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Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee  
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**Introduction**

Chairwoman Stefanik, Ranking Member Langevin, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on USAID's collaboration with our partners at the Departments of Defense (DoD) and State (State) on how we work together to that end in order to advance key national security priorities, leveraging our respective strengths, and those of our implementing partners.

I'm proud to say that our connections with the defense establishment have never been stronger. This collaboration is evident across the spectrum, from USAID personnel embedded at geographic Combatant Commands, to our ongoing implementation of the joint Stabilization Assistance Review. And, in the field, in places like Syria, USAID experts are working hand in glove with DoD and State colleagues to help stabilize areas and allow for the safe return of people displaced for years by horrific conflict.

In my testimony before you today, I will touch upon several key ways in which the executive branch agencies leverage their unique capabilities to respond to crises around the world, and how we are increasingly not just communicating, but actively collaborating with each other and our partners on the ground, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, contractors, and other nonfederal entities (NFEs).

**Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration**

Despite good intentions, lessons learned from places like Afghanistan consistently highlight the need to coordinate, align, and sequence local assistance and security efforts. For instance, as areas became secure, efforts to strengthen district-level governance in Southern Afghanistan were challenged by uncoordinated village-level assistance activities that discouraged local leaders from participating in larger community planning discussions. This in turn led to increased unintentional competition over resources rather than peaceful political discourse to prioritize needs. In recognition of these kinds of lessons, we have deliberately focused efforts on our

interagency communication, coordination and collaboration. State, USAID, and DoD are planning with each other, and supporting each other's mandates through our own roles and responsibilities.

USAID has more than thirty staff serving side by side with America's military men and women at the Pentagon, at our Combatant Commands, and other military headquarters around the world. This partnership with DoD injects critical perspectives across the humanitarian, conflict, and development spectrum, and better synchronizes U.S. government efforts as part of a whole-of-government national security approach. Six months ago, every USAID mission and Country Office around the world appointed a Mission Civil-Military Coordinator (MC2) to advise and work with DoD counterparts on country strategy development and implementation. USAID has already conducted MC2 training events across the combatant commands where USAID assigns staff, educating 58 USAID staff on their role and working with the Department of Defense as part of the Country Team. This has further institutionalized our relationship with DoD where it matters most – in the field.

Both sides are clearly committed to the development-defense relationship. DoD assigns 13 military officers and representatives, annually, to work alongside USAID staff in DC and in the field implementing programs and supporting mutual development and security priorities. This includes representatives from across the Geographic Combatant Commands and Special Operations Command, as well as a representative from the Navy and the Army Corps of Engineers.

USAID also continues to bolster its contingency and expeditionary capabilities to support humanitarian stabilization, and political transition environments. This includes expanding civil-military personnel, planning, training, and information resources. Specific to stabilization and political transition, USAID recognizes the key role that Special Operations Forces have played in supporting stabilization and countering violent extremism objectives, and is placing stabilization advisors at Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and some of the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) to help guide analysis, strategy, and implementation of programming.

Over the years, there have also been many requests from DoD to have an opportunity to increase their understanding of how USAID responds to disasters. In response, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) created the Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC) in 2004. These trainings serve two purposes: they educate U.S. military personnel on disaster response, the different roles for civilian and military entities, and how the international humanitarian system works. They also build and strengthen working-level relationships between USAID and U.S. military staff who will work together in the field.

Since the course's inception, we have conducted more than 900 trainings at combatant commands, components, units, war colleges, and other DoD institutions, reaching more than 25,000 DoD personnel. The impact of these trainings has been clear. When a disaster strikes, these DoD personnel understand how the international humanitarian system operates and how to provide the support USAID requests. We have seen this translate into more coordinated disaster responses.

### **Stabilization Assistance Review**

The Stabilization Assistance Review, (the SAR), has facilitated interagency coordination by having a single, joint document, that provides a U.S. government definition of stabilization, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each of the three components. Over the past year, the Departments of Defense and State, and USAID, have worked together with the interagency to review the USG's approach towards stabilizing conflict-affected areas overseas and to identify lessons learned to achieve more cost-effective outcomes. The final report was finalized and signed by the Secretaries of Defense and State, and Administrator Green earlier this year and released publicly last month.

