



**Michael Brzoska/  
Hans-Georg Ehrhart**

# **Civil-Military Cooperation in Post- Conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction**

**Recommendations for  
Practical Action**

**Policy Paper 30**

*What began spontaneously with German troops' first missions abroad has now become routine. Indeed, in some cases – notably Afghanistan – it has become a core element of planning and practice. We are referring to the parallel implementation of aid projects by civilian aid agencies and the Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) and the integration of military and civilian activities in crisis regions. And Germany is by no means a special case: civil-military interaction (CMI) is now a key issue for the armed forces and civilian aid agencies in many countries. Numerous actors – from the United Nations (UN) to German Agro Action – have discussed and adopted concepts and strategies for CMI.*

*There are many examples from crisis regions which show that the relationship between soldiers and civilian aid workers is a difficult one. Their organisational structures are incompatible, their organisational cultures conflict, and even if the goal of promoting post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction is shared by both these sets of actors, their interim objectives and their methods of achieving them also differ. Soldiers are supposed to stabilise the situation, if necessary through the use of military force. The role of civilian aid workers, on the other hand, is to improve local people's living conditions and especially reduce poverty.*

*However, non-military instruments can be deployed not only to achieve the interim goal of assisting the weakest members of society; they can also be geared towards supporting the interim objective of stabilisation. Civilian relief measures increase the legitimacy of the mission in the region itself and at home, and improve the troops' morale. Even in military circles, it is generally accepted that peace cannot be created anywhere in the world through military means alone, and that soldiers are therefore reliant on the successful deployment of civilian instruments of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction in order to fulfil their mandate.*

## I. Context of the Problem

In fragile security situations in particular, civilian aid that is subordinate to military objectives may be appealing as part of a comprehensive strategy to combat insurgency, but it is also problematical. Historically, this is not a new approach; it was developed as counterinsurgency (COIN) by the British armed forces in the 1950s and applied by the US military in the Vietnam War, for example. In recent years, the US Department of Defense, through its control of civilian aid – notably in Iraq and Afghanistan – has contributed as much as 20% of the US's official development assistance (ODA) budget, making it one of the largest donors worldwide.

However, gearing civilian aid – from food aid to micro-credit programmes – towards military objectives conflicts with basic goals and principles of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, especially the goal of eradicating poverty and the principle of neutrality. Civilian aid organisations are therefore sceptical about the expansion of civil-military cooperation.

In the practical reality of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, however, soldiers and civilian aid workers operating in the same regions cannot simply ignore each other. For civilian aid workers, too, cooperation with the military offers a certain appeal if, for example, the civilian aid workers themselves do not have enough vehicles to deliver aid to the local population and the military is willing and able to provide transport. Under certain circumstances, then, a troop presence which stabilises a fragile peace and creates a secure environment for political, social and economic reconstruction can improve the effectiveness of civilian aid. In a bad security situation,

the impact of civilian aid is invariably limited, so a joint approach is likely to be beneficial in terms of enhancing the success prospects of the post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction effort.

The conceptual and strategic approaches developed by countries and organisations for civil-military interaction (CMI) generally originate from military actors. To have any practical relevance, however, they must address the following questions:

- Subordination or parallel activities: Should the civilian or the military actors take the lead? Or is it simply about coordination?
- Distance or proximity: Should soldiers and civilian aid workers engage with each other, with their very different organisational structures and cultures, rules and procedures, or should they save time and energy by keeping their distance?
- Professionalism versus deficit compensation: Should non-military tasks only be carried out by professional organisations from the civil society sector, or do soldiers have a role to play here as well?

The aim of this SEF Policy Paper is to provide recommendations for practical action, based on a review of the concepts, contexts and experiences of civil-military interaction gained by German, European and other international actors in crisis and post-conflict regions.

## II. Civil-Military Interaction (CMI): The Contexts

Civilian and military actors must reach positions on the dilemmas outlined above, and do so in a wide variety of CMI contexts. In this paper, we identify three separate dimensions: 1) the situation on the ground in the crisis region; 2) levels of coordination; 3) types of civilian instruments.

### 1. Between “blue helmet” operations and war

The security situation in a crisis region influences the interests and conduct of all stakeholders. The military has a particularly strong interest in cooperating with civilian aid agencies if the security situation is poor. In this situation, it is especially important to gather information from civilian aid workers, who often have better local knowledge than the troops, and win the support of the local population in order to prevent the spread of violence. On the other hand, in situations in which the foreign troops are a potential or actual conflict party, or are regarded as such by relevant groups in local society, civilian aid agencies will be far less inclined to cooperate with the military. This cooperation will bring the civilian aid workers themselves closer to a conflict party, jeopardising the security of aid workers, making contact with the local population more difficult, and possibly leading to attacks on projects and therefore putting at risk the lives of the very people whom these projects are intended to benefit. The increasing number of attacks on civilian aid workers in Afghanistan is a case in point.

A key principle which should inform any decision on the distance/proximity dilemma described above is “do no harm”. This means refraining from taking any action which could be harmful to civilian aid workers, military personnel or the local population. The “do no harm” principle was developed for a different context – namely development cooperation as a cause of conflict – but is also useful in relation to civil-military interaction. Humanitarian organisations are in a particularly tricky situation here. The aim of alleviating the suffering of people in dire need by supplying them with food and medical care may well only be possible with military support, in the form of transport or convoy escorts, yet at the same time, humanitarian organisations are crucially dependent on maintaining their neutrality towards all conflict parties. In such situations, it may therefore be in the interests of the suffering population if aid agencies hand over the task of delivering aid to the military, if the risk to civilian aid workers is simply too great.

