Civil-Military Coordination and UN Peacebuilding Operations

*Cedric de Coning**

Abstract

Literature dealing with civil-military coordination (CIMIC) has mostly been concerned with the relationship between humanitarian actors and their military counterparts. In the United Nations (UN) peace operations context, however, the humanitarian-military interface is only one of several civil-military relationships. This paper is concerned with the question whether a different set of principles and guidelines is required for civil-military coordination in UN peace operations. The question is relevant because almost all the UN principles and guidelines for civil-military coordination have been drafted for the humanitarian-military interface, and most have been generated by the humanitarian community from a humanitarian perspective. In contrast, most contemporary UN peace operations are mandated to manage

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* Cedric de Coning is a Research Fellow at ACCORD where he is an advisor to the Training for Peace in Africa and the African Civil-Military Coordination programmes. He is a DPhil student with the Department of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch.

post-conflict peacebuilding transitions that occur in several phases and that involve many different civilian actors, including but not limited to the humanitarian emergency phase and the humanitarian community. The paper argues that UN CIMIC actions can make a positive contribution to the overall peacebuilding process if the military components' resources, energy and goodwill can be positively channelled in support of the overall mission objectives. Keywords: Peacekeeping, Peace Operations, Peacebuilding, Humanitarian, Coordination, Cooperation and CIMIC.

Introduction

Most of the literature dealing with civil-military coordination has been concerned with the relationship between humanitarian actors and their military counterparts. In the UN peace operations context, however, the humanitarian-military interface is only one of several civil-military relationships. Many other civil-military relationships, such as those among the military and human rights officers, electoral advisors, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) coordinators and development workers, continue throughout the life of a peace operation.

Through the years a body of policies and principles that guide civil-military relations has been developed in the UN and beyond. These policies and principles deal almost exclusively with civil-military coordination in humanitarian emergencies. This paper is concerned with the question of whether a different set of principles and guidelines is required for civil-military coordination in UN peace operations, or whether the existing guidelines for civil-military relations in humanitarian emergencies can remain relevant beyond the humanitarian context.

The question is relevant because almost all the UN principles and guidelines for civil-military coordination have been drafted for the humanitarian-military interface, and most have been generated by the humanitarian community from a humanitarian perspective.[1] In contrast, most contemporary UN peace operations are mandated to manage post-conflict peacebuilding transitions that occur in several phases and that involve many different civilian

actors, including but not limited to the humanitarian emergency phase and the humanitarian community. Can UN civil-military coordination policies that have been specifically developed to manage the relationship between humanitarian actors and military forces during the humanitarian emergency phase, be applied to manage the relationship between all civilian actors and UN military units? And can it remain relevant during all the phases of a UN peacebuilding operation?

This paper will analyse this question by first defining and developing a framework for UN peacebuilding operations, and contextualising the humanitarian emergency phase within this larger peacebuilding system. Thereafter the paper will define and analyse civil-military coordination in a UN peacebuilding operation context, and compare civil-military coordination in the humanitarian emergency phase with civil-military coordination in other phases of peacebuilding operations so that the different dynamics at play in the different phases, as they relate to civil-military coordination, can be explored.

UN Peacebuilding Operations

Peacebuilding is a complex system that consists of multiple short-, medium- and long-term programmes that simultaneously address both the causes and consequences of a conflict. In the short term, peacebuilding programmes assist in stabilising the peace process and preventing a relapse into violent conflict. In the long term, peacebuilding programmes, collectively and cumulatively, address the root causes of a conflict and lay the foundations for social justice and sustainable peace. Peacebuilding systems require a coherent and coordinated multidimensional response by a broad range of internal and external actors – including government, civil society, the private sector, international institutions and agencies and international non-governmental organisations. These

1 The exception is the DPKO (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) Policy on Civil-Military Coordination (UN DPKO 2002).

actors undertake a range of interrelated programmes that span the security, political, socio-economic and reconciliation dimensions of society. Peacebuilding starts when hostilities end, usually marked by a cease-fire or peace agreement, and typically progresses through three stages, namely a stabilisation phase, a transitional phase, and a consolidation phase. Peacebuilding ends when a society can sustain its transition without external support and it is replaced by a sustainable development period.[2]

Peacebuilding Phases

Successful peacebuilding operations evolve through three broad phases, namely the stabilisation phase, the transition phase and the consolidation phase.[3] These phases should not be understood as clear, fixed or time-bound, or as having absolute boundaries. One should anticipate considerable overlap in the transition between phases, and regression is possible, in which case a specific system may switch back-and-forth between phases (UN 2004:14).

The Stabilisation Phase

The stabilisation phase is the period that follows immediately after the end of hostilities and has a dual focus, namely establishing a safe and secure environment and managing the immediate consequences of the conflict

2 This definition of peacebuilding was first formulated by the author and Senzo Ngubane for an ACCORD study on *Peacebuilding in Southern Africa* commissioned by JICA in 2004. It was subsequently further refined by the author for the *African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Framework* developed by ACCORD for the Peace and Security Programme of the NEPAD Secretariat (NEPAD 2005).

