

CIVIL MILITARY COORDINATION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

Abstract

Military co-ordination in recent decades faces a number of complex and often interconnected challenges, including increased international interventions in fragile and conflict-affected states, the rise in frequency and scale of natural disasters, and the rapid proliferation of "humanitarian" actors, including non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations and the private sector. Debates on civil-military coordination tend to focus on conceptual issues, with lack of analysis as to how the relationship works at a practical level and more importantly how this relationship affects the humanitarian outcome for the population in need of humanitarian aid and protection. In the research of civil-military coordination, the author is guided by the following questions: How can humanitarian and military actors engage more effectively and strategically with one another? What can they really expect from each other? Are the existing frameworks for civil-military coordination (at the political, strategic and operational level) sufficient and appropriate for the goal? Answers of these questions would be an important step in securing a more constructive and effective civil-military relationship at strategic, operational and tactical levels.

Keywords: CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION, COOPERATION, SUPPORT, PRINCIPLES, LAST RESORT

1. The Notion of Civil-Military Coordination

In a scientifically expertise sense, there is a need to first define the notion of Civil Military Coordination. The notion of *Civil-Military Coordination* is often related to other terms similar to it, terms that are single-valued, concepts that are narrower or more comprehensive in content, but also notions that associate with each other, although they essentially misrepresent, that is, they are completely different. As such notions besides the notion of civil military coordination in professional literature that treats civil and military sector relations in security systems in the broadest segment, we come across the notions / terms: *CMCoord*, *CIMIC*, *civil military relations*, *civil-military cooperation*, *civil-military support* and others. Bellow, we first elaborate the distinction of these notions.

1.1 Civil military coordination – CMCoord

In our case, when we talk about civilian military coordination in humanitarian activities, the expression we use is *humanitarian civil-military coordination* or CMCoord. Thus, the humanitarian civil-military coordination defined by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva (OCHA): represents "the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and, when appropriate, pursue common goals" (OCHA, 2008, 1c)¹. To this end, the *Standing Interagency Committee* (IASC)² adds that the spectrum of interaction between military and humanitarian actors listed in the definition above is from coexistence up to cooperation. The range of interaction in the form of civil-military relations expressed as the rank of civil-military cooperation (such as in joint operations) is reduced as the intensity of military operations increases to combat. Joint operations are more acceptable in response to disasters in peace. The high possibility of civilian military cooperation in peace stems from the small risk of humanitarians being drawn into the dynamics of the conflict (which is absent in this case), and vice versa, the small opportunity for civilian military cooperation in a state of violent conflict (war) stems from the high risk humanitarians to be drawn into the dynamics of the conflict. Thus, in case of CMCoord, the essence of civil-military coordination is to determine in an appropriate manner the civil sector to engage with the military according to the operation scenario.

1.2 CIMIC (CIMIC)

CIMIK is a military term for which there are different interpretations, but essentially refers to the engagement of military actors with civilians in a particular operation or mission.

1.2.1 NATO CIMIC

At NATO, CIMIC represents "coordination and cooperation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, includ-

¹ OCHA is part of the UN Secretariat who is responsible for bringing humanitarian actors together in a more coherent response to emergencies. It was founded in 1998 with the reorganization of the UN Humanitarian Affairs Unit. Its mandate includes the coordination of a humanitarian response, policy development and humanitarian counseling.

² The IASC is the oldest and the highest level interagency forum for humanitarian NGOs, UN agencies and international organizations. Provides coordination, policy development and decision-making on humanitarian issues, including UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. Established in 1992 and approved by Resolution UN General Assembly 48/57 in 1993.

ing the national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies".³ Doctrinally, CIMIC provides a military function through which commanders connect to civilian agencies active in the space of operations. The main goal of CIMIC is to obtain support and potentially resources from the "domicile population, coordination and joint planning with civilian agencies, as well as providing expertise, information, security, infrastructure and capacity building for the locals in support of the military mission" (NATO, s.a). As a consequence, the distribution of CIMIC efforts tends to follow military priorities and does not offer "unconditional support to the humanitarian response" (SCHR, 2010, 7).

