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**Foreword**



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More information on CCOE's internship programme can be retrieved from our homepage.

The content of this CIMIC MESSENGER has also been published abridged in the recent "[per Concordiam](#)", a journal from the [George C. Marshall Center](#).

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

**The Use of Civil-Military Co-operation in a Comprehensive Approach** by **Stijn van Weezel**

**How the military focus shifts to human security**

This issue of the CIMIC MESSENGER discusses the challenges related to NATO's contribution to a Comprehensive Approach (CA) and the implementation of Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC). The past decades the character of war has changed giving rise to, so called, complex emergencies with the involvement of various new factors and actors. These new crises are not born militarily and cannot be solved militarily. Therefore conflict management needs another approach focused on human security where the military and civilian agencies collaborate. The implementation of such an approach has been problematic due to conflicting values, principles and priorities. In order to face these challenges NATO will need to alter its current doctrines and improve its relation with the civil agencies and the development of its own civilian capabilities. To de-conflict the current situation NATO will need to come to a standardization of the CIMIC doctrine in order to work more effectively in theatre and specifically with civilian agencies.





## 1. Introduction.

It has taken a while before policy planners and military strategists realized that contemporary conflicts demand a different policy approach. Over the last decades international conflict management has undergone some significant changes in what is an ongoing process. Modern peace operations have expanded in terms of duration, tasks carried out, and actors involved. Due to this increased complexity a new approach is needed in order to face these challenges and streamline the efforts of various stakeholders, both civilian and military. As a result the idea of an integrated approach, where the stakeholders co-operate and align their activities to improve stabilisation and in order to reconstruct a crisis area, has become rather fashionable. Such an approach has been adopted in the policy and planning doctrines of various organizations and nations. The implementation however has shown some mixed results and there seems to be a lot of tuning still needed in order to make it work more effectively and efficiently.<sup>1</sup>

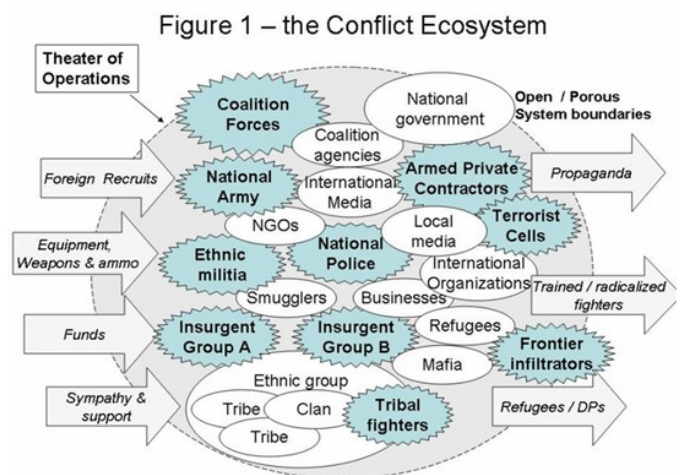
The term used by NATO for this kind of approach is Comprehensive Approach (CA).<sup>2</sup> This article will deal with the Alliance's contribution to CA giving special attention to the use of the Civil-Military Co-operation doctrine, or CIMIC for short. I want to stress beforehand, because the mistake is often made, that CIMIC and CA are not the same.

In this article I will try to explain why there is a need for a shift in conflict management, what the problems are with the current doctrines and how this might be improved.

## 2. The end for von Clausewitz?

Violent conflicts in states such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Sudan find themselves in the centre of global political attention. Often huge amounts of money are spent by the international community in order to deploy troops and facilitate diplomatic efforts in order to broker a peace. The last 20 years there has been a steep increase in the number of peace operations often with new players such as NATO, EU, and the African Union (AU) getting involved.<sup>3</sup> Despite the profound attention these conflicts (or complex emergencies) receive, trying to restore peace and order, most conflicts resume within five years after a peace agreement has been reached.<sup>4</sup> What we also can observe is that these conflicts have a certain regional dimension. Throughout the world we

can distinguish several regional clusters of war, like Afghanistan/Pakistan; Horn of Africa; the Balkans.<sup>5</sup> These new types of conflicts are very hard to contain as the belligerents don't behave like the parties in Clausewitzian\* wars because the goals are different as are the tactics deployed. The warring parties are a combination of state and non-state actors organized in very loose horizontal networks, rather than hierarchical military organizations (see Figure 1). The influx of new actors has changed the character of war as these new type of conflicts are more and more a mixture of political conflict, human rights violations, and crime. Furthermore modern violent conflicts are significantly influenced by social, economical, and environmental factors.<sup>6</sup>



