

CCOE Online Seminar Series
Resilient Leadership Cultivation
Meeting Minutes

Format: Online Seminar

Moderators: Lieutenant Colonel Ralf Baur, Captain Kathleen Porath

Featured Experts:

- **Dr. Nicholas Krohley** – Consultant, Researcher and Founder/Principal of FrontLine Advisory
- **Dr. Lobna Chérif** – Faculty member of the Department of Military Psychology and Leadership at Royal Military College of Canada

Audience: Open to public. Practitioners, experts, academics and advanced students

Date: 04 September 2024, 14:30 – 17:10 (UTC+2)

Duration: 160 min

Online Seminar of the Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Centre of Excellence

In this online seminar, we aimed to emphasize the crucial role of resilient leadership in both military and civilian sectors, particularly in today's increasingly volatile global environment. Focusing on Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) operations, the discussion highlighted how individual resilience and leadership can significantly enhance team performance, improve relationships with local populations, and increase the likelihood of mission success.

The seminar also explored the current state of CIMIC's resilience and the intersection of state-led and grassroots approaches to resilience, with a particular focus on the role of civil society in fostering societal resilience. Using the conflict between Russia and Ukraine as a case study, the discussions illustrated how civil society can contribute to societal strength, complementing state-driven strategies in times of crisis. A key takeaway was the introduction of a structured framework for cultivating individual resilience, applicable to leaders facing uncertainty and adversity. This conversation was timely and relevant, offering insights into how resilience can be fostered to strengthen both individual leadership and broader societal stability.

Presentation of Dr. Nicholas Krohley:

CIMIC & Resilience

About Frontline Advisory:

- **Mission:** Helping clients to navigate complex ground-level environments in the developing world by combining best practices of management consulting, market research, and proprietary ethnographic methods.
- **Activities:**
 - Conducting on-the-ground research and in-depth analysis of local environments and organizational dynamics.
 - Equipping businesses with skills to continuously learn, adapt, and thrive in challenging settings.

Resilience of CIMIC:

- **CIMIC and conflict:** CIMIC must be sustained across all spectrums/phases of conflict and therefore requires resilience within the community of CIMIC practitioners.
- **CIMIC as Joint Function:** Increased focus and attention are required for CIMIC's role as Joint Function to foster resilience and persistence of the CIMIC practitioners and activities.
- **CIMIC's resilience in 2024 – a SWOT Analysis:**

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated & experienced cadre of practitioner-advocates.• NATO emphasis on Cognitive Warfare, the Information Environment, and Competition.	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncertain/uneven value proposition to the joint force.• Limited J9 resourcing/staffing & institutional power.• Where does CIMIC fit within LSCO?
Opportunities to improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results -> Reputation -> Organizational Resilience• Enhancing our toolkit and refining our outputs.• Focusing our internal messaging to define our relevance.	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What if we cannot confront the "intelligence" taboo?• What if we are relegated to a post-war "stabilization" function?

Key Questions:

- How is societal resilience built? – Can CIMIC **build** societal resilience?
- How is societal resilience protected? – Can CIMIC **protect** societal resilience?
- How is this different from infrastructural resilience? – Can CIMIC **erode** societal resilience?
- Where does CIMIC fit in all of this? – How does **total defence** happen and what is **CIMIC's role** as the Civil-Military fulcrum?

Societal Resilience and Information Warfare:

- **Top-Down vs. Grassroots Approaches:** Different outcomes of heavy-handed, top-down approaches and grassroots approaches to building resilience in civil society, can be seen by comparing the contrasting strategies of building societal resilience in Ukraine and Russia.
- **Information as a Battleground:** CIMIC urgently needs to address disinformation and weaponized information. Balancing government or military intervention with preserving civil society's autonomy is a crucial challenge.

Ukraine Case Study: Societal Resilience in Action:

- **Bottom-Up Mobilization:** Ukraine's resistance against Russia can be used as a model of societal resilience, driven by grassroots efforts.
- **Role of Civil Society:** Ukraine's civil society has historically evolved in opposition to the government, and this dynamic shifted in 2022 when civil society mobilized to resist external threats in support of the government. This unique dynamic serves as a powerful example of societal resilience in action.

Challenges and Future Implications for CIMIC:

- **Navigating Complex Relationships:** The future role of CIMIC is an intermediary between military efforts and civil society, the fulcrum between the "whole of government" and the "whole of society". How can CIMIC effectively support societal resilience without overstepping boundaries such as ethical considerations?
- **Lessons from Ukraine:** Ukraine's resilience was not built solely by CIMIC. CIMIC is a valued partner but not a controller. The case study offers valuable lessons for NATO countries and CIMIC practitioners on how to navigate the intersection of civil and military cooperation in future conflicts.