1.2.2 The UN CIMIC

DPKO (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) The UN Peacekeeping Operations Unit with CIMIC places less emphasis on supporting purely military objectives (as NATO does) and instead focuses on achieving the broader goals of the UN Security Council and preserving adequate relations with civil and humanitarian aspects in the overall (integral) response of the UN. According to DPKO, CIMIC is "a military staff function in UN integrated missions that facilitates the interface between the military and civilian components of the mission, as well as with the humanitarian, development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN mission objectives" (UN DPKO / DFS-Department of Field Support, 2010).

1.2.3 EU CIMIC

In the EU, CIMIC is understood similarly to the UN by taking into account the "Guidelines on the use of the military and civil defence assets in disaster relief", updated in November 2006 (known as the "Oslo Guidelines") and their predecessors "Guidelines on the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in support of UN Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies" (European Commission, 2007, 317). The difference in the use of this term in the EU is that there is further erosion of the militancy of the notion CIMIC as understood in NATO. Namely, according to the European Commission, the capacities "must be deployed in a way which complements and supports the work of humanitarian organizations" (European Commission, 2007, sec 3.5).

1.3 Civil-military relations

The expression of civil-military relations relates mainly to the interaction between the military and a wider range of civilian actors, including civil society, state authorities, the rule of law, security sector reforms, human rights and development actors, and can be applied to a large number goals. But, in a simpler way, the term used in the context of security issues is in

³ Articulated in MC 400/2 and MC 411/1 and quoted in AJP 9.

connotation with democratic control of the armed forces, i.e. civilian control over the military sector. In professional literature it is most often common in the descriptions of the security situation and the changes in the security systems of transitional newly established democratic societies that previously had a socialist political orientation, or when the security situation in autocratic, totalitarian and militaristic societies should be explained.

1.4 Civil-military cooperation

The roots of the notion of civilian military cooperation lie in the civil defence systems, as they were organized and functionally set until the end of the Cold War. Namely, at that time civil defence systems at state level usually consisted of: the civil protection subsystem which was the most significant subsystem in the civil defence system; then sub-system activities for crisis control /management as the most important political explanation / justification for the objectives of civil defence; and the civilian support subsystem (which at NATO level was known as Civil Support and Civil Planning). With the end of the Cold War and the shift in the security paradigm and the accompanying transformations of national and collective security systems, there has been a transformation of civil defence systems that have currently had a not so clearly recognizable structure and function that, according to the previous organizational setup, are now with an elastic organization and a formation consisting of: Protection and rescue system (civil protection); and a Crisis Management System-that are mutually incompletely separate concepts; as well as the civil military cooperation system that functions in a more separate position, most often within defence systems. Civil military cooperation is in the function of enabling the overall civilian resources and opportunities to be used by the military in peace and war. In this setting, the seemingly dormant civil defence system will be re-engaged in case of military conflict and/or terrorist attacks of greater proportions in peace.

2. Humanitarian principles of civil-military coordination and their inconsistency

The fundamental principles on which civil-military coordination is based are in fact the same principles on which the delivery of humanitarian aid is based. Thus, civil-military coordination in the form of cooperation will be carried out in accordance with the following humanitarian principles (OCHA, 2010; IFCR/ICRC, 1996):

- Humanity - which means the provision of humanitarian assistance where it is needed and in a manner that respects the rights and dignity of the individual.

- Impartiality - where the provision of humanitarian assistance is carried out without discrimination among recipients of assistance and is con-

ducted solely according to the needs, with the priority given to the most urgent cases of anxiety / danger.

- Neutrality - which means providing humanitarian assistance without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversial situations of political, religious or ideological nature.

- Independence - which means providing humanitarian assistance in a way that is autonomous by political, economic, military or other goals of the actors engaged in these areas where humanitarian activities are undertaken.

