



Preserving Stability Amidst Regional Conflagration

US Engagement in Jordan

2011 to 2016



UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE
Making Peace Possible

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CONTENTS



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Executive Summary ...	3
Glossary of Terms ...	5
Foreword: Who Should Read This Case Study and Why? ...	6
About This Project ...	7
Methodology ...	8

Understanding the Complex Crisis in Jordan ...	10
The Backdrop of Complexity ...	10
The Complex Environment in Jordan ...	10
Violent Conflict and Violent Extremist Organization Activity in the Region ...	10
Creeping Violent Extremism in Jordan ...	11
State Fragility: A Frayed Relationship Between State and Citizen ...	11
Refugees ...	12
Natural Resource Scarcity ...	13
The United States in Jordan: Key Objectives and Accomplishments ...	14
Guarding a Tenuous Stability in Jordan ...	14
The Case for Engagement ...	15
Goals for Engagement ...	15
Early Days: Pre-2011 US Engagement in Jordan ...	16
Pivot Point: The Outbreak of Crisis in Syria, March 2011 ...	17
Pivot Point: Violent Extremist Organizations Evolve and Become More Threatening, 2013 ...	20
Pivot Point: ISIS Captures Mosul and Declares a Caliphate, June 2014 ...	21
Pivot Point: Russian Intervention in Syria and the Long Road Ahead, September 2015 ...	22
Unpacking the “How”:	
Differentiating Elements of US Government Efforts in Jordan ...	25
US Assistance Coordination from the Field (Jordan) ...	26
Overview ...	26
Elements of Assistance Coordination from the Field ...	26
Assistance Coordination from Washington, D.C. ...	35
Overview ...	35
Crosscutting Lessons in 3D Engagement: Reflections and Conclusions ...	41
Notes ...	43

Executive Summary

This is one of three case studies that the US Institute of Peace (USIP) developed to explore how the US Defense, Development, and Diplomatic (3D) communities can effectively collaborate and coordinate to respond to complex crises in fragile states. The case studies document efforts and draw lessons from where US government leaders believe deepening crises were staved off through collaborative inter-agency engagement.

Case Background

Jordan is an example of a country that has been buffeted by persistent conflict and instability in neighboring countries. It has had to contend with its own nest of challenges related to state fragility, homegrown violent extremism, and resource scarcity.

Whereas protests in Syria in 2011 precipitated civil war, protests in Jordan—of which there were more than eight thousand in 2011 to 2013—prompted Jordan’s king to repeatedly replace the prime minister, promise progress on political reforms, and seek international assistance to mitigate Jordanians’ discontent with economic and fiscal policies. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees surged into Jordan, exacerbating water and energy shortages, overwhelming health facilities and schools, and fueling a surge in commodity prices. Conflict in Syria decreased trade and tourism in Jordan, while sabotage cut off Jordan’s gas source in Egypt. The growth of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) in Syria animated Jordan’s small Salafi Muslim population; many fought for and led VEOs in Syria, some returning more radicalized and capable of carrying out attacks. Authorities amplified border security, security force training, and intelligence to mitigate external and internal threats, and Jordan joined the fight against ISIS launched by the United States after ISIS captured territory in Iraq. Despite a handful of terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016 and copious external and internal challenges, Jordan has remained largely stable, due in part to US support.

The Complex Crisis	US Objectives	Applicability of Lessons
<p><i>The crisis was shaped by the following interacting challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Violent conflict and VEO activity in the region</i> • <i>Creeping violent extremism in Jordan</i> • <i>State fragility: A frayed relationship between government and citizens</i> • <i>Refugees</i> • <i>Natural resource scarcity: A lack of renewable water resources and fossil fuels for energy</i> 	<p><i>The United States focused on two objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide support to Jordan to effectively manage potentially destabilizing internal stressors</i> • <i>Address the humanitarian and security needs in Syria from Jordan in ways that help mitigate Syria’s violent conflict and prevent VEO activity from threatening Jordan’s security</i> 	<p><i>Lessons from Jordan may best apply to circumstances in which:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The United States has a critical national security interest in the stability of a key ally trapped in a region engulfed in conflict</i> • <i>Assistance needs are voluminous and diverse</i> • <i>Cross-border assistance to a population in need is required</i> • <i>A long-term refugee presence requires long-term solutions</i> • <i>The security environment in the host country is permissive</i>

The US Defense, Development, and Diplomatic Response

The United States and Jordan share a long history of trying to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as encouraging peace and security in the broader Middle East. As the Syria crisis worsened, the United States could not allow Jordan, a reliable US partner in the region, to destabilize. To help Jordan respond to new challenges required increased US assistance: the number of personnel at US Embassy Amman grew by nearly 75 percent between 2010 and 2016. The United States provided substantial economic and military support to Jordan, and all 3Ds mobilized assistance to refugees and host communities in northern Jordan. The US Department of Defense (DOD) and State Department (State) helped Jordanian forces reinforce border security and manage refugee inflows, and bulked up military training and equipment transfers to Jordanian counterparts. The 3Ds also worked closely together and with the Jordanian government to move assistance across the Syrian border, sparing many Syrians from having to flee to Jordan to meet basic needs. Capable and experienced leadership within 3D agencies, together with the innovative and adaptive structures and processes those agencies initiated, provided assistance to help Jordan bolster its stability against internal and external challenges.

Summary of Lessons from Jordan

The case study review process yielded a series of lessons in two parts:

1. US assistance **coordination from the field**
2. US assistance **coordination from Washington, D.C.**

The following table summarizes these approaches, as well as some key takeaways.

	What Was Done	How It Was Done	Lessons
Assistance Coordination from the Field	Interagency leadership provided.	The US ambassador acted as an honest broker of institutional perspectives and capabilities, and the USAID mission director created new civil-military coordination mechanisms. Both drew on prior 3D experience or training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ambassadors should <i>strive to act as honest brokers</i> to make the most of 3D capabilities. ▪ Leaders should <i>innovate to improve 3D coordination, planning, and strategic coherence</i>; prior 3D experience is an asset.
	Southern Syria Assistance Platform (SSAP) created.	The SSAP coordinated cross-border assistance from Jordan to Syria. A USAID senior foreign service officer directed a 3D team of fifteen and reported to the deputy chief of mission. The USAID mission gave administrative support, so the SSAP could be easily ramped up or down.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Clearly define the purpose and limitations of a new bureaucratic structure.</i> ▪ <i>Anticipate the future need to scale back or eliminate bureaucratic structures that are created to deal with crisis.</i>
	Civil-military activities coordinated.	A DOD civil affairs planner at USAID, a civil-military support element, a USAID senior civil-military adviser, and State officers collaboratively planned activities that supported Jordan’s stability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be clear about objectives for collaboration. ▪ Expect needs for coordination to evolve, and be ready to adapt. ▪ Leverage all 3Ds’ experiences to develop situational understanding in a complex crisis.
	Nationwide interagency CVE assessment undertaken.	USAID and DOD collaborated on a joint assessment to better understand the violent extremism landscape so that the embassy could develop or adjust initiatives to prevent violent extremism from destabilizing Jordan. This effort involved leveraging money, subject matter, and planning experts from both agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use <i>collaborative assessments as a first step to gain common understanding</i> of dynamics that impact all 3Ds. ▪ <i>Leverage joint field research opportunities</i> to identify how civilian organizations can act now to prevent the need for military action later. ▪ <i>Expect collaboration to take time.</i>
Assistance Coordination from Washington, D.C.	USAID Syria Task Force facilitated information exchange and coordination.	USAID’s Syria Task Force, corun by USAID’s Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) and its Bureau for the Middle East, coordinated different types of USAID assistance to Syria from multiple countries. A senior executive service–level official and his chief of staff hosted weekly meetings attended by State and DOD colleagues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make agency task forces <i>inclusive of interagency partners.</i> ▪ Use <i>assistance coordination to create spillover benefits</i> of knowledge sharing. ▪ Create a <i>working-level position to support coordination of response</i> to a complex crisis.
	State Department Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) Office of Assistance Coordination (AC) provided support.	NEA/AC supported the assignment of resources to serve objectives for Jordan. It identified trade-offs between using resources to assist Jordan instead of other countries and priorities in the region. Embedded military officials at NEA/AC helped coordinate State’s security assistance with DOD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prolonged, expansive, and overlapping <i>complex crisis situations in a region may demand deep institutional adjustments</i> to help plan for and coordinate assistance. ▪ <i>Welcome interagency detailees to help coordinate</i> complementary assistance initiatives and productively engage Congress.
	Resilience approach to coordination adopted.	A resilience approach to coordinating assistance in Jordan layered humanitarian and development assistance in the same Jordanian communities. This effort helped refugee-affected and vulnerable communities meet immediate needs, while considering the long-term presence of refugee populations. It therefore reduced the need for perpetual humanitarian assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Proactively commit to working together.</i> ▪ <i>Create opportunities specifically for interagency brainstorming</i> to collaboratively solve problems and innovate—and involve both Washington, D.C., and field personnel. ▪ <i>Work toward overall community resilience</i> rather than applying humanitarian assistance and development approaches separately in areas where refugees will likely remain in communities for a long time.

Glossary of Terms

CA planner	civil affairs planner
CDCS	country development cooperation strategy
CENTCOM	US Central Command
CEP	Community Engagement Program
CF-J	CENTCOM Forward-Jordan
DOD	Department of Defense
ESF	Economic Support Fund
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
JAF	Jordanian Armed Forces
NEA	Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
NEA/AC	Office of Assistance Coordination at State's Near Eastern Affairs bureau
NSC	National Security Council
OHDACA	Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid
OIR	Operation Inherent Resolve
SCMA	senior civil-military affairs adviser
SOCCENT	Special Operations Command-Central
SSAP	Southern Syria Assistance Platform
START	Syria Transition and Assistance Response Team
State	State Department
State/PRM	Population, Refugees, and Migration bureau
TTX	table-top exercise
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/CMC	Office of Civil Military Cooperation
USAID/DCHA	Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
USAID/ME	Middle East bureau
USAID/OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
USAID/OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VEO	violent extremist organization

Foreword: Who Should Read This Case Study and Why?

This is one of three case studies (Burma, Jordan, and the Lake Chad region) designed to examine how the United States (US) government defense, development, and diplomacy (3D) communities worked together to prevent or manage different types of complex crises in fragile states.

Jordan is an example of a country that has been buffeted by persistent conflict and instability in neighboring countries. It has had to contend with its own nest of challenges related to state fragility, homegrown violent extremism, and resource scarcity.

Jordan has long been a linchpin of stability in a region characterized by chaos. With civil war raging next door in Syria, resource scarcity limiting Jordan's ability to provide for its people, and violent extremists in the neighborhood building a regional caliphate that could subsume Jordan, the United States has had to safeguard one of its strongest Middle Eastern allies.

Accomplishing this task required the US 3D institutions to innovate and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances both in what they did to support Jordan's internal stability and contain Syria's chaos and in how they worked together. To that end, some lessons from the US government's experience in Jordan may help inform other similar efforts to bolster allies' stability around the world.

These lessons could illuminate opportunities for effective engagement in other fragile states confronted by violent conflict at their doorstep that threatens to catalyze chaos within. Efforts to support close US partners such as Kenya, Niger, and Tunisia might benefit from the lessons extracted from the US experience in Jordan.

At a minimum, lessons from this case might apply in environments characterized by one or more of the following conditions:

- **The United States has a critical national security interest in preserving the stability of a key ally in a region engulfed by conflict and instability:** Jordan is an important partner for the United States in the Arab world. It has played a pivotal role as a historic broker of peace and stability in the region. At the same time, Jordan has had to absorb jolting long-term impacts of neighboring wars and stem the spread of terrorism, while suffering from its own complex web of internal political and economic challenges. The loss of this regional linchpin would fundamentally undercut the US ability to promote stability in the Middle East.
- **The United States provides voluminous and diverse assistance that requires a high degree of coordination:** A steady increase in assistance to Jordan meant that by 2015, the country received in excess of \$1 billion annually,¹ portions of which were managed by each of the 3Ds. Providers included DOD, which played a robust role in the delivery of humanitarian and civic assistance; was a necessary interlocutor to move assistance across the border; was building and enabling host nation military capacity to address the crisis; and needed to deconflict kinetic activities with assistance delivery. This case study offers insights relevant for environments that demand enhanced civil-military cooperation.
- **Cross-border assistance to neighboring populations affected by conflict is required:** Helping Syrians in Syria was a major component of Jordanian and US strategy to prevent the Syria crisis from destabilizing Jordan. Maintaining a stable base from which to support populations in neighboring countries affected by instability is critical for US assistance efforts.

- **The prospect of a long-term refugee presence in a priority country demands long-term solutions:** Years after the first wave of refugees crossed the Jordanian border from Syria, the realization that refugees would remain in the country due to the protracted conflict changed the calculus for the US government. If not accounted for in development assistance plans, refugees could continue to stress—and potentially threaten—the Jordanian state and host communities. This case study offers helpful insights for any country dealing concurrently with a long-term refugee presence and ongoing challenges to internal stability.
- **The security environment in the host country is permissive:** The US government’s large footprint in Jordan and the provision of a large amount of assistance depended on a stable security environment. In addition to American officials in Jordan, implementing partners, the private sector, and civil society organizations can move around freely. This freedom facilitates the provision of assistance, fosters accountability through monitoring, and enables commerce and free association to continue. The permissive environment helps prevent additional strain on Jordan’s local economies, enabling Jordanian groups to work with one another and with international partners to collaboratively plan and problem-solve.

This case study explores both *what* the United States did in Jordan and *how* it did so, looking at some of the approaches—resources, authorities, structures, and processes—the US government employed to achieve its objectives.

About This Project

Some public servants are all too accustomed to dealing with crises, when both information and time are at a premium. In the throes of crisis, there is little opportunity for careful consideration or reflection, and civilian agencies rarely have readily available lessons that they can leverage in real time as a crisis unfolds. Complexity further challenges the response, as the interacting influences of a plethora of actors and events make it difficult to draw direct causal links between US actions and outcomes. Amid a steady drumbeat of crisis over the past decade, learning has not kept pace. The result is lost time, money, and even lives.

The report of the Fragility Study Group, *US Leadership and the Challenge of State Fragility*, states that amid “the simultaneity of proliferating challenges [in fragile states] and constrained appetite and resources to address them,” the United States has not sufficiently captured lessons from past efforts to inform future endeavors. Although the Department of Defense (DOD) invests heavily in lessons processes, the Department of State (State) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) have not as thoroughly institutionalized processes for identify-

About the 3Ds

This report refers extensively to defense, development, and diplomacy (3D) “communities.” Broadly, these communities may include international and partner-country civil society organizations (CSOs), partner-country institutions, and implementing partners that assist the US government in developing strategy and policy as well as executing programs that further US government goals. This project focuses on the actions of three primary US 3D institutions: the Department of Defense (defense), the US Agency for International Development (development), and the Department of State (diplomacy). This simplification is made for the benefit of the reader, and the authors acknowledge that these agencies’ respective capabilities may overlap in some programmatic areas.

ing lessons and elevating them for agency leaders and personnel. This situation can be partially attributed to a lack of requisite resources, but it is also due to different organizational cultures.

This project, “3D Learning from Complex Crises,” seeks to help senior policymakers and working-level managers close this gap by identifying lessons from 3D coordination and collaboration efforts in such environments. To uncover these lessons, this project takes a case-based look at how the US government has made strides toward achieving a systemic approach to foreign policy and crisis response that “tackle[s] security, political, and capacity challenges in relationship to one another and not in isolation” by uniting the 3D toolkits in service to a common goal.² The project looks at both *what* the United States did in three crisis-stricken environments and *how* US actors cooperated and collaborated in order to do so.

