dr. Nadia Schadlow examines the history of the Army's role in post-conflict operations. Schadlow finds that, despite repeatedly performing stability functions, the Army has failed to structure itself for the task: "in recent conflicts, a failure to reconstruct…has perpetuated rather than reduced threats to the nation and international interests."[1]

Today winning in war means generating a sustainable peace. This is why stability is a foundational element of the Army's unified land operations.[2] The Department of Defense (DoD) also acknowledged this imperative by issuing DoD Instruction 3000.05. The document defines stability operations as a core U.S. military mission and equates its importance to combat operations.[3] It further directs the development of capabilities "compatible, through interoperable and complementary solutions, to those of other U.S. Government Agencies."[4] Meeting this demand requires changing military processes to reflect those of our capacity building partners, rather than expecting them to adopt military methods.

Most interagency partners, such as the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), use a program management structure to oversee their capacity building efforts. However, since the military lacks a similar process, interagency efforts are seldom fully integrated. The disparity has led to desynchronized execution during operations, and complicated the transition of tasks as the military mission ends.

Furthermore, in the conduct of stability operations, DoD expects military forces to establish civil security and civil control, restore or provide essential services, repair

critical infrastructure, and provide humanitarian assistance.[5] This complex array of tasks falls outside the core managerial and execution competencies of most combat units. Major General Eric Olson (Retired) is a notable stability expert, having served in both the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office and the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. He notes: "the range of reconstruction tasks [required] raises serious questions about the ability to ready any tactical unit…to undertake...the reconstruction tasks called for in the latest doctrine."[6] He adds that "assuming we believe our doctrine and value the lessons of history and thought of eminent theorists and practitioners…it will be important for the Army to look for ways to make reconstruction a more effective component" of operations.[7]

A potentially high-impact, low-cost way to increase the Army's effectiveness in stability operations is to augment its deployed structure at the operational level with an *integrated program management function*. This addition will meet the requirements of DoD Instruction 3000.05 by: (1) synchronizing management expertise with required tasks; and (2) adopting a management approach compatible with interagency partners. Furthermore, the needed capability is resident in the institutional force structure, and the Army could easily adapt it to perform this function.

This monograph explores how and why to pursue the integrated program management function as a means to improve the effectiveness of stability operations. Section 1 of the analysis defines a traditional military approach to stability operations and a traditional program management approach. Section 2 juxtaposes stability operations with program management to showcase already-existing similarities. Section 3 applies four program management domains to stability operations to demonstrate

potential benefits. Section 4 highlights how the application of program management functions to stability operations is compatible with the interagency approach. Lastly, Section 5 discusses Army Acquisition Corps capabilities that the Army can modify to perform this role.

Section 1: Key Definitions

<u>Stability Operations: Initial Response, Transformation, and Fostering Stability</u>

The Defense Department defines a *stability operation* as "an overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief."[8] The military performs these tasks to create a secure and stable environment for the "host-nation and interagency elements to function."[9] The Army uses a three-phased stability framework-- initial response, transformation and fostering sustainability--to guide the planning of its efforts in a stability operation.[10]

The initial response phase begins immediately following the cessation of major combat operations. During this period, Army units "often perform [stabilizing] tasks on their own" due to a lack of host-nation and U.S. Government (USG) Interagency capacity.[11] To sustain gains, it is imperative to quickly establish security, return critical services and meet the humanitarian needs of the host-nation populace.[12] This phase sets the conditions for the entry of partner agencies, and fosters the contributions of the host nation as a development partner.[13]

The transformation phase includes the execution of a broad range of post-conflict reconstruction, stabilization, and capacity building tasks.[14] The period is lengthy, often

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measured in years and sometimes decades.[15] The military must anticipate orchestrating stabilizing activities for a prolonged period while USG partner and host nation capabilities take shape. The principal effort is to grow host-nation capacity through its participation in the process.[16] This phase features expanding interagency contributions and requires integration of their efforts with military operations.[17] The goal of this phase is to ultimately enable self-governance on the part of the host nation and set conditions for normalizing USG efforts.[18]

Fostering sustainability is the last phase of the framework. In this phase, Army units' transition to "a steady-state posture focused on advisory duties and security cooperation."[19] The host nation assumes governance responsibilities and manages its internal security, while most USG assistance activities proceed under Chief of Mission authority. Success requires completing the transition of the Army's ongoing support activities, e.g., government capacity building and infrastructure, to USG agencies, the host-nation, or other credible local or international partners.