The feasibility of the principles is shown to be problematic, especially when it comes to the principle of neutrality and even more pronounced in the principle of independence, which is still known as principle of non-politicality. Questionability of these principles stems from the fact that in the relation of military-civil cooperation, the military actors appear as relatively new actors with humanitarian roles, but at the same time actor who in some way represent political mechanisms. The essence of the problem stems from the following: If humanitarian aid needs to be distributed without any political agenda in accordance with the humanitarian principles, then how to carry out humanitarian tasks with missions and / or operations of a certain agency that has a political background?! Thus, the question arises as to why the legitimate mandate of all political instruments of organizations / agencies used for political purposes include humanitarian aid?! Without clearly delineating the roles that give full responsibility to humanitarian aid to civilian humanitarian actors, their humanitarian aid would become only another instrument of political bodies - an instrument that would be used if there are more political and strategic priorities than priorities that are strictly based on needs. The humanitarian community points to the possible emergence of a dual system in which major humanitarian actors are responsible only for inconspicuous crises, while political actors / organizations perform "humanitarian" actions only in areas in which they have strategic, political and security interests. All of this greatly compromises the consistency in the implementation of the principles and makes these principles disputed by the humanitarian community.

3. Trends and Challenges for Civil-Military Coordination

In a case of crisis, it is shown that basic civil-military coordination is essential for the protection of humanitarian principles and to provide an effective humanitarian response. Lately there is a trend where humanitarian organizations and the military are increasingly working in the same environments. Until nearly a decade ago, there was a limited analysis of existing literature on how their relationship works in practice. It was unclear what is the impact on their relationship, in operational terms, with the changing na-

ture of conflicts and the development of an increasingly integrated approach to international interventions?! The first more concrete answer in this regard was given by the Humanitarian Policy Group with its project titled "Civil-Military Co-ordination: a Search for a Common Ground" completed in 2012. The project examines the interaction between international humanitarian and international or foreign military actors acting in a crisis situation, and offers some solutions to the relationship between national military actors and the international humanitarian community. The project report focuses on three thematic sections: 1) The rise of international military engagement in humanitarian actions and the overall problems it represents for coordination with international humanitarian actors; 2) Connection aspects that are specific to the situation of disasters; 3) Responsibility for the protection of civilians.

The focus of the analysis here will be placed on the second thematic unit, i.e. civil-military coordination in response to disasters.

3.1 Civil-military coordination and response to disasters

In much of the available literature that treats civil-military interaction, were mostly studied the so-called "Mega-catastrophes" (such as the Haiti earthquake in 2010, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake in Pakistan, the major floods that hit the United States in 2010 and 2011, as well as the Hurricane Mitch, which destroyed major parts of Central America in 1999). Thus, it was recorded that the foreign military engagement in the disaster response began with the serious deployment of significant international military funds to support the response of Hurricane Mitch in 1999. Twelve of the 30 states that responded contributed to military support (Wihart et al., 2008, 17). According to the US Army Peacekeeping Institute, "complex humanitarian emergencies such as those created by Hurricane Mitch in the Central American region are likely to be harbingers of future US military operations" (US Army Peacekeeping Institute, 1999, iv). The United States "deployed its military assets most frequently and in the greatest volume – 15 times between 2003 and 2006 for disaster relief" (Hanley, 2010, 12). But not only the United States, but also European countries have deployed military assets for natural disasters in Africa, Central America, the Middle East, and Asia. Thereafter, the intergovernmental bodies (such as ASEAN with the MCDA; UN; or NATO Euro-Atlantic Coordination Centre for Disaster Response) are not lagging behind. Such deployments are likely to be repeated and will include western and non-western military forces. The US Department of Defence announced this deployment as a "Core Military Mission" (US DoD, 2010). This increased military engagement is linked to humanitarian and political or security priorities in countries where there is a strategic interest. The "governments recognise that helping hands in uniform can boost their image and security ties to stricken nations" (Hanley, 2010). There are allegations that in-

creased military engagement in response to disasters causes a blurring of the difference between military and humanitarian spheres and competencies, but there is agreement that "from the humanitarian perspective, organisations appear to be less inclined to advocate for their relations with the military to be guided by humanitarian principles in natural disasters as compared to situations of conflict" (SCHR, 2010, 7).

3.2 Challenges for civil-military coordination in response to disasters

The most frequently highlighted challenges in such cases are: a) lack of coordination at the operational level in planning and reviews of the action; b) weak structures and processes for facilitating interactions; and c) essential gaps in "existing guidance" on specific issues.