Picture: The Conflict Ecosystem by David Kilcullen on Wikipedia

These complex emergencies are thus not born militarily and therefore cannot be solved militarily. To resolve these type of conflicts the use of only traditional military tools (stop violence, defeat the enemy) is not accepted as adequate anymore. As a result we have also seen that modern peace operations have expanded in terms of tasks involved. Not only does a peace operation needs to guarantee a cease fire, separate warring parties and monitor a peace process, it also must be able to aid in the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements and reconstruction in the post-conflict period.<sup>7</sup> The experiences in the field are that a solely military presence in the humanitarian vacuum that often exist in conflict situations is not sufficient enough and therefore a more civilian approach is needed where the *casu belli* are

<sup>1</sup> T.W. Brocades Zaalberg, *Towards a new concept for civil-military cooperation during stabilization operations*. (The Hague: TNO, March 2007).

<sup>2</sup> NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation, AJP-9(A)*, n.d.; "NATO - Topic: Comprehensive Approach," *A Comprehensive Approach*, n.d., [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_51633.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51633.htm); Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, *Proposal on a Way Ahead on Comprehensive Approach, C-M(2008)0029-COR1*, 2008; Anders Fogh Rasmussen, *SPC(R) Chairman's Report on Progress on the Action Plan on Proposals to Develop and Implement NATO's Contribution to a Comprehensive Approach*, Status Report (Brussels: NATO, November 30, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Christian Mölling, "Comprehensive Approaches to International Crisis Management," *Security Policy* 3, no. 42, CSS Analyses [2008].

<sup>4</sup> Cedric de Coning, *Coherence and Coordination in United Nations Peacebuilding and Integrated Missions - A Norwegian Perspective*, Security in Practice (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> "Database - Uppsala University," *Uppsala Conflict Data Program*, n.d., <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/database/>.

\* von Clausewitz's material on counter-insurgency and forms of war other than between states were never included in the published version due to his death.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Kaldor, "New wars," *The Broker*, June 2009; Stathis N Kalyvas, "War's evolution," *The Broker*, June 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Karsten Friis and Pia Jarmyr, *Comprehensive Approach. Challenges and opportunities in complex crisis management*, NUI, Security in Practice (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, June 10, 2008).



properly addressed and dealt with. The military alone lacks the capacities to solve these challenges because they are not equipped or adequate enough for carrying out civil tasks. It therefore needs to enhance the help from civilian agencies to fill the humanitarian gap and it tries to do this via civil-military interaction. Such an approach is needed because of the many linkages that exist between security and development.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. NATO's not so rapid reaction.

The experience of NATO in Kosovo and Afghanistan has led them to put the development of CA on the agenda in late 2004. It has taken two years to develop an idea about CA among 28 allies and despite extensive efforts there still is no single binding idea about what CA should be or how it should be operationalized. Progress on CA thus has been slow and there have been some large disagreement within the alliance if NATO should even want to look into further developing CA and enhancing civilian capabilities.<sup>9</sup> On the 2010 Lisbon summit the Alliance stressed however that a comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is a sine qua non for effective crisis management. And they addressed their incentive to actively engage with other actors from the international community to the overall international effort regarding crisis management.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the lack of binding idea or a definition of CA I will attempt to shortly describe what it entails and what the aim of it is. At an internal NATO CA stakeholder meeting held in September 2010 CA was described as being the synergy of all actors and actions of the international community through the co-ordination (and de-conflicting) of its political, development, and security capabilities in order to face today's challenges, such as violent conflict. CA actually is a sort of mindset or conceptual framework used as an umbrella term for describing the purpose of civil military interaction. NATO uses the term to indicate and stress the need for the international community to improve its co-operation and coordination of crisis management instruments. NATO sees the CA as a long term effort and is working to make improvement in several key areas, set out in the CA action plan, like:

- Planning and conduct of operations
- Lessons learned, training, education, and exercises
- Enhancing co-operation with external actors
- Public messaging<sup>11</sup>

Where CA is a political-civilian process, CIMIC is a military process meant as an operation support tool or facilitator between the military and civil world. CIMIC origins can be traced back to Civil Affairs units in the US army during the Second World War and it has been used during the Vietnam War and by the British in the 1950's as support for counter insurgency (COIN) operations.<sup>12</sup>

#### A Short Glossary on Civil-Military Interaction:

##### At planning level:

<i>Whole of Government Approach</i>	(OECD)
<i>Comprehensive Approach</i>	(NATO)
<i>Civil Military Coordination</i>	(EU)
<i>Integrated Approach</i>	(UN)

##### At field level:

<i>Civil-Military Co-operation</i>	(NATO)
<i>Effects Based Approach to Operations</i>	(NATO)
<i>Civil Military Coordination /CMCoord</i>	(UN OCHA)
<i>Civil Military Coordination /CIMIC</i>	(UN DPKO)

#### Current NATO Operations & Missions:

<b>Kosovo</b> (KFOR)	Jun 1999-
<b>Mediterranean Sea</b> (Monitoring)	Oct 2001-
<b>Afghanistan</b> (ISAF)	Aug 2003-
<b>Iraq</b> (Training Mission)	Jun 2004-
<b>Sudan &amp; Somalia</b> (Supporting AU)	Jun 2005-
<b>Horn of Africa</b> (Counter-piracy)	Aug 2009-

<sup>8</sup> Mary Kaldor, "New wars."

<sup>9</sup> Brooke Smith-Windsor, *Hasten Slowly. NATO's Effects Based and Comprehensive Approach to Operations. Making sense of the past and future prospects*, Research Paper, Research Paper (Rome: NATO Defense College, July 2008); Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Right Strategy, Wrong Place - Why NATO's Comprehensive Approach Will Fail in Afghanistan," *UNISCI Discussion Papers* 22, no. 2010, Discussion Papers (January 2010): 78-90.

<sup>10</sup> Heads of State and Government of NATO members, "Strategic Concept For the Defence and Security of The Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation", 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, *Proposal on a Way Ahead on Comprehensive Approach*.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Brzoska and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, *Civil-Military Cooperation in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction*, Policy Paper, Recommendations for Practical Action (Bonn: Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden, November 2008).





NATO, apart from its civilian leadership, has no civilian capacity to deploy during operations alongside the military effort. Their focus on civil-military co-operation is therefore via the civilian agencies who are outside their military parameters but present in the theatre. Since the military operation during the 1990's the Alliance has more and more progressed into the civilian sphere making CIMIC a vital part of its operations and missions.<sup>13</sup>

CIMIC is a complex process to link the military contribution to the civil contribution within a comprehensive and cohesive action to support societies in re-stabilization. In the theatre it is the non-combat function through which the military commander links with the civilian organizations active in his field of operations. It is an operation support tool which integrates the political, security, development, economic, rule of law, human rights and humanitarian dimensions. It is also used as a strategy to appease local communities in order to win 'hearts and minds'.<sup>14</sup> The core functions of CIMIC can be defined as:

- Support to the armed forces, through military planning and operations
- Support to the civil environment, through information and advice for civilian agencies
- Civil-military liaison<sup>15</sup>

CA should be seen as the mindset on how to implement reconstruction and development in order to supply the local population in affected areas with the demands they need where CIMIC is the method through which these efforts can be established. CIMIC is essential in the operationalization and implementation of CA because it is the primary military tool through which the Alliance interacts with civilian agencies in theatre. Progress on developing civilian capabilities within NATO and engaging with civilian agencies has however been slow and troublesome.

#### 4. How civil is CIMIC?

Ideally a successful CA would combine short term crisis response and stabilization with long term assistance and reconstruction. It should effectively co-ordinate the overarching process of civilian and military actors engaging at the various levels covering the whole spectrum of interactions in crisis

response. CIMIC's role in this would be to effectively help a military commander to steer the process with civilian agencies to reach the desired mission objective. The implementation of both doctrines hasn't been a smooth ride though, most probably due to the perceived military ownership.