Stability operations can vary in scale from small, such as the Ebola crisis, to significant, such as the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.[20] For context, the cost of the USG response to Ebola was $2.369 billion, split between the Center for Disease Control (CDC), DoD and USAID.[21] To understand the higher end of the spectrum, during the seven-year reconstruction effort in Iraq, the USG "managed more than $60 billion in U.S. appropriations and billions more in Iraqi funds to execute more than 90,000 [project] contract actions."[22] In Afghanistan, the current estimate is $113 billion spent on relief and reconstruction since 2002.[23] Given the magnitude of appropriated funding, number of contracted projects, typical multi-year duration and strategic importance of

the outcomes, the need for consistently effective management of stability operations is evident.

Projects, Programs, and Program Management

The terms *project, program* and *program management* are widely used in business, international development, and government sectors. Their meaning is relevant to military stability operations as they are the terms of art used by interagency partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other capacity contributors. Military doctrine frequently cites *projects* and *programs* but fails to define them.[24] This analysis will use the definitions provided by the Project Management Institute (PMI), the international standard-bearer for the practice of project management.[25]

Some military practitioners incorrectly use the terms p*rojects* and *programs* synonymously. A *project* is a "temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or result."[26] Projects are typically well defined, generally simplistic by design and have a definitive end-state.[27] In a stability context, a project example would be the construction of a building or the development of a police training curriculum. Projects serve as fundamental building blocks for program efforts.

Programs are "a group of related projects, subprograms, and program activities that are managed in a coordinated way to obtain the benefits not available by managing them individually."[28] Unlike projects, programs are significant undertakings that are complex in nature and require the synchronization of a broad range of project, program and subprogram interrelationships.[29] While projects have a definitive end-state, programs are longer-term endeavors that conclude upon the achievement of strategic objectives. Returning to the example above, a police training program would synchronize the construction of the building project, police curriculum project, and other

associated efforts to deliver a police training academy that produces trained police officers. The police training program, when coupled with other efforts such as a Ministry of Interior development program, would support a broader rule of law effort. This example illustrates how program outputs combine to achieve strategic objectives.[30]

Program management is the "application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to… meet program requirements"[31] More broadly, it is a "strategy execution method and means to deliver sustainable change."[32] In other words, program management is a way to implement strategic decisions over the life of an effort to maintain alignment with strategic objectives.[33]

U.S. Government (USG) programs are more complex programs to manage. These programs must conform to an array of legal, regulatory and policy requirements.[34] Unlike the private sector, which can quickly hire needed personnel or add capabilities, government agencies must work through a highly-regulated contracting process to add capacity.[35] Additionally, they rely on congressionally-appropriated funding and are subject to restrictions, strong oversight and oftentimes media interest. Finally, USG programs often span election cycles. Changes in congressional makeup and/or presidential administration can impact the program, and USG programs must remain aligned with shifts in U.S. strategic policy direction.[36]

Section 2: Viewing Stability Operations as a Program

Stability operations share many of the characteristics found in complex government programs. For example, both require the orchestration of a complex array of tasks to achieve strategic outcomes. Due to their scope and duration, both need a management structure that enables a common visualization of effort, provides consistency over time, integrates contract efforts effectively and addresses the

concerns of a broad array of interests. These similarities serve as the foundation for a new, cross-disciplinary approach to the stability problem. This section will illustrate this point by comparing four elements of both stability operations and program management: 1) visualization of effort, 2) enduring management structures, 3) contracted activities and 4) understanding stakeholders.

1) Common Vision of Tasks and Goals

A common understanding of the problem set, mission and goals is essential to stability operations and program management. The military and program managers use visualization tools to enable a shared understanding of the effort. In stability operations, Lines of Effort (LOEs) are "elements of operational design that link key effects and objectives to achieve operational and strategic conditions."[37] The visual linkage enables parties to comprehend the progression of activities. The LOEs are generally aligned with security tasks (e.g., Civil Control, Civil Security, Essential Services, Economic Infrastructure, and Governance), and conclude with the attainment of the desired strategic condition (see Figure 1). The sample LOEs show a combination of operational activities (e.g., defeat insurgency), and programmatic objectives (e.g., complete police training), blending both operational and program functions to achieve desired outcomes.