It is important to note that these case studies are not evaluations; rather they document efforts and draw lessons where US government leaders believe deepening fragility and crises were staved off through collaborative inter-agency engagement. In many cases, policy and decision-making involved fierce debate; while the colorful discussions are not always presented, the stories underlying the lessons and presentation of facts are important to understanding the challenge of systematizing and aligning security, political, and capacity development efforts in fragile states. The authors have done their best to distill the key insights into applicable, replicable lessons.

The cases covered in this series—Burma, Jordan, and the Lake Chad region—offer three distinct snapshots of complex environments that involved actors, approaches, and tools from all 3Ds. Although many other organizations, processes, and toolkits were essential to US goals in these environments, the 3Ds were indispensable to the promulgation and execution of US foreign policy across all cases. This report is not designed to be comprehensive or exhaustive; as a narrative, retrospective case study, it tells a story in an effort to help current and future generations of US national security practitioners access important lessons from hard-earned experience in difficult circumstances. It attempts to synthesize many different perspectives about the periods and cases in question, and it does not claim to make judgments about the future. At a time of transition in the US government, as personnel and sources of institutional memory may change roles or move on, the practice of capturing lessons is especially important.

The authors hope that this process of discovery, and the written products that have emerged, will assist US government agencies in the crucial work of institutionalizing lesson capture and future learning.

Methodology

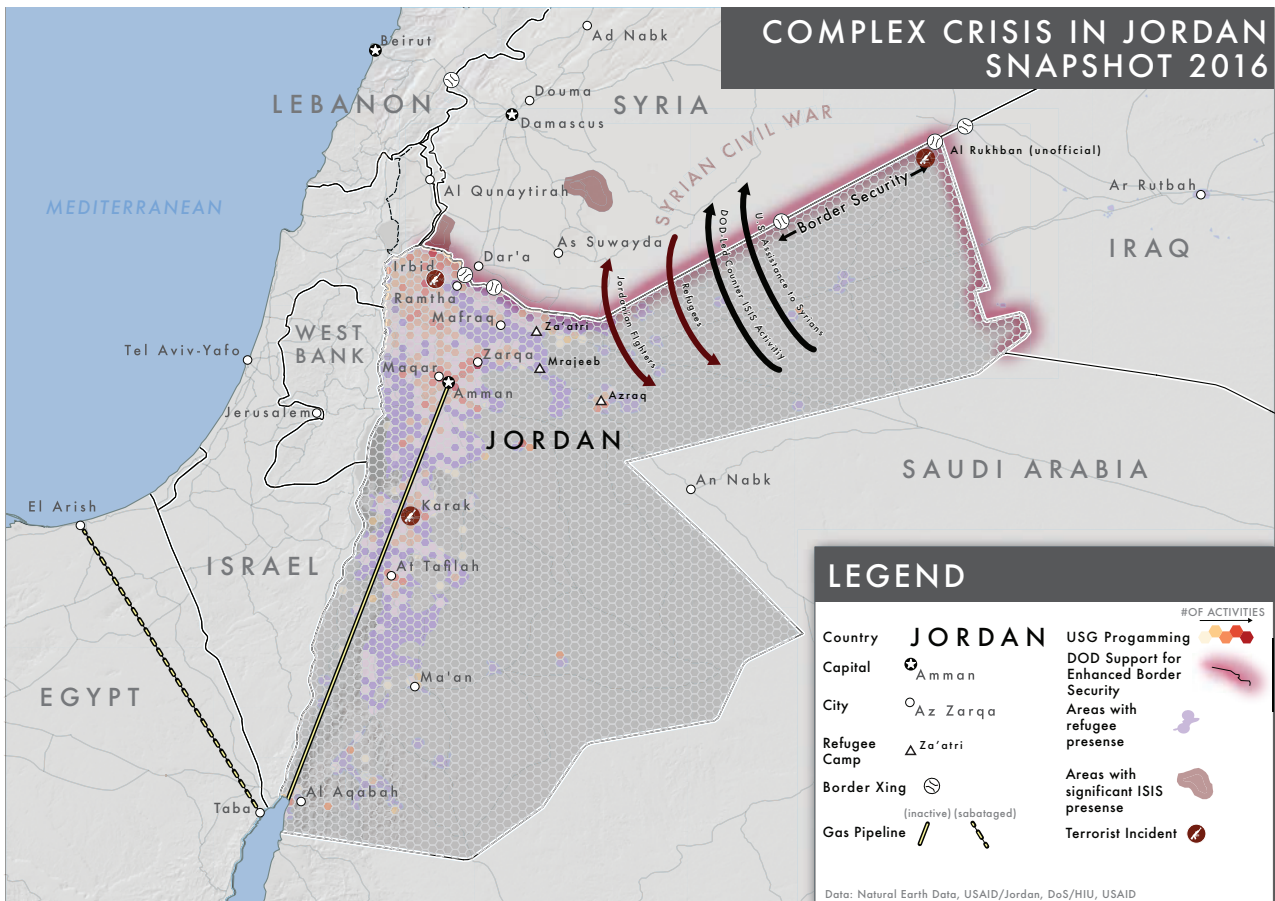
The three case studies in the series were selected following extensive consultations to identify where government leaders believed the 3Ds were working together in fragile environments more systematically and with greater effect. Each case study seeks to answer the following four guiding questions:

1. **What:** What did the United States do to further its goals and objectives in Jordan?
2. **How:** What coordinated, cooperative, collaborative, or integrated 3D approaches did the United States employ to pursue these objectives? What actors, organizational structures, processes, mandates or authorities, and resources enabled defense, development, and diplomatic engagement to achieve more together than each can achieve alone?
3. **Why:** Why did the United States choose to pursue its aims in these ways? How can one recognize similar situations in which US 3D actors might benefit from employing similar approaches?

4. **So what:** Why is this topic worth studying? How can one recognize similarly complex situations in which US 3D actors might benefit from employing similar approaches?

This report draws from an extensive literature review of more than one hundred unclassified documents about the evolving challenges facing Jordan and US government involvement to help Jordan mitigate those challenges from 2011 to 2016. These sources include official US government publications such as departmental websites, after-action reviews, departmental factsheets, public laws, Congressional Research Service reports, congressional testimony, and Inspector General and Government Accountability Office reports. All materials reviewed were unclassified so that lessons identified could be shared broadly. Researchers also examined reports from nongovernmental and multilateral organizations, as well as third-party publications such as news and journal articles and think tank analyses. In addition to this extensive literature review, the authors conducted more than twenty-five consultations with former and present US government officials at both working (e.g., action officer) and senior (e.g., deputy assistant secretary and above) levels from across the 3D communities who have worked the Jordan portfolio. This primary research was supported by a series of working-level workshops, as well as a “senior leader” session that tested, refined, and validated the report’s overarching findings. All consultations were off the record, but the stories and lessons shared throughout the report reflect these experts’ experiences and perspectives. A selected bibliography of key sources on this case is available at www.usip.org/3dlessons/Jordan.

Figure 1. Complex crisis in Jordan



Source: USAID/OTI.

Understanding the Complex Crisis in Jordan

The Backdrop of Complexity

Complex environments are almost ubiquitously uncertain, unstable, and opaque.³ Whereas complicated environments feature testable, observable phenomena, complex environments have many unknowable features, making it difficult to discern clear causal relationships and rendering outcomes unpredictable and emergent.⁴ Complex environments make it difficult for policymakers or implementers to reach certainty or agreement about what is to be done, making planning and programming particularly challenging.⁵ Put simply, in complex environments, policies and programs often provoke unforeseen, unintended outcomes, whereby attempts to influence one aspect of a problem affect other dynamics in entirely unpredictable ways.

Complexity is a useful frame for thinking about US engagement in Burma, Jordan, and the Lake Chad region because of the plethora of actors and dynamics present in these cases that demanded an integrated, adaptive, and aligned US government approach. Additionally, complexity describes not only the operating environment in these locations, but also the nature of the US policymaking apparatus, a heterogeneous set of various (and sometimes competing) interests, processes, actors, and dynamics. This project does not attempt to map the full complex ecosystem of each case, but offers an organizing concept under which various issues and dynamics such as state fragility, violent conflict, and humanitarian disaster may take root, affecting the efficacy of US policies and actions.

The Complex Environment in Jordan

Understanding the factors that threatened to plunge Jordan into crisis like its neighbors is an important first step in understanding what the United States did to help maintain Jordan's stability—and why it did so. **Jordan has been buffeted by persistent conflict and instability in neighboring countries. It has had to contend with its own nest of challenges related to state fragility, homegrown violent extremism, and resource scarcity.**

Several factors dominate the situation in Jordan.

Violent Conflict and Violent Extremist Organization Activity in the Region

The early 2011 popular uprisings known as “the Arab Spring” led to increased violence, lawlessness, weapons proliferation, and humanitarian crisis in an arc of instability that spanned from North Africa through the Middle East. Although tumultuous rebellions in Egypt and Tunisia eventually resulted in new leadership without civil war, insurgencies in Libya, Syria, and Yemen met the brute force of ruling powers, their allies, and an assortment of factions, leading to a downward spiral into protracted conflict. In Syria, rapidly escalating violent confrontations between President Assad's forces and opposition groups, many seeking freedom

Factors of Complexity in Jordan

- Violent conflict and violent extremist organization (VEO) activity in the region
- Creeping violent extremism
- State fragility—a frayed relationship between state and citizen
- Refugees
- Natural resource scarcity

from oppression or opportunities for more just governance, quickly evolved into a convoluted web of shifting alliances, exploited by largely foreign-fighter-led violent extremist organizations (VEOs). These organizations included the newly formed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which emerged from the embers of al-Qaeda in Iraq to proclaim its intention of building a “caliphate,” and the al Nusra Front (now known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham), a fighting force loyal to al-Qaeda. Following the axiom “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” some opposition groups opportunistically joined or aligned forces with these VEOs. As a host of states, individuals, and transnational groups joined the fray in financing, arming, advising, brokering deals, and otherwise influencing events in Syria, the inferno eventually spilled across borders, drawing in neighbors and major powers—including Russia, Turkey, Iran, the Gulf states, and a US-led coalition—to defeat ISIS.

The impact of the violence has been catastrophic. Assad regime forces have indiscriminately and deliberately bombed and killed civilians in Syria, sending millions of refugees fleeing across borders into neighboring countries. The speed and ferocity with which ISIS steamrolled into Raqqa in 2013 and Tikrit and Mosul in 2014, and the savagery of the organization’s activities in territories ISIS has held in both Syria and Iraq, has frightened many Jordanians.

Creeping Violent Extremism in Jordan

Although Jordan is not fighting a “hot war” against VEOs within its borders, there is a palpable fear—and real potential—for violence to increase in the kingdom. An ISIS-recruited Jordanian police officer attacked a Jordanian security training facility in Moaqar in 2015, and an eleven-hour gun battle disrupted an ISIS cell in Irbid in March 2016.⁶ Three months later, a suicide bomb attack killed seven people in the Rukban refugee camp, a settlement on the Syrian border near Iraq. In December 2016, ISIS scored its first civilian fatalities in the kingdom when terrorists, who were discovered in southern Jordan preparing materials to execute attacks, escaped to high ground at a tourist site in southern Jordan and fired on people in the area.⁷ Jordan’s fifteen thousand Salafis offer a ripe potential recruiting ground for VEOs; about a third of them are estimated to be jihadis.⁸ The jihadis remained mostly underground until 2011, when they began participating in the Syria conflict. To date, roughly two thousand have left to fight in Syria, some taking leadership positions with al-Qaeda-affiliated organizations.⁹ Jordan’s government worries that these individuals will return to Jordan more ideologically emboldened and tactically capable, with intentions to form political movements that are willing to use violence to achieve their objectives and to recruit followers among unemployed and discontented youth.¹⁰ Reflecting on the threat, Mona Alami, an expert on the Salafi movement in Jordan, notes:

Unlike the previous generation of Jordanian jihadis—al-Qaeda leaders from a decade earlier who professed their belief in a global jihad—this new generation currently fighting in Syria is prioritizing regional and local causes. The outcome of their engagement in Syria will define the vision and goals of this rising generation of Jordanian fighters. Perceived success in Syria will embolden them and likely lead them to seek a more active political role in Jordan—and perhaps to draw attention to the needs and grievances of their communities through violence.¹¹

State Fragility: A Frayed Relationship Between State and Citizen

Jordan’s vulnerability to VEO attacks and recruitment is exacerbated by its own fragility. The kingdom’s long history of strong public spending has put the country into serious debt. For more than two decades, the government has attempted to address the debt issue by ratcheting back public spending and liberalizing the economy—which grew steadily for a while. This

strategy substantially decreased the debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio.¹² However, the benefits of growth have not been equitably shared among Jordanians. Many entrepreneurial Jordanians living in urban areas, including many Palestinians, have thrived in the open economy, but the king's historically stalwart Hashemite Jordanian supporters living in eastern and southern rural areas have not. These populations have suffered as a result of the reduced public sector spending required to obtain loans and assistance from international donors and lenders, fueling discontent in poorer areas of Jordan where the cuts are most hard felt.¹³

Since 2011, regional conflict has exacerbated energy resource scarcity, dramatically reduced tourism, and strained housing, hospitals, schools, and sanitation, as well as commodity prices in Jordanian towns that host Syrian refugees. To cope with increased frustrations in its already restive population, Jordan's government reinstated subsidies for basic food, reduced fuel taxes, and increased wages and pensions. Today, nearly the entire government budget feeds salaries and energy subsidies.¹⁴ Suffering from a reduced GDP, higher commodity prices, an increasing refugee population, and tremendous security challenges, Jordan has had to rely heavily on Western and Middle Eastern partners for assistance in recent years.

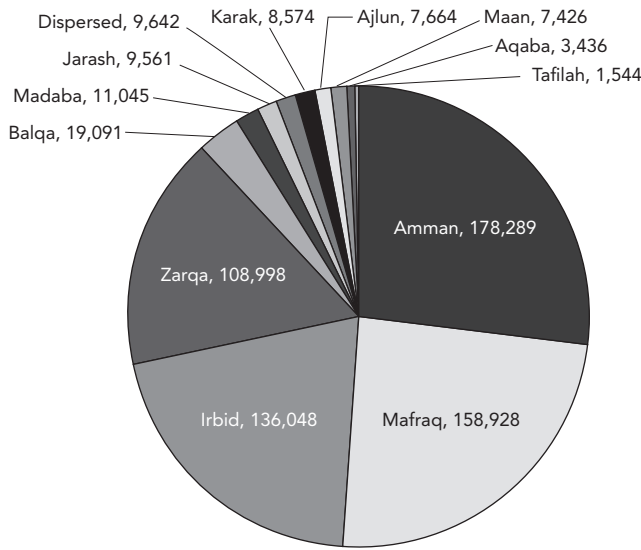
Civil society has long pressured King Abdullah II to devolve political decision making into the hands of the people; many feel power is too centralized with the king and his appointed government. Jordanians have complained that too many senior politicians are corrupt and not accountable to the people. Their exasperation came to a head during the early days of the Arab Spring, when nationwide protests catalyzed a change of government, as well as constitutional amendments introducing reforms to increase the independence of government institutions. In 2016, the king initiated reforms that are paving the way for more political parties, including parties that formerly boycotted elections, to run candidates. The reform process is intended to eventually enable parliament, rather than the king, to select a prime minister.¹⁵

Refugees

The pressure on Jordan's government to provide social services is exacerbated by an enormous refugee population. Jordan's population is estimated at just over eight million people.¹⁶ The kingdom is a melting pot of refugees, immigrants, and native Jordanians that offers its own set of challenges. Two million Jordanians are Palestinian refugees or of Palestinian descent, and about a million are migrant workers. Add to this mix half-a-million Iraqis who have fled conflicts at home and at least 649,000 Syrian refugees who have settled predominantly in Jordanian communities.¹⁷ Increased demands and competition for resources, employment, health care, shelter, and education have become acute.