3 There are various different interpretations of these phases, but most convey the same essential progression from violent conflict to normalisation, e.g. the Association of the U.S. Army & Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington D.C. published a *Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Task Framework* in 2002, in which they identify three stages, namely: the initial response, transformation and fostering sustainability.

through emergency humanitarian assistance programmes. The stabilisation phase will typically overlap with what the humanitarian community will refer to as the humanitarian emergency phase. During the mid to latter parts of the stabilisation phase, preparations will be underway for medium-term rehabilitation and longer-term reconstruction and development actions, and it is likely that various needs assessment processes will be undertaken, often culminating in an international donor conference.

During this phase the internal actors are typically pre-occupied with basic survival and the re-organisation of their social and political systems. As a result, external actors often play a prominent role during the stabilisation phase but they should nevertheless seek every opportunity to involve and consult with the internal actors. Depending on the situation the stabilisation phase usually ranges from 90 days to a year.

The Transition Phase

The transition phase typically starts with the appointment of an interim government, followed by, in the shortest reasonable period, some form of election or legitimate traditional process to (s)elect a transitional government, constituent assembly or some other body responsible for writing a new constitution or otherwise laying the foundation for a future political dispensation. This process takes place according to the provisions of the new constitution, after which a new fully sovereign and legitimately elected government is in power.

The transitional phase is focused on establishing a new legitimate and sustainable socio-political order, underpinned by a functioning bureaucracy, rule of law and a sustainable socio-economic system. The humanitarian focus shifts from emergency relief to recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The relationship between the internal and external players should reflect a growing partnership and a gradual hand-over of ever-increasing responsibility to the local institutions. The transitional phase typically ranges from one to three years (NEPAD 2005:14).

The Consolidation Phase

The consolidation phase is aimed at supporting the newly elected government and the civil society with a broad range of programmes aimed at fostering

reconciliation and nation-building, boosting socio-economic reconstruction, consolidating the rule of law and security sector reform and supporting development programmes across the political, security, socio-economic and reconciliation dimensions of peacebuilding.

The UN peace operation, and especially the military component, is likely to draw down and eventually withdraw during the early or mid stages of the consolidation phase. There will be a transition of responsibilities from the UN peace operation to a UN peacebuilding office and the UN Country Team and internal actors.[4]

The consolidation phase is thus aimed at ensuring that the internal actors develop the capacity to take full responsibility for their own planning and coordination, and that the role of the external actors is reduced to providing technical assistance and support. The consolidation phase typically ranges from four to ten years, but the country is likely to continue to address conflict-related consequences in its development programming for decades thereafter.

The Dimensions of Peacebuilding

Each peacebuilding system is determined by the patterns of interaction of the specific internal and external actors present, the history of the conflict and the peace process that resulted in the peace agreement. Although the specific configuration of each peacebuilding system will be unique, it is possible to identify a broad peacebuilding framework that consists of the following five dimensions: (1) security; (2) political transition, governance and democratisation; (3) socio-economic development; (4) human rights, justice and reconciliation; and (5) coordination, management and resource mobilisation (NEPAD 2005:19).

4 The drawing down of the UN peace operations in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and East Timor (UNMISET), and the establishment of UN peacebuilding officers in their place, are two contemporary examples.

The Security Dimension

The security dimension refers to those activities aimed at ensuring a safe and secure enabling environment for the internal and external actors. In the stabilisation phase this will include actions aimed at minimising the opportunities for spoilers, criminals and others opportunists who thrive in these near chaotic environments (Gueli et al 2005:11). The military force will, in most cases, take control over the territories formerly controlled by the parties to the conflict and ensure freedom of movement throughout the mission area for the civilian components of the mission and humanitarian agencies. Where necessary, this may include providing security to the civilian actors in the form of armed escorts or related activities. In the transitional and consolidation phases the emphasis gradually shifts to security sector reform aimed at the development of appropriate, credible and professional internal security, police and defence services.

The Political Transition, Governance and Democratisation Dimension

The political transition, governance and democratisation dimension involves the development of legitimate and effective political institutions, encouraging democratic participatory processes, supporting the political transition, and reforming the bureaucracy at all tiers of government. The political process includes building the capacity of political parties and civil society, facilitating a comprehensive peace agreement, facilitating the formation of an interim and/or transitional government, supporting a constitutional process and eventually supporting the electoral process. The governance process includes reforming the civil service, strengthening public sector management; reviving local governance; facilitating enabling legislation and policy frameworks and broadening the participation of civil society in decision-making process. There is usually the need for a specialised focus on reforming the criminal justice system and establishing the rule of law (Zacarias 2004:5).

The Socio-Economic Development Dimension

The socio-economic development dimension covers the relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic social and economic services as well as the return, resettlement and reintegration of populations displaced during

the conflict including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This dimension needs to focus on an approach that ensures effective dynamic linkages between activities related to the provision of emergency humanitarian needs and longer-term measures for economic recovery, sustained growth and poverty reduction. It is also crucial that a balance is struck in the relationship between social capital and social cohesion at all stages of the peacebuilding process. Programmes to be implemented in this dimension include emergency humanitarian assistance; rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of physical infrastructure; provision of social services such as education, health, and social welfare; and enhancing economic growth and development through employment generation, trade and investment, and legal and regulatory reform (Barungi 2004:3).