#### Recommendation

The type and intensity of civil-military interaction (CMI) must vary according to the security situation, so CMI is context-dependent. In determining whether such interaction should take place, the guiding principle, for both the military and the civilian organisations, should be “do no harm”. This means avoiding any harmful impacts on the local population, civilian aid workers and military personnel.

### 2. From decision-making to deployment

Soldiers deployed on the ground in crisis regions have a particularly strong interest in civil-military interaction. It enables them to gather information about the sentiment among the population and allows them to try and steer civilian aid measures in such a way that they gain the support of the local population. At higher levels of decision-making, however, the military’s interest in engaging with civilian organisations decreases. This is due to a concern that its methods will be challenged or, indeed, its projects come to be dominated by the civilian organisations. After all, the fundamental objectives pursued in any post-conflict situation, namely political, social and economic reconstruction, are, in essence, civilian goals. For the civilian agencies, the reverse applies. They have a strong interest in being involved at the highest level in decision-making on military operations, or at least being consulted prior to deployment, as they can then influence the mission in some way. However, they have less interest in cooperation on the ground, as it is here that they run the greatest risk of being instrumentalised by the military and putting their own workers’ lives at risk through proximity to the armed forces.

Experience shows that information exchange and coordination of operations improves the prospects of effective and efficient relief being provided for people in crisis regions. This is the only way to rule out any mutual obstruction of activities and ensure that the available resources are deployed efficiently.

#### Recommendations

- Civilian and military actors should keep each other informed, as a matter of principle, at all levels and at all stages – from decision-making on possible deployment to specific activities on the ground – about their objectives and intentions, and coordinate their approach. This recommendation does not imply that one side should have a right of veto over the other’s activities, but it does mean that views and opinions should be exchanged and taken seriously. Civil-military interaction should always be a deliberative process and involve a continuous dialogue at all levels about the interests, objectives and instruments deployed by all stakeholders.
- Civil-military coordination should not be used as a vehicle for one side to assert its objectives but should be viewed as a guiding principle. This may require many actors to rethink their approach long before they set foot in the crisis region.

### 3. From school-building to security sector reform

Civilian aid workers and soldiers are specialists in their respective fields. Experience has shown that specialists are the persons most capable of performing a task proficiently. However, civilian specialists are often insufficiently present in crisis regions. “Quick-impact” projects

in infrastructure- or house-building can also be carried out by the military. Even if soldiers undertake these tasks without any specific local knowledge, they may well gain support from the local population. However, even this type of project may well have medium- and long-term impacts. For example, the long-term impacts of a newly constructed well or school will depend on who has access to, and can use, this infrastructure, and whether there is sufficient interest in maintaining it properly. However, long-term impact analysis requires skills and experience which soldiers generally do not possess. More complex projects which are intended to have a longer-term development impact certainly require more detailed knowledge of local conditions as well as good planning by civilian experts. Nonetheless, there are some projects which do require military expertise, such as the demobilisation of ex-combatants and reform or capacity-building in the armed forces. Quick-impact projects that are carried out by the military should be handed over to civilian agencies

as quickly as possible, as they are better able to facilitate the subsequent transfer to national and particularly local actors that is essential to ensure the sustainability of the project.

### Recommendations

- **Civilian projects should generally be carried out by specialists. However, this means that the sending states must commit to training and deployment of an adequate number of appropriately qualified specialists.**
- **If specialists are not available, compliance with the „do no harm“ principle is most likely to be assured if non-experts confine their activities to less complex infrastructure projects (such as „quick-impact“ projects) and draw on local expertise in this context.**
- **The military should not commit to projects whose implications they cannot properly assess.**

## III. Terms and Concepts

The increasing complexity of civil-military interaction (CMI) has generated many different conceptual approaches. Different organisations use identical terminology, such as CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation), to denote different concepts. In order to cut through this complexity, we will distinguish, in the following, between civil-military interaction (CMI) in the broader sense, on the one hand, and CMI in the narrower sense, on the other. In our view, the various terms and concepts used to describe military-civil interaction should be applied in a more systematic and restrictive manner. CMI in the broader sense should generally describe cross-governmental cooperation or civil-military coordination at a strategic level, while CMI in the narrower sense should be understood as CIMIC, i.e. civil-military cooperation on the ground.

### 1. High-level coordination

CMI in the broader sense comprises the internal interaction between civilian and military activities and actors that is geared towards greater coherence. It is based on concepts of comprehensive, networked or integrated security which aim, through the whole of government approach or joined-up approach, to achieve more coherence among the various actors and policy areas with a view to increasing effectiveness and efficiency. This approach is especially important for measures in fragile states. Here, a series of interdependent problems, such as dysfunctional political institutions, insecurity, economic underdevelopment and a lack of social service provision must be dealt with simultaneously. Whether external actors attain the goal of stabilising those states identified as security risks is heavily dependent on coordinated interaction between the various policy areas. In line with this basic concept, as no single actor – whether it be a ministry, state or international organisation – has all the requisite capacities avail-

able, an integrated approach is required at both national and international level.

Against this background, many OECD countries have developed their own national strategies and mechanisms. The United Kingdom, for example, applies a comprehensive approach based on institutionalised interaction between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development (DFID). This approach provides a conceptual framework for interdepartmental action on policy goals defined by the UK Government. The cooperation, which is based on the principle of equality between the government departments involved, is managed by the Stabilisation Unit with funding being available from joint sources such as the Conflict Prevention Fund and the Stabilisation Aid Fund.

