

# Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence The Hague



## NATO Civil-Military Interaction (CMI) A CCOE Fact Sheet

### Introduction:

NATO CMI can be seen as the primary means for military forces to both expand their knowledge networks and develop shared situational understanding of the civil environment with other relevant actors in the area of operations. CMI enables the necessary engagement and coordination process required to create, build and maintain relationships between relevant non-military and military actors. Within these relationships and engagements with non-military actors, the military must be regarded as an equal player.

With regard to facilitating NATO CMI, Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) staff play a vital role. CIMIC interacts with non-military actors and thereby enables and facilitates CMI for other headquarters staff. CIMIC personnel are trained in bringing together the appropriate military and non-military actors. Facilitating CMI will differ at each level of command due to the focus, responsibilities and scope of coordination.

The introduction above leads to the following definition of NATO CMI:

*“Civil-Military Interaction is a group of activities, founded on communication, planning and coordination, that all NATO military bodies share and conduct with international and local non-military actors, both during NATO operations and in preparation for them, which mutually increases the effectiveness and efficiency of their respective actions in responses to crises.”*

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## Mission Implications:

Recent operations have proved that crises cannot be resolved in isolation. Therefore, NATO is convinced that crises can best be managed by coordinating efforts with non-military actors. Properly established and maintained relationships between military and non-military actors lead to better understanding, the avoidance of possible conflicts as well as more effective and efficient actions to counter crisis situations.



Everyone within the mission needs to consider CMI to a certain extent. Especially those who have relations with non-military actors carry the responsibility to make an effort to first understand their non-military counterparts and second seek to be understood by them. In order to do this, the military must assess relevant information and utilize already existing knowledge on non-military actors. Next to this, the military must build new and explore and exploit existing networks within the civil environment prior to the mission. This in order to create relationships and build rapport with non-military actors they have to work side-by-side with and avoid having to start from scratch when the mission begins.

## Relation NATO CMI and UN CMCOORD:

As mentioned above, NATO CMI is conducted between military and non-military actors within an area of operations, with the goal to increase effectiveness and efficiency of their responsive actions. In a lot of missions, NATO will have to work side by side with the UN and its organizations.

The UN uses a concept different from CMI, namely United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord). This concept is focused on interaction between non-military and military actors in humanitarian emergencies. The aim of this interaction should be to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. Both concepts are aimed at developing a working relationship between military and non-military actors. This relationship differs in every situation. However, NATO CMI applies to every NATO mission and aims at the improved efficiency of both military and non-military actors, whereas the UN-CMCoord concept only applies to humanitarian missions and its sole purpose is the benefit of the humanitarian effort.

## Assessment Implications:

Assessments help to create understanding with regard to the civil environment and non-military actors, and understand what consequences military actions can have on them within the area of operations. With regard to the assessments, CIMIC personnel plays a vital role. By using the PMESII (Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information and Infrastructure) and ASCOPE (Area, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People and Events) models CIMIC personnel can identify the best possible way to engage with non-military actors in a coherent and efficient manner.

## Leading Organizations:

As mentioned, NATO CMI is the responsibility of all actors involved in crisis management in the area of operations. However, within the military the J9 branch has the responsibility to conduct assessments with regard to non-military actors, facilitate interaction between military and non-military actors and ensure a coherent military message.



## CMI Principles:

The following principles should be taken into account when conducting CMI:

- Understand non-military actors and respect their autonomy in decision-making.
- Engage proactively with all non-military actors involved in the operation. Commanders in particular must maintain continuous and effective communication with their correspondent counterparts at local, regional, national and international levels.
- Facilitate interactions based upon mutual respect, knowledge of respective roles, trust and transparency. Institutional familiarity, credibility and reliability are key.
- Be able to adapt to evolving and specialized non-military expert advice and factors.
- Promote local ownership and build local capacity, ensuring timely and smooth transition to local ownership as soon as practical.
- Ensure internal NATO military coherence and consistent NATO messaging in interacting with non-military actors.
- Develop and implement a transition plan from the outset to ensure transition to civilian ownership as early as possible when taking on non-military tasks.
- Promote cooperation, reciprocal information sharing and unity of purpose as a desired method to achieve overall strategic aims and objectives.
- Operate within the framework of the NATO mission, responsibilities, authorities and legal obligations.

## Subjects for CMI:

Within the field of CMI, a number of important subjects can be identified that need to be discussed with non-military actors:

- Protection of Civilians
- Women, Peace and Security
- Cultural Property Protection
- Rule of Law
- Children and Armed Conflict
- Good Governance
- Building Integrity
- Gender

## Point of Contact during the Mission:

Military actors should liaise with non-military actors in the area of operations such as Doctors without Borders, UNOCHA, UNDP, the local municipality etc.



## Sources of Additional Information:

An example of the assessment of non-military actors in Afghanistan:

- <https://www.cimic-coe.org/products/conceptual-design/downloads/ccoe-publications/research/>

More information on UNCMCoord can be found here:

- <https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/CMCoord%20Field%20Handbook%20v1.0.pdf>

More information on UNCMCoord from a military perspective here:

- <https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/UN%20OCHA%20Guide%20for%20the%20Military%20v%201.0.pdf>

## References:

- Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence (2014), *Conceptual Considerations on Civil-Military Interaction*
- MC 0411/2, NATO Military Policy on Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Civil-Military Interaction (CMI)
- AJP-3.19, Allied Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation
- Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence (2014), *Best & Bad Practices on Civil-Military Interaction*

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## Do's and Don'ts:



### Do's

- Try to build (personal) relationships.
- Align relevant strategies in the planning phase.
- Evaluate and monitor your activities (and share the results).
- Share/communicate your way of operating.
- Describe the sustainability of your efforts.
- Respect each other's decisions and try to deal with them.
- Communicate your time frame.

### Don'ts

- Do not stereotype.
- Do not create barriers between military and non-military actors.
- Be careful not to disrespect each other's principles.
- Do not create dependency.
- Avoid making promises you cannot keep, they will turn against you.
- Never underestimate the 'need to share'.
- Do not plan in splendid isolation.
- Use existing structures and avoid creating new, parallel ones.

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