



CIVIL AFFAIRS TASK FORCE

**Conducting Stability Operations in the
Division's Rear Area During the Offense**

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SECTION 1

Vignette

It is currently D+10 and the 52nd Infantry Division (52ID) has experienced success during phase (PH) IIC, seize the initiative. Currently, the 1st Brigade/52ID is guarding to the west, the 4th Brigade/52ID has transitioned to the defense to destroy an enemy counterattack, and the task for 2nd Brigade/52ID is currently to follow and support the 3rd Brigade/52ID on objective (OBJ) Bayonet. The 52ID forward rear area boundary has shifted north by 30 kilometers from phase line (PL) Jane to PL Catherine. Civil population centers from the 1/52ID, 4/52ID, and 3/52ID have transitioned to the 52ID rear area. The conditions to transition to PH IIIA, attack, are now set to allow the 35ID, the VII Corps main effort, to seize OBJ Eagle and OBJ Falcons. This is to defeat Donovan's tactical group east along avenue of approach (AA) 2. Some of the civil population centers have experienced destruction. This is from direct and indirect fire weapon systems, and the lingering effects from adversarial nonlethal effects. Reports from the brigade combat teams (BCTs) indicate there are two cities lacking essential services such as police, electricity, and medical supplies. Local officials are struggling to manage the chaos from the fighting. Since the division does not have a clear plan on how to facilitate stability operations in the rear area, the cities quickly deteriorate. This causes the remaining civilians to flee onto the division's supply routes, that in turn, disrupts the sustainment operations. There are also reports of small arms ambushes and attacks from irregular forces operating near those cities. These compounding effects have created additional risks to the mission and impacted the division's ability to sustain the BCTs as VII Corps transitions into PH IIIA.

SECTION 2

Introduction

As maneuver units successfully execute offensive operations, the rear area of the division will extend in depth; it will include previously contested population centers. The division commander must then have the means to address threats to friendly forces and stability. Often at the National Training Center (NTC), BCTs will assume risk and not conduct minimum-essential stability operations tasks during the offense because of operations tempo. Instead, they focus more on the close and deep fight.

For the division to fulfill these stability operations tasks, this article contends the civil affairs task force (CATF) is a way for the division to support rear operations during the offense. For the CATF to be successful, the division needs to establish transition requirements for the next lower level of command. Additionally, to properly resource the CATF, the division may need to re-task-organize forces other than civil affairs (CA) to achieve a desired end state. Furthermore, the division needs to establish support relationships to sustain the CATF. Finally, the division also needs to consider the limitations of CA forces. Before discussing a way to employ the CATF, it is important to define the rear area, minimum-essential stability operations tasks, CATF, and support to civil administration (SCA).

SECTION 3

Defining the Rear Area, Minimum-Essential Stability Operations Tasks, Civil Affairs Task Force, and Support to Civil Administration

Field Manual (FM) 3-96, *Brigade Combat Team*, 19 January 2021, defines and explains the rear area as an “area within a unit’s area of operations extending forward from its rear boundary to the rear boundary of the area assigned to the next lower level of command.”¹ Moreover, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1 October 2022, states that, “Planning and preparing for rear area operations facilitates consolidation of gains during armed conflict.”² Units will conduct rear operations, including stability operations, and in some instances, it may be necessary to move the rear boundary of the next lower level of command. This allows for the area needed within the higher level of command’s rear area to conduct stability operations tasks. In some situations, units tasked to follow and support conduct the minimum-essential stability operations tasks. However, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-07, *Stability*, 31 July 2019, states that “once an operation becomes more static, responsibility for the forward brigades to conduct minimum-essential stability operations tasks increases along with the other elements of consolidation of gains.”³

In most situations, the responsibility for providing the basic needs of the civil population resides with the host-nation government or designated civil authorities, agencies, and organizations. However, there are inherited risks with assuming the host nation will have the resiliency to operate effectively within a heavily contested environment. “All operations morally and legally require forces to conduct minimal-essential stability operations tasks to provide for the protection and well-being of civilian populations.”⁴ Every operation order (OPORD) should include that units must be prepared to conduct two minimum-essential stability operations tasks: establish civil security and provide food, water, shelter, and emergency medical treatment.⁵ Civil security includes a diverse set of activities, is resource intensive, and is a necessary precursor for success in other stability operations tasks.