### Civil-military interaction (CMI) in crisis regions: a short glossary

#### CMI in the broader sense:

Interagency Cooperation (e.g. USA)  
 Whole of Government Approach (e.g. OECD)  
 Joint-up Government (e.g. United Kingdom)  
 Comprehensive Approach (e.g. NATO)  
 Civil Military Coordination/CMCO (EU)

#### CMI in the narrower sense

Civil Military Cooperation/CIMIC (e.g. NATO members)  
 Effects Based Approach to Operations/EBAO (NATO)  
 National CIMIC (ZMZ/I) and  
 CIMIC Abroad (ZMZ/A) (Germany)  
 Civil Military Coordination/CMCoord (UN OCHA)  
 Civil Military Coordination/CIMIC (UN DPKO)

At international level, the United Nations (UN), for example, with its new Peacebuilding Commission, is attempting to create an institutional framework to facilitate a more coordinated approach to post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. Furthermore developing the concept of integrated missions, which is intended to improve coordination between the various civilian and military UN actors and mechanisms, under the control of the relevant Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. In the European Union (EU), the challenge of internal consultation is addressed under the Civil-Military Coordination (CMCO) label, which aims to coordinate civilian and military actors on an equal footing. NATO, in turn, uses the term Comprehensive Approach to denote the use of military and civilian crisis management tools, while impact-oriented interaction with other actors is known as the Effects-Based Approach to Operations (EBAO).

CMI in the broader sense is highly complex and therefore difficult to implement. While the idea of comprehensive networking between all relevant actors and sectors makes sense in theory, many different problems arise in practice. At national level, highly disparate legal and political conditions are in place. In Germany, for example, attempts to soften the “principle of ministerial autonomy” (Resortprinzip), which is enshrined in constitutional law and grants each minister the freedom to supervise departmental operations and prepare legislative proposals without cabinet interference as long as his or her policies are in line with the Chancellor’s broader policy guidelines, have been unsuccessful so far. Neither the concept of coordination under the “civilian crisis prevention” banner nor the “networked security” concept – despite the rhetoric surrounding them – has achieved much in practice.

### Recommendations

- The dialogue between civilian and military actors about their understanding of key terms such as „security“, „crisis prevention“, „weak statehood“ and „peacebuilding“ should be intensified. A forum for this dialogue should be provided by government and non-government bodies and institutions, such as the Bundeswehr and the political foundations respectively.
- The German Government should make a renewed effort to harmonise the different interpretations of the respective roles of soldiers and civilians that are evident from a comparison of official documents such as the Action Plan „Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building“, and the White Paper 2006 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr. It is essential to clarify the meaning of hitherto – deliberately? – vague concepts such as the term „civilian“ (as in „civilian crisis prevention“) or „comprehensive“, „networked“ or „integrated“ security for different contexts.
- At the EU level, the transnational dialogue about civil-military interaction in crisis regions should be stepped up. Civilian actors should be intensively involved in this process. Joint deployment in crisis regions requires better coordination and perhaps, of necessity, a more unified approach by European actors.

In its 2005 coalition agreement, the German Government identified crisis prevention and response in particular as a priority cross-cutting task in German foreign policy which “requires the pooling of available financial and human resources, as well as additional funding.” In the White Paper 2006 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr, the overall concept of civilian crisis prevention is described as a component of “networked security”. The task of the Interministerial Steering Group for Civilian Crisis Prevention, which is made up of civilian crisis prevention representatives from the various federal ministries and is headed by the representative for civil crisis prevention from the Federal Foreign Office, is to bring together and coordinate the Federal Government’s actions in the area of crisis prevention, but it still plays only a marginal role in the planning of operations for post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. Indeed, it has not even proved possible, to date, to establish an interministerial fund based on the UK model. The various departments of government have divergent perspectives and approaches, which they have not managed to overcome. They also fear the loss of power and resources. The incentives to encourage interministerial cooperation have also been far too weak. At international level – such as the EU level – similar problems arise, ranging from divergent interests, a lack of or inadequate joint planning, and resource scarcity to conceptual and differences in organisation culture.

### Recommendations

- The German Government should make a renewed effort to improve coordination between the civilian and military response in crisis situations. Building on the principles enshrined in the Comprehensive Concept of the Federal Government on Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building of 2001 and the 2005 Action Plan, a concept should be developed which recognises the equal roles of civilian and military actors and offers strong incentives for interministerial coordination. An appropriate means by which to do this is to embed such coordination at a high level through the appointment of a Federal Government Commissioner with responsibility for crisis prevention. The Commissioner should be based at the Federal Foreign Office and have a dedicated staff, seconded by the ministries responsible, and own budget.
- Parallel civil-military interventions in crisis regions should be based on an interdepartmental analysis of the situation and integrated civilian-military planning of all the relevant functional areas.

## 2. Cooperation on the ground

Civil-military interaction (CMI) in the narrower sense refers to the formalisation of cooperation between military and civilian actors on the ground. In this context, a distinction must be made between concepts championed by military actors, for which the term Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) is often used, and those developed by civilian aid agencies.

According to the plans forged by the member states of NATO and the EU, the task of CIMIC is to identify the diverse interests and intentions of different civilian actors (governmental and non-governmental organisations, relevant groups and groupings in the population) and to coordinate and harmonise them where possible. The basis for this is the analysis and evaluation of the impacts of military activities on the civil environment and vice versa. The three core functions of CIMIC are defined as:

- support to the armed forces, e.g. through support for military planning and operations,
- support to the civil environment, e.g. through information and advice for civil authorities and agencies,
- civil-military liaison.