Like stability operations, programs require a visualization tool to promote a shared understanding. The *program benefits structure* is one management model used to illustrate a program's sequential logic. This approach visually ties each program activity to outcomes. It also displays the linkages between programs to demonstrate interdependencies between actions and program outputs (see Figure 2).[38]
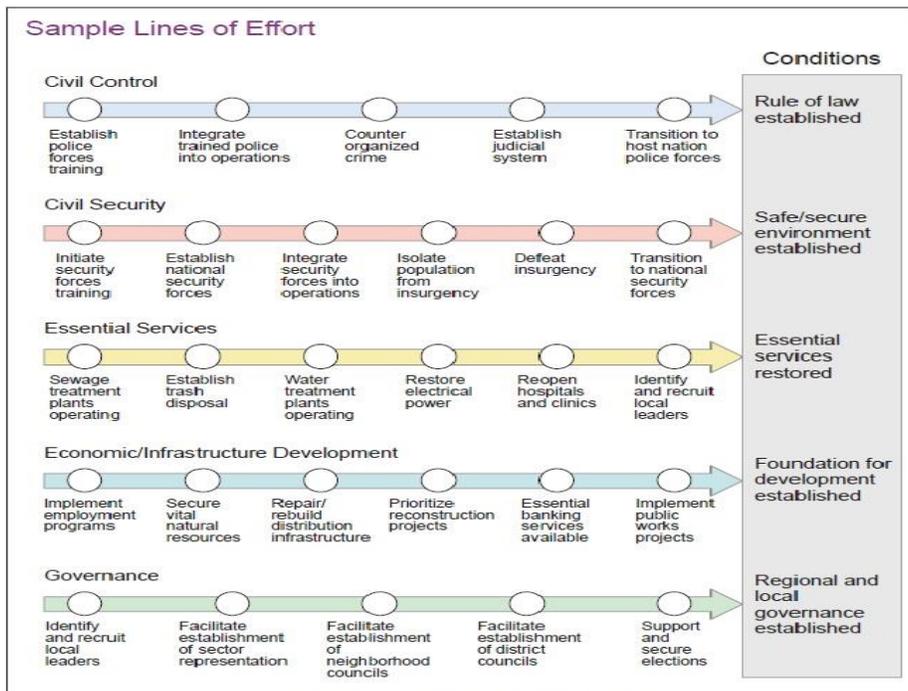
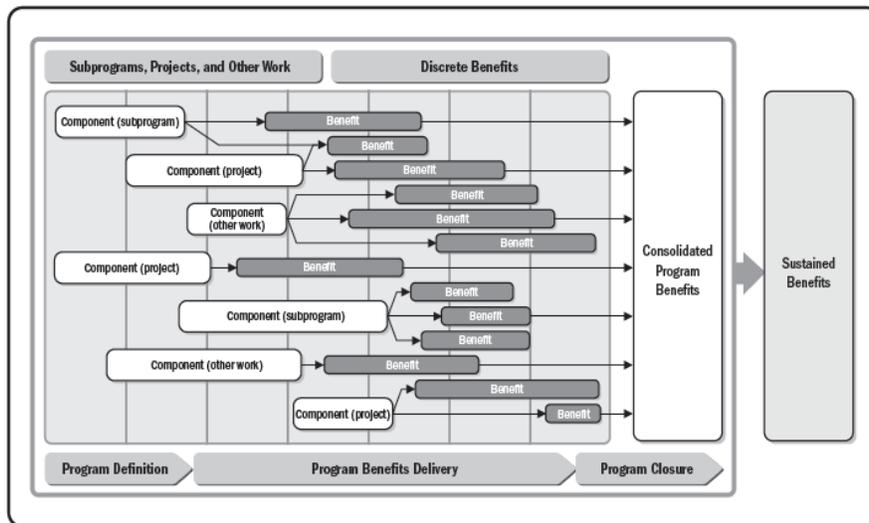Figure 1. Example of Stability Operations Lines of Effort[39]

Figure 2. Program Benefits Model[40]

Both the LOE and program benefits models visually display the relationship

between actions and strategic effects. The program benefits model, however, adds

more clarity by defining program relationships and the phasing of benefit delivery. This

model shows broader impacts as programs accelerate or experience delays, allowing more informed decision making.

Failing to visualize program interdependencies often leads to confusion in implementation. In Iraq, Major General Olson noted: "The program to build capacity in the national ministries…was being run in complete isolation from the local reconstruction efforts…making a bad situation worse."[41] With stability operations and complex programs, it is important to create a shared understanding of the approach, and visualization tools can play a fundamental role in that process. This is especially true for wide-reaching and prolonged endeavors that experience cyclical transitions in leadership.

2) Consistent Management

Historically, stability operations are multi-year or even decades-long efforts.[42] In these protracted operations, consistent synchronization of activities towards the desired objective is necessary to drive outcomes. Unfortunately, stability operations seldom benefit from consistent management. Personnel deployments of a year or less, result in a constantly rotating staff leading to lost institutional knowledge and inconsistent management. Furthermore, prolonged stability missions are also subject to policy changes. In Iraq, for example, "U.S. policymakers repeatedly shifted strategy" which meant "program managers not only dealt with long periods of uncertainty but also had to adjust to new systems, procedures and reporting requirements."[43] Ultimately, Special Investigators General for Iraq (SIGIR) described the environment as "a parade of *ad hoc* management entities that came and went with little accountability."[44]The long duration of the mission, rapid rotation of staff and lack of universally-understood processes resulted in unstable management of stability operations in Iraq.