The Human Rights, Justice and Reconciliation Dimension

The human rights, justice, and reconciliation dimension is concerned with ensuring accountable judicial systems, promoting reconciliation and nation building, and enshrining human rights. Programmes include justice sector reform and establishing the rule of law; promoting national dialogue and reconciliation processes such as truth and reconciliation commissions, and monitoring human rights. A system, which accommodates both restorative and retributive justice is recommended. It should focus on local values and include local traditional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. Peacebuilding programmes within this dimension should also ensure creating an environment conducive to peace, justice and reconciliation; increasing the involvement of women at all levels; the implementation of reparations, and the provision of participatory processes which include vulnerable groups. There is the need to rebuild trust and cross-cutting social relationships which span across religious, ethnic, class, geographic and generational cleavages in war-torn societies. This is an investment in social capital which underlies the ability of a society to mediate everyday conflicts before they become violent conflicts, and through building state-people relationships it advances social cohesion (Villa-Vicencio 2004:4).

The Coordination, Management and Resource Mobilisation Dimension

Coordination, management and resource mobilisation are cross-cutting functions that are critical for the successful implementation of all the dimensions and the coherence of the peacebuilding system as a whole (CSIS 2005:6). All these dimensions are interlinked and interdependent. No single dimension can achieve the goal of the peacebuilding system – addressing the consequences and causes of the conflict and laying the foundation for social justice and sustainable peace – on its own. The success of each individual programme in the system is a factor of the contribution that this programme makes to the achievement of the overall peacebuilding objective. It is only when the combined and sustained effort proves successful in the long term that the investment made in each individual programme can be said to have been worthwhile (De Coning 2004a:6).

Coordination entails developing strategies, determining objectives, planning, sharing information, the division of roles and responsibilities, and mobilising resources (Minear & Chellia 1992:3). Coordination is concerned with synchronising the mandates, roles and activities of the various stakeholders and actors in the peacebuilding system and achieves this through joint efforts aimed at prioritisation, sequencing and harmonisation of programmes to meet common objectives. In this context, coordination is the process that ensures that an individual programme is connected to the larger system of which it is a part and without which it cannot succeed (De Coning 2004b:9).

UN Civil-Military Coordination

Civil-Military Coordination is a contested concept with many different competing definitions and doctrines that describe essentially the same activity, i.e. coordination between civilian and military actors in peace operations. Some of the most common concepts are: Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) as used by NATO,[5] EU[6] and most countries in Europe and Canada; Civil

Military Operations (CMO)[7] as used by the United States of America (USA), and Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) as used by the UN humanitarian community.

During the Cold War, most UN peace operations were cease-fire monitoring missions. Since 1989, starting with the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, the scope and complexity of peace operations have considerably broadened. In most cases since 1989, peace operations have been mandated to support the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements. This has resulted in many new tasks aimed at assisting the host country to sustain the momentum of the peace agreement by: supporting transitional arrangements; establishing new national institutions such as a new defence force, a new police force, and a new judiciary, or reforming existing institutions; assisting with the organising of elections; supporting constitution drafting mechanisms; and assisting with special restorative justice initiatives,

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5 The NATO definition of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) is the co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil populations, including national and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies (NATO 2000:1).

6 The EU definition of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) is the co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between military components of EU-led Crisis Management Operations and civil role-players (external to the EU), including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies (EU 2002:9).

7 CMO is the activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and non-governmental civilian organisations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile operational area in order to facilitate military operations, to consolidate and achieve operational US objectives. Civil-military operations may include performance by military forces of activities and functions normally the responsibility of the local, regional, or national government. These activities may occur prior to, during, or subsequent to other military actions. They may also occur, if directed, in the absence of other military operations. Civil-military operations may be performed by designated civil affairs, by other military forces, or by a combination of civil affairs and other forces (See US military publications: JP 3-57, FM 41-10 & JP 1-02).

and with reconstruction and recovery programmes. Most of these new tasks, and the new components that have been added to carry them out, are intended to prevent a conflict from re-emerging by addressing the root causes of the conflict, and most new peace operations since the 1989 were, in effect, thus, peacebuilding operations.

In order to ensure that all these different new components work together as one coherent mission, the need developed to establish dedicated mechanisms and structures to facilitate coordination and cooperation. Several specialised coordination functions developed through the years, and within the UN military component, the civil-military coordination function emerged as the focal point for coordination between the military and civilian components.

Civil-military coordination in the UN context, because of its fundamentally different nature, requires a different approach from the NATO, EU and USA approaches to CIMIC and CMO. UN peacebuilding operations differ from most NATO, EU and coalition operations in that:

(a) they are typically consent-based operations, i.e. they are deployed after a cease-fire or peace agreement has been signed, at the request of the parties to the conflict, to support them with the implementation of the peace agreement, and
(b) the military unit is deployed as part of an integrated civilian-military-police peacebuilding operation under overall civilian direction.

In the UN context the civil-military relationship among the various multi-dimensional components of the peacebuilding operation and between the operation and the rest of the UN System will already be pre-determined, to a large degree, by existing UN policies,[8] and by the mandate and organisational

8 See for instance the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Guidelines on the Functioning of the Resident Coordinator System, 24 September 1999, and the UN Secretary-General's Note of Guidance on Relations between Representatives of the Secretary General, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators, dated 11 December 2000.

structure[9] of the specific UN peace operation.

