

Epilogue

CIMIC as complex international Military-Civilian Intervention for Conflict Solution and Relief

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R.V.A. Janssens

While NATO's definition of CIMIC would suggest an unambiguous concept, the essays in this volume make clear how complicated it can be and how it defies simple categorization. CIMIC takes place both during disaster relief and during peacekeeping operations. It takes place after military conflicts as well as during civil wars. CIMIC means military officers and enlisted men dealing with local government, if any is present, or else establish a local government. It also means dealing with local and international NGOs, and international government organizations. CIMIC is about maintaining peace and order and bringing relief to people who need it desperately, about rebuilding - often literally - societies, but sometimes it can also lead to entanglement in local conflict and result in 'mission creep' with detrimental results.

All of these aspects have been addressed by the essays in this collection. The discourse on CIMIC has been set by Michael C. Williams¹ and Thomas G. Weiss.² Their studies have provided an overview of the issues involved with CIMIC.³ They discussed topics ranging from the moral question of intervention during humanitarian crises to the roles of NGOs and of military forces in the operational area. Many of the issues mentioned in their works have been studied in detail by others, including the authors in this volume.

It is remarkable that there are many studies about war, yet few about ending wars. Most of the studies about ending wars focus on diplomatic settlements and international conferences.⁴ Few of these works deal with the role of the military in ending conflicts (with the exception of describing decisive battles). The historical context of CIMIC is therefore rarely covered.⁵ Most of the works concerned with CIMIC treat only peace support operations or humanitarian aid during the 1990s. Consequently, the majority of the works deal with UN peace operations, describing the complications of multi-national military operations under the precondition of non-intervention.⁶

Janssens and **Teitler** offer their view on earlier forms of civil-military cooperation. They see the origins of CIMIC in World War II operations, both in liberated nations and in the Allied occupation of enemy territory. Another dimension was added to CIMIC by counter-guerilla warfare at the end of the colonial period, notably in Asia, where winning the 'hearts and minds' of the local population was crucial to the success of these military operations. The Cold War period in Europe led to an experience that can be seen as the mirror opposite of contemporary CIMIC: civilian administration was to facilitate military operations. Yet, this notion of CIMIC - 'host nation support' - still falls within the context of civil-military cooperation. It is interesting to note that the key aspect of these (proto-)CIMIC operations during the period 1943-1989 was the way in which the armed forces dealt with local government and the local population.

In the years since 1990 the changes in CIMIC operations have been rapid. In this context, we can note *two crucial developments* in peacekeeping operations. *First*, as UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali encouraged a new kind of peace support operations, in which United Nations armed forces tried to diffuse conflicts within states. *Second*, and probably in line with interference in these intra-state conflicts, the armed forces began to take notice of

the role of NGOs. Often these NGOs were already present in failing states, trying to improve living conditions.

The role of these NGOs had been neglected for a long time in the study of international relations. Most of these NGOs have been set up by individual citizens who distrusted national governments. While national governments focus on national interests first and foremost, as Akira Iriye has shown in his excellent study of NGOs, most of these organizations think more in terms of international cooperation, human compassion, and civil society.⁷ To many NGOs, national governments - and as a representative of them, the armed forces - stand for the opposite of what they believe in.

This distrust of national governments by NGOs can be a complicating factor in disaster relief and peace support operations, as noted in many of the essays in this collection. Much of the debate on CIMIC is dominated by the issue of antagonism between NGOs and the military forces. In this volume these ideas are best expressed by **De Wolf**. In his analysis of different approaches of military forces and NGOs toward relief and peace support operations, he states that a key difference is that “aid organizations are demand-driven” and “the military are supply-driven”. It is interesting to note that **Van den Bogaard** in his essay on DART teams shows that this perception is not always true. In the case of natural disasters, the government of the stricken nation has to request aid. If a DART team is sent out, they also take local resources into consideration in their recommendations. In that way, they have exactly the same approach as NGOs.

This is true not only in the case of disaster aid. As **Homan** shows in his analysis of the operation in Bosnia, to the Dutch forces the role of the local community in creating and continuing economic and social projects is crucial. **Rijken**, in his analysis of the UNMEE mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia, also stresses the cooperation with local government and local organizations. CIMIC during UNMEE included host nation support and helping out the local population in areas of shortage and need.

This is not to say that **De Wolf's** observations are incorrect. I believe it is important to see his remarks as an expression of, in **Winslow's** words: the “differences in organizational goals (including values and basic assumptions), organizational composition (gender, age, ethnicity), and actual organizational structure”. **Bollen** and **Beeres** take this observation one step further when they state that “aid organizations have expressed their fear that in collaborating with the military, the latter may try take over control”.

This sentiment is not always unfounded. **Rappard** in his article on CIMIC Group North sees as part of the CIMIC tasks: “economic policy, public finance, spatial and environmental policy, education and culture policy, social policy, movement and transport policy, public health policy, security policy, media and communications policy and agriculture and nature policy”. Thus, it seems that CIMIC has acquired a political component. In any case, it is telling that it is the armed forces that want to set up CIMIC and regulate matters. CIMIC is, after all, a military concept.