For military actors involved in any CIMIC activity, the main priority is to fulfil the military mandate. Support to the civil environment, e.g. through smaller aid projects, and information-gathering through liaison mechanisms are primarily intended to protect military personnel by increasing their acceptance among the local population.

A rather different understanding of CMI in the narrower sense is found in the United Nations. Here, it is not about the primacy of military objectives; it is about the coordination of civilian and military actors to achieve goals set by the UN (generally the Security Council). Reference is made to the acronym “CIMIC”, although the final “C” stands for “coordination”, not “cooperation”. Depending on the mandate of the UN mission, civilian and military actors may have equal status (Kosovo being one example); alternatively, the civilian representative may hold the more senior rank (e.g. Sierra Leone). The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in turn, uses the acronym CMCoord, which stands for UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination. CMCoord is generally defined as the coordination of civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies. It is geared towards humanitarian principles and the specific situation on the ground, not the attainment of a specific political or military objective.

Many civilian aid agencies regard CIMIC as a purely or primarily military concept. As a consequence, some civilian actors attempt to distance themselves from the

military, while others insist on more rigorous compliance with the subsidiarity principle. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), for example, cooperates with the military, e.g. by providing briefings for German troops to prepare them for deployment in Afghanistan. However, it advocates a strict separation of mandates and their fulfilment. Nor does it use the term CIMIC, preferring instead to refer to “civil-military relations”. The German Development Service (DED), in turn, pursues a more open-handed approach. It deploys personnel as part of the German Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan, but does not wish to be part of a military strategy.

### Recommendation

It is important to foster mutual understanding between civilian and military actors. This means providing comprehensive training for troops and civilian aid workers, prior to deployment, in the principles and practical implications of civil-military interaction. Civilian actors should acquire an understanding of the military's interests and objectives and vice versa, with their respective representatives being involved in training delivery.

Although CMI in the narrower sense has improved over recent years, problems continue to exist. They range from different interpretations of the meaning and purpose of cooperation among personnel on the ground, divergent views on how to deploy limited resources, and difficulties in defining tasks and responsibilities, to problems arising from the different principles (distance vs. proximity to the local population), decision-making processes (hierarchical vs. horizontal), interests (political vs. humanitarian) and timeframes (short-term security objectives vs. long-term development goals).

### Recommendation

CIMIC should be understood as cooperation on the basis of equal partnership, complementarity and a clear separation of functions. No attempt should be made to integrate civil sectors into a military-dominated chain of command in the interests of „unity of command“, as this causes numerous problems. Instead, a shared understanding of the situation and its problems, and coordinated efforts by all stakeholders, („unity of effort“) should take priority.

### Joint financing instruments deployed by governmental, civilian and military actors

- Netherlands: Dutch Stability Fund, launched in 2004. Remit: secure funding for activities at the security/development interface. Lead agency: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation; Defence Ministry acts in an advisory capacity with a right of veto in areas of relevance to its own portfolio. Budget: 106 million euros in 2006.
- Canada: Global Peace and Security Fund (CPSF), created in 2005. Remit: secure financing for activities, especially official development assistance (ODA). Lead agency: the Canadian Government's Peace and Security Pool. Budget: 149 million euros for 2007/2008.
- United Kingdom: New Conflict Prevention Pool set up in 2008 (launched 2001). Remit: to support cross-governmental analysis, planning and strategic development in the fields of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation. Lead agencies: the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development and Ministry of Defence. Budget: 140 million euros in 2008/2009.
- United Kingdom: Stabilisation Aid Fund, launched in 2008. Remit: secure financing for stabilisation tasks in insecure and dangerous regions. Lead agencies: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development and Ministry of Defence. Budget: 243 million euros for 2008-2010.

## IV. Experiences and Challenges

Since the 1990s, all actors involved in CMI, especially the military, have been on a learning curve, not least as a result of the practical experience gained in the various crisis regions. This demonstrates two things: on the one hand, it is clear that interaction between civilian and military actors has become more intensive and, by and large, has improved. On the other hand, numerous challenges and problems still exist. This development process will be discussed below on the basis of three qualitatively different deployment scenarios: 1) humanitarian disaster relief, 2) peacekeeping and post-conflict rehabilitation, and 3) counterinsurgency and reconstruction.

### 1. CMI in the field of international disaster relief

Complex emergencies and major incidents pose a great challenge to civil and military planners and rescue workers today. International organisations such as the UN, NATO and the EU are therefore adapting their institutional capacities to cope with these situations. Since 1992, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been responsible for coordinating international humanitarian disaster relief. The OCHA Emergency Services Branch (ESB) is responsible for situation analysis and military and civil coordination and maintains the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, which lists the capacities and resources potentially available.

#### The Oslo Guidelines

##### Key Concepts for the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) by UN Agencies (2006)

- Requests for MCDA to support UN agencies must be made by the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator, with the consent of the Affected State, and based solely on humanitarian criteria.
- MCDA should be employed by UN humanitarian agencies as a last resort.
- A UN humanitarian operation using military assets must retain its civilian nature and character.
- Humanitarian work should be performed by humanitarian organizations. Insofar as military organizations have a role to play in supporting humanitarian work, it should, to the extent possible, not encompass direct assistance, in order to retain a clear distinction between the normal functions and roles of humanitarian and military stakeholders.
- Any use of MCDA should be, at its onset, clearly limited in time and scale and present an exit strategy element that defines clearly how the function it undertakes could, in the future, be undertaken by civilian personnel.
- vi. Countries providing MCDA to support UN humanitarian operations should ensure that they respect the UN Codes of Conduct and the humanitarian principles.