NATO, EU and coalition type operations, in contrast, are typically deployed in a more contested environment as peace enforcement operations, either to secure a cease-fire, or to support a cease-fire or peace agreement in situations where there is still considerable hostility by some factions against the peace agreement, e.g. the Taliban in Afghanistan. They are also deployed as a military force separate from the UN or other international or regional groupings that may be active in the conflict-prevention, peacemaking or peacebuilding spheres in the same country. The EU's concept of operations does allow for integrated civilian-military-police operations under EU auspices in future, but no such integrated operations have been deployed to date (EU 2002:11).

The African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa, e.g. SADC, ECOWAS, ECCAS and IGAD,[10] are in a somewhat similar position. The REC operations undertaken to date, e.g. the various operations undertaken under the auspices of ECOWAS in West Africa, have all been military operations in support of, but separate from, UN and other peace initiatives. The AU has deployed two fully fledged peace operations to date: the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) in 2003/04 and the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) which was deployed in 2004 and is still ongoing. AMIB had a small political office but it was largely a military operation. AMIS has, apart from its military observers and protection force, a civilian police force and civilian units such as a humanitarian assistance section and a political affairs section. The AU and RECs are developing the capacity to deploy multidimensional peace operations through the African Stand-by Force (ASF) initiative, and although the initiative is currently concentrating on the military and police dimensions of the ASF, it intends to add the civilian dimension in phase two of the ASF's implementation plan. The AU and

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9 See for instance the different types of integrated missions (separate, partial and full integration) identified by the Report on Integrated Missions (Barth Eide et al 2005:9).

10 Southern African Development Community, Economic Community of West African States, Economic Community of Central African States, InterGovernmental Authority on Development.

RECs do not have a specific CIMIC doctrine at present.

Whereas CIMIC in NATO and EU doctrine is thus motivated by the need to establish cooperation between the military force as a separate legally mandated entity and the civilian actors in their area of operations, civil-military coordination in the UN peacebuilding operations context is motivated by the need to maximize coordination between the military component and the civilian components of the same integrated mission, between the military component and the rest of the UN system, and between the military component of the mission and other external and internal civilian actors in the same mission area.

UN CIMIC Defined

The focal point for UN humanitarian coordination policy and training in the United Nations System is the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA has, under the authority of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, facilitated the development of a series of civil-military coordination policies and guidelines. These include the 'Guidelines on the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief', the so-called Oslo Guidelines, of May 1994 (OCHA 1994); the discussion paper and guidelines on the 'Use of Military or Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys' of September 2001 (OCHA 2001), and the 'Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies' of March 2003 (OCHA 2003). In addition, in June 2004, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted a reference paper on 'Civil-Military Relations in Complex Emergencies' that complements and expands the principles and guidelines previously developed on the use of military and civil defence assets and armed escorts, and provides guidance of a more general nature for civil-military coordination in humanitarian emergencies (IASC 2004). The complex emergency guidelines and the reference paper also introduced a new abbreviation into our vocabulary, namely UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord).

The definition of UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) is: 'the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and

military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training' (OCHA 2003:5).

The complex emergency guidelines have been developed to cover a broad range of humanitarian-military coordination scenarios and have been influenced, to a large degree, by the recent experiences of humanitarian agencies working alongside NATO and coalitions of the willing in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. In these peace enforcement and military intervention contexts, the distance between the humanitarian community and the military forces is typically much wider than that experienced in UN peacebuilding operations, where the military component is an integrated part of a UN mission. UN peacebuilding operations deploy, with a mandate from the UN Security Council, to support the implementation of a peace agreement. In most cases, especially after Somalia, a cease-fire or peace agreement is in place before a UN peacebuilding operation is deployed. In some cases such peace agreements may be fragile or even contested, but in general UN peacebuilding operations, including the military component, are regarded as a credible and legitimate neutral third-party intervention deployed to support the implementation of a peace agreement. The relationship between UN military components and their humanitarian counterparts is therefore generally much more cooperative than would be the case in situations where some of the parties to a conflict may perceive an external military force to be a party to the conflict.

From a UN peacebuilding operations perspective, it should also be noted that the IASC and OCHA policies and guidelines are focussed on the humanitarian dimension of civil-military coordination. Coordination between the military and humanitarian actors is one of the most prominent aspects of civil-military coordination during the humanitarian emergency. From a peacebuilding perspective, the humanitarian emergency usually occurs during the stabilisation phase and may, in some cases, even extend into the transitional phase. Civil-military coordination in the UN peacebuilding operations context can, however, not be limited to the humanitarian emergency. UN Civil-Military

Coordination takes place between the military component and all the civilian components of the UN mission, including the Civilian Police (CIVPOL), other members of the UN System and all the other external and internal actors, and during all the phases (stabilisation, transitional and consolidation) of a peacebuilding operation.

The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has participated in the development of the guidelines on the use of military and civil defence assets to support United Nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies, but it has also, in parallel, developed a civil-military coordination policy specifically for UN peace operations. Although civil-military coordination has been part of UN peace operations, in one or other form, since its inception, there was no specific UN doctrine or policy that governed 'civil-military coordination' until September 2002, when the DPKO released its 'Civil-Military Coordination Policy' (UN DPKO 2002).