Establishing civil security is necessary to achieve a safe and secure environment.⁶ During the offense, brigades and lower echelons tend to pass the requirements to conduct minimum-essential stability operations tasks to the next higher level of command.⁷ NTC tested a similar technique and used the PH IIIA fragmentary order (FRAGORD) and tasked a CA battalion aligned with the division to establish the CATF. Its mission was to conduct SCA within the NTC urban areas of Guba and Ambroluri to establish civil security along VII Corps routes AA3 and AA2. The division also selected these civil population centers based on the commander’s critical information requirements (CCIRs) tied to the division decision point to establish the CATF.

The CATF can provide SCA to the host nation to facilitate governance, often in coordination with unified action partners (UAPs). “SCA is assistance given by U.S. armed forces to stabilize or enhance the operations of the governing body of a foreign country by assisting an established or interim government.”⁸ The intent of SCA activities is to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, or recover from crisis, or enable governance during large-scale combat operations. Thus, it would not be hard to imagine the CATF working in the division’s rear area alongside other Soldiers, including advisor teams from security force assistance brigades, both of whom are working to build or rebuild capacity in the governance and security sectors respectively.

FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 28 July 2021, defines the CATF as “a scalable unit in charge of the stabilization elements and organized around the nucleus of CA and support elements.”⁹ CATFs are temporarily task organized formations that come from Army units and are then assigned to a theater army, corps, division, or BCT. The CATF’s core purpose is to concentrate stabilization efforts in an area of operation. This is usually in the rear area, under a commander’s main effort.¹⁰ In terms of stability operations tasks, the land component commander can establish and task the CATF to operate in the rear area and conduct SCA. This is mission essential to consolidating gains from offensive operations.¹¹

SECTION 4

Civil Affairs Task Force Utility

To set conditions for the CATF as a follow-on force, the division will need to establish transition requirements for the next lower level of command. These transition requirements provide a clear scope, task, and purpose that the BCTs can assign to a subordinate unit.¹² Because of operations tempo, BCTs will normally have just enough time to establish contact with existing civil authorities. This contact helps answer information requirements to prioritize SCA efforts for the CATF. For example, during World War II (WWII), the initial CA forces in Sicily limited their activities to establishing contact with city officials. The rapid advance of the division allowed little time for the CA forces passing through the towns and villages to set up an organization under a plan. As a result, the follow-on CA forces set in motion the CA Plan.¹³

A similar technique seen at the NTC involves the 52ID directing the BCTs, while on the offense, to establish contact with existing civil authorities. They are to identify threats to friendly forces and stability, and identify emergency provision requirements. This includes food, water, medical aid, and shelter in the civil population centers. These emergency provision requirements are like WWII military operations in Italy. For example, “Within a few days after the capture of each town, the civil population began filtering back [returning] and, on an average, towns had from 25 to 30 percent of their normal population by the tenth day after liberation. The immediate problems were food, housing, and health.”¹⁴

During WWII in Sicily, it was common to augment CA forces with protection and intelligence warfighting function capabilities. For example, “CA public safety officers, the provost marshal, and the Counterintelligence Corps (CIC) should operate as a team with joint prior briefing (prior coordination or planning), and the team should be retained in the town for a reasonable period.”¹⁵ The 52ID also tested a similar concept using a FRAGORD. It tasked BCTs to augment the CATF with psychological operation forces, unit ministry teams, human intelligence collection teams, public affairs, judge advocates, and military police. First, the planners considered the risk to the BCTs’ mission and forces. Next, the CA battalion task-organized these capabilities through an OPORD. This allowed the CA company to develop and execute their civil network development and engagement plan, which is in scope with its SCA activities, within a directed civil population center to achieve the division’s desired end state. Furthermore, the division needs a way to sustain the CATF during the offense. This is when establishing support relationships with the CATF is important.