Immediately after the devastating tsunami in 2004, OCHA sent assessment teams to the region and also decided to deploy Military Civil Defence Assets (MCDA), including civil-military coordination officers. These units are provided by the member states and, during deployment, report under the UN, which in turn has adopted 'Guidelines on the Use of MCDA in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines)'. MCDA are only deployed if civilian institutions are no longer able to manage the impacts of the disaster.

The CMCoord officers (including one from the EU's military staff) formed Combined Support Groups together with local military forces or established a UN regional civil-military coordination centre, e.g. in Thailand in the command centre of the US forces deployed there. This served as a contact point for liaison staff, e.g. from the World Food Programme or World Health Organization. The position adopted by the Government of Myanmar following the devastating cyclone in spring 2008, when it initially refused to allow the international community to bring aid into the country, shows, however, that military-supported disaster relief can be an extremely sensitive issue. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the EU therefore agreed, in July 2008, to improve civil-military interaction in the field of disaster management, but it was explicitly emphasised at the time that no country should be forced to accept this type of assistance.

Through the European Commission and its aid mechanisms, the EU has gained substantial experience in the field of civilian disaster relief. With the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), however, increasing thought is being given to possible ways of deploying the civil and military instruments available under the ESDP. Disaster relief is a core area within the civilian aspects of ESDP for which mechanisms and capacities are being developed. Recently, the opportunity to request military support for this field of activity has also been introduced. A steering body has been established, the coordination of military transport capacities as well as response capabilities have been improved, and the key capacities for disaster relief – such as logistics, medical support or ABC defence capabilities – have been identified and incorporated into a database. In the member states' defence ministries, liaison units have been established to deal with requests from the EU.

While the EU is still in the process of building its capacities for military-supported disaster relief, NATO has been actively engaged in this field of work for some time. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), established in 1998, coordinates NATO's activities in this area, which range from the provision of assistance to combat forest fires (e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 2007), flooding (Algeria, October 2006) and hurricanes (US, September 2005) to earthquake relief (Pakistan 2005/06) and assistance after major incidents (e.g. massive explosions in an ammunition storage site

in March Albania, 2008). In its disaster relief activities, NATO has since the 1990s worked closely with the UN and with humanitarian organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It endorses the Oslo Guidelines and is a participant in the UN's MCDA project. Nonetheless, the possibility of disaster relief being instrumentalised for political purposes cannot be ruled out. In 2008, for example, one argument advanced by the British admiralty to support the purchase of two new aircraft carriers was that they would be capable of taking on roles within disaster relief.

### Empfehlungen

- The provision of training for German civil and military personnel to equip them for the role of coordination officer for the United Nations (UN CMCoord) should be expanded.
- Contributions to disaster relief should be channelled, as far as possible, through UN agencies and humanitarian organisations. There should be better networking of the activities of the EU, other regional organisations and the UN.
- Civilian disaster relief capabilities should be expanded, and Germany should boost its efforts to enter its civilian and military disaster relief capacities on the UN's Central Register.

## 2. Peacekeeping und post-conflict rehabilitation

The need for more intensive civil-military interaction arises, in particular, in the context of international post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. These generally take place under conditions marked by the end of open hostilities and the existence of numerous political, psychological, social and economic problems. In the initial phase immediately after an armed conflict, the key priorities are to create the security envelope and deliver humanitarian relief. After that, the task is to (re-) establish governmental and civil society structures and, finally, facilitate structural development. Ideally, the military should only play a subsidiary role in this process, which means that it should only take action outside its core military mandate until these tasks can be taken over by civilian actors. In many cases, well-performing non-governmental organisations may have been operating in-country for some time. Nonetheless, it is by no means rare for CIMIC to develop into a long-term task. The reasons for this may include genuine military interests in CIMIC, the lack of civilian capacities, or the low impact of the measures taken.

Project funding is generally provided first and foremost by civilian institutions such as the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Federal Foreign Office, international organisations and private aid organisations, occasionally with cofinancing from local authorities in-country. On the face of it, the range of activities encompassed by CIMIC is impressive. In Kosovo, for example, not only were homes built for refugees; hospitals and public buildings were also constructed. Relief goods such as food, warm clothing, fuel,

medicines and toiletries/personal care items were distributed, sports facilities built, training provided for head teachers, and rural development projects carried out. These activities are planned and implemented and/or supervised by specially trained CIMIC personnel who can draw on a growing wealth of experience but whose work, nonetheless, is often still extremely ad hoc in nature.

CIMIC activities undoubtedly help to improve the situation on the ground in a specific sector. However, they may also be beset by various problems, some of which are structural in nature, while others result from the ad hoc nature of the activities. A basic problem is that the core function of CIMIC is not always clear. On the one hand, according to the NATO doctrine, protecting its own troops is the priority; on the other, the importance of contributing to nation-building is emphasised, particularly by the German side. This can result in divergent priorities being set in a crisis region. A further difficulty is that in the medium term, CIMIC only makes sense if the government structures in the country of operations are partly or fully functional, at least to a certain extent. CIMIC cannot make any real contribution in this respect, however, as establishing a legitimate, well-functioning governmental and administrative apparatus is a long-term development policy task.