Conversely, program management functions are designed to provide consistency over time despite changes in personnel. Programs often experience a change in management, but the program governance systems in place promote consistency of approach over the lifecycle. Program management systems capture a program's history and planned future activities, both of which are crucial to managing effectively contracted activities.

3) Integrating Contract Efforts

As previously noted, the list of stability tasks is wide-ranging and complex in nature. Implementation generally requires mobilizing a contracted workforce to supplement deployed forces. The Joint Publication 5-0 explicitly states that stability operations may "require contracted goods and services."[45] Integrating a contracted workforce is challenging because it requires synchronizing purely military activities with work under a contract agreement. Thus, the Army needs adaptive contracting strategies to ensure flexible arrangements, which will allow the Army to keep contract work synchronized with the host-nation and partner agencies.

USG programs also rely on contractor capacity and expertise to deliver goods and services. Program managers understand how to devise contracting strategies, with warranted agency officials, to employ and synchronize private sector activities. Deploying forces also need the ability to plan and manage contractor activities to ensure integration of ongoing efforts, and more importantly, to deliver required effects.

4) Understanding Stakeholders

Perceptions play a critical role in the success or failure of a stability operation. Accordingly, understanding and communicating with all interested parties is a crucial task. The numerous stakeholders involved include Washington-based executive and

legislative branch members, in-theater interagency partners, coalition members, non-governmental agencies and, most importantly, the host-nation government and populace.

The Army's stability manual describes stakeholders as those "who participate in planning and implementing [programs], those who may be affected by them, and those who could block implementation."[46] In addition to these doctrinal categories, stakeholders who are not direct participants but play a broader governing role merit attention. In the case of government efforts, this includes congressional and executive branch stakeholders.

The *implementation* participants are the "doers" of the activities and include a broad range of military elements, interagency partners, coalition members, contractors, and host-nation personnel.[47] Implementation management requires the integration of these diverse actors to achieve the collective benefit of their efforts and resources. As in stability operations, complex programs must also gain the cooperation of elements that may not be under their direct control. Achieving progress requires understanding pertinent stakeholder program objectives, management methods, and resources, to eliminate gaps and redundancies in execution.

The *affected* parties are those that may benefit or be hindered by stability efforts.[48] Affected parties primarily consist of the host-nation government and people, and may also include neighboring countries and other external actors. Understanding potential adverse effects that programs may have on these parties and seeking ways to mitigate impacts is the best way to manage these stakeholders. Although mitigation

may not be feasible in all cases, anticipating adverse effects before they occur enables

a proactive vice reactive management approach.

The best way to execute beneficiary management is to deliver programs that

meet expectations. Unmet expectations can sometimes create more problems than a

successful program can solve. For example, the Falluja Wastewater Treatment Plant

program, initiated in 2004, was projected to provide service to 100,000 residents.[49] By

the drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq in 2011, it had reached approximately 38,400

residents and required the Iraqi government to allocate $87 million to complete the

project.[50] Iraqi Minister of Finance Rafi al-Essawi noted the project "was constructed at

great cost but to little effect, at least in the eyes of Fallujans" because it only served "a

fraction of those intended."[51] Failing to align program results with the populace's

expectations in a stability operation can negate support for USG efforts. Even worse, it

may erode the populace's confidence in the host-nation government which ultimately

undermines the strategic purpose of USG intervention.

The *blockers* of program implementation in a stability environment may be violent

actors (insurgents, organized crime, etc.) or non-violent actors, (such as disaffected

politicians seeking to undermine the government in power). Programs that engender a

violent response require the synchronization of military security activities with program

implementers to minimize the threat. Notably, coordinating program activities with a

counter-insurgency military operation is a unique aspect of stability environments.

Diplomatic engagement is best used to manage non-violent blockers seeking to gain a

personal political advantage. In these cases, diplomats can work with host-nation

government partners to generate political options to minimize adverse effects.

The last stakeholder group for American military and civilian employees is the policy-making community based in and around Washington, DC. Clearly, the president and his executive staff will take keen interest stability efforts and provide direction to operational elements to ensure alignment with national security policy. Beyond the White House, the bureaucracies within agencies, primarily the Departments of Defense and State as well as the USAID, are also key stakeholders both as governing bodies and resource providers.