The DPKO definition of civil-military coordination is: 'UN Civil-Military Coordination is the system of interaction, involving exchange of information, negotiation, de-confliction, mutual support, and planning at all levels, between military elements and humanitarian organisations, development organisations and the local civilian population to achieve UN objectives' (UN DPKO 2002:2).

Because of the different meanings associated with the different acronyms that already existed in the civil-military coordination field, and because DPKO did not want to add to the confusion of introducing yet another acronym, the DPKO policy has refrained from using an acronym for civil-military coordination. However, in practice, DPKO has been using the abbreviation 'CIMIC' in most of the missions it has established since 2000, and CIMIC is currently used in the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB), the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI).

In order to differentiate between the UN use of the acronym CIMIC when it refers to 'Civil-Military Coordination' and the NATO use of the acronym CIMIC when it refers to 'Civil-Military Cooperation', this paper will refer to UN CIMIC whenever it refers to 'UN Civil-Military Coordination'.

Coordination, Cooperation and Coexistence

One of the most obvious differences between NATO CIMIC and UN CIMIC is the different ways in which these two organisations use the words, 'cooperation' and 'coordination'.

NATO understands 'coordination' to represent a higher order of mutual engagement than 'cooperation'. It perceives the humanitarian community to be unwilling to 'coordinate' with a military force such as NATO, and therefore regards 'cooperation' as the most appropriate relationship between NATO and its humanitarian counterparts.

In the UN humanitarian context, 'coordination' covers a spectrum of potential relationships that range from 'coexistence' to 'cooperation' (OCHA 2003:5). Cooperation is understood as a relationship where the component partners synchronise their policies and behaviour and undertake joint action. Coexistence, on the other hand, refers to the minimum level of coordination necessary to de-conflict respective actions. In between these two poles, there is a range of possible relationships that depend on the specific situation, but in most cases UN peacebuilding operations are likely to be placed towards the cooperation end of the spectrum. The most important factor that will influence the civil-military relationship is the degree to which the military force is perceived (by its humanitarian counterparts) to be engaged in combat action that may affect their neutrality (Oliker et al 2004:xiii).

When the military component of a UN peace operation is engaged in armed action, for instance when the UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) had to act forcefully against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in 1999/2000, or when MONUC was mandated to start forcefully disarming armed groups in Ituri and the Kivus in 2005, the humanitarian community will most likely increase the distance between itself and the military component of the UN operation, so that they are in a better position to maintain their own neutrality and impartiality. In other words, they will move closer to the coexistence end of the coordination spectrum. The motivation for this behaviour is the humanitarian community's primary objective of maintaining access to the victims of the conflict, so that they can alleviate suffering regardless of where it may be found.

UN CIMIC and Humanitarian Assistance

The traditional realm of civil-military coordination has been humanitarian-military coordination. As pointed out earlier, almost all the existing UN civil-military coordination policies and guidelines assume a humanitarian-military relationship and are concerned with maintaining an appropriate relationship between the two. There is a fundamental difference between humanitarian action on the one hand and development action on the other, and this is a crucial distinction for the civil-military interface. Essentially, humanitarian action is focused on life-saving emergency assistance in the short to medium term whilst development action is aimed at changing the structural causes of underdevelopment over the medium to long term.[11] The former is indifferent to the causes of the humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian action is aimed at alleviating immediate suffering and mitigating future potential humanitarian emergencies. Development action is a conscious effort to address the causes of underdevelopment and is aimed at fundamentally altering the structural

11 The Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship, endorsed in Stockholm on 17 June 2003, give the following useful definition of humanitarian action: '1. The objectives of humanitarian action are to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations. 2. Humanitarian action should be guided by the humanitarian principles of *humanity*, meaning the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found; *impartiality*, meaning the implementation of actions solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations; *neutrality*, meaning that humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out; and *independence*, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented. 3. Humanitarian action includes the protection of civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities, and the provision of food, water and sanitation, shelter, health services and other items of assistance, undertaken for the benefit of affected people and to facilitate the return to normal lives and livelihoods' (GHD 2005:7).

dynamics of the society. Development is inherently political and cannot claim to be neutral and impartial.

Humanitarian space is about protecting the former from the latter, i.e. protecting humanitarian action from political influence and interference. Humanitarian space protects the right of the victims to receive humanitarian assistance by protecting the right of humanitarian actors to have free access to the beneficiaries. If one does not emphasise and clarify this distinction then it becomes impossible to accurately delineate the role the military can play in support of the humanitarian action.

The various UN policies[12] that exist in this realm are all consistent in their guidance on what constitutes an appropriate humanitarian-military relationship:

(a) The military cannot be a humanitarian actor because military action is not motivated by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Therefore the military should not claim to undertake, or report its activities as humanitarian action.

