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## Short Presentation of Study on Civil-Military Cooperation – Meaning, Leading Principles, Functions and Cimic in Emergency Situations

Original article

Hristiyana Stoyanova Toneva<sup>1</sup>, A-F

ORCID  [0009-0002-7438-5911](https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7438-5911)

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<sup>1</sup> Logistics and technology Faculty, National Military University Vasil Levski, Bulgaria

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** The article presents the eternal relevance of the decision-making process and its inseparable connection with the personality of the decision-maker. Broadly speaking, the subject of consideration is the civil-military cooperation and relations. The main goal of the author is to review the leading principles and functions of CIMIC and offer information about an actual event where this was helpfully used.

**Methods:** The scientific methodology used is a combination of a theoretical review of the issue and the presentation of the mentioned techniques used in emergency situations in Bulgaria.

**Results:** The importance of the civil-military cooperation in both military and non-military operations is analysed in the article. This is accomplished by using real situations as examples and by theoretical conclusions.

**Conclusions:** The topic is essential for both military and non-military research and operations. As far as the author is concerned, this civil-military cooperation is of paramount importance to the success of military operations.

## **Introduction**

This article presents an analysis of study on Civil-Military Cooperation – its meaning, leading principles and functions and the cooperation in emergency situations, trying to acquaint the scientific audience with the importance of this cooperation in all military operations' successes.

### **1. The meaning of CIMIC**

"Civil-military cooperation is a complex of activities which are designed to plan, organize and lead activities in this area with the purpose of creating a basis for a multilateral approach and increasing the effectiveness of the use of armed forces in solving issues of a political, social and humanitarian nature in the area of the crisis and when dealing with the consequences of disasters“ ( Military Doctrine of the Republic of Bulgaria )

The need for interoperability necessitates the development of a common vocabulary as well as putting a common content into the terms that are used in both national and multinational frameworks.

As of 4 August 2022, NATO's Military Council Joint Standardization Board (MCJSB) approved the new definition for Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) as: A military joint function that integrates the understanding of the civil factors of the operating environment and that enables, facilitates and conducts Civil-Military Interaction to support the accomplishment of missions and military strategic objectives in peacetime, crisis and conflict.

As of 18 July 2022, the MCJSB approved the new definition for Civil-Military Interaction (CMI) as: Activities between NATO military bodies and non-military actors to foster mutual understanding that enhances effectiveness and efficiency in crisis management and conflict prevention and resolution.

These two terms are not only the new baseline for CIMIC in NATO, but also influence how it is perceived by civil counterparts in the wider community of interest.

The interaction between the armed forces and the civilian environment in which they conduct their operations is extremely important to the success of the operations themselves. Planning and conducting the full range of civil-military cooperation activities is the direct responsibility of commanders at all levels and assists them in achieving the objectives of the military operation” ( Military Doctrine of the Republic of Bulgaria).

Most often, when one of the disputing parties is intransigent, it leads to an open conflict. This could force the armed forces to intervene using all their means to end it and enforce international law. At the same time, the armed forces seek to ensure their own safety and that of the civilian population. That is why the CIMIC is aimed at improving the relationship between the troops and the civil authorities, thus facilitating the achievement of the sought military and political goals. They are an integral part of the operational task for which the military leadership of the operation is responsible.

## **2. Leading principles of CIMIC**

The CIMIC Principles are rules that influence the conduct of civil-military cooperation activities in the course of conflict and in the Bulgarian army they are grouped into two categories according to the CIMIC Handbook:

- principles governing the military leadership of CIMIC;
- principles governing civil relations.

### **2.1. Principles governing the military leadership of CIMIC**

There are the following principles concerning this area:

- a) Mission priority - the Bulgarian Army's formations conduct CIMIC activities to support the military mission/operation. CIMIC allows commanders to interact with civilian aspects of the operating environment to fully embrace civilian factors in planning. Only the commander can decide what military resources are to be allocated to the implementation of CIMIC activities so that this does not interfere with the successful conduct of the military operation.
- b) Management of the commander - it is the responsibility of commanders at all levels to direct CIMIC activities so that the necessary integration of military and civilian management and efforts is achieved. Commanders must be aware of the impact of the military operation on the civilian environment as well as the impact of the civilian environment on the military operation.
- c) Economy - commanders should avoid using military forces and resources to accomplish non-military tasks. Military resources are limited and attempts must be taken to preserve military capabilities. Only the necessary minimum of forces and means should be used to support the civilian population.
- d) Prioritization and concentration - the forces and means to accomplish CIMIC tasks available to the Bulgarian Army's commanders are limited, so they must concentrate on executing priority tasks. Concentration has the advantage of allowing the Bulgarian Army's formations to demonstrate a determination to act in the interests of the civilian population and improves the perception of the armed forces by civil society.
- e) Legal obligations and humanitarian considerations - in accordance with international law, the formations of the Bulgarian Army must respect, observe and protect the human rights of individuals and groups of people.

### **2.2. Principles governing the military leadership of CIMIC**

The following principles concerning this area may have been distinguished:

- a) Respect for culture - constant sensitivity to issues related to local traditions, customs, culture and way of life is of utmost importance to the success of the entire mission. Commanders of the Bulgarian Army's formations must demand from their subordinates sufficient knowledge and respect for local culture,

traditions and laws. CIMIC plays a vital role in ensuring respect for local culture through the training of troops.