The other critical Washington stakeholder is the U.S. Congress. Stability operations, like all government programs, are dependent upon congressionally-appropriated funding and are subject to the oversight that comes with it.[52] To provide in-theater reconstruction oversight in Iraq and Afghanistan, Congress created the Special Inspectors General for Iraq and Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGIR and SIGAR). Congress specifically formed these bodies to promote efficiency and effectiveness in management and to detect and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.[53] It is likely Congress will appoint similar investigative bodies to oversee future grand-scale stability operations, while relying on its Government Accountability Office for more routine performance and financial audits.

As in all government programs, the ability to explain the linkage between Congressional funding and program outcomes is essential. Management that maximizes effects and minimizes waste is the best way to communicate with this all-important stakeholder. Additionally, proactively correcting deficiencies uncovered through congressional oversight builds confidence by demonstrating a willingness to improve stewardship. Government program managers understand this imperative and

are well versed in the budgetary process, the use of congressional funding, and communication with Members of Congress and their staff.

Complicating Factors

　　While programs and stability operations are similar, there are important complications in the operational environment not present in traditional program efforts. Most notably, the security situation in a stability operation creates a level of ambiguity and risk not experienced in traditional programs. The crisis response aspect of operations means many tasks are not initially identified, rather they evolve over time. Although uncertainty is prevalent in programs such as advanced research efforts and far-reaching social reform efforts, the number of variables in a stability operation are exceedingly difficult to forecast, which can have significant impacts on the entire effort.

　　Another key challenge lies in funding authorities. In traditional programs, authorities are generally well defined and aligned with a single management body. Clear authorities simplify execution by streamlining resource decisions. In stability operations, there are multiple funding streams and authorities in place, including from interagency partners, that must be synchronized to achieve broader reconstruction objectives. Consequently, clear lines of authority over the entire operation are often blurred between intradepartmental and interagency lines and often result in overlaps or gaps in program activities.[54]

　　The most critical distinction is the need to synchronize purely military operational tasks with programmatic stabilization efforts. Synchronization requires the blending responsive military elements with more deliberate and specialized program activities to achieve combined effects. The need to orchestrate combat forces, contractors, interagency actors, specialty functions with coalition and host-nation participants to

achieve effects on a nation's populace makes stability operations a unique and

complicated endeavor. However, these complicating factors do not negate a program

management approach; rather, they amplify the need for even a more diligent

application of the program management processes.

Section 3: Applying Program Management Framework to Stability Operations

Analyzing stability operations through the program prism highlights ways in which

program management functions can complement the Army's current approach to

stability operations. Program managers have an array of processes and tools to achieve

outcomes. Specifically, the PMI has defined four program management domains that

serve as an overarching management guide for all programs. These domains include

strategy alignment, benefits management, governance, and stakeholder engagement.[55]

Because program management so closely resembles stability operations, as described

in the previous section, these PMI domains offer useful insights for enhancing the

management of complex stabilization activities across multiple lines of effort. This

analysis will now briefly describe how these domains can result in operational benefit by

applying them to the stability problem set.

1) Strategy Alignment

       Program strategy alignment is the process of "identifying opportunities and benefits to achieve…strategic outcomes through program implementation."[56] The method is analogous to the operational design model, with a particular focus on the program aspects of the problem. The process evaluates environmental factors and produces a program road-map to link program outputs to strategic objectives (see Figure 3). This analysis would easily complement the standard operational approach by linking the program implementation aspects with the broader LOE development effort.[57]
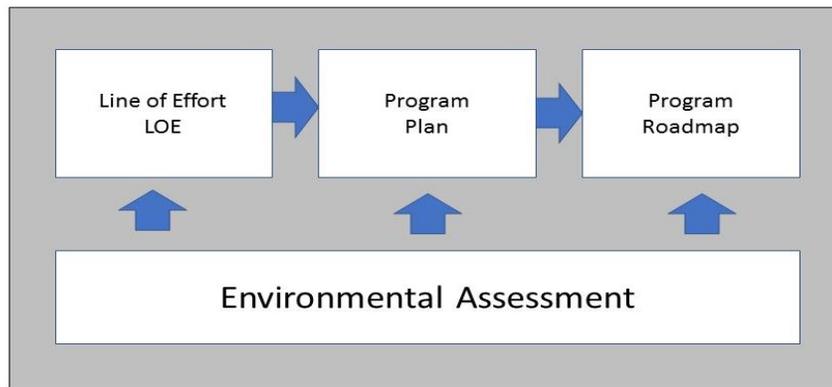

Figure 3. Depiction of Program Strategy Alignment Process[58]

       Many environmental influences in a stability environment have significant impacts on the execution of a program. The environmental assessment process seeks to identify these influencers and account for them in the plan.[59] An analysis of these factors would include an evaluation of available resources, authorities, contractor base, contract options, local industrial base, host nation regulatory requirements, and other salient data.[60] Essentially, this process is a program-specific mission analysis of the environment.

