

Civil-military cooperation: Definition and Purpose

NGOs and UN peacekeeping operations increasingly operate in a shared domain. Experiences in missions and operations have demonstrated that in the framework of military operations, the spectrum of relations between forces and civilian authorities, populations, organizations and agencies is complex.

As military action alone is insufficient to prevent or resolve crises/conflicts, success in operations require enhanced interaction amongst Military and non-Military actors at all levels before and during Military operations.

While the debate on civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) in complex political emergencies continues unabated, several organizations and nations are in the process of defining their positions on the subject. While recognising the need to find ways of cooperation and coordination, the different actors hold various views on how to respond to the altered conditions.

The fundamental question is what is meant by civil-military cooperation. This clearly means different things to different people, even within the military. Apart from the definitions used by individual nations and in particular by the NGO community that is using CIMIC as a term to refer to military involvement in humanitarian aid, perceived as a merger of political, military and humanitarian objectives that compromises humanitarian objectives and principles, two formal definitions currently exist: one from NATO, and one from the UN.

The UN simply refers to the need to cooperate at all levels within and outside the immediate area of the emergency. Since the end of the cold war era the number of conflicts increased and their nature changed. Until the late 1980s, the majority of wars were inter-state conflicts, but nowadays the world faces predominantly intra-state disputes and civil wars.



From 1991 the face of UN peacekeeping missions changed substantially. Until then UN Peacekeepers were used for dealing with interstate conflicts, serving as neutral observers to monitor cease-fire and to create buffer zones. The use of force was prohibited. Starting in the early 1990s peacekeeping forces were increasingly applied to intra-state conflicts and civil wars. The tasks, which were carried out by the peacekeepers, became more comprehensive and complex. The UN started to mandate missions under Chapter VII of the UN-Charter, which allowed the deployed forces to take coercive action.

NATO focuses on a partnership between civil and military organizations in support of the military mission. As a political military Alliance, NATO is committed to a broad approach to security as set out in the 1999 Strategic Concept and 2006 CPG and in this context crisis management is a core task. Prior to 1999 NATO viewed the role of CIMIC as a logistic function – Host Nation Support, this changed after the experiences learned in the Balkans. A new way of thinking:

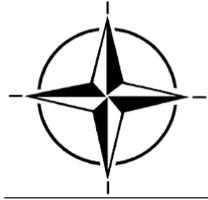
- Civilian Organizations are always present;
- Media has a wider impact in real time;
- Working in the civil environment cannot be avoided.

NATO Strategic Concept (Lisbon summit 2010) underlines that lessons learned from NATO operations show that effective crisis management calls for a Comprehensive Approach (CA) involving political, civilian and military instruments. Within NATO's Comprehensive Approach, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) is marked as one of the military facilitators. This enables the military to help reach the desired end state by coordinating, synchronizing and de-conflicting military activities with civil actors, thus linking military operations with political objectives.

In order to maximize success for all parties, it is crucial that all sides fully understand how each partner plans and operates. On one hand, military personnel at the tactical level will carry out CIMIC tasks, as generically described in NATO CIMIC doctrine AJP-3.4.9 and specified in tactical

publications, directly contributing to the military effort as ‘boots on the ground’. On the other hand, CIMIC tasks will be carried out by personnel not directly linked to CIMIC staff functions.

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AJP-9

NATO CIVIL-MILITARY CO-OPERATION (CIMIC)
DOCTRINE

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The AJP-9 doctrine defines several principles for the civil-military relationship.

“The co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies.”

The immediate purpose is to establish and maintain the full co-operation of the NATO commander and the civilian authorities, organizations, agencies and population within a commander’s area of operations in order to allow him to fulfil his mission:

Aim: to enhance NATO’s ability to interact with other actors in order to improve Alliance contribution to crisis prevention and management;

Scope: to promote improved interactions and working relationships without defining the role of any actor. Interaction implies neither military control of civil organizations nor the reverse;

Objectives:

- to achieve greater coherence of efforts by different actors;
- to develop mechanisms to optimize interactions;
- to improve practical cooperation;

in order to collaborate more effectively in planning and conducting operations.

The dialogue between civilian and military actors about their understanding of key terms such as „security“, „crisis prevention“, „weak statehood“ and „peacebuilding“ should be intensified, Civil-

military cooperation is essential for the effective and efficient management of complex conflict situations, and therefore needs to be improved.

At the end, we can say that many progresses have been achieved, however it is necessary to continue to dialogue in order to share as much as possible procedures to be adopted and targets to be identified.

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