

Inside this issue:

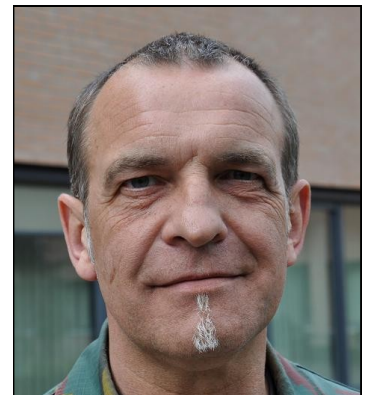
Civil-Military Cooperation in a United Nations Mission	1
Introduction	2
Mandate and structure	2
Cooperation and reconstruction	3
Analysis of the approach	4
Conclusions	5
Get in contact with CCOE	6

Civil-Military Cooperation in a United Nations Mission

by Marco Corstjens

Foreword

Marco Corstjens, Warrant Officer in the Belgian Army, is working in CIMIC since 1998. He serves as a CIMIC instructor in the Belgian Information Operations Group comprising a CIMIC Support Unit and a PSYOPS Unit. He followed various CIMIC related courses at different levels, including Civil Affairs course in "Fort Bragg" (U.S. Army). His extensive mission experience derives from missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Sri Lanka (after the Tsunami) as well as Lebanon.



Besides his active participation in multinational trainings and exercises he is a regular supporter of CCOE, as instructor.





The views and opinions expressed or implied in this article are those of the author and should not be construed as carrying the official sanction of NATO, Belgian Armed Forces or CCOE.

Personal mission experience in Lebanon

1. Introduction

I have been deployed at the Belgian contingency of the United Nations Mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL¹) in 2006 and 2008. The Belgian contingent consisted of an engineer and explosives ordnance disposal (EOD) capacity, no fixed area of responsibility (AOR) was assigned. This Belgian Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) unit was covering 22 villages. For the Belgian CIMIC Team the main task was to liaise. Liaison is necessary to gain trust, as well as respect. In order to accomplish this one has to be open and honest and communicate in a transparent manner with all the different actors. For our CIMIC² activities, cooperation through liaison with the humanitarian actors was preferable, if not vital. These actors are the specialists to conduct reconstruction and development activities. In this article I will elaborate on my mission experience in Lebanon and give an insight in how CIMIC was applied in a UN mission.

2. Mandate and structure

In August 2006 the United Nations Security Council adopted a new resolution, UNSCR 1701³, in order to halt the hostilities between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah group, thereby ending 34 days of violent conflict. With this new resolution, the troop strength of the UN mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was increased by 11000 soldiers, starting from approximately 2000 and ending at 13.000. The resolution allowed for 15.000 troops. The establishment of UNIFIL dates back to early 1978 when it was first deployed in the south of Lebanon under resolution 425 and 426⁴. The new resolution allowed the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to re-deploy their troops in the south under supervision of

UNIFIL parallel to the withdrawal of the Israeli Armed Forces (IDF).

The mission consisted of two pillars: one civilian and one military. Both require cooperating with each other in order to comply with the mandate set out in the resolution. For the military it is important to know the UN Civil Affairs (UN CA⁵) unit in the civilian pillar, which deals with the civil environment and is in the forefront of interaction with local government officials, civil society and other entities. As a CIMIC unit you have to be aware about this! The design of the UN mission in these two pillars can be a bit problematic as it involves a lot of bureaucracy due to the separate organisational structures.

In the period before 2006, only one military officer and one national civilian representative within UNIFIL were tasked dealing with the civil environment. This changed with the expansion of the mission in 2006 and the introduction of a joint structure, or J-structure⁶, in the mission's headquarter. The introduction of this new organisational structure also included the involvement of a CIMIC J9 section dealing with the civil environment in the military pillar. This allowed for a stronger CIMIC involvement at all levels; strategic, operational and tactical. The area of responsibility for UNIFIL was divided into two sectors. Sector West, which was under Italian command and Sector East which was under Spanish Command (see Picture 1). In both sectors CIMIC was provided and supported by a so called G9 and a S9.