- b) Common goals - establishing, maintaining and enhancing civil-military cooperation is critical to the success of the mission/operation in the operational area. It is necessary to establish and adopt common goals that are shared by both the armed forces and civilian organizations and the local population.
- c) Shared responsibility - analysis of common goals should lead to agreed shared responsibilities in order to establish and maintain lasting and mutually beneficial relations. As soon as possible, CIMIC authorities should develop cooperation agreements and transitional mechanisms with civil society organizations to avoid misunderstandings and define the roles and responsibilities of both parties.
- d) Consensus - it is necessary to make every effort to ensure and preserve the desire for cooperation between the Bulgarian Army's units operating in a given area, on the one hand, and the authorities, the local population, international and non-governmental organizations, on the other hand. Consensus can break down suddenly for even trivial reasons, and commanders must be prepared to devote sufficient time and energy to overcoming these situations.
- e) Transparency - a successful CIMIC requires mutual faith and trust in all participants in the operation. CIMIC tasks must be transparent, demonstrate ability and determination in order to win the faith and trust of all structures and elements of the civil environment.
- f) Communication - effective communication with civic authorities, agencies and organizations and the local population is vital to maintaining both consensus and cooperation. Clear and effective measures need to be developed to establish and maintain communication channels through the use of CIMIC forces and assets between military and civilian organizations to avoid potential conflicts.

### **3. The main functions of CIMIC**

Effective relationships between governments, local population and civil organizations, on the one hand, and armed forces, on the other hand, are essential for the successful solution of the conflict. Civil-military cooperation is a serious tool for commanders to create and maintain these relationships.

According to the Bulgarian „CIMIC Handbook“ and „The guide for CIMIC specialists in Bulgarian Army“, the main functions of CIMIC are as follows:

- civil-military relations - the purpose of these relations is to provide the necessary coordination to facilitate and support the planning and conduct of the operation. The establishment of relations of political level on the part of the Republic of Bulgaria is an important condition for the success of the operation.
- maintenance of the civil environment - it includes a wide range of activities, such as providing the necessary information, personnel, material resources, technique and equipment, communication facilities, special expertise and training.

Actions for the benefit of the civil environment are undertaken by the troops to assist in the restoration of all or part of the vital functions in the affected country. These include: participation in the restoration of government structures and administration necessary to normalize civil order; reconstruction of the services which help to create satisfactory living conditions and facilitate the renewal of economic life according to the set priorities; restoring the rule of law and public administration; restoration of economic life.

- Support of the troops - the formations of the Bulgarian Army will need significant civilian support in the operational area, both from the local population and in terms of resources. At the military level, the success of civil-military cooperation depends on several factors. First, the contingent planning process must be based on doctrinal parameters, allowing for clearly defined tasks and scope. Second, the ability to fulfill these goals, through availability of adequate funds; personnel, good equipment and sufficient resources.

#### **4. CIMIC in emergency situations**

The successful defense in emergencies such as natural ones - disasters, industrial accidents, catastrophes, humanitarian crises, and others, is carried out by carrying out preventive activities, protection, coordination and interaction activities, assistance, recovery, resource provision, and aid provision.

Today, however, both emergencies and disasters, crises, pandemics and conflicts transcend in scale and scope state borders and it is not impossible for the forces of the civil protection and the fire and rescue teams, medical and others structures to independently cope with a large-scale emergency - a situation, accompanied by mass destruction, damage to the infrastructure and with the multitude of victims and injured among the population. Undoubtedly, efforts, teams and resources are needed of all ministries, departments and organizations, including those of the armed forces.

There are several conditions for the success of civil-military coordination and cooperation between civilian actors and military teams in emergency situations.

To begin with, the participating teams from the military formations must fully understand the mandate, goals and objectives, the role, the structure, methods and principles of non-military actors. It is also important to establish and maintain good relationships before and during the mission to ensure mutual understanding. The specially trained and appointed experts in this field can play an important role in this direction - the CIMIC specialists from the armed forces.

Secondly, the armed forces and CIMIC teams in particular should not seek to displace but only to assist or complement the efforts of civilian participants. In case of a disaster, the condition of the infrastructure may be significantly degraded. Therefore, civil infrastructure components can become completely ineffective (whether due to industrial accident or natural disaster). CIMIC professionals can carry out and provide an adequate assessment of the

condition of a given area and to identify weaknesses and critical gaps or capability gaps in the civilian environment which must be filled, temporarily or permanently.

Another very important condition for successful interaction and good coordination requires mutual understanding of goals, the mandates and capabilities of the participants in the management of crises. This can only be achieved through joint actions in response to the disaster, development of joint training and training programs on a unified scenario and pursuit of clearly formulated common goals and tasks.

Also, clear procedures, protocols and standards are also necessary, on which to do the interaction.

Last but not least, it is mandatory to attract the military formations in the disaster response planning process, the identification and preparation of options and measures for disaster prevention. This will improve the process of split training, training efficiency will increase.

Finally, a very good example can be given here regarding the recent floods in South Bulgaria. Over 2500 military personnel provided assistance for about a month to those affected by the floods in the region of Karlovo, Bulgaria. Also, more than 200 military machines were used in the activities led by the commander of the military formation. The troops cleaned the most damaged houses and repaired the main infrastructure of the towns. A helicopter crew from an airbase also participated in the evacuation of people. Moreover, the military personnel participated in the transportation of seriously ill people and in the delivery of food and water to the people of the affected villages. This cooperation led to better and fast results.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, CIMIC can be defined as cooperation at any level of operations, not only military, which contributes to improving the condition of the civilian population. Knowledge of the functions and principles of CIMIC is mandatory in the planning and organization of the activities by the specialists for the successful completion of any operation or mission. In order to achieve the much desired coordination of efforts between the military formations involved in the disaster area and civil structures, organizations and agencies, they must all be included in the joint planning process and subsequently to coordinate their actions to achieve significant and well concerted joint effects.

This is the way to achieve the desired result – successful civil-military interaction and effective coordination in saving human lives.

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