Presentation of Dr. Lobna Chérif:

Resilience in Leadership

ABCs of Resilient Leadership:

- **Affect – Emotional Intelligence:**
 - Ability to recognize, understand and manage own emotions as well as to influence the emotions of others.
 - Key Components of Emotional Intelligence:
 - **Self-awareness:** Ability to recognize and understand own emotions as well as their impacts on others. Allows leaders to be mindful of their emotional responses and how they emotions influence their interaction and decisions.
 - **Self-regulation:** Ability to control and redirect disruptive emotions to stay composed and adaptable.
 - **Motivation:** Internal drive to achieve the goals set, being committed to a mission and keeping a positive mindset.
 - **Empathy:** Ability to understand and share the feelings of others to manage diverse teams and assure effective communication.
 - **Social Skills:** Ability to manage relationships effectively, to facilitate communication and to build networks.
 - If applied, these components can enhance resilience and effectiveness of teams, especially in high-pressure environments.
- **Behaviour – Decision and Habits:**
 - Behaviour consists of conscious decisions and habits.
 - Approximately 40% of human behaviour is driven by habits and 60% by decisions. Decisions are mostly critical in the moment but habits can reinforce individual resilience over time.
 - Resilient habits ensure constant preparedness and focus.
 - Building and integrating resilient habits is crucial and requires time, self-discipline and training. Resilient habits can for example be healthy nourishment, exercising regularly, etc.
- **Cognition – Cognitive Awareness:**
 - Ability to understand and recognize own thoughts and being mindful of how we perceive, interpret and respond to situations.
 - Cognitive awareness allows leaders to be conscious of their biases and assumptions and improves emotional regulation.
 - Cognitive awareness helps to process and interpret challenges in order to foster resilience as well as to enable adaptability and continuous learning.
 - Cognitive awareness leads to better situational awareness and helps to improve communication and relationships.
 - Being aware of the fact that repeated focus on what can go wrong or what could have been done differently can affect individual effectiveness.

The technique of *Defusion* to manage emotions, actions and thoughts:

- *Defusion* involves stepping back and observing emotions, actions and thoughts from a distant point of view.
- *Defusion* means recognizing that emotions, actions and thoughts are not necessarily facts or imperative directives.

- By practicing *defusion*, “automatic” responses are prevented to reduce the impact of unhelpful thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

The Role of Character:

- The individual character, comprised of deeply held values and core beliefs, is the foundation upon which resilient leadership is built.
- Strong character allows leaders to act and lead with integrity and in that way to build trust within a team to create a stable and resilient environment.
- Six broad virtues classify the 24 character strengths which serve as building blocks of a good character:
 - **Wisdom:** Creativity, Curiosity, Judgment, Love of learning, perspective
 - **Courage:** Bravery, Perseverance, Honesty, Zest
 - **Humanity:** Love, Kindness, Social Intelligence
 - **Justice:** Teamwork, Fairness, Leadership
 - **Temperance:** Forgiveness, Humility, Prudence, Self-regulation
 - **Transcendence:** Appreciation of beauty and excellence, Gratitude, Hope, Humour, Spirituality
- The character strengths serve as practical tools that not only leaders but everyone can cultivate to enhance individual resilience.
- Of these 24 character strengths, everyone has five to seven signature strengths. On their website, the *VIA Institute on Character*, provides a free scientific survey to identify individual character strengths: <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>
- Once identified, it is important to make the use of individual signature strengths a habit to perform and feel better.

The S.P.A.C.E. Strategy:

- The *S.P.A.C.E. Strategy* is five-step approach to weave all the above mentioned concepts together into a practical and applicable framework. This fosters individual resilience and integrates it into leadership styles to transfer it to a team.
- Five steps to create *S.P.A.C.E.*:
 - **S-top and be present:** Regularly pausing in the midst of a challenge to ground oneself in the present moment and to identify the actual issue rather than reacting impulsively and being caught up in thoughts, feelings and worries about the future or regrets about the past.
 - **P-ractice tactical breathing:** Tactical breathing helps to regulate the automatic nervous system to control the body’s response to stress situations. In this way it promotes relaxation and reduces stress hormones. A common method is the four-second breathing which consists of a four-step cycle that should be repeated until a noticeable sense of calmness and control can be felt. The four steps are:
 1. Four seconds breathing in
 2. Four seconds holding the breath
 3. Four seconds breathing out
 4. Four seconds holding the breath
 - **A-cknowledge and accept your/others’ ABCs:** Validating own emotions, actions and thoughts as well as those of others without judgement or resistance is important to respond effectively and to notice and mitigate arising tensions within a team. Being aware of the interconnectedness of thoughts, emotions and actions is crucial. When

acknowledging others' feelings, trust and an environment of psychological safety are created which enhances resilience. Also a perspective shift is needed to accept that emotions and thoughts during high-pressure situations are only temporary and not defining others' personalities.

- **C-all on character strengths:** Making use of individual character strengths during high-pressure situations means tapping into an individual perspective, individual judgement and relying on for example fairness, kindness, humility, humour, etc. to find an appropriate solution, to navigate challenges and to lead with authenticity and resilience in any situation.
- **E-mpower yourself/others:** The true power of resilient leadership is not only empowering yourself but also empowering others. This is about reminding others of their own character strengths and convincing them of showing the world their better selves. In this way a ripple effect can be created across a bigger team or even an organization. Empowerment fosters a culture of mutual respect, trust, support and shared purpose that allows not only to react to challenges but to respond to them, which is the true essence of resilience.

The Impact of creating *S.P.A.C.E.*:

- When creating *S.P.A.C.E.*, individual choices reflect values. This means for example standing up for the right even when a situation is difficult.
- Creating *S.P.A.C.E.* creates authenticity, trust and credibility and therefore a resilient culture within a team.