¹ UNIFIL: "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon"

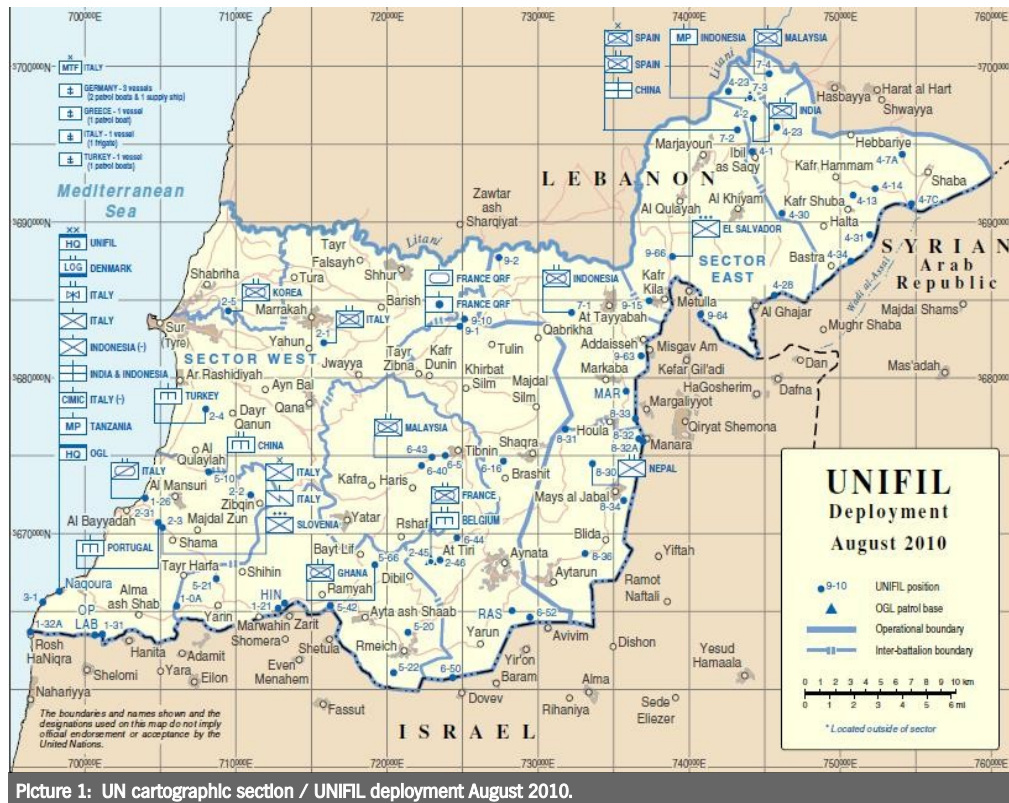
² CIMIC considered as NATO definition according to AJP-9 CIMIC Doctrine

³ United Nations Security Council, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701.

⁴ United Nations Security Council, United Nations Security Council Resolution 425; United Nations Security Council, United Nations Security Council Resolution 426.

⁵ "UN Civil Affairs components work at the social, administrative and sub-national political levels to facilitate the countrywide implementation of peacekeeping mandates and to support the population and government in strengthening conditions and structures conducive to sustainable peace" (DPKO/DFS Policy Directive on Civil Affairs, April 2008)

⁶ Used mainly within NATO where the letters refers to the level (e.g. J-joint) and the numbers identify the functional area (e.g. 9-CIMIC)



Picture 1: UN cartographic section / UNIFIL deployment August 2010.

3. Cooperation and reconstruction

In the early stages of the mission effective cooperation and alignment of activities between all the different actors wasn't really taking place. Activities were determined by the own agenda of each element and their priorities allowing for little coordination or exchange of ideas between them, which resulted in a loss of joint effort. Essentially, the military thought they knew all there was to know, thereby ignoring the input and views of the civilian actors in the field. This situation changed when a Spanish Colonel took command of the J9 cell in the mission headquarter in Naqoura and put in place an organized structure providing a coherent mission and focused plan. The J9 cell was further reinforced with officers and non-commissioned officers, mostly from European countries, who had a good background and sufficient professional experience in CIMIC. The result of these changes became swiftly evident. There was improved cooperation at the highest level and the appointment of an liaison officer for the various actors in the AOR. With this reorganization, including the section and appointment of experienced officers CIMIC finally commenced functioning as force asset providing added value to the mission.