Patience and generosity in Jordan's most affected host communities have worn thin.¹⁸ According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), most Syrian refugees (about 85 percent) live in some of Jordan's poorest municipalities in the northern governorates of Amman, Balqa, Irbid, and Mafraq—each of which hosts more than 100,000 refugees. Most other Syrian refugees are clustered in more rural governorates, with an average of less than 10,000 per governorate. Some of these refugees first lived in one of Jordan's three official refugee camps or other unofficial camps; as of December 2016, more than 140,000 still did.¹⁹ Some long-established Jordanian populations in rural eastern and southern Jordan have expressed frustration that, compared to other Jordanian communities and Syrian refugees, they now receive little attention or assistance from their government and international organizations. These groups have begun to feel like "minorities and guests in their own nation."²⁰

Figure 2. Refugees in Jordan by governorate



Source: "Syrian Regional Refugee Response," UNHCR Interagency Information Sharing Portal, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>

Natural Resource Scarcity

Another pressure on Jordan's government is the country's scarce water and energy resources. This scarcity, combined with a growing population, perennially challenges the country's ability to meet the needs of its citizens.²¹ Jordan struggles to maintain a manageable debt-to-GDP ratio due to the high cost of imports, infrastructure, and processing to meet peoples' needs. The influx of Syrian refugees has stirred frustration among many Jordanians who feel they are in competition for resources. Many believe that Syrians' needs are draining the government's financial ability to provide adequate water, energy, and other vital services to Jordanians.

Water: Jordan's per capita water availability is one of the lowest in the world.²² Jordan accesses most water from aquifers that are overdrawn and often polluted and from the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers, which also serve Israel and Syria. To supply a large refugee population, Jordan urgently requires costly infrastructure investments to produce and distribute water to populations far from the sources where water is harvested.

Energy: Jordan's land offers no fossil fuels for energy production, so the kingdom spends nearly one-fifth of its gross domestic product to import oil and gas.²³ Although Syrian refugees have increased demand for energy, conflict elsewhere in the region has obstructed the import of gas. Before the Arab Spring in 2011, Jordan purchased gas from Egypt at a negotiated rate, but pipeline sabotage in Egypt required Jordan to buy much more expensive gas from Saudi Arabia until it signed a fifteen-year, \$10 billion deal with Israel in 2016.²⁴ In 2016, Jordan started building its first nuclear reactor, which will make use of the country's large uranium reserves when it and another reactor are completed—but this isn't expected until 2025.²⁵

As this picture of complexity makes clear, Jordan faces no shortage of challenges. In the following sections, this report tells the story of how the United States operated in this complex landscape, working across bureaucratic silos to reinforce Jordan's stability against serious odds.

The United States in Jordan: Key Objectives and Accomplishments

Guarding a Tenuous Stability in Jordan

In January 2011, like so many other frustrated citizens across the Middle East, Jordanians took to the streets to voice their outrage over corruption, inflation, and unemployment. For Jordan, this kind of action was not particularly unusual. The country's largest Islamist movement and leftist political organizations regularly rallied activists to complain about inadequate opportunities for the political opposition. And although the size of the January protests was impressive by Jordanian standards, the protests were nothing compared to those in other Arab Spring countries, where tens of thousands turned out. The king of Jordan and his government might not have been too concerned—but for who these protesters were. They were not members of the political fringe. Most of the protestors were East Bank Hashemite Jordanians—the king's most loyal supporters. They were not yet calling for the king's head, but they were demanding democratic reforms that would give more power to the people and reduce corruption.

Meanwhile, across the border, events were taking a turn for the worse. Whereas the early days of the Syrian war in 2011 pushed only a relative trickle of refugees into Jordan, an astounding 236,487 refugees arrived in 2012, and nearly 300,000 arrived in 2013.²⁶ Jordan's northern communities strained under the weight of refugees' needs. Emergency rooms, clinics, and hospitals were overrun by Syrians seeking health care. Schools were overwhelmed by the additional student populations. Water lines were illegally tapped, damaging infrastructure and obstructing access by many. Trash mounted in heaps faster than it could be carted away, contaminating ground water. As tensions mounted, so did the threat of violence, as escalating frustrations in host communities boiled over. To quell the potential for violence, the refugees and the communities hosting them needed assistance with meeting immediate needs. And the government of Jordan (GOJ) needed assistance to manage the people pouring over the border, to make sure they were not illegally entering the country and that VEO affiliates were not infiltrating the kingdom. Syria's problem was clearly becoming Jordan's.

While this crisis was escalating, the United States was planning to begin scaling down some of its longstanding development assistance to Jordan, including some health and water programs. But the unprecedented surge in refugees and the fear of a destabilized Jordan changed that plan. The United States and other international donors recognized they were needed in a big way. US Embassy Amman—which at the time was a “normally” functioning and staffed embassy managing relatively steady-state diplomatic engagement and assistance—would have to become a hub for both internal and cross-border crisis response to help maintain Jordan's stability.

Remarkably, despite standing on the precipice of crisis, Jordan has managed to maintain a delicate stability over the years. The GOJ remains intact and politically stable. ISIS forces have not rolled across the kingdom's borders, nor have they successfully executed widespread attacks to disrupt the daily lives of Jordan's residents. The hundreds of thousands of Syrians who fled to Jordan to escape conflict and VEOs caused host communities to bend but not to buckle under the pressure. The country has not run out of water or fuel to support its population. The economy has suffered, but it has not tanked. Jordan's poorer rural communities have not revolted, despite being aggrieved by economic reforms, public spending cuts, and perceptions that refugees and refugee-affected communities are disproportionately receiving attention and benefits. Crucially for the United States, during this time of excep-

The Rapid Growth of US Embassy Amman

After Embassy Damascus suspended operations in early 2012, the need to continue responding to the Syria crisis and addressing spillover effects impacting Jordan required an amplification of the US presence in Amman. Between 2010 and 2015, permanent American staff at Embassy Amman—located only fifty-five miles from the Syrian border—increased by more than 60 percent, amounting to a total employment of 865 and an embassy community of 1,400, including family members (“Inspection of Embassy Amman Jordan,” US Department of State, Office of Inspector General, June 2015, <https://oig.state.gov/system/files/isp-i-15-29a.pdf>). By the end of 2016, the US embassy community had reportedly grown to encompass more than forty US government organizations and roughly two hundred US employees and family members. Some three hundred to five hundred temporary duty employees are in Jordan on any given day, and over a fifteen-month period, two hundred members of Congress and their staffers visited Jordan. Secretary of State John Kerry visited seventeen times in twelve months.

“We are operating in many different spheres, which is largely why it is such a big embassy—because those programs require personnel.”

—US Ambassador to Jordan Stuart Jones

Source: Justin Schuster, “An Interview with Stuart E. Jones, Ambassador to Jordan,” *The Politic*, August 14, 2013, <http://thepolitic.org/an-interview-with-stuart-e-jones-u-s-ambassador-to-jordan>.

tional regional tumult, Jordan has remained a stable and reliable ally and security partner in the Middle East.

The Case for Engagement

Fierce fighting in Syria compelled the US embassy in Damascus to shut its doors in February 2012. The closure of the embassy signaled that the conflict was getting out of hand and could dramatically affect the stability of adjacent countries and the entire region. Although no one in the international community, including the United States, intervened to stop the Assad regime’s atrocities against civilian populations, the rest of the world was concerned about the spreading violence and increasing humanitarian needs imposed on Syria’s neighbors by the massive flood of refugees.

Jordan is geographically nestled in the heart of the Middle East and surrounded by countries experiencing extreme fragility, instability, and outright conflict. One senior US official referred to Jordan as “the crossroads of Armageddon.” This remark underscores the importance the United States ascribed to ensuring that the effects of what was playing out in Syria did not spill into Jordan. The United States could not risk allowing its most reliable partner in the Arab world to become destabilized as a result of conflict in the region, its own internal vulnerabilities, or the interaction of the two.

Goals for Engagement

“The United States and Jordan share the mutual goals of a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East and an end to violent extremism that threatens the security of Jordan, the region, and the entire globe.”

—US Department of State²⁷

The looming potential for violent conflict and extremism in the region to undermine Jordan’s stability and status as an effective partner in the Middle East caused the United States to prioritize efforts in Jordan that:

- **Provided support to Jordan to effectively manage potentially destabilizing internal stressors**, including water and energy scarcity challenges, a Salafi population increasingly animated by regional VEO activity, a refugee surge, and the longstanding grievances that continue to drive popular unrest.
- **Addressed the humanitarian and security needs in Syria** in ways that helped prevent and mitigate Syria's violent conflict and VEO activity from threatening Jordan's security and from driving unsustainable waves of refugees into a fragile and resource-strapped country.

These twin priorities guided all US activities in Jordan during the time period under consideration in this report—and reflected the longstanding close relationship between the US government and the king of Jordan. The United States prioritized activities—in both Jordan and Syria—that the king determined were needed to maintain stability.

This section offers an overview of the actions taken and achievements made by the United States in Jordan from 2011 through 2016.

Early Days: Pre-2011 US Engagement in Jordan

Before 2011, US Embassy Amman was a relatively normal US embassy. Although it had managed one of the largest US assistance portfolios for years, the embassy was primarily focused on supporting Jordan's long-term economic growth, political liberalization, and security force modernization, as well as cooperation on regional initiatives such as negotiating peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The assistance included cash support for the GOJ that was conditioned on economic and political reforms to improve domestic productivity, reduce public sector spending, and decentralize political power. This partially fulfilled a 2008 agreement in which the United States committed to providing Jordan with assistance worth \$660 million every year for five years, split almost equally between Economic Support Fund (ESF) money and Foreign Military Financing funds.²⁸

The USAID Mission in Jordan (USAID/Jordan) supported projects to reduce Jordan's fragility by helping the government improve its public health and education services (especially by building and renovating schools), particularly in the aggrieved poor and southern governorates that were hit hardest by earlier public spending cuts.²⁹ It also supported water projects to help manage use of water in the kingdom without depleting nonrenewable sources. These projects included subsidizing waste treatment and water distribution projects in Amman, Mafraq, Aqaba, and Irbid.³⁰ In 2010, the Millennium Challenge Corporation approved a five-year, \$275.1 million compact to provide more water to Amman and Zarqa and to "help improve the efficiency of water delivery, wastewater collection, and wastewater treatment."³¹ To promote democracy in Jordan, USAID supported capacity-building programs for the parliament's support offices, the Jordanian Judicial Council, the Judicial Institute, and the Ministry of Justice. It also supported training of political parties and members of parliament.

Security assistance mostly focused on helping Jordan modernize its armed forces—especially its air force—through military training and grants to purchase conventional weapons systems.³² In 2008, the United States began helping Jordan establish a set of surveillance towers along part of its border with Syria. The United States also provided customs inspection and border patrol assistance and supported police training in forensic criminal investigation procedures.³³

Some of USAID/Jordan's activities had been slated to wind down just as the Arab Spring hit Jordan, Syria, and other states in the region. Fortunately, the United States' longstanding

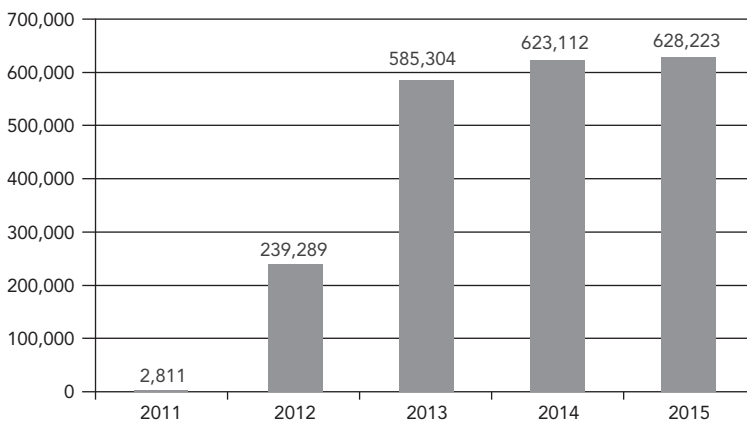
partnership with the GOJ and civil society meant that the United States was well poised to rapidly adapt its programs to meet new or exacerbated needs as they erupted during the Arab Spring. USAID/Jordan and its implementing partners were familiar with the capacities and limitations of both the local and the national government to manage the trickling refugee influx that started ramping up in 2011. The consistency of the US partnership with Jordan would prove to be an important factor in the following years as priorities shifted and resource needs ballooned.

Pivot Point: The Outbreak of Crisis in Syria, March 2011

In March 2011, demonstrators in the southern Syrian city of Dara’a peacefully protested the brutal torture of fifteen young boys and the death of one whose mangled body was returned to his family. Syrian authorities loyal to President Bashar Assad had beaten and burned the boys and pulled out their fingernails after the boys had penned graffiti suggesting that Assad might face revolt in the Arab Spring uprisings. Syrian forces fired on the demonstrators in a chilling show of force that resulted in the death and imprisonment of hundreds of Syrians. The hundreds of thousands of Syrians who took to the streets to call for President Bashar Assad’s resignation were violently suppressed by the regime’s forces. Small fledgling militias responded by battling regime forces for control of towns and cities. A number of senior-level defections from Syrian forces led to the formation of the Free Syrian Army and increased organization among the motley militias. By January 2012, Assad’s forces had intensified the use of heavy artillery against the opposition forces, including indiscriminately bombing areas where civilians were present. In June, the United Nations (UN) declared that Syria was in the midst of civil war. Shortly after, the Assad government began using fighter jets to fire on rebels in Aleppo, Syria’s largest city and its economic capital. By late 2012, Assad had begun using barrel bombs—containers filled with explosives, shrapnel, and sometimes chemicals—to inflict maximum damage on rebel-held areas and civilians.

The rapid escalation of the Assad regime’s brutal tactics against Syrian rebels and civilians drove an exodus of Syrians into neighboring countries, including Jordan (see figure 3). Additionally, weapons related to the Syria conflict began to proliferate in Jordan and Syria’s other neighboring countries. In October 2012, the GOJ arrested eleven Jordanians who were found possessing explosives from Syria and were allegedly intending to use them use them to attack targets in Jordan.³⁴

Figure 3. Syrian refugees and asylum applicants in Jordan



Source: “Population Statistics,” UNHCR, http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/time_series.

The 3Ds responded to the rapid turn of events in two ways. First, the United States delivered cross-border assistance from Jordan to war-affected Syrians. Second, the 3Ds scaled up assistance to the GOJ and Jordanian communities where existing development challenges and resource shortages had been further complicated by the refugee influx, including humanitarian assistance, support to development priorities such as essential health and education services, and additional security support. Furthermore, the US embassy revised the reform-focused conditionality (see box “Cash Transfers and Conditionality for Jordan”) of cash transfer assistance to ensure that conditions requiring reforms would not detract from stability during this tenuous time.³⁵

The United States and the GOJ worked in lockstep to structure programming during this period. Extraordinarily, the United States agreed to discuss all proposed assistance in Jordan *and Syria* with Jordanian officials and to vet implementers and beneficiaries of assistance in Syria before proceeding. This policy directly tied US assistance priorities to those of Jordan.

Humanitarian Assistance to Syrians Trapped by Conflict in Syria

The GOJ, the US government, and other international partners in Jordan rapidly organized and deployed funding and personnel to facilitate assistance to Syrians to prevent them from becoming so desperate that they needed to flee across borders. The assistance included plastic sheeting for makeshift shelters, as well as blankets and mattresses; emergency medical supplies; flour for bakeries; and items necessary to support children’s welfare.³⁶ The US ambassadors in Jordan and Turkey consulted with USAID and State colleagues to divide Syria into areas of responsibility for assistance coordination teams in Syria and Jordan. The efforts were closely linked through Syria-related US government coordination mechanisms such as USAID’s Syria Task Force.