(b) The military can support humanitarian action, and the appropriate way in which this can occur is set out in the policies/guidelines:
   (1) Military support must be requested by a humanitarian actor, ultimately the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC).
   (2) Military support provided must be under civilian direction.
   (3) Military support must be considered as an option of last resort, i.e. there is no civilian alternative and the military capability is uniquely able to provide this service.
   (4) To avoid reliance on the military, the support given must be limited (in time and scope) and the military must hand back the task to an appropriate civilian actor as soon as such an actor is capable of taking on the task again.
   (5) The type of support and method of delivery should be designed to limit the (visible) association with the military where such an association may

12 The Oslo Guidelines, the guidelines on the use of MCDA in complex emergencies, the guidelines on the use of armed and military escorts, the DPKO Civil-Military Coordination Policy of 2002, and the IASC reference paper.

endanger the beneficiaries and humanitarian workers.[13]

(c) In exceptional circumstances the military can provide direct emergency assistance, but this should only occur as an absolute last resort and at the request and under the 'direction' of an appropriate civilian authority, ultimately the HC. In immediate life-threatening circumstances the military will obviously act first and coordinate as soon as possible thereafter.

The principles and guidelines that steer the humanitarian-military interface during a humanitarian emergency that coincides with the stabilisation, and in some cases the transitional phase, of a peacebuilding operation are thus relatively clear. There are, however, no similar guidelines for civil-military coordination between the military component and non-humanitarian civilian actors in transitional and consolidation phases of peacebuilding operations.

UN CIMIC and Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding, like development, does not have the same neutral and impartial mandate that humanitarian action has. UN peacebuilding operations are neutral third-party interventions, in that they do not take sides among the former parties to the conflict when supporting the implementation of a peace agreement (Tschirgi 2004:2). As the peace process develops, this neutrality shifts away from a focus on the parties to a neutral guardianship of the peace process. In some exceptional circumstances this may mean acting against one or more of the parties to safeguard the provisions of the peace agreement, but in general this implies working closely with the parties to the peace agreement in the implementation of the various stages of the peace process. In the consolidation phase this means working closely with the newly elected government to

13 The Guidelines for complex emergencies (OCHA 2003) differentiate between direct, indirect and infrastructure support. The more visibly direct the support the more likely it is that the association with the military may endanger the beneficiaries or the humanitarian actors.

support them in their efforts to consolidate the transition from war to peace. UN peacebuilding operations are thus not neutral and impartial in the same sense in which these concepts are used to define humanitarian action.

The primary role of the military component of a UN peacebuilding operation is to ensure a safe and secure environment within which the rest of the external and internal actors can operate. The secondary role of the military component is to make its resources available to external and internal actors in support of the overall mission objectives. For instance, in the context of a DDR programme, the military component, over and above its security function, may be in a position to provide transport, medical services, camp building, weapons storage and/or weapon destruction services. Similarly, in the context of an UN-supported election where a UN peace operation is deployed, the military component, over and above its security function, may be in a position to assist with the identification of suitable sites for polling stations, providing transport and manpower, engineering support, equipment like generators, furniture, etc.

The use of military assets in the peacebuilding context differ from the use of military assets in the humanitarian context in that there is no assumption of independence, based on the neutrality and impartiality of the civilian peacebuilding partners. In the UN peacebuilding context, e.g. in a DDR or elections programme, both military and civilian partners are understood to be engaged in an activity aimed at bringing about a specific outcome that will fundamentally change the dynamics of the situation. Those opposed to an election, for instance, will be opposed to all that are involved in the electoral process, regardless of whether they are civilian or military. The close cooperation between military and civilian partners in the UN peacebuilding context does thus not have the same implications for the security of the civilian partners, or beneficiary population, as it would have in the humanitarian context.

Once this distinction with humanitarian action is established, it makes sense for the UN peacebuilding operation to integrate the overall management of the resources at its disposal, and in this context these kinds of military support are seen as leveraging the resources that exist within the different components of the mission, so that ultimately the UN peacebuilding operation can maximise

the impact it can have on the peace process by mustering and focussing all of its available resources on a specific outcome, e.g. facilitating a successful election.

One can distinguish between three different types of civil-military coordination functions, namely liaison and information management, mission support and community support (De Coning 2005:121). Liaison and information management lies at the core of coordination and refers to a wide range of activities involving the exchange and management of information. Depending on where one finds oneself on the coexistence to cooperation spectrum, these activities can include, for example, joint assessments, joint planning, and attending or hosting coordination meetings. Mission Support refers to those actions a military component undertakes in support of a civilian function, for instance providing transport, providing specialised equipment or expertise, etc. to a civilian component of the mission, or to other civilian actors in the mission area, including humanitarian or development partners. Community Support refers to those actions military units undertake to support local communities and to build confidence in the peace process.

Some of the actions undertaken by military units in the latter category, for instance, the provision of 'free medical camps' to the local population by UN military units, have been a source of irritation to the humanitarian community because they have been reported as, or confused with humanitarian assistance. These kinds of military actions in support of the community should be distinguished from humanitarian assistance.

The primary motive of the military unit for providing the medical service is to build a good relationship with the local population, to improve the image of their unit and the peace operation, and to build confidence in the peace process. In situations where a peace operation is dealing with elements hostile to its presence, a good relationship with the local community is essential for obtaining information from the local population and to minimise the risk of hostile acts carried out with the protection of the local population. The medical services provided by UN military units are not necessarily life saving, although in some individual cases they may be. The medical services are more akin to those being provided by a local clinic and in some cases it may be quite specialised, for instance, cataract operations and dental services.