Picture: NATO / An Antonov An-124 with relief goods for Pakistan; a joint civil-military effort

Within NATO there are some discrepancies between internal and external efforts. There are some large disagreements between member nations about what NATO's role and tasks should be and inherent to this discussion is whether the Alliance should engage in further extended peace operations and therefore develop civilian capabilities. According to some, NATO should widen its current Eurocentric scope outwards to other regions in the world. Reason behind this is that local conflicts tend to have a more global impact as failed states can form a safe haven for terrorist groups, like what happened in Afghanistan. These countries therefore indirectly can pose a security threat to the national security of NATO members.<sup>16</sup> Humanitarian interventions (forced or not) and development assistance are regarded as effective tools to defend themselves against threats boiling up in failing states. Most striking example is of course Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and NATO's current commitment to ISAF after the attacks of September the eleventh 2001. Parallels can be seen with NATO supporting the AU on its peace keeping missions in the failed states of Sudan and Somalia.<sup>17</sup>

Others within NATO rather see the Alliance keeping faithful to its military identity. Stick to own turf is their preferred discourse. The new Eastern European members feel sympathy for this point of view because they still feel Moscow breath-

<sup>13</sup> T.W. Brocades Zaalberg, *Towards a new concept for civil-military cooperation during stabilization operations*.

<sup>14</sup> NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation*.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Brzoska and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, *Civil-Military Cooperation in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction*.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Kaldor, "New wars"; Stephen Cornish and Marit Glad, *Civil-military relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in comprehensive approaches*, Security Policy Library, Security Policy Library (Oslo: Den Norske Atlanterhavs Komite, May 2008), [www.dnak.org](http://www.dnak.org).

<sup>17</sup> "2010 Failed States Index - Interactive Map and Rankings | Foreign Policy," n.d., [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/2010\\_failed\\_states\\_index\\_interactive\\_map\\_and\\_rankings](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/2010_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings).



ing down their neck. They joined NATO for a security guarantee and have an interest in that NATO does not divert too many resources away from collective defence towards the development of CA and out-of-Europe activities. France also opposes the development of NATO's CA role because it fears that the US might use CA to give NATO a more global role.<sup>18</sup>

The disagreements on the political and strategic level have profound effects on the outcomes on the operational and tactical level. We see in Afghanistan that there is a wide range of adaptations of CIMIC in the field and this necessarily does not contribute to the effectiveness of NATO's contribution to CA. Because there is no binding NATO CIMIC doctrine every country can implement it as it likes. In practice this entails that PRTs tend to go for quick wins; handing out toys to children or opening a medical clinic which will guarantee a nice photograph opportunity and wave the flag in order to show the public back home that the work the military carries out matters, that they are helping in reconstructing and not fighting, to sell the mission at home and appease public opinion. It is this political short sightedness that undermines not only the sustainability of projects but also the work relation with civil agencies because there is no focus on an adequate needs assessment leaving little room for a humanitarian approach.<sup>19</sup>

So besides the internal strife NATO also has its difficulties in engaging with civilian agencies.

It sure would have raised some eyebrows in the offices in Brussels, Geneva, and New York when they took notice of the fact that NATO was going to focus on reconstruction and development schemes. But surely beyond the initial bewilderment there must have been some fear among the policy planners of the large International Governmental Organizations (IGO) of being overshadowed by NATO's efforts.<sup>20</sup> Possibly because of this slight hint of suspicion, the relationship between NATO and other IGOs hasn't fully evolved yet to a fruitful standard. It also poses the practical dilemma of where should NATO's crisis management mandate end and where should those of the IGOs begin? This dilemma is of course also inherent to the internal NATO discussion on how civilian does the Alliance wants itself to be. In this sense NATO might benefit from keeping to its military roots since the most military action can do is create stability and a space in which a civilian process can be established, by for instance UN agencies.<sup>21</sup>



Picture: Isafmedia on FLICKR / Norwegian soldiers talk to a local Afghan in Faryab Province, Afghanistan