Apparently, NGOs do not always see the need to organize all efforts centrally. Again, this difference in perception of the need for central planning can probably be explained by looking at the organizational goals of both armed forces and NGOs. NGOs are often focused on making local enterprises self-sufficient and are therefore more oriented toward local efforts, while NATO forces see CIMIC as part of their overall mission in their operational area.

Yet, there is another perspective to this lack of cooperation. **Bollen** and **Beeres** in their essays try to analyze the different attitudes of NGOs and armed forces. They use the *viable system model* to show what and where cooperation works or does not work. Through concepts such as ‘antagonistic cooperation’ and ‘resource dependency perspective’ they try to explain why civilian and military organizations cooperate in spite of all the differences. Their research results, however, also point in a different direction. Their assumption is, as in most of the

literature, that all these organizations have the same goal in mind: to improve local conditions. In general terms that is true, but there is no consensus on specifics. Disagreement about method or even goals is not limited to military officers, on the one hand, and NGOs, on the other. There is already a substantial body of literature about the intricacies of multi-national military operations. Less attention has been given to the differences among the NGOs and the lack of cooperation among them.⁸ In her essay **Winslow** quotes a Canadian officer who states that “sometimes NGOs don’t want to talk to each other”. **Oostendorp** makes, implicitly, the same observation when he writes about his SFOR experiences. He welcomed NGOs who wanted to cooperate, and he respected NGOs that went their own way. It would be incorrect to presume that these latter NGOs want to be independent only of military forces, they often also do not want any other NGO in their way.⁹

This need for independent identities for all parties involved in both disaster relief and peace support operations becomes also clear in their attitude toward the media. They all want to get attention, in order for the ‘home front’ to see what important tasks they are executing. As **Winslow** points out in the case of negative news, the consequences for NGOs are even worse than for military officers. Bad news might end the career of an officer, but bad news for an NGO might mean the end of funding.

Just as one should not assume that military forces and NGOs are two unified blocks during CIMIC, it would also be a simplification to state that the armed forces should take care of security, and that the NGOs should coordinate the relief effort. As **Winslow** points out, there has been an increasing demand on the military for humanitarian aid. **Van den Bogaard**, in his essay on the DART teams, explains why national CIMIC efforts are necessary. Many of the reasons he mentions have to do with the fact that, especially in the early stages of a relief effort, a national military force is just simply one of the few organizations which can offer the necessary aid: military forces can be deployed quickly (a first group within 24 hours), they have the needed capacity, and they are less budget-restrained. During peace operations, military forces sometimes need to provide both security and aid. In Kosovo, as shown by **Van Loon**, there was no local government and there were no NGOs present when the NATO forces went in. **Rijken** points out that in Eritrea the government did not coordinate with NGOs, which were consequently unprepared. On top of that, he states that it is hard to keep the soldiers and officers from taking initiative themselves, since they too are moved by the living conditions of the local people, and want to offer aid as well.

Again, CIMIC, and the debate on how best to provide aid to people in need, can be very complex since we are speaking of so many different types of operations: relief aid, peace-keeping (as in SFOR and UNMEE), and peace enforcing (as in Kosovo).

The debate about the intricacies of cooperation between military forces and NGOs seems to have overshadowed most other key CIMIC issues. Only **Van den Bogaard** points to the importance of (local) *culture* during CIMIC. As **Janssens** and **Teitler** note in their historical introduction, CIMIC used to be about military forces and local government, which meant that local culture was a crucial element in CIMIC. In the various case studies presented in this volume, the importance of cooperation with local government for the military forces is mentioned. There is no mention, however, of the role of culture in these dealings. It is hard to believe that cultural differences would be of no consequence. Maybe one reason for the absence of culture from the discussion is that most of the case studies in this volume, with the exception of the Dutch Marines in UNMEE, concern operations in Europe. It is a pity that earlier peace support operations or disaster relief by the Dutch Marines are not dealt with here. In the 1990s they participated in peace operations in Cambodia, northern Iraq, Haiti, and in disaster relief in the Caribbean. Their experience with non-Western cultures in these regions might have shed a different light on the role of culture during CIMIC.

Another way to contribute to better CIMIC is through the study of the colonial period. During the nineteenth century and earlier, military forces of European nations often had to execute military government or deal with local government (and not only by fighting them). Regularly, social scientists were used to explain local culture and win, in modern words, the 'hearts and minds' of at least the local rulers. Although the goal during the colonial period was to keep control over the colony, while CIMIC is directed at making people self-reliant, the experience of the earlier period related to the importance of culture and how to deal with it could still be of interest.

