

Inside this issue:

"Train as you fight" Preparing for Civil-Military Interaction	1
The need to train and edu- cate civil-military Interaction	2
Civil-military Interaction course for NLDA cadets	3
Visit CCOE	4
Get In contact with CCOE	6

"Train as you fight" **Preparing for Civil-Military Interaction**

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Foreword

Early December 2011 a group of 25 officer cadets from the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) paid a two-day visit to the CIMIC Centre of Excellence (CCOE). The visit was part of an extensive 200hr course on civil-military interaction and was aimed at confronting theoretical notions with practical insights. This CCOE Messenger first addresses the need for improved training and education in the area of civil-military interaction. It then outlines the civil-military interaction course at the NLDA and concludes with an overview of the cadets' visit to the CCOE.

The following article reflects the views of the author alone and not necessarily those of the CCOE.





1. The need to train and educate civil-military interaction

In 1973 General William F. DePuy, first commander of the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), emphasized that it was necessary to expose soldiers to realistic battlefield conditions before they experienced actual combat (Reeson, 2006). Doing this should improve the soldiers' preparation and thereby their internal efficiency, which in the long run should enable external effectiveness. This belief was widely shared and led to the development of new training methods and a training philosophy that is often referred to as *train as you fight*. Ever since military training programs have continuously been improved and better shaped towards the real threats and challenges that soldiers were facing in the theater. A clear example reflecting the new philosophy was the establishment of the US Combat Training Centers (CTCs). The five pillars upon which the CTC program is based require (1) that participating units be organized as they would for actual combat, (2) a dedicated, doctrinally proficient operations group, (3) a dedicated, realistic opposing force (OPFOR), (4) a training facility being capable of simulating combat conditions, and (5) a base infrastructure. As reflected in these pillars, the main focus of the CTCs is to develop a combat ready force that is physically and psychologically prepared to fight and win wars (Reid, 2007). In most military training institutes, US and European alike, one observes a similar focus.

Meanwhile, however, many of today's complex emergencies demand that interrelated political, economic, and developmental as well as security problems have to be addressed simultaneously (Rietjens & Bollen, 2008). Consequentially, international efforts are increasingly about integrating approaches of civilian and military actors, and state and non-state actors such as NGOs and IOs. Effectiveness depends on combining military expertise on security with civilian expertise on governance, human rights, rule of law and economic development. To realize this civil-military interaction is of crucial importance.

In many operations the approach to civil-military interaction was essentially improvisational, pragmatic and ad hoc. Meeting on the ground in the theater, personnel worked out solutions overcoming differences for the common good. As such, coordination evolved over time in response to specific needs on the ground. There is merit and appeal to this approach. Some argue that every crisis is occasion-specific and circumstance-specific. Its unique characteristics mean that strategies and structures for civil-military interaction need to reflect the specific and dynamically evolving circumstances (Gourlay, 2000).



Picture 1: NLDA / Cadets at the Netherlands Defence Academy.

However, at a local level, a tremendous responsibility devolved on the battalion commanders and their junior officers as a result of the gap between the assigned mission and the requirement to establish order on the ground. These commanders had to tailor much of their operations to the unexpected challenges they faced, rather than execute the sort of mission they were tasked, organized, and trained to perform (Vogelaar & Kramer, 2004). Overall civil-military interaction depended strongly on the personalities involved and the qualities they brought to the table, rather than on planning and standard operating procedures (Zaalberg, 2005). As a consequence, many differences occurred within and between rotations and contingents. These differences included priorities, budgets, and involvement of the host nation actors. Such an approach yields inefficient use of limited aid resources, delayed humanitarian relief efforts, inconsistency between rotations, and conflicting objectives in the (post-)conflict



environment (Peabody, 2005). This lack of coherence is one of the factors often cited as contributing to the poor success rate and lack of sustainability of international peace and stability operations (Coning & Friis, 2011).

Although there is no single solution to improve civil-military interaction at the local level, the logic of improved preparation is expected to shape the thinking of military through: (1) awareness of the civil dimension, (2) acknowledgement of the interdependencies between military and civilian actors, and (3) a more effective application of tactics and tools related to civil-military interaction. In the long run this should lead to efficiency gains, greater respect for the comparative advantages of civilian and military actors, and enhanced mission effectiveness. The next section addresses an initiative to implement such preparation in the educational program of the officer cadets at the NLDA.

2. Civil-military interaction course for NLDA cadets

Alike many military training institutes and academies the subject of civil-military interaction has received relatively little attention at the NLDA. During their scientific bachelor study the officer cadets are mostly taught mainstream courses including military operations, defence logistics, management and organization and military ethics. This makes perfect sense as these issues form the core of their future military careers. In these courses however very sparsely attention is paid to civil-military interaction. In some of them an introduction lecture is included, but due to the limited time available this can only scratch the civil-military surface. To fill this gap we developed a course that is specifically aimed at civil-military interaction. Since a few years this course is included in the fourth and final year of the study curriculum.