### Recommendation

The Ministry of Defence should formulate specific CIMIC guidelines for reconstruction activities in post-conflict societies. Among other things, they should state that strict compliance with the subsidiarity principle is required in respect of both external civilian and local actors, and that short- and medium-term CIMIC projects should be aligned to a greater extent with medium- and long-term development projects.

A recurrent problem is coordinating activities with the numerous NGOs on the ground. Improvements in this area could create synergy effects, e.g. with regards to the costs and delivery of aid to the population, but achieving this is made more difficult by the different organisational cultures and structures on the civilian and military sides respectively. The Bundeswehr, for example, is competing with other actors, such as international organisations, for scarce resources, and this can result in the emergence of parallel structures and duplicate measures. Projects already being undertaken by other actors are sometimes overlooked, resulting in unnecessary duplication of work here too. Internally as well, the measures adopted may not always comply with overarching political or military goals.

A further problem is the adaptation of a project to a rapidly changing local environment and the requisite coordination with other interest representatives. Ultimately, it is about ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of projects. A key issue here is the rapid changeover in CIMIC personnel, which makes the sharing of experience, confidence-building and cooperation more difficult. Economic linkages and socio-cultural particularities also pose

a challenge, as does the poor absorption capacity of the government apparatus or civil society. And finally, there is the problem of how to evaluate success. An absence of clear criteria, a lack of transparency as regards costs, poor evaluation techniques and a lack of independent scrutiny and control all make it more difficult to evaluate CIMIC projects objectively. Such evaluation, however, is vital for any optimisation of the approach.

### Recommendations

- The training and selection of CIMIC specialists should meet high quality standards. The duration of deployment of CIMIC personnel serving as liaison staff in-country should also be extended.
- The control and evaluation of CIMIC projects should be improved with detailed documentation procedures and standardised evaluation criteria. The involvement of external auditors should be considered. Academic research on CIMIC by independent institutions should also be intensified.

In view of its diverse capabilities, which include a broad range of civilian and military assets, the EU is an important actor in the field of peacekeeping and post-conflict rehabilitation. The EU has demonstrated its sustained strength in the civilian field in the Balkans in particular. It has recently improved its leadership capacities in both the civilian and the military sphere, so that a comprehensive approach – for example in the Congo or in Kosovo – is gradually emerging. In the CMI arena, however, it still faces institutional impediments, notably in the relationship between the European Commission and the Council, as well as concerns at national level in the member states themselves. Furthermore, there is still very little linkage between the narrow military understanding of CIMIC and the move towards a holistic approach to crisis management.

### Empfehlungen

- The European Union should utilise its civil-military potential for peacekeeping, post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction more consistently. For this to happen, however, internal institutional rivalries must be dismantled.
- The Federal Republic of Germany, as one of the most important member states, should bring renewed pressure to bear so that the EU expands its development and security potential further and unleashes the synergies between these two policy areas, with a view to achieving more sustainable management of international crises.

## 3. Counterinsurgency and reconstruction

A principle which was often applied in the past is that reconstruction is not possible in countries with ongoing conflict. In many conflict regions today, however, activities which were previously assumed to be sequential – warfare, emergency relief, reconstruction and stabilisation – are being carried out as parallel processes. Warfare is geared towards combating insurgents, who are regard-

ed as spoilers and are waging war against the national government that is being supported by external actors. At the same time, the aim is to improve the living conditions of the local population through the satisfaction of basic needs, the expansion of good governance structures and development measures, not least with a view to securing the local population's political support and isolating the spoilers. This gives rise to qualitatively different challenges for civil-military interaction, which becomes a key element of a counterinsurgency strategy, or COIN for short.

COIN is a combination of offensive, defensive and stabilising measures. In this context, CIMIC has the task, among other things, of contributing to operational planning, information-gathering and the identification of military objectives. In that respect, COIN is a comprehensive approach which encompasses the full spectrum of activities, including reconstruction and humanitarian relief. It is currently being carried out in Iraq and Afghanistan where, despite all the differences between them, some interesting parallels can be observed.

- In both cases, after swift initial success by the military – in both cases, the US-led coalition forces – a multifaceted insurgency movement emerged which is making it more difficult to stabilise these two countries despite considerable efforts by the international community.
- Not all the relevant political forces have been involved in the political process.
- In the early stage in particular, nationwide civilian reconstruction has largely been neglected.
- Nor has enough been done to create a secure environment. In both cases, the light footprint approach was initially adopted, which meant that comparatively few forces have been deployed to create the security envelope.
- Military spending greatly exceeds the budget for civilian actions; this was particularly noticeable during the first few years of the conflict.
- It is extremely uncertain when – and indeed whether – the operations are likely to be brought to a successful conclusion.

The task of stabilising Afghanistan which was originally taken on by NATO has changed in nature over recent years. With the expansion of the operation to the country as a whole, the ISAF forces are increasingly engaged in counterinsurgency. Civil-military interaction takes place at operational/tactical level, mainly through the PRTs, now 26 in number. This is an integrated approach which brings together military, diplomatic, development and – in the case of the German PRTs, for example – police actors in a single team. Although there is no uniform blueprint for the PRTs, this approach generally pursues the political objective of strengthening the influence of the elected government by creating a security envelope and through stabilisation measures.