The SAR report establishes a common policy definition of stabilization, and supports a set of actions to improve stabilization efforts, including co-deployment of U.S. Government civilians and U.S military forces. The report also defines lead agency roles for stabilization missions, with State as the lead federal agency for U.S. stabilization efforts; USAID as the lead implementing agency for non-security stabilization assistance; and, DoD as a supporting element, to include providing requisite security for and reinforcing civilian efforts where appropriate. These lines of

effort are foundational to improve inter-agency policy and operations, enabling each Department/Agency to focus on its core responsibilities.

### **Coordination on Disaster Response**

USAID's long-standing relationship and coordination with DoD during natural disasters is the most visible example of our collaboration. USAID leads and coordinates the U.S. government's humanitarian response to an average of 65 disasters in more than 50 countries every year.

Of these, USAID requests DoD support only in situations when civilian response capacity is overwhelmed, civilian authorities request assistance, and the military provides a unique capability. This occurs most often during sudden-onset natural disasters or large-scale crises when the U.S. military's capabilities in logistics and transportation can be used to support civilian response efforts.

For example, during the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak, USAID requested support from the U.S. military to bring speed and scale to the response and fill specific gaps. These included building Ebola treatment units, training health care workers, running logistics operations to transport supplies, and providing support to the Monrovia Medical Unit, a high-quality Ebola field hospital staffed by the U.S. Public Health Service. At the peak of the operation, nearly 2,500 soldiers deployed to the region as part of the U.S. military mission, Operation United Assistance.

When a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck Nepal in 2015, USAID requested DoD's support to deliver 114 tons of emergency relief supplies to remote villages, transport more than 530 humanitarian personnel, and help USAID conduct aerial humanitarian assessments of affected areas. USAID also coordinated with DoD to streamline airfield logistics at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport so that relief supplies could reach people in need more quickly.

DoD is often used as a stopgap measure until additional civilian capabilities can be brought to bear. Once more cost-effective partners are available to take over, we help transfer DoD operations over to them. For example, during the 2016 response to Hurricane Matthew, USAID utilized DoD helicopters to deliver critical supplies to the Southern Claw of Haiti, which was cut off from the rest of the island. USAID positioned two civ-mil coordinators on the USS Iwo Jima

to provide on-site coordination for air operations in support of USAID humanitarian requests. These personnel also advised the JTF-Matthew Commander and his staff about the response strategy, priorities, and current operations of the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to ensure synchronization between humanitarian and military activities. Eventually, World Food Programme was able to come in and use their helicopters to deliver supplies with an expanded footprint and increased volume. Once roads were cleared, other partners were able to truck in supplies more consistently and efficiently, using large trucks that carry significantly higher volumes of supplies for a fraction of the cost of helicopters.

While USAID requests the unique capacities of the U.S. military in only 5 to 10 percent of responses, good coordination during these times is key to success. One tool that USAID uses to coordinate specific DoD activities at the disaster site is the Mission Tasking Matrix or “MITAM.” The MITAM allows USAID to communicate, validate, and prioritize specific requests for DoD support to make sure that they are in line with USAID’s overall response strategy and reflect what the needs are on the ground.

### **Our Partners**

When working with our implementing partners, as well as assisting DoD in selecting its own NGOs, including Non-Federal Entities (NFEs), to work with, it is critical that we ensure unity of effort and appropriately assess and sequence interventions. As highlighted by interagency roles and responsibilities in the SAR and the draft *DoD Guidance on Arrangements with Non-Federal Entities in Support of DoD Humanitarian and Other Assistance Activities*, we must seek processes that promote efficient programming, limit unintended consequences and working at cross-purposes, and enables a common operating picture within the interagency and with our international partners. Specifically, State concurrence and consultation with USAID is necessary before DoD enters into an arrangement with an applicable NFE at the country, GCC, and global levels. This falls in line with the SAR principles for stabilization assistance that State leads the overall effort, USAID leads on non-security assistance, and DoD is in a supporting role.