The same process could account for these factors in the context of the desired

LOE objectives to devise a program plan. Additional program analysis in this process

includes feasibility studies, assumptions analysis and an analysis of strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).[61] This collective analysis produces a

program roadmap depicting the chronological list of the main program activities.[62] These

program-specific effects could easily align with the interim objectives identified as part of

the LOE campaign design. The roadmap would effectively link campaign strategy to
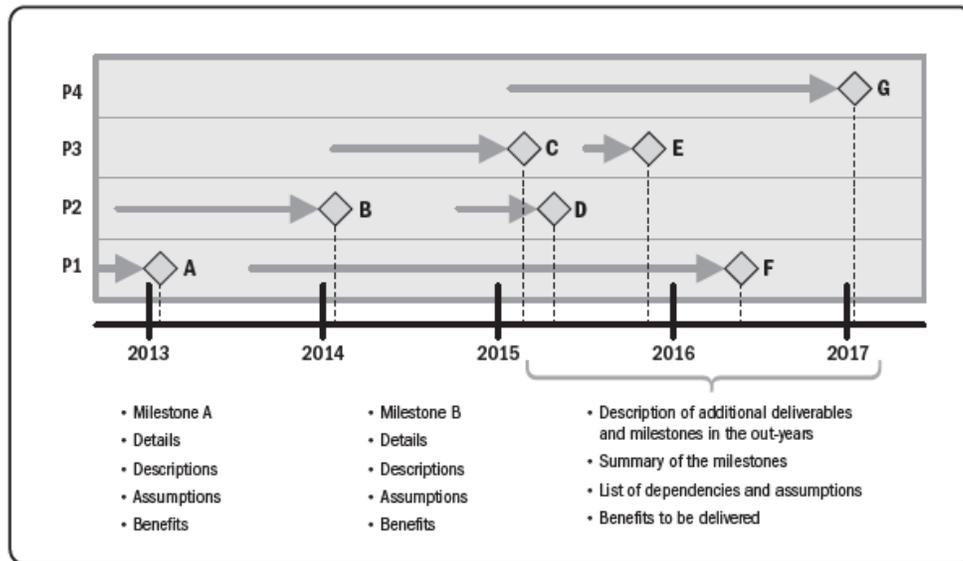
program execution (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Program Roadmap Example[63]

The approach offers the military practitioner a deeper understanding of the

program functions needed to execute the stability framework. Additionally, this effort

creates a product that other implementation stakeholders in the stability arena

understand, since they use a programmatic approach to their efforts.

2) Benefits Management

Benefits management the process of defining, delivering, and sustaining the intended effects of a program.[64] Critical aspects of the approach are monitoring interdependencies between programs, assess the impact of program changes, and assign responsibility and accountability for program outcomes.[65] This management system ties decision making to program outcomes.

The host nation's people's confidence in their government is a key determinate of success or failure in a stability operation. Accordingly, program managers gauge a successful program by the effects on the host nation's populace, rather than through program deliverables alone. In this regard, there are two critical measurements associated with stability operations; measures of performance (MOPs) and measures of effectiveness (MOEs).[66]

MOPs focus on task accomplishment and answer the question, "are we doing things right?"[67] In a stability environment measures of performance monitor the execution of program milestones outlined in the reconstruction schedule. For example, a MOP might include the number of police trained. These data would help managers and overseers evaluate the USG's ability to carry out the programs. They do not indicate whether the programs were effective; they only indicate task completion.

In contrast, MOEs focus on effects attainment and answer the question, "are we doing the right things?"[68] Effects are harder to assess than performance outputs, as the former are results driven. To carry on the examples above, MOEs of a police training program would be a decrease in the local crime rate or a corresponding increase in the affected population's confidence in the rule of law. Distinct from the MOPs, which quantify outputs, MOEs describe the quality of outcomes.

Many practitioners of stability tasks focus on MOPs because they are easily quantifiable, yet they can also falsely equate activity with progress. Although MOPs are necessary as a program management tool, a valid assessment of program impacts concentrates on the MOEs. Adding the rigor of benefits management to the stability effort would better align program activities with relevant and quantifiable MOEs. Further, an understanding of effects-based measures would assist program managers in creating contracting strategies that meet the intended effects of the efforts.

3) Governance

Program governance includes the "systems and methods for which a program and its strategy are defined, authorized, monitored and supported by its sponsoring organization (higher command authority)."[69] An essential part of governance is the establishment of a program office to drive informed and timely decisions on program activities.[70] The management tasks would include the justification, allocation, and monitoring of congressionally appropriated funding. The office would further define reporting and control processes for subordinate program efforts and synchronize their activities. As a fusion point between traditional operations and programs, the program office could work with contracting agencies to develop strategies best aligned with the mission.