The primary motive of humanitarian action is to alleviate suffering wherever it may be found, i.e. motivated solely on the basis of need. Although the medical services provided by the UN military unit usually benefit the community, they cannot be said to be need-based in the humanitarian sense of the word. In other words, the beneficiary population has not been selected on account of an independent assessment of needs among the wider beneficiary population. The community benefiting from the UN CIMIC support activity would have been typically chosen because of their proximity to the military unit's location. The essential distinction between this UN CIMIC action and humanitarian action is thus that it is not essential life-saving assistance in a humanitarian emergency, and it is not motivated solely by the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity (need), impartiality and neutrality. These UN CIMIC actions should not be reported as humanitarian assistance by the military units, nor should it be seen as such by the humanitarian community.

At present, this kind of UN CIMIC activity carried out by UN military units, although widespread and common, is generally ignored at the operational level by the UN peace operation because no one is sure how to discount them in the context of the existing UN humanitarian civil-military coordination policies. They are reported as UN CIMIC activities, but there is no attempt to provide the military units with guidance or to direct these actions.[14] The reality is, however, that these types of UN CIMIC actions are not quasi-humanitarian activities, but rather development type actions that occur throughout the life of a peacebuilding operation, i.e. throughout the stability, transitional and consolidation phases.

We have to look beyond the existing humanitarian civil-military policies and guidelines to address these kinds of UN CIMIC actions that occur alongside and beyond the humanitarian emergency phase. In the current policy vacuum UN CIMIC action beyond the humanitarian phase is either ignored,

14 The UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) has made an attempt to provide policy guidance to military units, but at the time of writing this draft policy document was still being debated at the mission management level in Kinshasa and at the headquarters level in New York and Geneva.

or humanitarian-military policy guidance is erroneously applied, which has the pathological effect of undermining the clarity and precision of the existing humanitarian policy and guidelines. The result is that most military units have carried out UN CIMIC actions according to their own national doctrines and this has often resulted in unintended consequences and negative feedback from the humanitarian community (Slim 2004:9). Most UN CIMIC support actions are carried out at the Battalion level, and most Battalions for UN peace operations are currently provided by countries like Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Ukraine and Uruguay.[15] None of these countries has a national CIMIC doctrine for use in peace operations. Most of them, however, train their soldiers in counter-insurgency warfare, and some of them are busy fighting counter-insurgency wars. Without a conscious effort to provide them with clear policies and guidelines for UN CIMIC actions in the UN peace operations where they are deployed, it is natural that they will revert to what they know best, i.e. counter-insurgency style 'winning hearts and minds' campaigns.

The UN should accept that military units deployed within a UN peacebuilding operation context will undertake such CIMIC-type actions, and engage them proactively so that these CIMIC actions can make a positive contribution to the overall peace process when channelled constructively. Military units are typically eager to make a positive contribution during the six months they are deployed. What is needed is clear policy guidance so that their resources, energy and goodwill can be positively channelled in support of the overall mission objectives and so that their UN CIMIC activities become complementary to the work undertaken by the humanitarian and development community.

These types of UN CIMIC actions should not be seen as isolated acts of community outreach by individual units, as they currently are, but rather as part of the overall mission effort in support of the peace process. They should be integrated into the larger mission effort and should be coordinated with all partners and stakeholders. For instance, UN CIMIC Community Support

15 Refer to the peacekeeping section of the UN website (www.un.org) for the most recent rankings of UN Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs).

actions should be aimed at helping the local community, i.e. they must be based on the need of the community (needs-driven as supposed to supply-driven) and the community should be encouraged to take ownership of and direct these projects. UN CIMIC actions should be coordinated with all partners and stakeholders, e.g. in the case of a military unit rehabilitating a school, such services should be coordinated with the appropriate civilian authorities (local education authorities, local community leaders, UNICEF, OCHA, NGOs working in the education field that may be active in the area, etc.) so that the actions of the military unit are complementary to the actions (humanitarian and development) that are being undertaken by the appropriate civilian and humanitarian actors. The UN CIMIC school rehabilitation project should not be in competition with or undermine the activities of these civilian actors. It should be undertaken in support of a larger school rehabilitation programme, so that the school that is rehabilitated through the UN CIMIC action will be integrated into and be supported by the larger programme, thus ensuring sustainability.

If UN CIMIC Community Support actions:

(1) are undertaken in support of (and preferably directed by) the local community, and
(2) are well coordinated with all the other stakeholders, they are likely to result in:
    (a) good relations with the local community,
    (b) confidence in the UN peace operation and the peace process, and probably also
    (c) good publicity for the military unit in question, and the UN peace operation in general.

However, if such projects are unilaterally undertaken by a military unit for the sole purpose of 'winning hearts and minds' and to generate publicity, they are unlikely to have long-term and sustainable benefits. For instance, under such circumstances a military unit is likely to choose to support a school because of its proximity to the unit's location regardless of the needs of the surrounding community or the school rehabilitation plan of the education authorities. Or they are likely to offer free medical services regardless of the fact that an NGO

may be trying to assist the local clinic to establish a sustainable service based on a cost recovery model. These kinds of uncoordinated and supply-driven CIMIC actions are likely to create tension between the military unit, the local community (who may feel exploited by winning hearts and minds actions) and other stakeholders (such as local authorities, NGOs and UN Agencies) who have not been consulted in the process.