Probably most problematic is the relation between NATO and the various humanitarian organizations (henceforth NGOs). Although there is a myriad of different NGOs, the majority is very reluctant in collaborating with the military.<sup>22</sup> This makes aligning activities very hard and hampers the overall civil-military effort in crisis area. This alignment is crucial however for CIMIC to be of any added value, not only from a military perspective but also in the wider scope of crisis management. A more efficient coordination is needed in order to avoid duplication of efforts to help affected populations more effectively and resolve conflict. Both parties are aware of this but due to cultural and organizational differences it has been hard to implement such a sort of coordination or alignment. For instance the military are interested in working on the ground with NGOs but are less inclined to cooperate on the planning level because they do not want to incorporate too many civilian goals in their military planning. While on the other hand, the NGOs rather avoid cooperation on the ground but are interested in working together on the planning level in order to have some input regarding measurements.<sup>23</sup>

In theatre NGOs tend to avoid collaboration with military and keep their distance from CIMIC endeavours, not only as an ideological stance but also as a risk mitigation strategy. NGOs are somewhat appalled by the securitization of humanitarian aid as a result of some COIN and CIMIC operations. From the humanitarian perspective (as laid out in the Geneva Conventions and Oslo Guidelines) the primary driver of action and aid direction should be the needs of the affected population and not political priority.<sup>24</sup> In Afghanistan

<sup>18</sup> Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Right Strategy, Wrong Place- Why NATO's Comprehensive Approach Will Fail in Afghanistan.."

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Cornish and Marit Glad, *Civil-military relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in comprehensive approaches*; Raj Rana, "Contemporary challenges in the civil-military relationship: Complementarity or incompatibility?," *IRRC* 86, no. 855 (September 2004): 565-592; Damian Lily, *The Peacebuilding Dimension of Civil-Military Relations in Complex Emergencies*, A Briefing Paper (London: International Alert, August 2002); T.W. Brocades Zaalberg, *Towards a new concept for civil-military cooperation during stabilization operations*.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Cornish and Marit Glad, *Civil-military relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in comprehensive approaches*; Raj Rana, "Contemporary challenges in the civil-military relationship: Complementarity or incompatibility?."

<sup>21</sup> Mary Kaldor, "New wars."

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Cornish and Marit Glad, *Civil-military relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in comprehensive approaches*; VOICE, *NGO Seminar on Civil-Military Relations*, Seminar Report (Brussels: Voluntary Organizations In Cooperation in Emergencies, February 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Michael Brzoska and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, *Civil-Military Cooperation in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction*.

<sup>24</sup> OCHA, *Oslo Guidelines. Guidelines on the use of foreign military and civil defence assets in disaster relief*, 2007.



CIMIC projects and humanitarian aid, with a focus on reconstruction and development, have been directed to provinces and regions based upon political priority. Such forms of subordinated aid are counterproductive according to the NGOs.<sup>25</sup>

Besides the ideological stance the NGOs also avoid cooperation within the CIMIC framework because of practical objections. Engaging with the military might seriously undermine their image as being impartial and independent. Being associated with the military forces also increases the risk of becoming a target for insurgents. In Afghanistan the integration of humanitarian assistance in political/military strategies has had a negative impact on the security of NGO-employees.<sup>26</sup> This is partly caused by the fact that CIMIC activities blur the lines between military and civilian actors.

Also with the NGOs there is the conflicting issue of mandates. Due to the political interest behind a military mission, which we identified earlier in this article, there is the threat that CIMIC efforts can undermine the sustainability of NGO projects. To mention one example from Afghanistan: In one of the province a free veterinary service severely undermined a carefully built up NGO project where vaccinations of life stock were provided for a small fee, in order to ensure sustainability of the project. Obviously the free PRT service became very popular among the local population forcing the NGO project to close down, thereby damaging a sustainable mechanism.<sup>27</sup> This example illustrates that within the current execution of the CIMIC doctrine political interests collide with need assessment: Projects are often set up for the sake of a project in order to have a deliverable. There is no regard for the needed social infrastructure. Schools are built but no teachers trained, irrigation systems set up but nobody trained for maintaining it. But the effects of this don't wear out as soon as the military have left. Due to the constant interfering of the military in the civil domain the lines between the two spheres are blurred. As a result CIMIC projects stigmatize the civilian effort which remains for years after the military have left, adding years to the process of reconstruction and reconciliation.