A program management office structure also serves as a natural integrating point for the interagency since the program framework is common to both. Further, a program office might also produce the added benefit of developing host nation capacity, by integrating host-nation representatives into the structure. Host-nation "ownership" is a fundamental principal of stability operations, integrating host-nation representatives into a program office would advance this goal.[71]

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Additionally, a logical management structure is essential to sustaining program gains and driving progress over the long duration of a stability operation, for two important reasons. First, the program office would serve as a bridge between operational forces and program activities. As Major General Olson noted, a Brigade Combat Team Commander… would benefit greatly from the assistance of a command and control element that was able to organize and integrate the reconstruction component."[72] A program office at the operational level would provide this needed organization and decision-making body. Second, the program office would help the management team capture the history of the program and understand the context of prior decisions and relevance of planned activities. This institutional knowledge would in turn facilitate communication with the principal stakeholders.

4) Stakeholder Management

Stakeholder management is the process of capturing stakeholder needs and expectations, gaining and maintaining their support, managing communications, and mitigating resistance.[73] As noted earlier, stability operations have a myriad of participatory, affected, blocking and governance stakeholders whose expectations can often be in direct conflict with one another. Well-run programs can manage stakeholder interests by identifying all critical participants, building an engagement plan and executing systemic engagement.[74]

Stakeholder identification includes categorizing various groups and individuals by their level of interest and impact on the program. The stakeholder equities and power to influence the program governs the nature of the engagement strategy (See Figure 5).[75] The engagement strategy supports the program management plan to ensure alignment of with the important program decisions or outcomes.
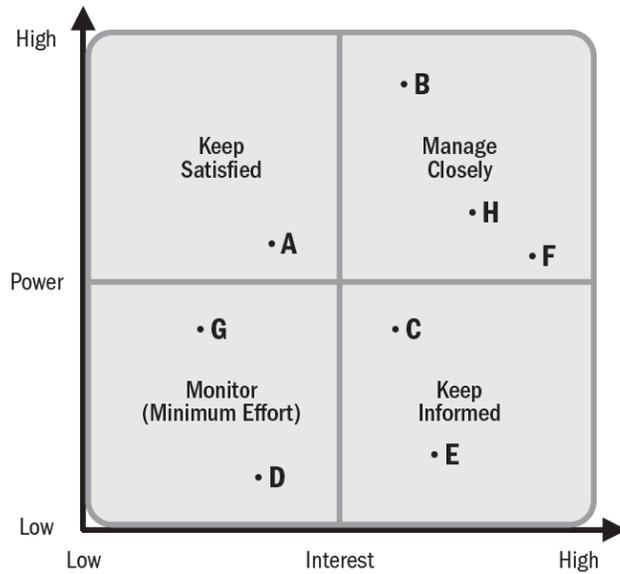
Figure 5: Stakeholder Map[76]

For example, it is wise to engage stakeholders with high interest and power to influence the process before strategically relevant decisions, to garner their support for the activity. Examples include the joint task force commander, the chief of mission, and host-nation officials. Other affected stakeholders with less direct influence might also be engaged to ensure they understand the timing and impacts the program will have on their activities. Examples include members of the populace and development partners.

Stakeholder management must be an ongoing process through the life of a program. Having a documented plan to accompany a program is especially important in a stability environment where the participants of the program rotate frequently, but the governing and affected stakeholders remain constant. A program management approach would enable consistent messaging over the life of the effort, particularly if embodied in a program office as described above.

Applying the program management domains to the stability environment demonstrates the potential operational benefits of a disciplined program approach. If the

Army were to adopt these domains as a tool for managing stability operations, its practitioners would gain a better understanding of the program environment, more effectively link program outcomes to strategy, make better informed decisions, and benefit from greater discipline in the stakeholder management process. The other key benefit of the Army adopting these tools would be sharing a common approach with our interagency partners, which in turn facilitates unified action in the context of stability operations.

Section 4: Unified Action: Program Management Bridges the Gap

As noted earlier, the DoD directed that stability operations "shall be compatible, through interoperable and complementary solutions, to those of other U.S. Government agencies."[77] This mandate calls for a proactive approach by the DoD towards integration based on commonly accepted principles, rather than expecting interagency partners to alter their methods to fit into the military construct.

Achieving interoperability is challenging given the lack of an interagency framework that outlines authorities, designated roles, and responsibilities in a stability operation.[78] Nonetheless, a synchronization mechanism is of vital importance to avoid repeating past missteps like those in Iraq where, in the words of SIGIR, "the lead agencies – DoD, State and USAID – sometimes coordinated but rarely integrated their operations: stovepiping…[was] the apt descriptor."[79] One way to improve integration is to build on the main program management commonalities found among partner agencies.