The UN should develop CIMIC principles and guidelines for UN CIMIC in peacebuilding operations so that these kinds of UN CIMIC actions undertaken beyond the humanitarian realm can be positively channelled and integrated into the UN mission's overall vision and strategy in support of the peace process.

Recommendations for UN CIMIC Principles and Guidelines

DPKO, in consultation with other development stakeholders, needs to clarify how its UN CIMIC policy relates to the existing humanitarian policy and guidelines for civil-military coordination and the non-humanitarian aspects of peace operations. The confusion starts with the terminology, and DPKO can no longer escape from taking a clear position on which concepts and abbreviations should be used in UN peace operations.[16] UN CIMIC is one option to distinguish between the UN and NATO applications of the same abbreviation 'CIMIC'.

16 In some UN peace operations, e.g. Haiti and Sudan, there are civilian civil-military coordination officers that use the same terminology reserved for humanitarian civil-military coordination officers, namely 'CMCoord' officers. These officers are also sometimes referred to as 'CIMCoord' officers, but this does not appear to be a conscious attempt to differentiate them from 'CMCoord' officers, but rather just a more phonetic spelling of the way 'CMCoord' is pronounced. Most military civil-military coordination officers in UN peace operations are referred to as 'CIMIC officers'. However, the IASC Reference Paper (IASC, 2004:11) has allocated the term 'Civil-Military Liaison Officers (CMLO)' for DPKO, and although DPKO has not yet taken a decision on whether or not to use this term, the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) seems to have started to use the CMLO terminology.

DPKO's policy needs to spell out what it is that the UN CIMIC function should (and should not) do. It is important to give the military component clear guidelines with regard to what is, and what is not appropriate for the military to do as part of the UN CIMIC function in UN peace operations. The UN CIMIC policy needs to be clear about the CIMIC functions and how they should be executed. The policy should make a distinction between support provided to humanitarian actors, where the relevant humanitarian civil-military policy guidelines apply, and to support provided to peacebuilding actors.

Conclusion

Peacebuilding operations are designed to assist the peace process and prevent a relapse into conflict, but their ultimate aim is to address the root causes of a conflict and to lay the foundations for social justice and sustainable peace. In the post-Cold War era, the focus is increasingly shifting from peacekeeping, which was about maintaining the status quo, to peacebuilding, which has to do with managing change.[17] Most UN peacekeeping operations since 1989 have in effect been peacebuilding operations in that their focus was on supporting the implementation of comprehensive peace processes, which included classic peacebuilding tasks such as DDR, justice sector reform, organising elections, training and restructuring new police forces and facilitating the transition from interim to transitional and eventually to democratically elected governments.

Coordination performs a critical function in complex peacebuilding operations and can be understood as the effort to ensure that the peace, security and development dimensions of a peacebuilding operation are directed towards a common objective.[18] The military component of a UN peacebuilding operation makes use of a UN civil-military coordination (UN CIMIC) branch to facilitate liaison and coordination with the civilian components of the mission,

17 Espen Barth Eide, presentation delivered at the 'DDR from a Peacebuilding Perspective' Course, 19-24 January 2004, Norwegian Defence International Center (NODEFIC).

the rest of the UN system and all the other external and internal partners in their area of responsibility.

Almost all the existing UN policies and guidelines on civil-military coordination are focussed on the humanitarian-military relationship. Although the humanitarian-military relationship is especially sensitive and needs particular attention, it is, from a UN peacebuilding perspective, only one facet of a much larger and longer-term operation. The humanitarian emergency phase typically coincides with the stabilisation phase and sometimes stretches into the transitional phase. UN CIMIC in peacebuilding operations covers all these phases and extends into the consolidation phase. Apart from the humanitarian actors, civil-military relations in UN peacebuilding operations provide for the interface with all the specialised civilian components of the UN mission, the development partners in the UN System, international and local NGOs in the development field and the authorities and civil society of the host society.

Most existing UN policies and guidelines are, however, limited to humanitarian civil-military coordination, and there is currently no policy guidance for the non-humanitarian realm of civil-military relations. In this policy vacuum UN CIMIC action beyond the humanitarian phase is either ignored, or humanitarian civil-military policy guidance is erroneously applied. Both the former and the latter have the pathological effect of ultimately undermining the clarity and precision of the existing humanitarian policy and guidelines, thus further eroding humanitarian space.

UN CIMIC actions can make a positive contribution to the overall peacebuilding process if the military components' resources, energy and goodwill can be positively channelled in support of the overall mission objectives, so that the CIMIC activities are complementary to the work undertaken by the humanitarian and development community.

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18 With apologies to the definition of coherence on p. 4 of the Henry Dunant Center for Humanitarian Dialogue's February 2003 report: *Politics and Humanitarianism: Coherence in Crisis?*: 'Coherence came to mean: the effort, notably by the UN and some donors, to ensure that all international aid and interventions in a particular crisis are directed towards a common objective.'

The paper concludes with the recommendation that UN DPKO should develop a clear and distinct UN CIMIC policy that provides guidance for civil-military coordination throughout the life of a UN peacebuilding operation. Such a UN CIMIC policy should incorporate the existing UN humanitarian civil-military policies and guidelines, and develop additional and complementary policies and guidelines for the stabilisation, transitional and consolidation phases of post-conflict reconstruction.

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