Expectations of the PRTs are very high. Nonetheless, it must be emphasised that they cannot provide a universal

solution to what is a highly complex problem, especially since three-quarters of the reconstruction and development projects take place outside the PRT/CIMIC framework. Furthermore, they were born of necessity, reflecting a lack of political will to take on a more substantial commitment. Even today, NATO is still not represented with PRTs in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. The approach is problematical because, among other things, the dividing lines between civilian and military engagement are blurred, which can increase the risk to civilian aid workers. What's more, the military mandate is not always clearly defined; in some cases, it overlaps with what are actually civilian tasks. There is also a lack of qualified personnel, especially on the civilian side, and yet it is the civilian dimension of the PRTs which must be substantially strengthened. Finally, it remains debatable whether PRTs are of any benefit at all in the south and west of Afghanistan, where there is heavy fighting.

### Recommendations

- PRTs should not be deployed in areas where there is heavy fighting as the extremely tough security requirements are not compatible with the stabilisation mandate. Civilian projects implemented by conflict parties cannot comply with basic principles of development cooperation such as local ownership and sustainability.
- Where PRTs are in operation, CIMIC reconstruction activities should link in with medium- and long-term development cooperation projects to a greater extent. Integrated planning is a prerequisite here, however.
- Clear differentiation should be made, as far as possible, between military and civilian actors. The military actors involved in a PRT should focus on safeguarding security, as well as on demobilisation, disarmament and military aspects of security sector reform.

One dilemma which arises is that armed forces engaged in COIN operations are mainly focussed on fighting the enemy, whereas civilian aid organisations are geared towards providing support for the local population. Another dilemma is that in conflict regions such as Afghanistan, development assistance inevitably becomes politicised, given that it has to serve the prescribed objective of supporting the central government. This alone increases the risk to civilian actors. Many NGOs attempt to maintain some distance from the conflict parties and demonstrate their impartiality, in order to safeguard their own security. Nonetheless, the fact remains that most of the NGOs operating in Afghanistan, for example, obtain the bulk of their funding from government donors, which raises the question of whether and how this impartiality can be demonstrated. The problem is exacerbated if there is inappropriate conduct on the part of the military, such as a failure to mark vehicles properly, the portrayal of military personnel as aid workers, aid being made conditional on the local population's willingness to supply information, or presentation of military activities as humanitarian assistance. However, even without this type of conduct, tension still exists between the military's interest in information-gathering, combating insurgency and presenting a positive image, on the one hand, and the NGOs' interests in independence and impartiality on the other.

### Recommendation

Any participation by Germany in COIN operations should be given very careful consideration, for it may well entail extremely high political, financial, ethical and above all human costs. The German Bundestag and the population at large should be fully and clearly informed about the nature of COIN, which involves combat operations against hostile forces. Civilian aid organisations should not participate in COIN operations.

## V. "Militarisation" or "Civilisation"?

Civil-military interaction in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction takes place in a variety of conditions. In the field of disaster relief, a set of rules has recently been developed within the UN framework which enables military assets and resources – especially transport and logistics – to be used in the performance of these tasks. These rules assign a clearly subsidiary role to the military, with civilian organisations being granted the undisputed lead role. In complex interventions in the field of peacekeeping and post-conflict rehabilitation, civil-military interaction takes place on a more or less coordinated basis, and although competitive situations and losses in effectiveness can occur, the importance of maintaining actors' autonomy is largely undisputed. If reconstruction measures are combined with counterinsurgency (COIN), however, CMI is likely to become militarised; this means that the role of the military increases and the distinction between civilian and military activities becomes more and more blurred.

The key difference between COIN and peacekeeping is that in the former case, the intervention forces are active conflict parties in a violent civil war, whereas in the latter, they are not. In Afghanistan, for example, NATO is attempting to support the Karzai government's control over the entire country against insurgent forces, albeit on the basis of a broad consensus that in essence, is about winning the "hearts and minds" of the population by addressing the main causes of the conflict.

What is needed, then, is a precise analysis of the causes of the conflict and an appropriate political strategy for its management. In essence, these are political goals. Nonetheless, the military component plays a very important role in COIN. One reason for that is the difficult security situation, which can cause a dilemma: either to accept the military domination of the operation, or to accept the insurgents' growing influence. What is certain, however, is that civilian reconstruction is almost impossible to carry

out effectively in areas where heavy fighting is taking place. As civilian reconstruction is essential for the attainment of the political goal, however, the US military, for example, is trying to expand its capabilities in the field of nation-building. Another option under discussion goes further and advocates incorporating governmental actors from the civilian sector into the military command chain for the duration of the operation. Apart from the fact that institutional resistance and legal obstacles stand in the way of this approach, there are three arguments against it: firstly, the military lacks the appropriate capabilities; secondly, the civilian agencies would be weakened; and thirdly, development assistance would be downgraded to a mere functional element of military security. Furthermore, key dilemmas would remain:

- On the one hand, the military needs the support of local state actors, but on the other, in many cases this support is not guaranteed, either at all (i.e. in failed states) or to an adequate extent (weak states).
- On the one hand, the security of the troops themselves takes priority, from a military perspective; on the other, reconstruction measures undertaken within the framework of development policy require direct contact with the local population, which may put the security of personnel at risk.
- On the one hand, state and society in the target country should develop autonomously and responsibly in accordance with the principle of ownership; on the other hand, the intervention forces will undoubtedly seek to exert control over events and local actors.
- On the one hand, the fastest possible stabilisation of the political situation is desired, but on the other, efforts to tackle the causes of instability only achieve stability in the long term, whereas in the short to medium term, it may have the opposite effect.