Assistance to Syrian Refugees Who Fled to Jordan

Despite the assistance that the international community was able to make available in some parts of conflict-affected Syria, many Syrians who feared for their lives had no option but to flee. Experience has shown that refugee camps often turn into long-term, chronically underdeveloped settlements that prevent refugees from resuming a semblance of normal life and that refugees struggle to contribute to local economic, social, and political communities. To proactively prevent this phenomenon from occurring, Jordan and international organizations encouraged Syrians—many of whom had family or friends in Jordan—to take shelter in communities instead of in camps. However, as refugees surged into Jordan at accelerating rates, the additional population imposed an increasing burden on the communities where they settled. The United States and the international community endeavored to support refugees in both kinds of situations.

Support for Refugees in Camps

Three official refugee camps opened in Jordan from 2012 to 2016. The largest is Zaatari, which international donors constructed in mid-2012. Although by the end of 2016, Zaatari had a population of about 80,000, it once housed more than 120,000 people, making it the fourth largest city in Jordan.³⁷ In less than five years, more than half a million refugees passed through its barbed-wired-topped walls. The 3Ds substantially supported construction of the camp and provided other direct support to refugees inside. State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees,

and Migration (State/PRM) provided funding to UNHCR, while DOD helped build the camp and USAID funded the UN World Food Program to implement a cash-based transfer program that provided refugees with electronic vouchers for the purchase of goods at supermarkets in the camp. Refugees outside of the camps also benefited from cash-based transfer support. Jordan's other official refugee camps were Azraq, with about 35,000 inhabitants, and Mrajeeb al Fhood, with about 4,500.³⁸

Support for Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees Outside of Camps

Preexisting US development assistance programs struggled to meet the onslaught of additional needs in communities affected by the refugee influx. Programs contended with constrained budgets and limited flexibility to rapidly change programmatic focus on the ground. Fortunately, USAID was already working on hospital renovations in hard-hit areas of Jordan and was prepared to advise Jordan's health ministry about ways to accommodate refugees. US efforts got hospitals up and running, stocked emergency rooms, and trained Jordanians to work in psychological services, including helping hundreds of victims of torture who had escaped from Syria. It was hard work and very taxing for the sole American health officer and three Jordanian personnel who supported this effort before reinforcements arrived at the USAID mission.

The US government expanded its work in 2012 to include support for social and essential services in communities affected by the refugee influx. It built schools in the north and advised schools about how to manage the additional demands imposed by refugee families that wanted to enroll their children. For example, schools began a rotation of three shifts in an extended school day. USAID initiated a community engagement program in refugee-affected communities that helped communities find solutions to problems rather than waiting for the government to do so. In overcrowded towns where trash was piling up, USAID imported trash trucks and trained people to run them. When hacked pipes began to exacerbate water scarcity and threatened to enflame conflict in some communities, the United States helped deliver water from alternative aquifers so vulnerable communities would not be without it. The United States also funded a desalination plant to increase the availability of potable water throughout the country.

Notably, although the refugee influx precipitated this increased assistance to affected communities, USAID's development assistance aimed, first and foremost, to help Jordanians. It did not explicitly aim to help refugees themselves; neither planning nor monitoring processes included refugees among the intended or counted beneficiaries of the assistance. This policy later changed.

US assistance helped prevent the pressure on host communities from increasing frustration with Jordan's governance structures at every level.³⁹ Unfortunately, one side effect of this focus on communities that absorbed the largest refugee populations was that it created a perception among Jordanians in other disadvantaged areas—particularly among the “native” Hashemite Jordanians in the south—that they had been further sidelined in comparison to this latest influx of refugees. In response, USAID, with the backing of the ambassador, increased support to these areas as well.

Security Support to Jordan

DOD, which had excellent relationships with the Jordanian Armed Forces and its Border Guard (JAF), established US Central Command Forward-Jordan (CF-J) in 2012 at a training

center near Amman. The intent of sending fewer than one hundred “planners and other specialists” was to advise, train, and otherwise support Jordanian forces to contain threats in Syria and bolster Jordan’s defenses.⁴⁰ At the King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center, a bare-bones, unheated facility made of plywood containing an amphitheater, cramped offices, and meeting rooms was rapidly built to accommodate US forces. CF-J provided assistance to Jordan to set up a sensor and monitoring system along the border and to train Jordan’s Border Security Guard. A civil-military support element (CMSE) team in Jordan supported assistance requested by local-level Jordanian government officials when civilian donor agencies were unable to provide it. For example, the team fulfilled the Mafraq governor’s request to provide items such as refrigerators, kitchen equipment, and water storage tanks to Jordanian officials administering deserter camps that hosted former fighters from Syria.⁴¹

Pivot Point: Violent Extremist Organizations Evolve and Become More Threatening, 2013

In March 2013, the Syrian city of Raqqa fell to an assortment of rebel groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) and the al Nusra Front. The king of Jordan publicly stated his concern that a jihadist state could emerge alongside Syria’s border with Jordan.⁴² The next month, the head of ISI moved from Iraq to Syria and expanded the organization’s name—and self-proclaimed mandate for a caliphate—to include Syria. ISI was retitled ISIS, and the group quickly accelerated its capture of territory, including Raqqa.⁴³

In mid-2013, the US intelligence community determined conclusively that the Syrian regime had used chemical weapons against opposition forces and civilians. Rather than launching an attack on Syria, the United States worked with Russia to broker a deal to remove specific chemical weapons from Syria.⁴⁴ This decision reflected the US desire to keep the focus on containing the conflict and preventing the spread of VEOs rather than becoming part of the active conflict inside Syria.

Expansion of DOD Presence and Activities in Jordan

Following its June 2013 annual military exercise in Jordan, “Eager Lion,” DOD left behind a detachment of F-16s and US Patriot missiles, as well as about seven hundred personnel.⁴⁵ In April 2013, DOD had announced the deployment of elements of the First Armored Division headquarters to Jordan that would:

provid[e] a cohesive command and control element in cooperation with Jordan forces, . . . could be expected to coordinate with CF-J, . . . [and] if directed . . . establish a joint task force headquarters that would provide command and control for chemical weapons response, humanitarian assistance efforts, and stability operations.⁴⁶

Thus, DOD could better help Jordanian authorities coordinate cross-border assistance to refugees.⁴⁷

Building a Fence

In March 2014, the United States completed another phase of its Jordan Border Security Program: a fence built along parts of Jordan’s borders with Syria and Iraq. This fence marked the beginning of phases two and three of the program, which in coming years would entail “a fully integrated and networked fence running alongside a 275-mile stretch of Jordan’s borders with Syria and Iraq.”⁴⁸ The program aimed to improve the GOJ’s ability to implement surveil-

lance, detection, and interdiction along land borders—particularly with respect to detecting ISIS fighters, smugglers, and refugees on both sides of the fence.⁴⁹ There are plans to extend the fence along the entire border, to outfit it with sophisticated surveillance and detection equipment, and to install ground sensors as well as station-trained, quick reaction forces at key points. The surveillance capability afforded by the fence feeds into a larger joint United States and Jordanian effort to improve understanding of the violent extremist activity in Syria and to prevent spillage of the conflict and VEOs into Jordan.⁵⁰

Pivot Point: ISIS Captures Mosul and Declares a Caliphate, June 2014

In June 2014, ISIS swiftly and catastrophically attacked and took control of Mosul, Iraq, and “officially” declared the establishment of a caliphate stretching from Aleppo province in Syria to Diyala province in Iraq. Two months later, ISIS claimed control of the giant Mosul Dam in Iraq (it was quickly retaken by Kurdish and US forces). The expansion of the ISIS threat in the region, and the continuation of unabated conflict between the Assad regime and the patchwork of opposition groups, substantially complicated the problems facing the United States and Jordan. Attention and resources in Amman and elsewhere had to be diverted from focusing exclusively on Syria and Jordan to addressing Iraq and other ISIS-controlled territory. Meanwhile, Jordanians were growing increasingly concerned about the intentions of some Syrian refugees and returning Jordanians who had traveled to fight alongside VEOs in Syria. A 2014 survey of Jordanians suggested that 71 percent believed the country should not take in more Syrians, and 75 percent wanted a buffer zone within Syria to host refugees.⁵¹

The United States maintained and expanded its two-pronged approach to addressing both the external threats from neighboring conflicts in Syria and Iraq and those threats that were now percolating within Jordan’s own borders.

Mobilization of a Military Response to ISIS

In August 2014, the United States sent hundreds of DOD personnel to Iraq and began air strikes against ISIS there. Soon after, air strikes were launched against ISIS in Syria.⁵² These strikes marked the start of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), which by March 2015 included Jordan and a coalition of sixty countries.⁵³ By November 2014, DOD had sent 1,500 more troops to Iraq to train, advise, and assist Iraqi forces to fight ISIS. After ISIS publicly broadcast a video of a Jordanian pilot it had captured in early 2015 being burned alive, Jordan agreed to act as host for a train-and-equip initiative that the US and Turkey planned to jointly implement for the “moderate Syrian opposition.”⁵⁴ Jordan stepped up its contributions to OIR air strikes and intelligence.

Spotlight on the Jordanian Pilot

In February 2015, ISIS outraged and emboldened Jordanians by broadcasting a video of a captured Jordanian pilot being burned alive in a cage, a provocation to which the king of Jordan vowed an “earth-shaking” response. Jordan immediately executed a long-held prisoner whom ISIS had wanted released and ramped up air strikes against ISIS targets. By May 2015, Jordan had flown more than 325 sorties to target ISIS—more than all other Middle Eastern OIR coalition partners combined.

Continued Bolstering of Jordanian Security Capabilities

The United States continued to provide roughly \$350 million annually to build the capacity of the JAF to protect borders and counter terrorism threats and to participate in counter-ISIS operations.⁵⁵ The United States also delivered equipment to Jordan, including small arms, munitions, aircraft spare parts, night vision devices, UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, and F-16 fighter aircraft munitions for the fight against ISIS.⁵⁶

Pivot Point: Russian Intervention in Syria and the Long Road Ahead, September 2015

Russia began militarily supporting Assad's forces in September 2015, adding further complexity to the US government's decision-making processes about how to manage the Syria issue and the related ISIS problem set. The United States and international and multilateral institutions delivering assistance to Syria and to Jordan understood that the road to resolution and peace would be longer and more painful as a result of both the persistent threat of VEOs and Russian involvement in the Syrian conflict. The traumatized millions who crossed borders would not soon, if ever, return home. More refugees continued to flee as Syrian regime attacks escalated with Russian support. Jordan's king stated plainly in February 2016 that the country could not absorb additional Syrian refugees and temporarily closed some border crossings.⁵⁷ After a June 2016 suicide attack at the Rukban refugee camp on Jordan's remote northeastern border crossing with Syria, Jordan cut off entry to Syrians and halted passage of humanitarian aid in the area, stranding tens of thousands on the Syrian side of an earthen berm that lies along the border.⁵⁸ Violent extremist activity in Jordan continued to grow; ISIS affiliates were thought to be behind a handful of terrorist attacks executed in 2015 and 2016.

The United States sought to protect Jordan from further instability from external threats by continuing the provision of cross-border assistance to Syrians and stepping up its campaign against the ISIS threat. In Jordan, it increased resources and closed the gap between support to refugees and support to refugee-affected communities, in recognition of the fact that integrating humanitarian and development assistance would yield more sustainable benefits to both groups. It also launched an effort to gain more understanding about the evolving violent extremism landscape in Jordan.

Continuation of the Fight Against ISIS and Support to Security in Jordan

In December 2015, CF-J evolved into the Combined Joint Operations Center—Jordan, which continued to support partnership with the JAF, but also obtained some equipment and began providing support to OIR. It works with partners from several countries to aid the JAF in its mission to defend Jordan. In February 2016, President Obama signed the United States–Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, which authorized expedited review of proposed arms sales to Jordan and raised the cap on the value of sales for three years.⁵⁹

The OIR coalition increased air strikes against ISIS throughout 2015 and 2016, helping local forces take control of territory in key locations. By April 2016, twelve countries had executed a total of more than 11,000 air strikes (roughly 70 percent of them by the United States), forcing ISIS out of 40 percent of its territory in Iraq and 10 percent of its territory in Syria.⁶⁰ The United States also restarted its train-and-equip program, which entailed significant operational support from Jordan.

Cash Transfers and Conditionality in Jordan

Cash transfers have long been a key component of US assistance to Jordan. In 2015 and 2016, they totaled \$231.4 million and \$470 million, respectively: USAID, “US Provides \$429.7 Million in Grants to Jordan,” press release, September 21, 2015, <https://www.usaid.gov/jordan/press-releases/sep-21-2015-us-provides-4297-million-grants-jordan>; and USAID, “US Provides \$470 Million Cash Transfer to Jordan,” press release, December 18, 2016, <https://www.usaid.gov/jordan/press-releases/dec-18-2016-us-provides-470-million-cash-transfer-jordan>.

Jordan uses the transfers to service its foreign debt and support public sector projects. The transfers are conditioned on benchmarks that Jordan’s government agrees to meet—primarily reforms that aim to improve “public financial management, efficient use of natural resources, and competitiveness.” (“Jordan Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2013–2017,” USAID, amended March 2015, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1883/Amended-Jordan-Country-Development-Strategy-March-2015.pdf>.) USAID manages the transfers, but an interagency group at the embassy discusses and agrees to conditions attached to them.

Amplification of Resources for Jordan’s Stability

To help Jordan with the ongoing fiscal strain, the United States signed a \$1.5 billion sovereign loan guarantee agreement with the GOJ in 2015—adding to guarantees issued in 2013 and 2014 for, respectively, \$1.25 billion and \$1 billion. The United States also issued cash transfers totaling more than \$700 million in 2015 and 2016 (see box, right). These transfers partially fulfilled a nonbinding memorandum of understanding that the United States had signed with Jordan that allowed the US government to provide up to \$1 billion in aid per year for fiscal years (FY) 2015, 2016, and 2017.⁶¹ State’s press release announcing the agreement cites a shared commitment to:

promoting regional security and stability, furthering Jordan’s economic development, and advancing social, political, and economic reform in Jordan . . . and recognize[d] Jordan’s increased immediate needs resulting from regional unrest, the efforts Jordan [was] undertaking at the forefront of the fight against ISIS and other extremist ideology and terrorism, the influx of refugees from Syria and Iraq, the disruption of foreign energy supplies, and other unprecedented strains.⁶²

A new memorandum of understanding is in development for the post-2017 period.

Promoting Resilience: Layering Humanitarian Assistance and Development Assistance

Refugees are often not eager or able to return to their home areas immediately after conflict has subsided. Even when offered assistance to return to and live in their home locations, many refugees opt to stay in other countries for years, and some never return. Recognizing the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis and reflecting on lessons from other cases, the United States adjusted its development assistance strategy in Jordan to account for and incorporate refugee populations into longer-term planning processes. This approach is designed to promote “resilience” within communities that are subject to prolonged or repeated shocks. Rather than dedicating humanitarian assistance solely to addressing the needs of the refugee population and separately allocating development assistance to address the needs of the community, resilience programming in Jordan layers both kinds of assistance in the same location to help host com-

Spotlight on USAID Community Engagement Program

The USAID Community Engagement Program aims to create “stronger, more cohesive and resilient partner communities.” It builds the capacity of locally elected community enhancement teams and municipal and local government to collaboratively identify stressors in Jordan’s most poor, refugee-affected, and conflict-vulnerable communities; and to plan projects that address these stressors in a conflict-sensitive way.