An even broader topic that in general has been ignored, but begs for more attention, is how to give people, or sometimes even nations, *a better future*. Often peace support operations take place in so-called 'failed states', where local government has completely collapsed (if it ever worked), and where living conditions are appalling. Of course, there has been and continues to be a serious debate in the field of development studies on how to address these issues. It seems unlikely that military interventions are the solution to these problems. Yet the choice that is made by doing CIMIC is never debated.¹⁰ European nations have decided that they do not want to interfere in the political situation in a country, but only restore peace and order (unlike the United States military forces, where Civil Affairs includes a political role). NGOs and European governments alike want the initiative for aid to remain with the NGOs. The suggestion seems to be that the development of a local capacity for economic and societal growth is the key goal. However, one should also wonder about the origins of a particular 'failed state' or why people are poor in some countries. Maybe the way power is divided in a society will keep on creating problems, unless the political structure of that country is changed, and a beginning of a civil society can be made.¹¹

This might mean commitment of armed forces to a peace support operation for a longer period than most governments are willing to make (or some armies are capable of making because they have been downsized after the end of the Cold War). These are political issues. This volume was about CIMIC officers and researchers sharing their observations on the development of CIMIC, asking challenging questions, and offering interesting answers to some of those questions.

CIMIC, in its present shape, is a relatively new topic. As has been demonstrated here, it is a complex topic to study, and it is a complex way to solve problems. CIMIC is used in very different circumstances and is about dealing with very different parties, who sometimes do not even want to cooperate. In the end, it is fascinating to see how in recent years, it is not only NGOs who have thought in terms of human compassion, but national governments have, in addition to national interest, paid more attention to moral issues in international politics as well, and committed more military forces to peace support operations and disaster relief. It can hardly be expected that such a relative recent practice can immediately be implemented flawlessly, and consequently many adjustments and attempts at improvement have taken, and will take, place. CIMIC is a challenging way of trying to ameliorate the conditions of people in terrible circumstances, and though it might seem idealistic to some, it is a positive and important contribution to a more stable and peaceful international society.

Notes

¹ Michael C. Williams, *Civil-Military Relations and Peacekeeping*, Adelphi Paper 321 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

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- ² Thomas G. Weiss and Cindy Collins, *Humanitarian Challenge & Intervention*, (2nd edition, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000); Th. G. Weiss, *Military-Civilian Interactions: Intervening in Humanitarian Crises* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999).
- ³ The standard works on the American approach to CIMIC - called Civil Affairs - are John T. Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997) and Karin von Hippel, *Democracy by Force: US Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).
- ⁴ See for instance: Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Gregory A. Raymond, *How Nations Make Peace* (New York: Worth Publishers, 1999), John G. Ikenberry, *After Victory* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000), and A.J.P. Taylor, *How Wars End* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985). An interesting study of the concept of peace is Michael Howard, *The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000).
- ⁵ There are individual studies of wartime or postwar occupations of territory, especially in connection with World War II. These are mostly historical studies that do not specifically focus on civil-military relations.
- ⁶ See for instance: Christopher Bellamy, *Knights in White Armour: The New Art of War and Peace*, (3rd edition, London: Pimlico, 1997). More specific studies of the United Nations peace operations are John Whitman (ed.), *Peacekeeping and the UN Agencies* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), and Wolfgang Biermann and Martin Vadset (eds.), *UN Peacekeeping in Trouble: Lessons Learned from the Former Yugoslavia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998). An exception are the studies published by the Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Center. Their titles include S. Neil MacFarlane and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (eds.), *Peacekeeping at a Crossroads* (Cornwallis Park: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1997), Alex Morrison, Douglas A. Fraser and James D. Kiras (eds.), *Peacekeeping With Muscle: The Use of Force in International Conflict Resolution* (Cornwallis Park: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1997), and David M. Last, *Theory, Doctrine and Practice of Conflict De-Escalation in Peacekeeping Operations* (Cornwallis Park, Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1997).
- ⁷ Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- ⁸ NGOs can be competitive amongst themselves, since they all try to raise money from the public in their home countries. It is essential for an NGO not only to achieve its humanitarian goals, but also to get attention for its achievements as an individual organization in order to be able to raise more money.
- ⁹ See, for example, the contradictory actions of the Red Cross and US CARE in their food relief programs in Somalia (Andrew S. Nastios, 'Humanitarian Relief Interventions in Somalia: the Economics of Chaos', in: *International Peacekeeping*, 3 (1996) 1: 82-83.)
- ¹⁰ An interesting discussion of the negative results of humanitarian aid is offered by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montelos in his *L'Aide humanitaire, aide à la guerre?* (Brussels: Edition Complexe, 2001). Edward Luttwak, in a notorious essay in *Foreign Affairs*, suggested that peace support operations only prolong the misery of civil war and should be stopped (Edward Luttwak, 'Give War A Chance', in: *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1999).
- ¹¹ A much more bleak view on the origins of conflict is also possible. The military historian John Keegan co-authored with Andrew Wheatcroft a study entitled *Zones of Conflict: An Atlas of Future Wars* (Simon & Schuster; New York, 1986) in which they stated that war will continue to erupt in certain places in the world no matter what because of physical, climatic, logistic, and economic reasons.
- It must be said that Keegan expressed in more recent books the hope that violence and war would eventually disappear. See, for instance, John Keegan, *War and Our World*: Chapter 5, 'Can there be an end to War?', pp. 61-74 (Pimlico; London, 1999).