For example, during WWII, again in Sicily, the Allies established the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories (AMGOT). CA forces stressed, “Supply Arrangements: Owing to shortage of transport, AMGOT personnel could not carry sufficient rations to be self-supporting for more than a few days, and difficulty was often experienced in persuading the Quartermaster to provide

them with rations. This could have been partly obviated if the function of AMGOT had been directly acknowledged by unit commanders as a part of the force.”¹⁶ This example stresses the importance of establishing support relationships when it comes to sustaining the CATF.

Army support relationships allow the supporting commanders to employ their units to achieve the results required by the supported commanders. Support relationships range from an exclusive relationship between two units, known as direct support, to a broader level of support extended to all units under the control of the higher headquarters, known as general support.¹⁷ Moreover, an effective technique used at the NTC involves the division sustainment support battalion providing general support to the CATF. This relationship is key to sustaining the CATF’s ability to conduct stability operations tasks throughout the division’s rear area. The CATF develops requests based on mission requirements over time and space to develop sustainment running estimates. This action by the CATF creates shared understanding at echelon, supports anticipatory logistics, and mitigates shortfalls in planning and equipment. This action also establishes division priorities that are based on the subordinate units’ tempo. The higher headquarters then analyzes these requirements and issues orders to subordinate units, including the division sustainment support battalion, to provide the required support.

Finally, divisions should consider the limitations of the CA forces before they establish the CATF. There is also one limitation regarding the NTC—its inability to communicate beyond line-of-site (BLOS). Returning to the final example of CA forces in Sicily during WWII, CA forces stressed communications “were found to be of the utmost difficulty and here again the primary cause was lack of transport. The next most important reason was that priority on Army signals had, quite naturally, to go to operational messages.”¹⁸ In context of area, FM 3-94, *Armies, Corps, and Division Operations*, 23 July 2021, provides a graphic that, concerning frontage and depth, the division’s area can exceed 100 square kilometers.¹⁹ This requires assets that enable BLOS communications and access to the division’s mission command services on upper tactical internet (UTI) for receipt of operational graphics and reports. For example, the CA unit normally depends on the supported unit to bridge a gap with BLOS radios and UTI access. CA companies at the NTC frequently co-locate with the BCT’s main command post (MCP) or even the brigade engineer battalion MCP. This is to enable their BLOS capability and operate with the UTI. However, once the division establishes the CATF and the CA unit is operating in the division’s rear area, their BLOS capabilities no longer exist.

SECTION 5

Conclusion

Joint Publication 3-07, *Joint Stabilization Activities*, 11 February 2022, states that as a requirement for building and sustaining stability, U.S. forces will need to focus on establishing human security, which “encompasses civil security, personal security, and basic needs: food, water, and shelter.”²⁰ The U.S. Army supports these human security requirements by conducting minimum-essential stability operations tasks to provide for the protection and well-being of the civilian population. CATFs are capable formations with which commanders can build and sustain stability in rear areas while BCTs commit to the close and deep fights. Using lessons from the NTC and CA forces in Sicily during WWII, the CATF is a useful formation for the division commander to concentrate stability operations in an area of operation under a single effort. As combat operations yield success and the division’s rear area extends in depth to encompass previously contested population centers, the division needs to decide how to employ the CATF to consolidate gains.