Projects have included:

- Rehabilitation and equipping of the Al Seeleh Healthcare Center to accommodate heightened demand after the refugee influx
- Installation of street lighting in Al Sarhan to reduce petty crime and car accidents
- Improving sanitation and cleanup where a refugee influx caused trash to build up in Ramtha

munities develop in ways that adapt to and benefit from the presence of refugees and help refugees become productive members of their communities to lessen the burdens they impose.⁶³

In 2015, USAID pioneered this approach in Jordan and committed additional resources to enroll all children—including all refugee children—in school. Development assistance to support hospital expansions and renovations explicitly accounted for refugees when considering the capacity necessary to serve a given location in the long run. Following conversations about how to tap the human capital in refugee populations as a source of economic growth and job creation, the Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) used humanitarian assistance funds to pilot a vocational training project for refugees in host communities so that USAID could learn from it and potentially build a full development program to serve refugee-affected communities in Jordan’s border area.

In 2015, the United States adopted an approach that considered refugees as long-term residents of Jordan and prioritized resilience strategies to help mitigate their impact on communities while enabling them to make valuable contributions to the economy and society. Some assistance programs are specifically aimed to help build relationships within refugee-affected and conflict-vulnerable communities (see box above).⁶⁴ These projects bring community members and local governments together to collaboratively deal with the strains that the entire community is feeling, including refugees. The United States also encouraged other donors and the GOJ to view the inclusion of refugees in development initiatives as an opportunity to stem, for example, health crises and the vulnerability of youth to VEO recruitment.

Support to Host Country Crisis Management Capacity in Pursuit of Resilience

After a few years of assisting Syrian refugees in Jordan, the United Nations and the United States appeared to be establishing and entrenching enormous humanitarian and development assistance programs in parallel to each other—and, worse, in parallel to activities executed by Jordan’s own permanent institutions of state. The US ambassador to Jordan and other senior US leaders encouraged the United Nations to focus on helping Jordanian partners build capacity to manage and leverage development and humanitarian assistance to support community resilience. To support that priority, USAID worked with the GOJ’s Project Management Unit at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to build capacity among Jordanians to manage projects that streamline humanitarian and development assistance. The United States supplied three advisers: a trade adviser, a communications adviser, and an adviser to the director of the Project Manage-

ment Unit. The ministry assigned Jordanian staff to shadow the advisers and build their capacity to independently run the unit in the near future. In early 2016, the ministry launched the “Jordan Compact,” a “new holistic approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the international community to deal with the Syrian refugee crisis.” The compact applies a resilience approach to the assistance requested of international donors, aiming to “turn the Syrian refugee crisis into a development opportunity” that helps grow Jordan’s economy and improves development in refugee-affected communities.⁶⁵

Assessment of Violent Extremism in Jordan

In 2015, amid rising concern about the risk of violent extremists gaining strength in Jordan, the Royal Hashemite Court of Jordan (the Royal Court) gave US Embassy Amman permission to conduct an assessment of the violent extremism landscape in the country.⁶⁶ In consultation with USAID’s research methods experts, the US Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) funded a research team to gather both qualitative and quantitative data in all twelve of Jordan’s governorates. This research resulted in a 1000-page unclassified report that was briefed in December 2016 to US officials, the Royal Court, and a host of other organizations. For example, the UN Development Programme was briefed on the findings because it was tasked with helping Jordan update its national countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy.⁶⁷ USAID began a review of its assistance portfolio to develop indicators to gauge the impact of its existing programs on the violent extremism challenge set. The intent was to develop a data-based method of potentially adjusting approaches to mitigate violent extremism challenges more effectively.

Jordan is certainly not out of the woods yet. But taken together, US efforts to help stabilize the kingdom, and address the Syrian conflict through cross-border assistance have helped keep the country on its feet during a historic, tumultuous period.

Unpacking the “How”: Differentiating Elements of US Government Efforts in Jordan

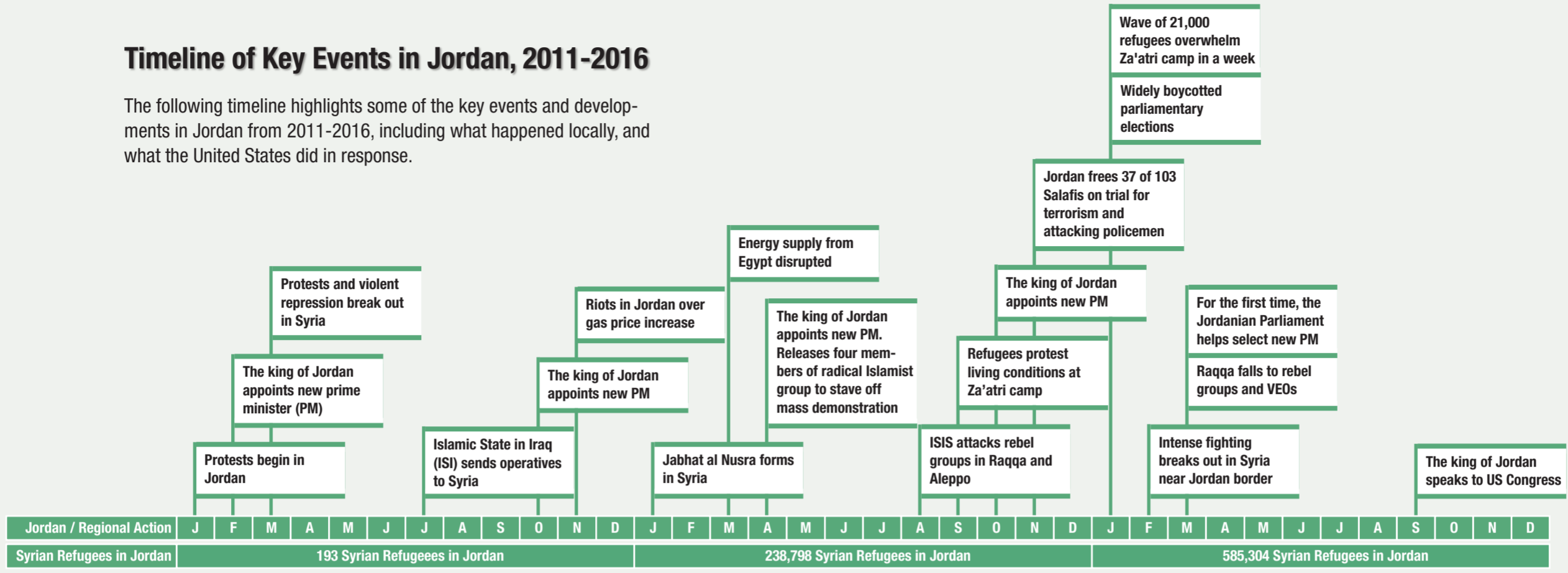
Having discussed what the United States did in Jordan, this report now turns to look at how it was done. This section explains the approaches—resources, authorities, structures, and processes—employed in service to US objectives in Jordan so readers can understand what worked and why:

- **US assistance coordination from the field (Jordan)**, which involved effective leadership, the creation of a new structure (the Southern Syria Assistance Platform, or SSAP), innovative civil-military cooperation, and cohesive implementation of 3D interagency assessments to meet US objectives
- **US assistance coordination from Washington, D.C.**, which entailed founding a USAID Syria Task Force, establishing a new State Department office to help deal with the complexity of assistance coordination in Jordan and across the Middle East (the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs’ Office of Assistance Coordination), creating a working group headed by senior embassy leadership, and using a business model that leveraged all available resources to support Jordan’s long-term stability

The US government used these two approaches, working from the field and in Washington, D.C., to pursue its twin objectives of preserving Jordan’s internal stability and containing the spillovers from the crisis in Syria that could threaten Jordan’s security.

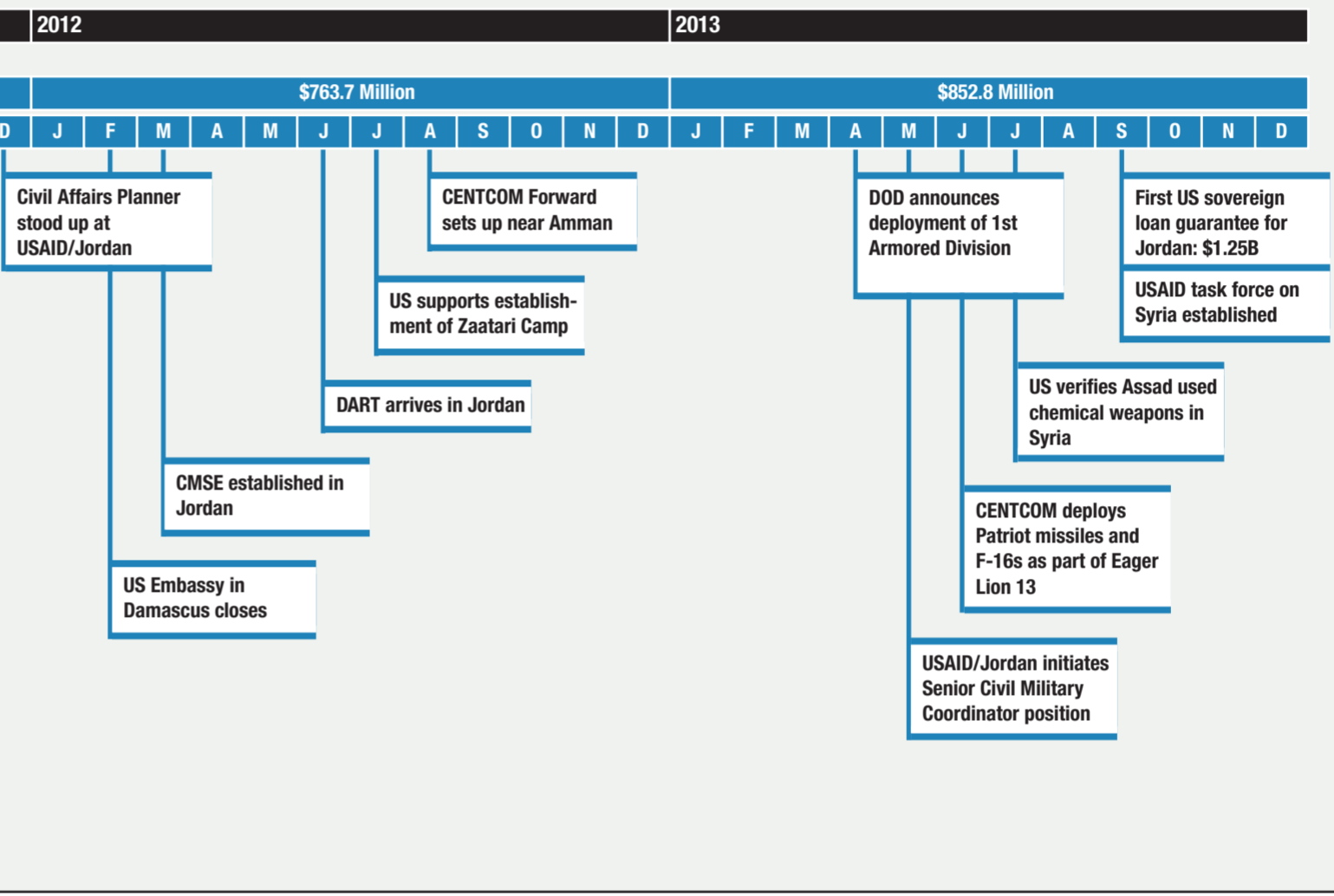
Timeline of Key Events in Jordan, 2011-2016

The following timeline highlights some of the key events and developments in Jordan from 2011-2016, including what happened locally, and what the United States did in response.



GLOSSARY

- CENTCOM:** US Central Command
- CDCS:** Country Development Cooperation Strategy
- CF-J:** CENTCOM Forward-Jordan
- CJOC-J:** Combined Joint Operations Center-Jordan
- CVE:** Countering Violent Extremism
- DART:** Disaster Assistance Response Team
- DOD:** Department of Defense
- ISI:** Islamic State in Iraq
- ISIS:** Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
- MB:** Muslim Brotherhood
- MOU:** Memorandum of Understanding
- NEA:** Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
- OIR:** Operation Inherent Resolve
- SCMA:** Senior Civil Military Affairs Advisory
- SOCCEC:** Special Operations Command-Central
- SSAP:** Southern Syria Assistance Platform
- USAID:** US Agency for International Development
- VEO:** Violent Extremist Organization



US Assistance Coordination from the Field (Jordan)

Overview

In early 2012, Embassy Damascus closed its doors amid a worsening security and humanitarian situation in Syria. To deal with the crisis, the United States had to quickly organize delivery of lifesaving assistance to Syrians from countries neighboring Syria. It also needed to help those countries manage a crush of refugees from the conflict and stem the flow of arms and fighters into and out of the country. Given the proximity of active conflict zones in Syria to the Jordanian border and Jordan's capital city, Embassy Amman took on additional assistance coordination responsibilities for both Syria and Jordan. It was critical for the embassy to align efforts in Syria with its overall country strategy for engaging Jordan, as well as with GOJ priorities. To these ends, leadership at Embassy Amman acted with great care to coordinate and make the most of different US government organizations' capacities to deliver assistance in both countries.

Elements of Assistance Coordination from the Field

Interagency Leadership

Relevance to Goals: Senior leaders in Jordan recognized that changes in the complex environments in Syria and Jordan required the embassy to manage increasingly large assistance portfolios for both countries. They found new ways to coordinate 3D activities, including staffing and organizational adjustments that better leveraged the 3Ds' combined expertise and resources to bolster Jordan's stability amid internal and external challenges. US government leaders in Amman ensured that the 3D organizations that were providing assistance in the same areas of Jordan were communicating, coordinating, and in some cases collaborating to maximize support of Jordan's stability. They also ensured that cross-border assistance to Syria and, later, OIR efforts in Jordan were aligned with overall US priorities so as not to unduly increase burdens or threats to the kingdom.

How It Worked: US Ambassador Stu Jones and, later, Ambassador Alice Wells acted as honest brokers of institutional perspectives and capabilities. They were able to see opportunities for additional interagency leverage and adapt on the fly. For example, embassy leadership created an inclusive working group and mandated that participants share information and collaborate on issues and assistance needs evolving from the Syrian conflict. The US ambassador in Amman ran the immense embassy operation (see figure 4) like a chief executive officer, in that he focused on bringing the best combination of US government capabilities to support US goals and objectives. For example, when he visited Washington, D.C., Ambassador Jones would visit USAID to consult with senior leadership about assistance and resources to ensure that all 3Ds were working in unison.

Interagency leadership was enabled by, and composed of, a series of factors.

Leadership Preparation: A host of the senior leaders who led 3D efforts in Jordan had previous 3D experience. Ambassador Jones had served as a deputy chief of mission in Iraq and in Egypt, worked on the National Security Council (NSC) staff, and served in other complex environments, including Turkey and Colombia. USAID/Jordan Mission Director (MD) Beth Paige had not only managed assistance in other complex environments—including Pakistan, Nepal (during the peace process), Kenya, El Salvador, Mali, and Egypt—but had also served as the USAID senior adviser to the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute and profes-

sor of international development at the US Army War College (AWC). CF-J Commander Major General Gary Cheek drew on his experience working closely with interagency partners in Afghanistan. Such interagency and crisis experience had exposed these senior leaders to the operational norms and capabilities of other US government organizations, helping them work together when crisis struck.

Leading Assistance Planning and Coordination for Syria: Cross-border assistance to Syrians in conflict-affected areas, as well as in areas hosting internally displaced persons, necessitated coordination among many parties: USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), Office of Food for Peace, and Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI); implementing organizations delivering assistance; the US Defense Attaché (DAT) at Embassy Amman and other DOD elements in the country; and the GOJ and its military elements at the border. The GOJ feared that cross-border assistance could exacerbate the situation in Syria if, for example, assistance reached terrorist organizations or provoked the Syrian regime to take actions that induced further refugee flows, so the 3Ds coordinated closely with their Jordanian partners to deliver cross-border assistance and arbitrate which groups or individuals were eligible to receive it.