## 5. A way ahead.

It's not all bad news and some progress has been made regarding the contribution of CIMIC within CA and NATO's con-

tribution to CA. There is however still a lot of room for improvement and to really successfully contribute to the improvement of international crisis management there still is a long way to go. The current problems that exist are present throughout the NATO command structure from the top level policy planners (political/strategic) down to the soldiers with their boots in the mud having to actually engage with locals and field workers from civil agencies (tactical). There is some interference within the development of civil-military relations that hamper the effective implementation of CIMIC and CA. Problems that were addressed in this article included:

- Current CIMIC doctrine execution and status of CA
- Low intensity relation between NATO and the IGOs and NGOs
- Lack of civil capabilities within NATO

One important and urgent issue the Alliance needs to address is the standardization of the CIMIC doctrine. CIMIC, for it to be of more significant value, should make a shift centre stage becoming more prominent in military planning.<sup>28</sup> Of course this will encompass a difficult, bureaucratic and political, process but NATO should be aware that it is very likely that in the future it will be engaged in more non-article V operations and therefore it needs to be prepared to operate in conflict situations where humanitarian skills are essential.<sup>29</sup> It is probably unlikely that NATO in the future will encounter such hairy situations as in Afghanistan but it should learn from its experiences there. Afghanistan has shown that a country cannot be divided into neat spheres of are designated for stabilization, fighting, or reconstruction. Due to the unforeseen circumstances in Afghanistan, the failure of securing areas, lack of civil engagements, we see that the military are forced to fill in civil tasks for a longer period than intended and the situation has shown that the military are in general quite lousy in performing these tasks.<sup>30</sup> The tasks the military has to perform in these complex situations is often very ad hoc in character and includes a wide range of activities. CIMIC should focus on supplying humanitarian assistance based on the basic needs of the affected population and be a tool to hand over ownership in a region to the local government and people as quickly as possible and engage civilian agencies to deploy their structural assistance projects.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Cornish and Marit Glad, *Civil-military relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in comprehensive approaches*.

<sup>26</sup> "Aid Worker Fatalities in 2009 | Human Rights | Change.org." n.d., [http://humanrights.change.org/blog/view/aid\\_worker\\_fatalities\\_in\\_2009](http://humanrights.change.org/blog/view/aid_worker_fatalities_in_2009).

<sup>27</sup> Stephen Cornish and Marit Glad, *Civil-military relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in comprehensive approaches*.

<sup>28</sup> T.W. Brocades Zaalberg, *Towards a new concept for civil-military cooperation during stabilization operations*.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Right Strategy, Wrong Place- Why NATO's Comprehensive Approach Will Fail in Afghanistan."

<sup>30</sup> Michael Brzoska and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, *Civil-Military Cooperation in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction*.





Picture: NATO / Helsinki NATO meeting on CA

The interference of military activities within the civilian domain has led to some irritation among the civil agencies. NATO should try to improve its relation with the civilian agencies first by raising its awareness on civilian doctrines, culture of organization, and project conduct. It should open up the dialogue with the civilian sphere and share information in order to create some mutual awareness of each other. Due to the current operational support function of CIMIC, military in the field rather see civilian agencies do work that fits within their aim; if they do not wish to collaborate they are seen as obstructionist. This is a grave misconception of the efforts of the civilian organizations and it is not a proper starting point for a sustainable relation.

On the same terms civilian agencies are obliged to understand the evolving non-combat doctrine, operations, and aims of the military forces with whom they are obliged to share their working environment.<sup>31</sup> This awareness raising could be done by improving the way in which information is shared between the various actors. This includes lessons learned, joined education and exercises, and the development of trainings.<sup>32</sup> NATO should enhance pre-deployment training and exercises with civilian agencies on all levels. Furthermore both parties should keep each other informed at all levels and stages, this in order to acquire a better understanding of each other's objectives.<sup>33</sup>

