

The end of the 20th century brought a big change in the way peacekeeping was conducted. Military commanders had to face a previously unknown situation in which theatre of operation became the area of activity of hundreds of civilian organisations. Many of those civilian actors worked on similar issues but their number and diversity of their interests and motivations proved to be a challenge to the armed forces. What is more, it was clear that the contemporary peacekeeping required a multidimensional approach. It no longer meant only supporting peace agreements but also conducting early peace-building activities. As a consequence, the catalogue of tasks of soldiers started to include activities traditionally performed by civilian humanitarian workers.

As a response to this problem, the international community introduced the concept of a comprehensive approach to peacekeeping. It emphasised the necessity of reinforced interaction between the military effort to provide security and the civilian aim of reconstruction. In the ideal scenario described by the comprehensive approach, all actors involved in the area of operation would pursue a common end-state, cooperating, sharing information and supplementing each other's actions. However, achieving comprehensive approach would be impossible without a dedicated capability that would allow the military to engage with civilian actors in a more coherent and systematic way.

Under such circumstances, the NATO Military Committee called for the establishment of a special policy on civil-military cooperation (CIMIC). It was defined as cooperation and coordination, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national populations and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies. The aim of CIMIC branch was to support the military plan by facilitating interaction with civilian actors and de-conflicting military activities with civilian plans.

CIMIC branch is an unusual group in the armed forces. Within NATO, tasks related to civil-military cooperation are performed by soldiers. CIMIC officers are an integral part of the military command and control structure and directly contribute to the military effort as 'boots on the ground'. However, while performing their duties, they are also in continuous contact with civilian actors, who work in a different, less disciplined way, have diverse goals and motivations. As a result, the CIMIC branch constantly and simultaneously operates within two very different environments, mixes two contradictory logics of behaviour and answers to two sets of expectations. It has to accommodate the rigidity of the military with the flexibility of civilian actors, the formality with latitude, and the political goals with idealistic pursuits. It leads to an extraordinary situation in which CIMIC officers, while doing their duty, perform several roles at the same time.

Objective of the project

The overall objective of the proposed project is to determine how tensions between different roles of NATO CIMIC branch influence the efficiency of the NATO doctrine of civil-military cooperation. When an actor is required to fill in two or more roles with contradicting expectations, he or she must necessarily ignore some of those expectations. This way he or she diminishes the efficiency of the role, and as a consequence the efficiency of the doctrine that is built upon this role.

In order to achieve this objective it is necessary to firstly determine the way NATO CIMIC officers define their roles, and secondly identify tensions between them which create the role conflict. All the necessary data will be collected in two phases. The first phase will consist of a desk research, during which the researcher will analyse official documents regarding NATO civil-military cooperation, as well as reports and analysis written by scientists and think tanks. In the second phase the researcher will conduct interviews with officers experienced in performing tasks of civil-military cooperation. All gathered data will then be analysed with regards to CIMIC roles and the conflict between them.

Basic research

The proposed project fulfils all criteria of basic research, meaning it is focused on gaining theoretical knowledge. The direct outcome of the proposed research project will be a full description of roles performed by CIMIC officers. Due to the special role of CIMIC branch as a determinant and an example of change in the theatre of operation, it will also be meaningful for broader topics of nature and dynamics of relations in the system of military operations. Identification and description of the role conflict will allow for better understanding of causes of limited efficiency of CIMIC branch. In this sense, the proposed project will become a base for further scientific research concerning civil-military cooperation and roles of the military in peacekeeping.

Reasons for choosing the research topic

Academics often focus on questions related to the efficiency of armed forces and peacekeeping, incorporating different perspectives. In this sense, also the relation between soldiers' roles and the efficiency of their actions was considered. However, this research usually regards other branches of the armed forces, such as land forces or navy. The research on the branch of civil-military cooperation is very rare. Whereas, thanks to its multidimensionality and multiple roles, it is an exceptionally interesting research topic. What is more, CIMIC is a very useful tool in contemporary peacekeeping. That is why, the efficiency of its actions (resulting from the efficiency of its doctrine) is crucial and in a longer perspective influences the efficiency of peacekeeping mission. Additional reason to conduct the proposed project was the participation of the researcher in specialised NATO CIMIC courses. Thanks to them, the researcher learned the specifics of CIMIC branch and became fascinated with its complexity.