Leadership: Building Civil-Military Coordination in Jordan

At the end of 2011, the incoming USAID/Jordan Mission Director (MD) Beth Paige had just left her advisory and teaching assignment at the US Army War College (AWC). Her interactions with DOD colleagues there drove an interest in learning about US Central Command’s (CENTCOM) thinking about Jordan and what capabilities were available to contribute to US assistance objectives in Jordan.

Following some initial discussions—including a predeployment visit that USAID’s Office of Civil Military Cooperation (USAID/CMC) organized at CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida—the Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) sent personnel to participate in development of USAID/Jordan’s first Country Development Cooperation Strategy. The participating officers contributed suggestions about ways in which CENTCOM’s incoming civil-military support element (CMSE) could best coordinate activities that leveraged DOD’s overseas humanitarian, disaster, and civic aid funding with USAID activities—thereby supporting both USAID’s and SOCCENT’s priorities: to provide much-needed assistance while building strong relationships between the US military and Jordanian community leaders in border areas.

With USAID/CMC liaising and providing support, the MD made an official request that SOCCENT send a civil affairs (CA) planner to Amman to embed at the USAID mission. The CA planner would not simply serve a typical liaison function—representing SOCCENT at USAID and reporting back to headquarters—but would become a member of the USAID team, complete with an institutional email address and responsibilities for supporting the USAID mission.

SOCCENT both supported the request and successfully petitioned the Defense Security Cooperation Agency for out-of-cycle overseas humanitarian, disaster, and civic aid funds that were ultimately sourced from other combatant commands. CMC sent a temporary duty officer to Amman to help establish the CA planner position and situate it within the broader USAID mission and embassy. New individuals rotated into the position every six months, and in 2016, the CA planner position was elevated to membership in the USAID senior management team. A similar position was created within the Southern Syria Assistance Platform at the embassy. In 2014, the SOCCENT commander requested inter-agency embeds, rather than liaisons, to support the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force for Syria, which was working to train and equip moderate Syrian opposition forces.

Delivery of US assistance to Syria, therefore, often relied on embassy leadership liaising with the GOJ to ensure that cross-border assistance activities did not conflict with other joint US-Jordanian priorities. These activities included the movement of assistance items and implementing partner staff across the border. Ambassador Jones and USAID MD Paige agreed that USAID would establish a position of deputy MD for Syria to facilitate coordination of activities, especially humanitarian assistance and support to essential services in conflict-affected areas. The deputy MD coordinated all USAID assistance to Syria, participated in ambassador-led meetings to share information, and coordinated assistance with broader embassy efforts. Meanwhile, the DATT at Embassy Amman, sometimes in cooperation with other DOD elements in Jordan, liaised with Jordanian border security elements on behalf of State, USAID, and their implementing partners in order to effectively send goods and people across the border.

Leading Assistance Coordination and Planning in Jordan: Although all 3Ds could help Jordan address the internal impacts of the Syrian conflict, such well-meaning efforts threatened to become duplicative or at variance from one another without great attention to ensuring coordination. The steady-state structures in place did not provide adequate support for crisis scenarios.

For example, it was very important to establish the alignment of priorities and coordinate activities between USAID/Jordan and DOD components there, both of which implemented assistance in Jordan. Before MD Paige took up her post in Amman, she conferred with USAID's Office of Civil Military Cooperation (CMC) to solicit SOCCENT's partnership in quickly addressing some important needs in Jordan's refugee-affected communities (see box, previous page). She also created a USAID-staffed senior civil-military adviser (SCMA) position at USAID/Jordan to ensure that assistance in both Jordan and Syria was aligned with what DOD was doing in Jordan and assessing in Syria.

Lessons from Interagency Leadership

- **Ambassadors should strive to act as honest brokers.** They should proactively engage and value input from personnel from other US organizations, rather than prioritize their own institution's perspectives. This behavior ensures not only that leaders make the most of the respective capabilities of all the US government organizations working on and in a country, but also that they cultivate trust and respect.
- **Leaders should innovate as necessary to improve 3D coordination, planning, and strategic coherence.** 3D leaders should initiate modes of collaboration between offices and personnel that otherwise operate in silos, especially in complex environments where "business as usual" will fail to meet objectives due to unusual circumstances. MD Paige realized that greater coordination with DOD elements was needed to leverage both USAID and DOD capabilities in country, and with the support of Ambassador Jones, she created the first embedded planner position in any USAID mission to advance civil-military collaboration. Ambassador Jones recognized that the impact of the crisis in Syria created the imperative for more robust coordination and new structures, so he and MD Paige jump-started an interagency "cell" within USAID/Jordan. The ambassador saw the need for further adjustment after the Syria crisis and the US government's response to it took on new dynamics in 2014, so he directed that the cell be moved under embassy leadership and include personnel from all 3Ds who coordinated assistance to Syria. The embassy named this entity the Southern Syria Assistance Platform (SSAP).

Southern Syria Assistance Platform (SSAP)

Relevance to Goals: Embassy Amman’s structural adjustments to manage assistance to Syria were important for two reasons. First, as Syrian refugees surged into Jordan, it quickly became evident that the best way to mitigate the potential for instability in Jordan was to help Syrians in Syria so that they didn’t feel the need to flee to Jordan. Accordingly, assistance to Syrians quickly became a high-priority US objective. Second, Embassy Amman’s leadership needed a mechanism to streamline engagement with all US government organizations involved in supplying assistance to Syria. The SSAP acted as a one-stop shop for embassy leadership to learn what US organizations were capable of doing in Syria, what they wanted to do, and what they needed from others (leadership, US government counterparts, the GOJ) to implement cross-border assistance.

Consolidating the organization of US assistance from Jordan to Syria also helped Embassy Amman maintain a trusting partnership with the GOJ. The SSAP enabled embassy leadership to communicate clearly to wary GOJ counterparts about where US assistance would go in Syria, who it would benefit, and how this assistance would indirectly—but greatly—benefit Jordan. This knowledge helped assuage the GOJ’s concerns that cross-border assistance could inadvertently worsen Jordan’s challenges if carried out carelessly or without consultation. It also helped streamline the US government’s requests for GOJ assistance to authorize the transit of items and implementing partner staff over the border.

The SSAP also enabled more organized coordination with US assistance to Syria that was being coordinated from Turkey.⁶⁸ As the SSAP was evolving, the US ambassadors to Turkey and Jordan agreed on how to divide responsibility for providing assistance to the northern and southern areas of Syria

How It Worked: The SSAP facilitated the delivery of hundreds of millions of dollars of humanitarian assistance to Syria overseen by USAID/OFDA’s Disaster Assistance Response Team leader. Other less resourced, but no less important, activities facilitated by the SSAP included delivering development assistance to Syria (especially essential services such as maintenance and repair of infrastructure for power generation) and reporting on nonlethal assistance to opposition forces and police. SSAP personnel served as experts on Syria, helping US government counterparts understand what was going on in different areas of the country and the assistance being provided by State and USAID.

SSAP: A Summary

Three lines of effort:

- Humanitarian assistance
- Development and transition assistance
- Reporting

Staff: USAID, State, DOD

Director: USAID senior foreign service officer

Reports to: Deputy chief of mission

Coordinates with: Embassy political section, State/PRM, USAID in Washington, D.C., OIR Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, GOJ

The SSAP team was composed of fifteen personnel from USAID, State, and DOD.⁶⁹ The director was a USAID senior foreign service officer. Personnel from the component US government organizations did not ultimately take direction from the SSAP director; they all technically reported directly to their own organizations but were mandated to work with one another. For example, the SSAP's civil affairs officer—a six-month rotational position staffed by OIR's Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force in Kuwait—reported to the OIR Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force headquarters in Kuwait. This officer helped ensure that DOD and US civilian assistance organizations developed a common understanding of the operational environment and stayed out of one another's way. The ambassador formally delegated authority to the SSAP director via a classified memo; USAID set forth how members of the team would be organized and work with each other on a daily basis. The SSAP also received administrative support from USAID/Jordan. SSAP was designed to remain lean so that it could serve its purpose without becoming an entrenched part of the US government's long-term embassy apparatus in Jordan and it could be dismantled at the appropriate time, when the crisis permits.

The SSAP shared information on events in Syria through a regular interagency meeting on assistance chaired by the deputy chief of mission. All elements at the embassy were invited to listen while SSAP members drilled down on what they were doing and how their activities intersected with the GOJ and other partners. Embassy staff always accompanied SSAP staff to meetings with Jordanian government counterparts and they often pulled SSAP personnel into meetings to ensure coordination. In 2016, the SSAP participated in about half-a-dozen scenario exercises with DOD that required 3D organizations to plan for and practice “responding” to hypothetical events that could affect the operating environment, US priorities, and a host of other factors.

Lessons from the SSAP

- **Clearly define the purpose and limitations of a new bureaucratic structure.** Politically, because US and Jordanian priorities are aligned, US Embassy Amman directed SSAP to focus on assistance that would prevent the need for Syrians to flee Syria. This directive was designed to help mitigate the risk to Jordan's stability posed by an influx of Syrians. Functionally, SSAP was designed to centralize coordination of all nonmilitary assistance to Syria from Jordan and to act as a one-stop shop for senior US government leaders in Jordan to get information and issue guidance. The SSAP director was empowered to facilitate coordination among programs implemented from the SSAP and between SSAP initiatives and broader Embassy Amman initiatives and priorities. The director was not, however, authorized to make institutional decisions on behalf of US government organizations that contributed personnel to the SSAP, or to direct members of the SSAP team in the same way that a head of office could.
- **Anticipate the future need to scale back or eliminate bureaucratic structures that are created to deal with crisis.** Anticipating that someday the need for cross-border assistance to Syria might change, the embassy avoided creating a permanent administrative architecture to support the SSAP. Instead, it drew on USAID/Jordan's administrative capabilities to support personnel working in Jordan. This decision helped keep SSAP's structure and membership lean and objective oriented so it could be easily adjusted or dismantled.

Civil-Military Coordination

Relevance to Goals: The US government’s approach to supporting stability in Jordan from 2012 to 2016 was full of civil-military innovations that brought USAID, DOD, and State into closer strategic and programmatic alignment. Beyond coordinating assistance in refugee-affected areas of Jordan, civilian and US military personnel at the embassy and CF-J collaboratively developed a composite situational understanding of dynamics in Syria and Jordan and the relationship between the two countries. This understanding helped ensure that different parts of the US government were pursuing objectives in ways that were complementary. Additionally, DOD personnel implemented a number of projects in refugee-affected areas of Jordan that complemented USAID and State efforts to address humanitarian and development challenges. The resources supporting these DOD projects were tiny in comparison to the vast tranches of assistance delivered by US government civilian organizations, and the 3Ds required some trial and error to find a civil-military approach that worked well.

How It Worked: Just after MD Paige took leadership of USAID/Jordan, a four-person civil-military support element (CMSE) team arrived on the scene to plan and execute a modest portfolio of humanitarian and civic assistance projects in refugee-affected areas of Jordan. The projects filled gaps that State, USAID, and other international organizations were unable to fill quickly or were restricted from filling by rules constraining the use of appropriated funds.⁷⁰ A civil affairs (CA) planner with a focus on coordinating with other USAID/Jordan and embassy staff allowed the CMSE team to focus on daily programmatic activities “collaborat[ing], plan[ning], and conduct[ing] civil-military activities through the USAID mission, the GOJ, and the Military Assistance Program,” without the bureaucratic burden of having to attend meetings at embassy facilities.⁷¹ The CA planner sought USAID/Jordan’s support to liaise with local community and government leaders in the areas where the team implemented assistance and to ensure that appropriate USAID technical officers were involved in planning and monitoring projects the CMSE team implemented. CA planners rotated through the post every six months.

In 2013, the MD created a SCMA position at the USAID mission to work full time with DOD counterparts in Jordan to design, authorize, and monitor small-scale projects. The SCMA was a USAID foreign service officer who had just completed an assignment to study at the AWC. The SCMA facilitated briefings between USAID personnel and DOD counterparts and coordinated all direct engagement between the CMSE and USAID’s GOJ partners and implementing partners. The SCMA also served as an interagency liaison at the CF-J facility, where he helped ensure better coordination and deconfliction between CF-J’s and USAID’s assistance activities in Jordan. Additionally, he liaised with the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force that later worked on counter-ISIS priorities for OIR.⁷²

As CA planners and CMSE teams cycled through Amman every six months, the quality of collaboration among the 3Ds fluctuated with the different personalities and visions of those individuals. It was not uncommon for incoming personnel to want to rehash a previous team’s approach to projects that were not yet complete. Criticism about the CMSE projects within USAID rose. Some USAID staff felt that the CMSE projects were not implemented to the standard that they could be if requirements for civil-military communication and coordination on projects were more concretely defined and routinely executed.⁷³

As result, the SCMA developed, and the ambassador approved, a “rules of the road” guide in 2015. The document formalized the relationships among the USAID SCMA, the embed-

ded CA planner, the CMSE team leader, and the range of parent organizations that oversaw these entities. The guidance helped ensure that the CMSE projects were implemented in better alignment with the ways that USAID implements assistance, including the use of assessments to help plan projects. In some cases, State/PRM, USAID, and the CMSE team jointly participated in assessments; State/PRM liaised with the United Nations and others doing complementary work in the area; USAID provided technical assistance and sometimes liaised with local government officials; and the CMSE team prepared actual project plans.

Some of the CMSE's team's collaborative activities with USAID and State/PRM included:⁷⁴

- Providing humanitarian supplies to Syrian military deserters whom State/PRM, UNHCR, and relief organizations could not assist due to statutory constraints on funding activities that benefit military or other armed actors
- Assisting in the establishment of the Zaatari refugee camp in 2012 and developing infrastructure at the Azraq refugee camp in 2014, per UNHCR request
- Completing fourteen civil assistance projects, including clinic and school rehabilitation or expansion, at an average cost of \$200,000 per project, over five years

These projects were quite small compared to the hundreds of millions—and, later, billions—of dollars that USAID allocated for Jordan, and they were often implemented on much slower timelines than anticipated. Although implementation was sometimes a source of friction between USAID and the CMSE team, the projects filled important gaps.

By 2015, the SSAP had brought a CA planner on board to liaise full time with DOD counterparts focused on OIR in southern Syria. The SCMA position was phased out because it was no longer a full-time job without Syria-related responsibilities. The CA planner at USAID/Jordan took on a more expansive coordination role in 2016.

Lessons from Civil-Military Coordination

- **Be clear about objectives for civil-military collaboration.** Each organization brought different objectives, approaches, and timelines for assistance in affected communities. Cooperation improved when the rules of the road were formalized and instituted.
- **Expect needs for coordination to evolve and be ready to adapt.** Although the SCMA was key to formalizing improvements in coordination between USAID and DOD, the position became unnecessary after the SSAP brought on a full-time DOD CA planner and USAID/Jordan determined that the CA planner at the mission could take on the SCMA's former responsibilities concerning Jordan.
- **Leverage 3D experiences to develop situational understanding in a complex crisis.** Unlike environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan, where the DOD presence evolved before or concurrently with civilian assistance ramping up, civilian assistance began prior to DOD involvement in the Syrian crisis. DOD was therefore able to learn about the operating environment in Syria from US civilian counterparts.

Nationwide Interagency Countering Violent Extremism Assessment

Relevance to Goals: From 2015 to 2016, USAID and DOD supported a nationwide CVE assessment in Jordan. The assessment emerged as a result of a shared desire on the part of

USAID/Jordan, SOCCENT, the CMSE, and the Political and Public Diplomacy section of the embassy to better understand the violent extremism landscape and to develop or adjust initiatives to prevent violent extremism from destabilizing Jordan. Public Affairs had a specific interest in learning about trusted media outlets that could be used for CVE and other messaging. USAID wanted to understand options for developing CVE initiatives and/or adapting current programming. SOCCENT realized that an investment in understanding violent extremism in Jordan could help its civilian counterparts address Jordan’s vulnerabilities to violent extremism—and thereby reduce the likelihood that DOD and the Jordanian military would need to employ kinetic methods to deal with VEO activity in the future.