The course takes in total 196 hours and in general aims to provide insight in the interaction processes between military units and the wide range of civil actors (e.g. NGOs, key leaders, private military firms) in different settings. The main focus of the course is on interaction at field level, but developments such as interdepartmental coordination in western capitals are also addressed. We structured the course around three main clusters. The table below presents the three clusters, the subjects that are central within each cluster and a selection of the literature that is used.

To address the subjects in each of the clusters we make use of several guest speakers, ranging from military practitioners, NGO representatives and scientists. To project the insights of these lectures with reality and to face the difficulties that are inherent to the domain of civil-military interaction we have been visiting the CCOE for several years. During these visits the cadets are confronted with role play and during last year's visit also with the interactive game Go4It. The next section deals with last year's visit in more depth.

Cluster	Subjects	Literature (selection)
1. Humanitarian operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of military in natural disasters Dealing with refugees Case studies on Katrina, Kosovo, Pakistan and Rwanda Workshop cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sipri (2008) Rietjens & Bollen (2008)
2. Stability & reconstruction operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The historical origins of civil-military interaction 3D approach Interacting with NGOs Private military firms Host nation actors (key leader engagement, local participation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rietjens et al. (2009) Kitzen (forthcoming) Rietjens & Bollen (2008) Singer (2005)
3. Measuring progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring performance and effectiveness of peace support operations Comprehensive mission planning and effect measurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rietjens & Bollen (2008) Rietjens et al. (2011)



3. Visit CCOE ¹

Having been welcomed in the morning of December 8 the program started with two introduction lessons dealing with the challenges of comprehensiveness and civil-military liaison. These lectures were a good step in what would become a challenging day. Next on the program was the introduction of the CIMIC centre and the liaison role play. The cadets were divided in three groups and each group was confronted with three different scenarios. The first scenario dealt with a well known and rich shopkeeper from a fictitious city centre who requested compensation for his damaged shop. It appeared that while driving, one of the military trucks got a flat tire, went off the road and smashed the window of this men's shop. Now he wanted compensation for the damaged goods. On top of that he also wanted protection from either the police or the military to prevent further plundering. The cadets quickly realized the potential influence the salesman had on the public opinion and treated the case accordingly. They undertook several actions to handle the situation. They had a personal eye-check on the situation, informed the own military police and forwarded the problem to the OPS-room.



Picture 2: CCOE / Instructors during the rehearsal of go4It.

In the second scenario a local farmer showed up to report the discovery of a human skull and bones. He believed the skull and bones might belong to a victim of ethnic violence and hoped that the military forces could help him. The cadets reacted in a very open way trying to find a solution. In the end of the conversation

they connected the farmer with the ICRC, an organization well equipped to handle such an issue. This resolved their case.



Picture 3: CCOE / Rehearsal of the game go4It in late 2011.

In the third and final scenario a woman reported that the previous night a man was killed in a shooting incident just outside her house. He was then taken by a military ambulance which accidentally passed. The woman was worried that nobody took care of the dead man's identification. According to local customs it is very important to bury the body within three days and she therefore hoped the military to help her find the body. Having discussed the possibilities, the commander of the group of cadets decided they call the local police, several hospitals in the city and the ICRC. In the meantime they would monitor the situation.

In all three scenarios the cadets were confronted with different real life stories that forced them to react in a sensitive and well thought manner. Make no promises and act within the intent of the commander. Despite several initial hiccups and challenges along the way, the role play proved to be a useful way to train tactical civil-military skills.

After dinner the second main event was scheduled which was the interactive game Go4It. Through serious gaming Go4It provides insight in the comprehensive approach. The game contains of four main players: the local government, the task force, the opposing forces and the NGOs. After describing the game rules a first test round was played and as expected most cadets

¹ I would like to thank Cols. Kasselmann and Snellen and all CCOE staff involved, most notably Capt. Baur, for making this visit happen.



wanted to play the role of the opposing forces. During the test round the different cards of the game were introduced: intervention cards, target cards and assessment cards. Intervention cards turned out to be central to the game. By using these cards each player could shift the overall situation in the common area of operation towards their desired end-state. An example of such a card was “to create sanitation in the camps”. Playing this card had several positive results, e.g. on the living conditions ². Despite the complexity of the game the two game masters were very well capable of explaining the rules and confronting the cadets with the decisions they made.

The next day another game of Go4It was played. This time for real and with four rounds. During this morning the cadets learned a lot about what interventions to make, the consequences of these interventions and the use of target and assessment cards. And as in every game all players desperately wanted to win, with or without cheating. All in all, in a short timeframe Go4It provided a lot of new practical insights in the civil-military interaction domain. And also important, it was fun to play.

In conclusion: despite their importance, “classic” courses such as military logistics and military operations often offer insufficient know-how on civil-military interaction. As this issue has become increasingly important in today’s complex emergencies it is very worthwhile to explore civil-military interaction more in-depth. To avoid a “cold war mindset” one should start doing this in a very early stage. Preferably in primary education programs such as at the NLDA. Combining theoretical notions on civil-military interaction with practical insights that are given in the CCOE’s programs is highly beneficial. In this way we can further incorporate the *train as you fight* philosophy to enhance mission effectiveness.



Picture 4: CCOE / First conduct of go4It during a course at CCOE.

² It is outside the scope of this Messenger to fully describe the game.



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