In future crisis management operations the Alliance will need to rely on its capabilities to liaise and co-operate with civilian agencies because of the current trend of the shift of focus towards human security.<sup>34</sup> This collaboration should take place not only in the field but also on the planning level in

order to be more efficient. NATO should not feel obliged to independently develop extensive civilian capabilities in order to fill the humanitarian gap often present in a complex emergency. Besides the fact that it is not the Alliance's core business so to say it also would seriously interfere with civilian efforts, their mandate, and more importantly it further politicizes humanitarian aid which is an undesirable process. It is also doesn't seem to be in NATO's interest to carry out long term reconstruction and development projects. For a coherent and comprehensive approach to crisis management it seems best for all stakeholders involved that NATO acts as military as possible but be able to act civilian when necessary. In this regard training and education of CIMIC personnel in order to raise awareness and improve civil capacities is an important aspect. Within the organization here is a shortage of deployable civilian personnel and in the field CIMIC staff is followed up rather rapidly which encompasses a loss of specific expertise in a certain area and confidence built up. The incorporation of more functional specialists both in the field and in the planning level could contribute to a better need assessment, better liaising with civilian agencies and a better execution of the CIMIC doctrine. Only adding a tribal or development advisor doesn't contribute extensively to CIMIC capabilities. NATO's civil capabilities and CIMIC implementation should not be there to try and integrate civilian efforts but rather try to harmonize and streamline the civilian and military efforts, make a clear separation of functions, to contribute to stability in an area.

NATO recently stressed at the Lisbon summit its commitment to working more closely with its international partners in order to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilize post-conflict situations.<sup>35</sup> The improvement of the international effort is however not a challenge for NATO alone. As identified, national strategies often undermine the transnational effort of a mission and there seems to be a lack in unity of purpose. To overcome this, the build up of a systematic relationship is essential. A relationship where regular meetings are held in order to discuss practices and experiences, measure progress and evaluate missions in order to enhance understanding of opportunities for alignment and co-operation.<sup>36</sup> This needs the involvement of all the stakeholders and preferably with the civilians in the lead and not NATO.

<sup>31</sup> Raj Rana, "Contemporary challenges in the civil-military relationship: Complementarity or incompatibility?."

<sup>32</sup> H.J. Kasselmann, "CCOE Support to the Operationalization of the Comprehensive Approach (CA) - Best Military Advice on the way ahead for the CA Platform," June 2, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Brzoska and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, *Civil-Military Cooperation in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction*.

<sup>34</sup> Heads of State and Government of NATO members, "Strategic Concept For the Defence and Security of The Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation".

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Julian Lindley French, Paul Cornish, and Andrew Rathmell, *Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach*, Programme Paper (London: Chatham House, March 2010).



## 6. Conclusions

Complex emergencies pose a lot of interdependent problems that must be dealt with simultaneously.

NATO tries to accomplish this with its contribution to a comprehensive approach and deploying tools like for instance CIMIC. The situation in Afghanistan has shown however that these complex emergencies are indeed highly complex and it is difficult to implement the new crisis management doctrines. To overcome these challenges NATO should try to move from the current narrow military understanding of CIMIC to a wider more holistic approach on crisis management. Furthermore, doctrine implementation demands capacities and the Alliance will need to come to a frame of reference in order to standardize its crisis management approach, especially the CIMIC doctrine.

The blurring of lines between humanitarian action and political-military action should be avoided because it hinders a successful stabilization and reconstruction effort. Quite frankly it would be best for all parties if they try to stick, as much as possible, to their turf and respective expertise. Therefore in benign environments civil agencies should be the first choice on all strands except security operations and

local defence force training. In order to establish such a working relation in the field pre-deployment preparation is a must: On the planning level, military forces should have regular talks and exercises with civilian agencies in order to raise mutual awareness but also to become better aware of each other's goals and abilities this in order to, hopefully, better coordinate or align activities in the theatre.

The Alliance, and the member nations, can contribute to this development by altering their current mindset on this issue. A first step has been the underlining of the importance of a comprehensive approach at the recent Lisbon Summit. Further steps will include change in the areas of planning, classification of data, development of capacities and doctrinal implementation. This is needed to smoothen the relation with the civilian agencies and eventually to deliver a more sustainable CA contribution in theatre. Let's not forget that the comprehensive approach is a mindset, a way on how to tackle a complex emergency. This approach will be needed in the future and in order to implement this approach CIMIC will be vital.

Any comments or suggestions to this information leaflet?

Would you like to contribute an article?

Please contact us!

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