ANNEX A

Tactical Decision-Making Exercise

SITUATION

This scenario is described through the lens of a G-35 planner in the 52ID. It is D+4 and you will prepare the future operations (FUOPS) integration cell to develop the division PH IIIA FRAGORD. The unit will publish the FRAGORD on D+6 with an expectation of meeting the conditions to transition to PH IIIA on D+10. On D+10, 52ID will assume responsibility of 9 civil population centers once the forward rear area boundary extends north by 30 kilometers. The BCTs will begin conducting minimum-essential stability operations tasks by rapidly resourcing food, water, and medical supplies. They will do this with the help of UAPs. Per tasking, the CA companies from the 410th CA Battalion will provide general support to the four BCTs. Eight of the nine civil population centers are located along a supply route within AA3 and AA2. Of those eight civil population centers, two are cities showing indicators of instability, trending downward, and will have governing officials present. Those two cities, Gardakert and Gusar, will likely run out of emergency provisions by D+14. Each town has a population of no more than 300,000 people. The G-9, along with the 410th CA Battalion commander, recommends establishing a battalion CATF. The purpose is to consolidate stability efforts within the division's rear area, and you agree to put this recommendation up for decision.

52ID COMMANDER'S INITIAL GUIDANCE

By the time we transition portions of our rear area to VII Corps, I want there to be a safe and secure environment. Because of the limited number of CA forces available in theater, only re-task-organize CA companies you need to stabilize downward trending population centers that could impact our freedom of movement to sustain the BCTs. I need CA companies forward with the BCTs, especially the ones on the offense or that have transitioned to the defense, so they can at least support the BCTs in beginning the minimum-essential stability operations tasks. As you develop the concept, be prepared to discuss risks that I will inherit based on adjustments to the task organization, especially if you are pulling resources from subordinate units to resource the CATF. Also consider how you will sustain the CATF, provide protection, and resource it with a communications capability BLOS.

DIRECTIONS

Use examples in the paper and the concept sketch in figure 1 to develop recommendations for the division's PH IIIA FRAGORD to direct the establishment of the CATF. To prevent the initial vignette from occurring, develop the following: CCIR to help prioritize civil population centers, additional forces required, tasks to the subordinate BCTs, and a task/purpose for the CATF.