The drift towards militarisation, outlined above, does not result primarily from the military's particular interest in nation-building tasks. Operating in this field, after all, means that it runs the risk of frittering away its energies, having to disclose its operational planning, and forfeiting its scope for action. All of this is exacerbated by the relative weakness of civilian state actors vis-à-vis the military, which can range from a far lower budget, a lack of qualified personnel to far less political authority than the military. In light of this situation, the military is increasingly dealing with the issue of reconstruction as well. Indeed, in US military doctrine, nation-building is now given the same priority as the combat mandate. Nonetheless, there is a lack of clear and specific instructions, because the military mandate – combating insurgency – takes priority in the specific operational situation. This, in turn, can undermine the political and strategic objective if, for example, military action results in the deaths of innocent civilians, which is inevitable in this type of war. What's more, instead of clear and attainable political goals, the requirements made are often vague, conflicting and unrealistic; given the great complexity and questionable nature of military-backed social engineering in other cultures, they border on hubris.

### Recommendation

When complex interventions involve military assets, they should follow a development policy, not a power-political logic; that means that the development of the target country should take precedence over military (war on terror), geostrategic (control of a specific area), ideological (regime change) or Alliance policy (role in and future of NATO) factors.

Using a combination of COIN and reconstruction has only limited prospects of success but can become very expensive. Time is a factor which works in the insurgents' favour, as do the difficulties experienced by external actors in coordinating their diverse civil and military activities effectively in the face of divergent interests and approaches, especially in a highly volatile environment. All the former need to do is to conduct a campaign of destruction; the latter, on the other hand, are intent on building a state or even a different type of society. The former will remain in the country; the latter will (have to) pull out of the country at some point, at the latest when political support at home crumbles or they come to be regarded as occupying forces in the country of operations. The former can choose their time and methods; the latter have to react and, in doing so, must accept undesired consequences of potentially major significance. The dilemma is almost impossible to resolve if the insurgents have a safe haven to withdraw to and have adequate supplies, financial resources, matériel and fighters at their disposal.

### Recommendation

Civilian capabilities and resources for complex intervention should be boosted on a long-term basis. This must include the appointment of specialist practitioners in the fields of justice, police, economics, agriculture, medicine, conflict mediation and governance. They should be available for deployment at all stages of the engagement.

Civil-military cooperation in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction is essential for the effective and efficient management of complex conflict situations, and therefore needs to be improved. Despite some progress made, however, numerous problems continue to exist in practice. These include a lack of a shared understanding of concepts, poor planning and divergent analyses of the situation, cultural differences, different deployment priorities and personnel issues, especially in the civil sector. But even if these problems are resolved, civil-military interaction is not a universal panacea. It can only make an effective contribution if it is embedded in an effective political strategy which takes account of its capacities and resources and aims to attain clear and realistic goals which are geared towards the specific situation on the ground.

## Authors:

**Professor Michael Brzoska**, Director of the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) at the University of Hamburg

**Dr. Hans-Georg Ehrhart**, Head of the Centre for European Peace and Security Studies (ZEUS) at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH), University of Hamburg

## Co-signatories:

**PD Dr Andreas Heinemann-Grüder**, Project Leader at Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)

**Dr Citha D. Maass**, Member of the Research Division Asia at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin

**Dr Albrecht Schnabel**, Senior Fellow, Research Division, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)



Published by:  
Stiftung Entwicklung und  
Frieden (SEF)/  
Development and Peace  
Foundation  
Dechenstraße 2  
D-53115 Bonn

Phone: +49 (0)228 9 59 25-0  
Fax: +49 (0)228 9 59 25-99  
E-mail: [sef@sef-bonn.org](mailto:sef@sef-bonn.org)

Website:  
<http://www.sef-bonn.org>

Editor: Florian Pfeil  
Translation: Hillary Crowe  
Layout: Gerhard Süß-Jung

ISSN 1437-2819

© Stiftung Entwicklung und  
Frieden, November 2008

The **Development and Peace Foundation** is a cross-party and non-profit-making organisation funded by the federal states of North-Rhine Westphalia, Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony. The Foundation sees its role as a forum for the German and international debate about social and political responses to globalisation. Its aim is humane and sustainable development worldwide. With its publications and events, the Foundation operates at the interface between policy-making, research, civil society and the economy.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees is chaired by the minister-presidents of the four donor states. The Chair of the Executive Committee is Professor Sabine von Schorlemer; her deputies are State Secretary Dr Gerd Harms and State Secretary Michael Mertes. The Foundation's Advisory Board is chaired by Professor Dieter Senghaas. The Foundation's Executive Director is Dr Michèle Roth.

The **SEF Policy Papers** publish the views of noted experts on urgent issues in world development. In this way too, the Development and Peace Foundation seeks to participate intensively in the political debate about global issues and provide recommendations for political action.

### Selected Policy Papers

(Unless otherwise stated, the Policy Papers are available in German and, in electronic format, in English; price per copy: € 2.50):

- 29** *Afghanistan: Policy Adjustments or Withdrawal? Political Implications of the Escalation of Violence.* Jochen Hippler, September 2008
- 28** *The Responsibility to Protect as an Element of Peace. Recommendations for its Operationalisation.* Sabine von Schorlemer, December 2007
- 27** *Global Resource Management: Conflict Potential and Characteristics of a Global Governance Regime.* Raimund Bleischwitz, Stefan Brinzezu, October 2007
- 26** *Justice and Solidarity in the Shadow of Globalisation: Options for Mature Economies.* Friedhelm Hengsbach SJ, June 2007

Contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.