Subsequently, on all three levels regular coordination meetings were established to de-conflict planned events. This simple open approach ensured that all activities between the military CIMIC personnel on one hand and the UN CA personnel on the other hand avoided duplication of effort and accompanied waste of resources. Important aspect to mention is the goodwill and trust which developed between the groups.

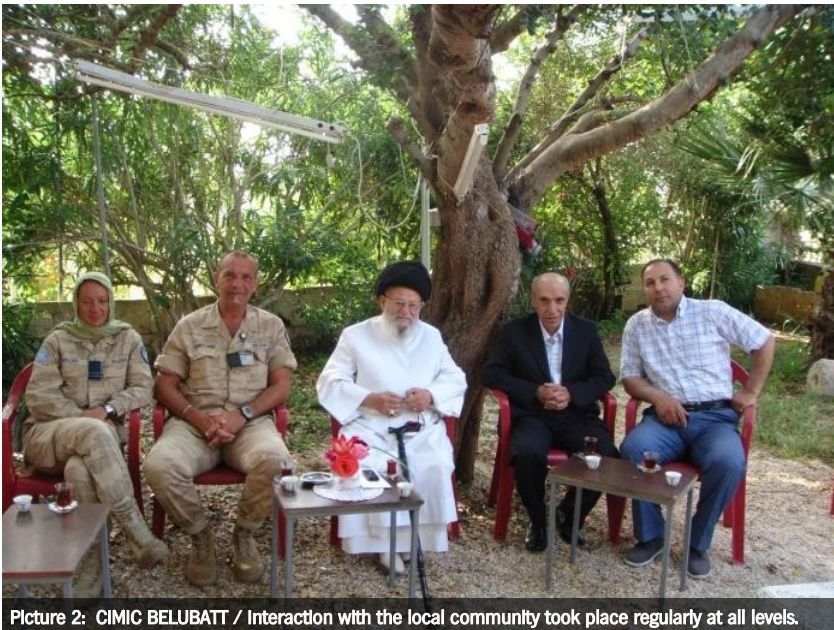
UNIFIL attached great importance to the relation with the local population with whom the peacekeepers operate. There are several facets to this relationship such as:

- Informing the people of south Lebanon about UNIFIL's mandate and activities;
- Providing or facilitating limited assistance to the extent possible;
- Respecting and sharing in local culture, customs and concerns;
- Participating in community events and ensuring minimum disturbance to normal daily life from UNIFIL's operations in the area.



The main interfaces between the community and the missions were the UN CA (Civilian) and the Civil-Military Coordination (Military). Personnel from these units played a key role in liaising with local authorities and communities on behalf of the mission, as well as initiating a range of activities to support the population in the areas of responsibility.

During the mission, UNIFIL had to liaise with a range of actors at the local community level. This included local government representatives, community representatives, religious leaders, civil society groups and international agencies engaged in recovery and development activities.



Picture 2: CIMIC BELUBATT / Interaction with the local community took place regularly at all levels.

In its task to support the local community, UN CA assisted in developing and strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations. UN CA represented UNIFIL in seeking technical assistance and funding support from multilateral and bilateral donors for projects in south Lebanon. Although UNIFIL is not a humanitarian or development organization, from its early years of deployment it had a strong humanitarian disposition in addressing the consequences of wars and occupation in south Lebanon. UNIFIL battalions delivered a range of basic services to communities, using the skills and technical expertise of peacekeepers, as well as deployment of UNIFIL's engineering and other operational resources in assistance of the local population. A number of UNIFIL contingents provided free medical, den-

tal, veterinary and other assistance to the local population. In addition, UNIFIL contingents have been conducting various educational programmes for the local communities such as computer literacy, languages, sports etc...

5. Analysis of the Approach

The critical mistake is, that these activities were run by UNIFIL units often. As a result the local community was over dependent on UNIFIL at the expense of self reliance. By providing these services, sometimes with generous funding, tends to make the civil authority too dependent. These activities, despite their best intentions can create an expectation from the local authorities that UNIFIL will solve all their problems, providing a quick, easy solution. UNIFIL can support, through UN CA and CIMIC the legitimacy of UNIFIL and the authority of the local government, but cannot and must not replace the local government by taking their place and implementing all kind of development activities.