All the primary USG developmental agencies follow a program management approach to deliver their capacity building efforts. Interagency partners use this approach to leverage the private the sector as the execution wing of their efforts.[80] Two

such principal USG partners are USAID and the Department of State's International

Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Bureau.

As combat operations wind down, USAID and INL will often be among the first

interagency partners to arrive on the scene as part of the USG stabilization effort.

USAID is the USG's primary international development agency, which plans and

executes a diverse array of programs around the globe ranging across numerous

development sectors such as health, education, food security and democracy

promotion. Likewise, INL conducts the nation's foreign assistance for the rule of law and

counter-narcotics training. Both organizations leverage program management functions

to guide their developmental efforts. USAID's Program Cycle Operational Policy,

updated in 2016, governs the "making of strategic decisions at the regional or country

level about programmatic areas of focus" and project design to "implement strategic

plans."[81] INL has published its own series of Program Management Guides that provide

similar guidance for program implementation.[82]

Additionally, within DoD, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is a major

participant in stability operations. Like the interagency partners, USACE applies

program management methods to coordinate its infrastructure building activities.

However, its management functions are constrained to infrastructure projects, it does

not fulfill an overarching theater integration role. The common factor among these three

main contributors to stability operations is the use of program management as the

principal means managing their efforts.

Although program management has become standard within INL, USAID, and

USACE, it is not a function described in joint doctrine or used as part of the campaign

management process. Tactical elements working through the stability framework are often directed to manage "programs" in support of the campaign plan. However, since there is no doctrine governing the process and no trained program managers included in deployed command structures these management efforts tend to be *ad-hoc*, unresponsive to local stakeholders' needs and interests, and often unsustainable.

Consequently, the structure with which interagency partners attempt to integrate is often incompatible with their processes. Utilizing a program management approach to unify the command's campaign efforts with USAID, INL and USACE will provide a common foundation for interagency cooperation. This addition does not forgo the use of the campaign planning process; it simply enhances the current operational approach by providing a means to integrate partner program efforts.

Section 5: Solutions Exist in the Institutional Army

Fortunately, the Army already has considerable program management capacity resident in its Acquisition Corps. While the branch plays an important role by developing the Army's combat systems, it is largely an untapped resource as a provider of program management expertise to operational forces. In a deployed environment, where integration of complex programs with interagency partners is an imperative, the program management functions have operational value and can potentially produce positive strategic impacts.

Given its core competencies, the Army Acquisition Corps is well suited to provide this needed expertise. Acquisition officers are certified in the program management field and possess a unique understanding of governmental processes required in the deployed environment. Having a ready pool of talent available is important, since SIGIR concluded in Iraq, "finding people with a comprehensive understanding of program

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management—including the development of an appropriate cost, scope, and schedules for each project and task order—proved to be an enormous challenge."[83]

Army acquisition professionals understand the program functions and can adapt them to complement operations. Additionally, these officers are well versed in the justification and use of congressionally appropriated funds. Further, they understand contracting strategies and can apply this expertise when developing comprehensive management plans with partner agencies. Finally, since Army acquisition officers begin their careers in the operational force, they have the added benefit of understanding both the operational planning and interagency program "languages," allowing them to serve as a bridge between two quite distinct communities.[84]

As the proponent for the land domain of warfare, the Army should supplement the current stability doctrine by providing a more thorough discussion of the role of programs and program management in executing stability operations. The Army Acquisition Corps should add a stability-specific training component to the acquisition certification process. Also, it should seek broadening opportunities for its officers to serve in USAID and INL program missions to gain a better understanding of interagency program management functions. Finally, it should deploy program managers to supplement emergency USG response efforts, such as the Ebola crisis, or other more protracted stability efforts, such as efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The Army's Operating Concept focusses on how to "Win in a Complex World." The concept explicitly states winning occurs at the strategic level, and requires Army forces to "integrate the efforts of multiple partners."[85] One way to simplify a "complex world" is to remove complexity whenever possible. Better harmonization of

management functions with interagency partners would be one step towards a more simplified and integrated approach. While the application of program management is not a panacea for all the complexities of the environment, it does offer a potentially minimal-effort, high-payoff way to simplify the process of interagency management and improve the delivery of program outcomes. These impacts will further our strategic objectives at all levels and work to safeguard vital congressional funding and authorities. While less visible to senior leaders than other elements of the fight, these contributions to sound management of DoD resources and relationships are the foundation of successful stability operations.

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