Operational coordination. It points to the lack of effective operational coordination between military and humanitarian actors. But, if the civilian and military actors are separately examined, the established non-coordination is more about the humanitarian sector itself than its relation with the military. The challenge arises from the usually large number of humanitarian organizations involved in a specific disaster response. The lack of coordination is also the case among many military actors. The oversaturation of foreign military actors results in harsh cooperation due to the numerous security procedures and resistance between groups. It imposes the solution to be an ad hoc formal agreements and the establishment of a common centre. Only then comes the problem of vagueness how to connect military and humanitarian actors, that is, how to engage military actors together with the whole of the cluster in which humanitarian organizations operate. Unlike foreign military forces, the national army does not have that problem and it is closely involved in the cluster system. The next challenge is the unwillingness of some members or cluster leaders to exchange information with the military regardless of whether it is a national army or foreign military forces. This in turn entails the problem of non-participation of military actors at cluster meetings. In the overall complex situation, one must not forget that the central role in the coordination will have the national army.

Effective coordination - problems and solutions. In general, the military identifies two issues for achieving effective coordination: one problem is in insufficient and robust coordination structures, processes and mechanisms; while the second refers to the effectiveness of a strategic level versus the demonstrable weakness on the terrain and the poor dispersion on the terrain that is characterized by concentrating on one area and completely absence in other areas.

The possible solutions consist of: Identifying structured coordination processes and mechanisms, i.e. having clear direction for the engagement;

establishment of a joint command centre (for the military and humanitarians) that will function on personal relations even though it gives an outward image of separation (Hofmann and Hudson, 2009); preparing the humanitarians and the military for disaster response that will be based on an early structured engagement of cooperation in simulations, exercises and trainings; and Connecting in Strategic Disaster Management Network that will cover all key stakeholders, including government departments.

4. Instead of the conclusion: Limitations of the basic guidelines (existing guidelines)

The Oslo Guidelines, the "leading international instrument concerning the role of militaries in the response to natural disasters" (SCHR, 2010, 6), do not provide guidance on relations with the host country. They do not treat the most problematic areas in terms of military-humanitarian relations, especially if the catastrophe accompanies a conflict in which the domestic army is a party.

Also, the relationship between national military and international humanitarian actors has not been sufficiently developed. Delivery of aid in most cases must be in line with the host government, that is, an intervention without government knowledge, and even when limited selective military properties are used, it causes some tension and will be applied only in exceptional situations.

The relationship between international military and international civilian actors is quite variable when disaster response activities are undertaken in situations of ongoing armed conflict, general violence or political instability. For the conflict zones, standard operating procedures (SOP) for military forces are being developed, but most often the priority is placed on the security of military actors rather than on the protection of civilians. While recognizing the concern that humanitarian organizations have with regard to coordination with the military in the context of disasters, it is not sufficiently determined whether any such conflict poses an increased challenge for coordination with humanitarian actors?!

One of the key principles in the existing guidelines is that of the "last resort" (final necessity) in disasters. Humanitarian actors have a different understanding of the principle of last resort, and the Standing Interagency Committee (IASC) explains that decisions on the use of foreign military assets in certain cases have been lengthy and complicated, in no way unified in their application and this resulted in greater engagement of military properties that are either not used or used in an ineffective and inefficient way. This is partly related to the lack of specific guidelines for the use of MCDA (IASC, 2011, 2).

The use of MCDA in "last resort." For this purpose, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), managed by the Humanitarian Coordinator, has prepared an HCT-agreed framework. The framework specifies five key conditions: the use of property must be based exclusively on humanitarian criteria; the ultimate need is a last resort when the highly vulnerable population cannot be helped or the protection cannot be achieved by any other means and there is no corresponding civilian alternative; the urgency of the given task requires immediate action; the use of the property is temporarily limited in time and scope; and the use of the property is approved by the HCT.

From a military perspective, problems relating to the implementation of the principle of a last resort are likely to relate to the failure of some countries to adequately translate policy and doctrine guidance and in the application of principles in different ways. The implementation of the last-resort principle is also complicated by the UN mechanisms. Under these mechanisms in the event of a disaster, upon request and with the permission of the host country, the UNDAC Team should be deployed on the ground to conduct an initial needs assessment. The MCDA Military Assets Register is based on the assumption that military assets will remain committed to the registry with priority over the needs of national defence, and this arises as a reason for some countries to falsify their contributions in the MCDA registry.

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