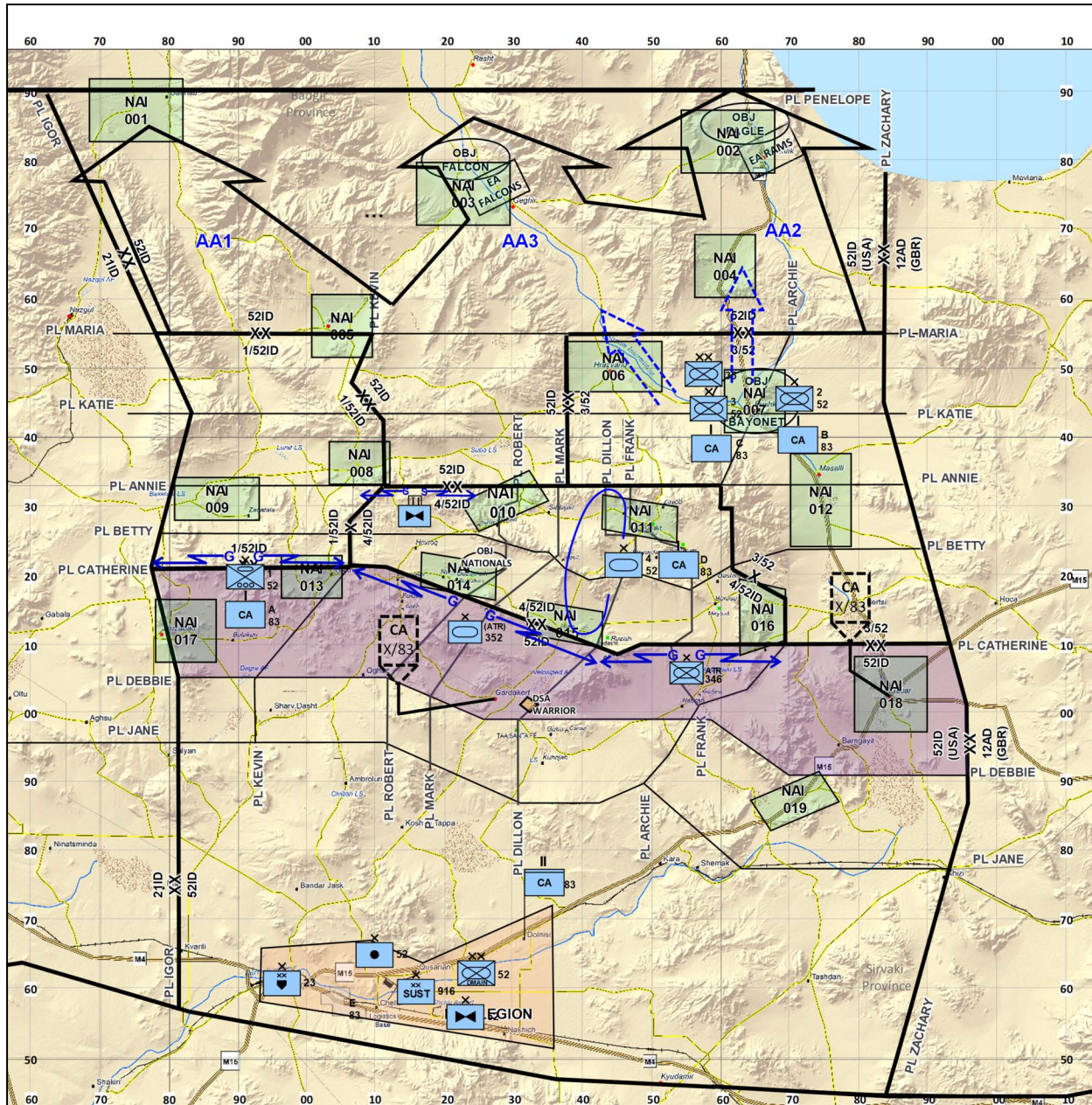


Figure 1. Pre-approved concept sketch.²¹ The purple shaded area depicts where the preponderance of division's stability operations needs to occur based on BCT's reporting.

ENDNOTES

1. FM 3-96, *Brigade Combat Team*, 19 January 2021, page 2-26.
2. FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1 October 2022, page 4-15.
3. ADP 3-07, *Stability*, 31 July 2019, page 2-4.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid, page 2-7.
7. ADP 3-07, *Stability*, 31 July 2019, page 2-4.
8. FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 28 July 2021, page 1-8.
9. Ibid, page 4-30.
10. Ibid, page 6-47.
11. Ibid, page 2-9.
12. Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Publication 23-01 (738), *Combining Arms in the Close Fight*, November 2022, page 160.
13. Coles, Harry L., and Albert K. Weinberg, Center of Military History, 1986, United States Army In World War II, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, page 735.
14. Ibid, page 848.
15. Ibid, page 735.
16. Ibid, page 199.
17. FM 5-0, *Planning and Orders Production*, 16 May 2022, page B-8.
18. Coles, Harry L., and Albert K. Weinberg, Center of Military History, 1986, United States Army in World War II, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, page 199.
19. FM 3-94, *Armies, Corps, and Division Operations*, 23 July 2021, pages C-11 through 13.
20. Joint Publication 3-07, *Joint Stabilization Activities*, 11 February 2022, page I-10.
21. Figure 1. Operations Group, National Training Center.

GLOSSARY

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	avenue of approach
ADP	Army doctrine publication
AMGOT	Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory
BCT	brigade combat team
BLOS	beyond line-of-site
CA	civil affairs
CALL	Center for Army Lessons Learned
CATF	civil affairs task force
CCIR	commander's critical information requirement
CIC	counterintelligence corps
ID	infantry division
FM	field manual
FRAGORD	fragmentary order
FUOPS	future operations
MCP	main command post
NTC	National Training Center
OBJ	objective
OPORD	operation order
PH	phase
PL	phase line
SCA	support to civil administration
UAP	unified action partner
UTI	upper tactical internet
WWII	World War II



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