How It Worked: In late 2014, USAID brought a CVE expert to Jordan who had previously run USAID’s CVE program in Kenya to investigate the potential for a useful CVE assessment. He interviewed an array of US government stakeholders and Jordanians and then shared the results, which suggested the need for an assessment. He proposed a way forward to the DAT, the chief political officer, and select others. They in turn supported the need for a study. In January 2015, the CA planner at USAID reached out to the SOCCENT’s J5 (Planning) branch in Tampa, which agreed to fund the study—initially in four of Jordan’s twelve governorates, with the understanding that the project would be expanded if the pilot went well. SOCCENT issued a task order through one of its standing contracts with a research implementer.

The SCMA and CA planner, with support from USAID’s monitoring and evaluation experts in Washington, D.C., and in consultation with SOCCENT J5, drafted an initial scope of work (SOW) in a slow and challenging months-long process due to different organizational cultures and standards for producing SOWs and institutional language barriers. For example, DOD was surprised by how much time was needed during the planning phase to involve USAID’s research methods experts in drafting the SOW. DOD typically relies on its implementers for this expertise. Ambassador Wells required that the team seek permission from Jordan’s Royal Court before she would offer her final concurrence to proceed. After the SCMA led a presentation to the court about the proposed study, permission was granted. Finalizing the plan required extensive socialization among US stakeholders in Jordan.

In June 2016, SOCCENT J5 and its contractor personnel delivered the initial results (for the initial four governorates), providing an opportunity for Embassy Amman and CENTCOM stakeholders to deliver feedback. They critiqued the lack of direct and actionable recommendations, and this feedback helped shape the final product. The very detailed, 1,000-page final report on all twelve governorates was issued in December 2016 and pared down for briefs to a broad range of audiences in Jordan. The report specifies steps that US government and other stakeholders might take to address specific CVE challenges (see box, “Findings and Recommendations of Jordan CVE Assessment”). It also highlighted any initiatives that could be collaborative.

Lessons from the Interagency CVE Assessment in Jordan

- **Use collaborative assessments as the first step to gain common understanding of dynamics that affect all 3Ds.** The collaborative approach to understanding violent extremism in Jordan applied a combination of the distinctive lenses that each 3D employs in its specialized work, leading to a more informed assessment to guide programming. DOD’s funding and technical support from USAID headquarters

Findings and Recommendations of the Jordan CVE Assessment

Findings:

- There is latent vulnerability to violent extremism throughout Jordan
- The most vulnerable governates are Zarqa, Mafraq, Balqa, and Ma'an
- There are mixed attitudes toward different VEOs
- Jordanians view the GOJ as capable and willing to control VEOs
- Violent extremism mindsets in Jordan evolve through three main pathways related to personal circumstances

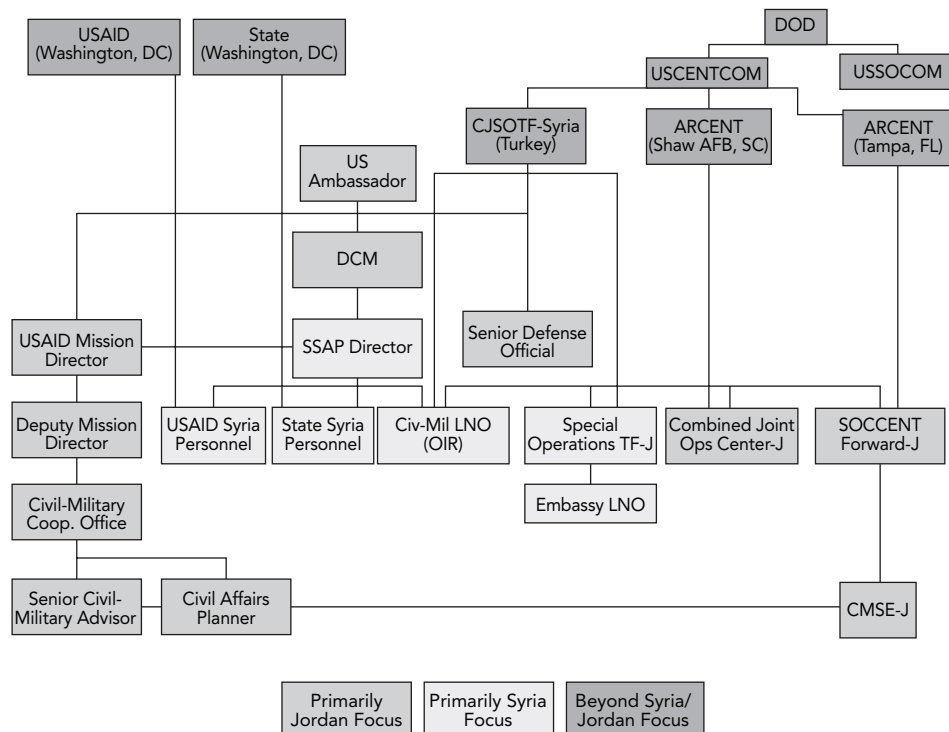
Recommendations:

- Foster resilience to violent extremism
- Delegitimize violent extremists/VEOs
- Expand the CVE engagement community

were especially critical. The assessment had interagency buy-in from the beginning, so a wide range of personnel took interest in its findings.

- **Leverage joint field research opportunities to identify how civilian organizations can act now to prevent the need for military action later.** Most recommendations resulting from the study were flagged for action by civilian organizations. SOCCENT, the funding organization, valued the recommendations as much as the civilian agencies because diplomatic and assistance activities in the near term could help decrease the likelihood that VEOs in Jordan would require a kinetic response in the future.

Figure 4. Civil-military relationships at US Embassy Amman



- **Expect collaboration to take time:** Although it was relatively simple to contract an implementer to conduct research, reaching agreement on a SOW for the assessment, as well as on the contractor’s implementation plan, took time and was challenged by cultural differences among US government institutions.

Assistance Coordination from Washington, D.C.

Overview

As the conflict in Syria ramped up and the US response was parceled out to US embassies in Syria’s neighboring countries, there was a corresponding need for alignment among the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the 3Ds that supported field initiatives. In the early days of the Syria conflict, both USAID and State developed centralized approaches to assistance coordination. In 2012, USAID established a Syria Task Force that coordinated assistance efforts by all USAID bureaus and offices in Washington, D.C., and in various countries surrounding Syria. In 2014, State’s Near Eastern Affairs Bureau (State/NEA) established the Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) to more easily reprogram resources in a region affected by rapidly changing conditions and to take the burden of assistance coordination off the department’s country desks. The desks were swamped and in a perpetual state of reactivity as they managed diplomatic and operational responses to the day-to-day evolutions of conflicts and instability across the region. NEA/AC began to engage with both USAID and DOD to holistically assemble assistance plans and resources for Jordan.

USAID Syria Task Force: Facilitating Information Exchange and Coordination

Relevance to Goals: When it became clear that multiple bureaus would need to coordinate with one another and with a variety of interagency partners to provide assistance to Syria, the USAID administrator decided to establish a task force for Syria. He also acted to ensure that the ballooning assistance funds provided to USAID in response to the spiraling crisis would be spent in a coordinated manner. USAID’s Syria Task Force served a function similar to a traditional DOD task force in that it coordinated disparate parts of an institution to work together toward specific objectives—in this case, to coordinate assistance to Syria by offices and individuals working from Washington, D.C., Frankfurt (where USAID had a regional hub), Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. The task force facilitated routine exchanges among USAID offices; focused attention on specific issues, actions, or objectives; and consolidated USAID input to interagency processes and products. It also attracted participation from interagency partners that sought coordination. Representatives from State/PRM, CENTCOM, SOCCENT, US Special Operations Command, and the US Army Special Operations Command were regular participants. The task force provided a weekly opportunity for stakeholders to gain visibility on what was going on inside Syria and what USAID—and often other institutions—were doing to help meet the needs of Syrians in Syria, to build their resilience to a worsening situation, and to prevent further regional instability.

How It Worked: USAID’s Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/DCHA) and Middle East (USAID/ME) bureaus ran the task force. In the early days, the assistant administrators of the two bureaus chaired the meetings. USAID assigned a director at the senior executive service level to run the task force, joined by a senior deputy assistant administrator from USAID/ME to cochair and a chief of staff from USAID/OFDA. Given the volume, diversity, and pace of US assistance to Syria, plus the bureaucratic difficulties of

planning for, delivering, and monitoring that assistance from multiple locations, the task force set up weekly meetings that were attended—in person or by phone—by staff working for the spectrum of USAID bureaus and offices in Washington, D.C., and at field locations, including Turkey and Jordan. After OIR started, the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force usually participated in these weekly meetings.

The USAID Syria Task Force served several functions.

Surfacing Challenges: Task force discussions highlighted the challenges related to US policy, host country logistics, and the US bureaucracy that can arise when multiple US government bureaus and offices provide cross-border assistance from multiple locations and in coordination with many non-US partners. The regular interaction spotlighted deconfliction, identification of gaps, and decisions for senior-level consideration. For example, as OIR ramped up, USAID personnel in Jordan and Turkey who were managing assistance to Syria had to make sure they had a common understanding of the evolving situation in Syria. The task force regularly brought these personnel together to coordinate assistance activities that USAID was implementing in the north and south of Syria.

Catalyzing Table-Top Exercises: In cases where task force discussions uncovered problems or the need to plan for possible changes in the Syrian or regional environments, task force leadership joined other senior leaders from civilian and defense organizations in “table-top exercises” (TTX), typically supported by DOD’s joint staff and held at USAID or at the Pentagon. These events brought together US government organizations and leaders to anticipate the implications of different possibilities and plan for contingencies. For example, the interagency participants joined in a TTX early in the crisis to think through how winter weather would affect displaced Syrians and the US government’s provision of assistance. The AWC’s Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute facilitated a TTX for Embassy Amman.

Strategy, Planning, and Information Dissemination: The task force developed strategy and budget plans, participated in State-led contingency planning processes for Syria, and contributed to papers and briefing materials requested by senior USAID or interagency leadership that situate USAID’s Syria-related activities in multiple countries within the larger context of US goals and activities concerning Syria. It also assembled comprehensive information products for interagency and public consumption, including critical maps depicting assistance, displacement, and conflict trends. These maps were essential elements for planning for scenarios that changed daily.

Lessons from USAID’s Syria Task Force

- **Make agency task forces inclusive of interagency partners.** Invite participation or at least observation by a broad range of stakeholders. Inclusivity helps facilitate information sharing and arbitration of issues prior to NSC meetings to streamline requests for decisions by senior leaders.
- **Use assistance coordination to create spillover benefits of knowledge sharing.** Although established to coordinate USAID assistance, the task force created a venue for the exchange of information that was visible to and open for participation by outside parties and catalyzed the higher-level interagency engagement necessary to solve problems and plan for anticipated changes on the ground.
- **Create a working-level position to support coordination of response to a complex crisis.** Coordination of assistance efforts at this scale against a backdrop of rapid, relentless change in a complex environment is a full-time job.

State Department Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC)

Relevance to Goals: In September 2011, the State Department in Washington, D.C., initiated the Office of the Special Coordinator for Middle East Transitions. The office was established in recognition of the increased burdens of the Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia desks in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) in the wake of the Arab Spring. The Office of the Special Coordinator was supplanted in 2014 by the Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC), led by a deputy assistant secretary of state. This new office was responsible for developing and implementing the US government’s assistance policy throughout the Middle East and North Africa; ensuring that the assistance programs supported the US government’s and the State Department’s priorities and policies; managing foreign assistance funding provided to NEA; and leading grants management, project monitoring and evaluation, budget preparation, sector programming, and development issues for the bureau.⁷⁵ For Embassy Amman and for State’s Jordan desk at NEA’s Levant office, this move spelled relief, as interagency planning and budget coordination quickly became an exceptionally onerous task for a country that by 2015 received upward of \$1 billion in multifaceted assistance. Managing this assistance was a full-time job because it was disbursed on different institutional timelines, subject to different authorities, served different lines of effort, delivered via multiple funding mechanisms, and appropriated via different congressional processes.

How It Worked: NEA/AC’s mandate was set forth in the State Department’s *Foreign Affairs Manual*. NEA/AC was organized into six divisions: one for planning, budgeting, and evaluation; one for grants management; one for regional programming; and three that each covered one or more countries in the region. NEA/AC was not charged with setting top-line objectives for the countries or the region it serves, but it was given responsibility for ensuring that US government organizations serve priorities set by the State Department and the White House. NEA/AC was responsible for proposing ways to reprogram funds that for various reasons might not get spent in the countries for which they have been budgeted. This way, the resources were more likely to stay in NEA rather than being repurposed in another region.

NEA/AC today has several primary functions.

Identify Assistance Priorities: Given the volume of assistance that the United States gives Jordan, NEA/AC’s Jordan officer has a big job. With the exception of humanitarian assistance channeled through State/PRM, the officer coordinates the tools and resources of the US government in service to priorities set by leadership in Amman and at NEA, the NSC, and Congress. These priorities often (if not usually) derive directly from requests made to Congress or to the White House during visits by the king of Jordan to Washington, D.C., or from white papers that Jordan’s Royal Court delivers to the US embassy in Amman.

Navigate Assistance Trade-Offs: The embassy, congressional staff, and the NSC reach out to NEA when they receive requests from Jordanians that they believe should move forward. NEA/AC studies the proposals and flags for leadership what assistance trade-offs must be made with respect to US assistance to other countries or for other objectives. This process has, at times, helped NEA leadership bring important decision factors to light during difficult discussions with their counterparts at Embassy Amman, in Congress, and at the White House.

Support Development Assistance: USAID usually coordinates its development assistance strategy and plans with State and DOD at post, so NEA/AC often does not review program plans or budgets until it is time to move the paperwork forward. Support includes cash transfer assistance and the conditions that the GOJ must satisfy to receive it, a package that is for-

mulated by a USAID-led interagency task force at Embassy Amman. NEA/AC encourages colleagues to keep in mind ways in which they can work without undermining the long-term independence of Jordan's economy and security.

Support Security Assistance: Although it has only a light touch on coordination of the US government's development assistance portfolio, NEA/AC works more "hand in hand" with DOD on the security portfolio. NEA/AC benefits from on-site support from two active duty military detailees. They help NEA/AC officers understand DOD authorities, coordinate State's foreign military financing assistance with DOD objectives and other assistance activities, and communicate effectively with security counterparts at post. These positions are usually filled for six to twelve months at a time by Army or Air Force officers who are fulfilling education requirements to serve in a "joint" billet. These positions have proven instrumental in preparing funding packages to be reviewed and approved by Congress.

Although friction sometimes arises between NEA/AC and other State bureaus and interagency partners that are required to work with it, the office has helped align a wide variety of assistance initiatives to serve top-line country priorities rather than individual organizations' interests and agendas.

Lessons from State/NEA's Office of Assistance Coordination

- **Prolonged, expansive, and overlapping complex crisis situations in a region may demand deep institutional adjustments to help plan for and coordinate assistance.** Although a single crisis or a short-lived crisis may be well-served by a special coordinator in Washington, D.C., a task force, or another temporary structure, multiple complex and indefinite crises—especially in high-profile situations that entail moving significant and diverse resources—may demand deeper institutional adjustments.
- **Welcome interagency detailees to help coordinate complementary assistance initiatives and productively engage Congress.** NEA/AC's two military detailees help NEA/AC officers understand DOD authorities, coordinate State's and DOD's security assistance, and communicate effectively with DOD partners at Embassy Amman.

Resilience Coordination

Relevance to Goals: As the United States recognized that refugees would likely continue crossing into Jordan, making poor communities even more vulnerable to economic shocks and possibly violent extremism, the 3Ds adopted a resilience approach to assistance in these areas. The approach aimed to put vulnerable, refugee-affected communities on a path toward development that addresses refugee and community needs in integrated, sustainable ways. This

Resilience Defined

USAID defines resilience to recurrent crisis as "the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth."