## **Deconfliction**

With humanitarian actors working in complex emergencies worldwide, it is critical to keep humanitarian workers safe in insecure environments. In recent years, armed opposition groups, state militaries, and/or coalitions have destroyed humanitarian sites and convoys and civilian infrastructure in several locations throughout the world. In contexts where humanitarians operate in the same space as military coalitions and non-state actors, humanitarians often lose access or are at serious physical risk.

State and USAID work closely with DoD personnel on this issue of deconfliction and advises U.S. military forces of humanitarian locations and humanitarian personnel in both static and non-static locations to protect against attacks and incidental effects of military attacks.

In locations where the U.S. military is engaged in fighting, State and USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) establishes deconfliction mechanisms for the humanitarian community. This has been done for static sites and dynamic humanitarian missions in Syria and Iraq and elsewhere. OFDA has also set up a deconfliction mechanism for the humanitarian and development community for static sites only in Somalia.

When a non-U.S. led coalition is responsible for kinetic military action, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is responsible for establishing a deconfliction mechanism for the international humanitarian community. For example, OCHA has set up deconfliction mechanisms in Yemen and Afghanistan.

## **Being in the Right Place, At the Right Time**

As State, USAID, and DoD lean into their roles in these contexts, we again realize how much time, access, and coordination are of the essence. As demonstrated most recently in Syria and Somalia, the lack of standardized mechanisms to co-deploy USG civilians and to provide immediate stabilization activities impedes on our ability to seize critical windows of opportunity at local levels.

Historically, State USAID has successfully co-deployed staff with DoD in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Syria to conduct stabilization and humanitarian work and to coordinate

assistance efforts. The SAR recommendation around co-deployment of civilians seeks to solve civilian co-deployment legal and security challenges in stabilization areas with military partners in the field. The recommendation was developed out of recognition that it is critical to have civilian experts at both the planning stages and on the ground working alongside our military colleagues to enable a unified approach that can appropriately layer and sequence security and non-security assistance. Working alongside DoD enables State and USAID access and visibility too difficult to reach areas critical to adequately plan, monitor, and assess local conditions vital to furthering stabilization objectives.

Working in conflict-affected areas presents various logistical and operational challenges to conducting conflict prevention, stabilization, and development programming, from transporting materials, to procuring necessary heavy equipment, and accessing specific technical capabilities. Ultimately, USAID relies on vetted commercial solutions and local businesses to support early recovery and stabilization programming. As commercial solutions and local businesses are limited in conflict-affected areas, this can affect response time. With the authority requested in the Defense Support to Stabilization (DSS) Legislative Proposal (LP), DoD would have the ability to, when necessary – with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, and in consultation with USAID and OMB – be able to provide needed equipment and logistical support necessary to conduct limited stabilization activities. This was the challenge in Northeastern Syria, where while USAID was able to eventually procure equipment, precious time was already lost. Furthermore, many of these areas that are being cleared of ISIS elements are riddled with mines and unexploded ordinance that make it unsafe for local partners and displaced persons to return or to work. With the authorities outlined in the DSS LP, DoD would be able to provide support to demining efforts, helping expedite the return of local partners and the delivery of USAID supported stabilization assistance. For these reasons, as well as the required coordination built in to the DSS, USAID supports the DSS authority for DoD.

## **Conclusion**

We face any number of challenges, in a world where foreign assistance is increasingly delivered in non-permissive environments. Many of the issues are beyond our control, but one of the things we can try to mitigate is unintended consequences. By working with each other in DC and on the

ground, acting as checks and balances, sounding boards, subject matter experts that bring unique capabilities to the table, we can inform each other's decisions, holistically assess secondary and tertiary effects, integrate lessons learned, and prevent uninformed operations.

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the subcommittee, our close coordination with the Departments of State and Defense, in areas of fragility or conflict, through combined disaster response, and cooperation in steady state locations where we both shape the environment to positively affect our prosperity or security, is more important than ever in the world we live in. As you well know, America is facing an unprecedented array of national security threats – not only threats from violent extremism and epidemics, but also fallout from the displacement of people on a scale not seen since the Second World War. These crises cannot be solved by kinetic action and hard power alone. Diplomacy undertaken by the State Department and the international development efforts of USAID help prevent, counter, and respond to these threats and create a more secure, prosperous and economically integrated world.