Working in a comprehensive approach setting enhanced the capability of the unit and at the same time it strengthened the capacity of the local authorities and civil organizations. All efforts were coordinated with the local authorities and humanitarian organizations. During the weekly and bi-weekly coordination meetings all activities were announced to the appropriate levels in order to avoid a duplication of efforts and to try involve all stakeholders. It is imperative to recognize the importance of involvement of the local authorities. It is their country, it is their activity. We as military are there to support the different stakeholders, if the activity supports the commander's mission.

For successful CIMIC the key is good communication. CIMIC activities need to be transparent. Communication also means liaison, which is the most important of all core functions in CIMIC. Running projects is not the only way to get the confidence or support from the local community. Standard CIMIC activities can be useful but it always has to be done in close cooperation with the humanitarian organisations and local au-



thorities in order to assess the effectiveness of the project. The ideal situation would exist when the military component of a peacekeeping operation merely has a supporting role, while the local authorities in cooperation with humanitarian organisations implement the projects. Such an approach might be beneficial for all parties and serve best the interests of the local community.



Picture 3: UNIFIL / Supporting reconstruction works.

It is important to stress again and ask our self the question: How can we successfully support the commander's mission? Conducting CIMIC activities like road construction, building prayer houses, etc. or having an open communication line with all the stakeholders. Communication is the magic word in CIMIC. Without communication there is no transparency regarding our activities. Communication means liaison, as the most important core functions in CIMIC, a CIMIC member can't be effective and trusted if he or she is not reliable. CIMIC activities or the so called projects are not necessarily the only way to get confidence of the local authorities or population.

Sometimes it is necessary to perform some CIMIC activities but always it has to be organized in close cooperation with the Humanitarian Organizations and the local authorities. Ideal would be that the military has a supporting role to the local authorities who are implementing these activities together with the Humanitarian Organizations. Supporting with military means for high visibility activity would benefit both.

6. Conclusions

As a UN mission, it involved a lot of countries that do not have extensive experience with CIMIC doctrine and procedures the way most NATO and European countries apply it. This was sometimes problematic. As a result, UNIFIL's mission was highly project driven. Due to a shift of focus from liaising to the more project driven approach, a blurring of lines occur between military and civilian efforts. Limiting this project-driven approach might have benefits for the civil-military relation. The focus of every peacekeeping mission should be on creating ownership within the local community. They have to be involved in the activities as it is their country and their community. Moreover, for the benefit of peacekeeping the military should never be in the lead.

Despite best efforts it is not easy to get the full participation of all stakeholders or even agree on a general coordination. Better awareness and coordination is needed in order to avoid capitalizing on short term gains and also avoid creating long term dependency. The local community should be actively involved by organizing and implementing projects and activities. The reconstruction is in their need. Liaise, assess and advise are required to maximize the effectiveness of the military mission and ensure that social, political, religious and cultural factors are taken into appreciation.

Regarding the comprehensive approach it is important to know that security and development are strongly linked. Therefore CIMIC should focus on its core function which is liaison. This is the tool to that comprehensive planning takes place at all levels. This demands a high degree of professionalism from CIMIC operators as well as a very good understanding of the mandate and working policy of the different organizations active in the field.



The CCOE CIMIC MESSENGER is an electronic publication of the CIMIC Centre of Excellence.

Its dedicated aim is to provide a forum or platform for stimulating and presenting innovative and comprehensive thinking on NATO CIMIC and Civil-Military Interaction (CMI) related issues such as mission experiences, concepts, doctrine or lessons learned.

The views and opinions expressed or implied in the CCOE CIMIC MESSENGER are those of the authors and should not be construed as carrying the official sanction of NATO, of any national armed forces or those of CCOE.

Any comments or suggestions to this information leaflet?

Would you like to contribute an article?

Please contact us!

www.cimic-coe.org



Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence
Complex Twente - Building C1
Lonnekerveldweg 30
7524 PP Enschede
The Netherlands

Tel.: +31 534 80 3400
Fax : +31 534 80 3444
Central Registry CCOE: registry@cimic-coe.org
Public Affairs Officer: pao@cimic-coe.org