

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>

## POLICY QUESTION

Since the projected demand for civil affairs activities is outpacing the supply of civil affairs forces, how should the U.S. Army Reserve better use its soldiers' civilian-acquired skills in planning and implementing civil affairs operations abroad?

## BACKGROUND (p. 1)

### *The Civil Affairs Mission and the Civil Affairs Community*

Civil Affairs (CA) are activities that foster relations between military forces and civil societies. These activities improve mission effectiveness and help achieve military objectives. CA forces use cultural, linguistic, and technical expertise to inform military commanders about the civil society within the operational environment. CA forces may interact with governmental and nongovernmental agencies.

Nine-four percent of CA forces are in the U.S. Army. The remaining six percent of the CA forces are comprised of U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy personnel. There are approximately 7,500 CA reserve and active soldiers in the U.S. Army. The U.S. Army Reserve provides the U.S. Army with 87 percent of its CA capacity, and the Active Component provides the remaining 13 percent.

CA units emerged during World War II and were known as Military Government units. CA activities evolved to include humanitarian assistance and development projects during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The appeal of CA skills surged in the 1990s as global instability rose, contributing to reconstruction and humanitarian efforts around the world. The demand for CA units remains high in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

U.S. Army Reserve personnel are a vital element of the U.S. Army's military capabilities, namely its deployable strength. Within the last decade, the U.S. Army Reserve has been transitioning from a supplemental force-in-waiting into an operational force.

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<sup>1</sup> *This student paper was prepared in 2010-2011 as a requirement for the Masters of Public Policy Program at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. The research, analysis, policy alternatives and recommendations contained in this paper are the work of the student who authored the document, and do not represent the official or unofficial views of the Sanford School of Public Policy or Duke University. Without the specific permission of its author, this paper may not be used or cited for any purpose other than to inform the client organization about the subject matter. The author relied in many instances on data provided by the interviewees and makes no independent representations as to the accuracy of the data.*

### *U.S. Military Doctrine is causing a High Demand for Civil Affairs Forces*

The post-9/11 shift from fighting traditional warfare to irregular warfare elevated the importance of “soft power” and CA activities. National security policy emphasizes an integrated approach to conducting stabilization and reconstruction operations. The combination of these operations with “hard power” remains a national security priority. The number of CA units is expanding to meet U.S. national security obligations.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT (p. 6)**

### *There is a CA Capability Gap: the Demand for CA forces is Outpacing Supply*

Despite the U.S. Army’s plan to expand its CA forces, the Center for Strategic and International Studies asserts that the “projected demand for civil affairs continues to outpace supply.” This shortfall gives rise to the importance of maximizing the efficiency of CA activities and forces. However, recent reforms in the U.S. Army have the potential to hinder the capability and efficiency of CA units to deliver its missions.

### *The Emphasis on Functional Specialties is declining in the U.S. Army*

In 2006, the U.S. Army transformed its CA doctrine in support of new national security objectives. Reform of the CA doctrine included the decision to emphasize general competencies over functional specialties. The doctrine replaced twenty-two functional specialties with six general areas.

This new classifying system for CA competencies gives the U.S. Army Reserve a less precise indication of its service members’ skill set acquired from civilian education and professions. This reform works against the ability of the U.S. Army Reserve to capitalize on its members’ unique functional expertise, which plays a significant role in performing well in CA operations and civil-military operations.

### *The Requirements for the Eleven Skill Identifiers are Too Broad*

The U.S. Army Reserve also awards eleven skill identifiers for eleven civil sector functions. These skill identifiers were established to help the service track civilian skills. The requirements for earning a skill identifier are “broad, set low and outdated” in some cases. Also, there is a lack of emphasis at the commander level for service members to apply for the skill identifiers.

### *The U.S. Army Reserve’s Database for Tracking Civilian Skills has Many Shortcomings*

The U.S. Army Reserve created the Civilian Acquired Skills Database to track data about service members’ civilian occupations. This database facilitates the ability to identify and access functional expertise to fulfill mission requirements by providing improved

sourcing options to commanders. Despite reporting requirements, the service is struggling to collect timely and accurate data from its service members.

## **CRITERIA (p. 9)**

- Improve the ability of the U.S. Army Reserve to identify the actual level of functional expertise currently resident in the CA force.
- Close the U.S. Army Reserve's CA capability gap in order to better execute reconstruction and stabilization operations.
- Enhance the U.S. Army Reserve's participation in whole-of-government planning efforts related to CA activities.

## **ALTERNATIVES (p. 11)**

### **1. Study and Re-Write the Skill Identifiers.**

Evaluate the current system of classifying functional specialists in the CA force to determine the civil-sector specialized skills that are truly critical in achieving national security objectives. At this point, it is unclear if the eleven broad skill identifiers are capturing the essential skills that are needed to conduct civil affairs operations. Once these skills are identified, update the list of skill identifiers accordingly. Re-write the skill identifiers in a way that distinguishes the service member's level of expertise. There should be three levels (tactical, operational, and strategic) awarded for each skill identifier to reflect the service member's actual level of competence. Require service members with identified functional expertise to periodically take competency evaluations to validate the actual level of functional expertise. The competency evaluations should be tailored to test a specific level of expertise within a specific skill identifier.

### **2. Require CA Personnel to Apply for Skill Identifiers.**

Require CA reserve service members to apply for a skill identifier within their civil-sector functional area of expertise. In order to keep the U.S. Army Reserve continuously informed of its supply of functional expertise, this requirement should be infused into the U.S. Army Reserve's continuous training schedule. Place the emphasis of functional expertise at the command level. Require commanders to discharge service members who refuse to apply for the skill identifiers. This alternative will be fully realized only with the participation of the entire CA reserve force; partial participation will not provide the U.S. Army Reserve with an accurate picture of the civil-sector skills resident in the CA force.

### **3. Remodel the Army Reserve Civilian Acquired Skills Database (CASDb).**

Remodel the Army Reserve Civilian Acquired Skills Database to improve its utility to the service. This alternative consists of three steps. First, expand the database's format to allow service members to insert more than one current occupation as well as previously-held occupations. This reform allows the service to capture past experience that can be harnessed alongside of newly acquired skills in the civil sector. Second, require CA service members to update their employment information on a regular basis to allow to service to take advantage of any newly acquired skills. Third, infuse this requirement into the continuous training schedule in order to meet Department of Defense established reporting requirements. The goal of the above efforts is to provide commanders with improved sourcing options to fulfill mission requirements.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS (p. 16)**

I recommend the full implementation of Alternatives 1 and 3. I recommend implementing all provisions of Alternative 2 except for the requirement to discharge service members who fail to comply with the directive.