Source: "The Resilience Agenda," USAID, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JGJS.pdf.

means improving coordination between different development and humanitarian assistance funding streams to structure programs that could reduce the need for perpetual humanitarian assistance.

How It Worked: Two bureaus implemented most efforts to assist Syrian refugees and affected communities in Jordan: State/PRM and USAID/DCHA. To a much lesser extent (in terms of dollars and activities), SOCCENT’s CMSE used its Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Assistance (OHDACA) mechanism to contribute as well. When Syrian refugees began streaming into Jordan, USAID was already delivering development assistance to affected communities there, and State/PRM funded a lot of refugee assistance. Nevertheless, coordination was difficult: although USAID had a full-blown mission directing assistance in Jordan, State/PRM had much more limited support from officers in Washington, D.C., who were responsible for multiple country portfolios. This staffing crunch in Washington, D.C., was characteristic of many US government assistance bureaus and offices when the Arab Spring began, because many countries in the region had not previously required or wanted assistance.

The Case for Resilience: State/PRM and USAID often disagreed about the extent to which assistance gaps existed in communities where only one of them worked or about which organization should be delivering which type of assistance in which areas. Some of USAID’s and State/PRM’s nongovernmental organization implementing partners began trying to take on coordination functions, hosting meetings to try to understand what USAID or State/PRM was doing in different areas. There was a clear need to better overlay humanitarian assistance that served Syrian refugees who might be in Jordan indefinitely and development assistance that aimed to benefit Jordanians in many of the same communities.

Implementation Challenges to a Resilience Approach: Differences between State and USAID—and among bureaus and offices within each of them—posed challenges to coordinating assistance to promote resilience. These differences included different funding cycles and planning processes, as well as geographically separated portfolio development and management.

USAID missions develop three-to-five-year country development cooperation strategies (CDCS) and the State Department draws up three-year integrated country strategies to pursue long-run objectives in partner countries. Most crisis response initiatives receive ad hoc funding that is planned for a relatively short time horizon. New tranches of humanitarian funding for Jordan (via State/PRM) were, as is typical, usually released off cycle from regular budgeting cycles to respond to immediate needs. USAID struggled to rapidly assess the changing situation on the ground and repurpose assistance funds from other priorities. USAID/Jordan tried to publicize all the newly planned development activities that it executed in refugee-affected communities and poor rural communities that resented the widely broadcast news of “new money” that donors were pledging to help refugees in their country.

Differences in how USAID and the State Department manage projects can make resilience planning difficult. State/PRM mostly plans and manages its assistance in Washington, D.C.—including the large amount of resources transferred to multilateral assistance organizations. It sends personnel to the field for monitoring purposes. State/PRM personnel largely manage assistance from the field, but their home offices in Washington, D.C., support logistics and provide resources. In countries like Jordan, where USAID has a full-blown country mission, much support to these teams is provided by the mission, which also runs development programs funded through regional and other bureaus. During the early days of crisis response for Jordan,

USAID and State/PRM often failed to communicate well about the evolving and interrelated needs of refugees and affected communities or about what they were doing to help them.

Leadership for Resilience Programming: The coordination challenge in Jordan was too technical (requiring in-depth understanding about certain types of assistance) and too specific to the institutional difference of State/PRM and USAID for NEA/AC to sort it out at the working level. A leadership intervention was necessary. In 2014, the State/PRM assistant secretary of state and USAID's assistant administrators for USAID/DCHA and USAID/ME put their heads together in an effort to kick-start better coordination. They aimed to ensure that State/PRM and USAID were, to the best of their collective abilities, helping Jordan manage the impact of refugees. Assistant Secretary for State/PRM Anne Richard had a longstanding relationship with Nancy Lindborg, the assistant administrator for USAID/DCHA, due to their history in the humanitarian assistance community. Assistant Secretary Richard visited USAID on several occasions to help align plans for the implementation of State/PRM's resources with USAID's plans. Leaders at both institutions made a pact to work together. This commitment helped USAID and State organizations transition to an assistance portfolio that began linking long-run refugee welfare to long-run community welfare—an approach that promoted resilience of communities to further refugee influxes, rather than improving community development in ways that the presence of refugees would continue to disrupt.

Cross-Organizational Communication: As a first step toward overcoming institutional silos between State/PRM and USAID, leadership at USAID/ME and USAID/DCHA and State/PRM began participating in periodic video teleconferences (VTCs) to discuss specific topics concerning the US government's delivery of humanitarian and development assistance in Jordan. The VTCs included State and USAID personnel in Washington, D.C., as well as in Amman. The discussions focused not on funding but on brainstorming “win-win” ways to address assistance challenges. The regular conferences built better coordination and collaboration that led to better joint planning to program assistance. They also led to better coordination among US assistance bureaus in advance of frequent international summits at which senior US government leaders were expected to explain the US assistance approach.

Assistance Programming for Resilience: The collaborative discussions fed directly into efforts to adopt an assistance strategy that promoted community resilience—rather than stove-piped development and humanitarian assistance approaches—as a means of supporting refugee welfare and community stability well into the future in Jordan. USAID amended its 2013 to 2017 CDCS for Jordan to include Syrian refugees among the beneficiaries of its initiatives to support schools, health centers, and more. This amendment meant that objectives, as well as monitoring and evaluative indicators for development projects, formally included refugees as target beneficiaries.⁷⁶ The ongoing VTCs helped participants identify ways to leverage State/PRM's continued work with refugees—including much that was geared toward education—to transition into resilience programming. At a donor's conference in London in 2016, the United States announced that it would provide funding to help ensure that all children in refugee-affected communities—not just Jordanians, not just refugee children—could access education. Refugee schoolchildren and Jordanian schoolchildren would benefit from this new humanitarian assistance, which would have long-term benefits for the development of entire communities. This announcement supported the new Jordan Compact, in which the GOJ's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation put forth “a new holistic approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the international community to deal with the Syrian refugee crisis.”⁷⁷

Spreading the Resilience Approach: When visiting Jordan, the assistant administrator for USAID/DCHA urged the United States' multilateral and international partners to adopt hybrid strategies for programming resources rather than, for example, UNHCR and the UN Development Programme implementing parallel programs. Resources to support assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordan were provided through a number of mechanisms and from a number of sources, but given that 90 percent of State/PRM's FY 2016 refugee assistance to Jordan was awarded to international organizations, this advocacy was particularly important to helping ensure that US funds made the intended impact.⁷⁸

Lessons from Resilience Coordination

- **Proactively commit to working together.** USAID and State/PRM leadership committed to and personally led opportunities for iterative interaction among assistance personnel.
- **Create opportunities specifically for interagency brainstorming to collaboratively solve problems and innovate—and involve both Washington, D.C., and field personnel.** State/PRM and USAID not only overcame bureaucratic silos, but collaboratively planned and problem-solved through repeated interactions that bridged organizational and field-headquarter divides.
- **Work toward overall community resilience rather than applying humanitarian assistance and development programs separately in areas where refugees will likely remain in communities for a long time.** As the conflict in Syria grew increasingly complex and protracted, USAID and State/PRM jointly planned for humanitarian assistance to pilot ways to incorporate refugees into longer-run development initiatives. USAID also began counting refugees among the intended beneficiaries of development to better gauge the impact of US assistance.

Crosscutting Lessons in 3D Engagement: Reflections and Conclusions

In looking at US 3D efforts in Burma, Jordan, and the Lake Chad region, and in examining where the United States was able to make some progress toward strategic priorities, a few key ingredients for success arose repeatedly, though they manifested themselves differently:

1. Workforce preparation
2. Shared priorities resulting from joint planning and coordination during crises
3. Purpose-fit authorities and funding
4. Timely adaptation of structures and processes
5. Regional engagement notwithstanding bilateral structures

This section includes an explanation of how the lessons from Jordan support these cross-cutting themes, adding some color to why they matter and how they might be operationalized.

Workforce Preparation: Give the workforce 3D experience to groom them to succeed in crisis environments.

Ambassador Stu Jones had served as deputy chief of mission in Iraq and Egypt, both large embassies in complex environments, and as director for Iraq on the NSC staff. USAID Jordan MD Beth Paige served as USAID faculty at the AWC; SSAP Director Teddy Bryan

had attended AWC as a USAID student. Both were USAID MDs in conflict zones before their service in Jordan, including, notably, Colombia and Lebanon. CF-J Commander Major General Gary Cheek had served in the interagency melting pot of Afghanistan, commanding US forces. Their experiences familiarized these leaders with their State, USAID, and DOD colleagues and capabilities. For example, Ambassador Jones's experience at the US embassy in Iraq helped him understand how to manage a crisis embassy. And MD Paige understood DOD planning capabilities and had seen how USAID and DOD efforts could be better coordinated, driving her to request a DOD planner to embed with USAID.

Shared Priorities Resulting from Joint Planning and Coordination During Crises: Align planning and coordination to develop a shared framework of top-line priorities.

The Jordan assistance portfolio was enormous, encompassing large amounts of humanitarian, development, and security assistance. Managing it required coordination and planning to avoid gaps and redundancy and to ensure that the 3Ds' coordinated efforts created better outcomes than each D could achieve by working in its typical silo. Coordination and planning were particularly well executed at US Embassy Amman, directed by and with the ongoing support of the ambassador and the USAID MD. Leadership established a working group to help prioritize and develop joint 3D assistance activities. For example, although the CMSE team created and was responsible for implementing DOD's humanitarian and civic assistance activities, it drew on USAID/Jordan to provide technical expertise and on State to facilitate cooperation with host county civilian partners and multinational partners. SOCCENT embedded a CA planner at USAID/Jordan to facilitate cooperation. State verified that all potential projects were aligned with US policy priorities. The standard roles and procedures that guided how different elements of the civil-military community at US Embassy Amman coordinated on assistance were spelled out in a "rules of the road" guide assembled by the USAID's senior civil-military adviser.

Purpose-Fit Authorities and Funding: Use existing authorities and funding creatively and seek exceptions, new authorities, or new funding to enable leaders to confront crises in the face of evolving circumstances.

As the relationships among protagonists to the tumultuous war in Syria grew increasingly complex, ISIS captured territory in both Syria and Iraq, and Russia made clear its commitment to shoring up the Assad regime, it became clear that Syrian refugees would remain in Jordan for a very long time. This demographic trend portended ongoing long-term humanitarian and development challenges for the Jordanian communities that were hosting refugees. It also threatened the stability and solvency of the country as a whole. To adapt to this reality, the 3Ds layered humanitarian assistance and longer-term development assistance (such as the ESF and OHDACA accounts) to support resilience in refugee-affected communities, providing refugees with the temporary help they needed while assisting host communities to expand, for example, public health and education services to meet needs of both Jordanians and long-term refugees.

Timely Adaptation of Structures and Processes: Adjust foreign policy machinery in crisis.

As the Syria crisis exploded, the refugees pushed over Jordan's border created a critical national security threat for Jordan, and the need for assistance to both Jordan and Syria

increased. When Embassy Damascus was forced to shutter its doors in early 2012, the USAID mission in Jordan adapted by creating a deputy MD to coordinate USAID's cross-border assistance. The embassy established an interagency working group that met weekly under the deputy chief of mission's leadership. In 2014, USAID's Syria assistance team joined State and DOD personnel in an approximate fifteen-person team at the embassy that was managed by a USAID foreign service officer. The retooled entity was called the Southern Syria Assistance Platform (SSAP); its function mirrored the Syria Transition and Assistance Response Team (START) that coordinated assistance to Syria from Turkey. The two platforms communicated and coordinated with each other. They also coordinated with USAID's Syria Task Force, which was established in 2012 to coordinate cross-border assistance to Syria from multiple surrounding countries.

Regional Engagement Notwithstanding Bilateral Structures: Harness bilateral structures and tools to address transnational challenges.

Innovative structures and processes helped ensure that the 3Ds' support to Jordan was coordinated not only inside Jordan, but across the border in Syria, so that assistance to both countries supported Jordan's stability. Additionally, USAID's Syria Task Force enabled a regional approach to mitigate challenges emanating from events in a single country. Without the task force, SSAP and START might have found that the activities they implemented through different bilateral partners did not add up to a coherent regional approach. The Syria Task Force helped ensure that decisions about assistance priorities were well informed by a common situational understanding, and helped avoid gaps and overlaps in the assistance that START and SSAP sent to Syrians in the north and south of the country.

Notes

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65. "The Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis," Government of Jordan, February 7, 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-compact-new-holistic-approach-between-hashemite-kingdom-jordan-and>.

66. The Royal Hashemite Court of Jordan serves as interlocutor between the king and the GOJ and aims to support a good relationship between the king and the Jordanian public.
67. “National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Jordan (P/CVE),” UNDP, May 17, 2016, www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/05/17/national-strategy-on-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-in-jordan-p-cve-.html.
68. The Turkey platform is called the Syria Transition and Assistance Response Team, or START. It predated the SSAP and has a more complicated structure, in that it is staffed by about forty-five people spread throughout four locations in Turkey, it is not as integrated into the US mission in Turkey, it has been providing assistance to areas of Syria that have been at the center of fighting, and it has had to contend with challenges inherent to the Turkish context (e.g., variability in the permissiveness of the operating environment).
69. At the end of 2016, this group consisted of three USAID senior foreign service officers, two State Department officers, six USAID/OFDA officers, one USAID foreign service national officer, two Americans hired locally in Amman, and a civil affairs captain sent from the OIR Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force in Kuwait.
70. For example, civilian organizations of the US government sometimes cannot procure items quickly enough or do not allow new construction. Some programs are limited by statutes forbidding the provision of foreign assistance to armed actors (e.g., border guard military officials who needed office equipment; camps supporting ISIS defectors).
71. SOCCENT and USAID were also assigned to design mechanisms to collaboratively monitor and evaluate programs with joint inputs and outputs. The approval cable for CMSE ultimately authorized the use of OHDACA funds (with Title 10 authorities) if and when activities were jointly planned, designed, reviewed, and approved by USAID officers or others at Embassy Amman, subject to the administrative regulations set forth by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and authorities attached to the funding and requiring concurrence of the chairman of the JAF. See Cable from US Ambassador Stuart Jones to the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau, “Deployment of a Civil Military Support Element to Jordan,” March 29, 2012.
72. CF-J was initially launched as a wait-and-see operation that foresaw the potential for security problems emanating from Syria to escalate in Jordan or for Jordan and/or the United States to eventually need to take up a stronger posture in the face of regional threats. After the first CF-J contingent arrived in Jordan, some personnel began looking for things to do and, with the best intentions, started implementing small projects in border communities. These were not coordinated with the rest of the interagency, and CF-J eventually backed off implementing these projects and stuck to implementing small projects directly with military counterparts (rather than civilians) at the border.
73. To some extent, SOCCENT and USAID had different objectives, and certainly they had different timelines for achieving them. No single document directed USAID-CMSE coordination; a March 2012 cable states that “CMSE-J programs should support the goals and objectives of the United States in Jordan, USAID’s country development cooperation strategy, CENTCOM’s Theater Campaign Plan, and SOCCENT’s Campaign Plan.” The USAID and CMSE teams needed more streamlined guidance.
74. Hackenbracht, “Achieving Civilian-Military Unity of Effort: Jordan Case Study.”
75. Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, <https://fam.state.gov/fam/01fam/01fam0160.html>.
76. The CDCS was extended to remain current through 2019.
77. Government of Jordan, “The Jordan Compact.”
78. Funds were programmed through the Migration and Refugee Assistance funding allocation. “Inspection of Embassy Amman, Jordan,” US Department of State, Office of Inspections, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, June 2015, p. 5, <https://oig.state.gov/system/files/isp-i-15-29a.pdf>.



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