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CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF *CIMIC* MISSIONS IN MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS

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Abstract: Where a minor conflict arises, there is a deep or superficial cultural problem. Culture is always a cause of conflict, whether it pays a central role or it subtly influences it. Intractable conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian, are not only related to territory issues or sovereignty, but they also refer to the recognition and legitimacy of certain entities and ways of life. Life in harmony means life in cultural fluency. It means getting familiar with certain cultures: their nature, the way they function and modalities through which they interweave with human relationships in times of peace and conflict. The study of conflicts and the awareness of different cultural dimensions, including here communication, ways to settle and resolve conflicts, and the understanding of their identities and roles within a certain community, are defining elements in resolving conflicts or crises. The human factor from different cultures as well as the involvement of civilian actors have increased the degree of involvement of CIMIC component within military operations. Moreover, a good knowledge of the local situation, of the specific cultural aspects of a particular conflict zone can facilitate communication and cooperation with local authorities and locals, which gives specificity to CIMIC actions. Therefore, in theaters of operations, it is important to identify the most effective way of dealing with civilian actors, for coordination at all levels during military operations.

Keywords: CIMIC (civil-military cooperation); conflicts, communication; cultural dimensions; cultural fluency

1. INTRODUCTION

At a time of major change, in a relatively short time, society has faced many challenges; to a larger extend of a political nature. To this end, in order to resist and evolve socially, culturally and morally, the society must adapt quickly by rethinking all variables related to the social space so that the individual can react effectively to the changes occurring in his environment. By extrapolating, the current security environment, the international one faces a dynamism that seems to be accelerating more and more, having as main actors the key political changes. They play an important role in the evolution of European security systems. States do cooperate to maintain security by promoting their own security and the European security by affirming the values of democracy, the national and international values, and by firmly supporting the market economy. In recent years, there has been a change in local and regional power centers, which has led to a strategic reconfiguration of partnerships, to a different approach to the way in which the main actors assume specific roles and to their interests expressed according to safety objectives. It is obvious that all these political issues of the states involved in assuring the security have culminated in the beginning of the war against terrorism, the main problem faced by the contemporary civilized world. These acts of terrorism, generated by and generating asymmetric wars, have resulted in the reconfiguration of the current international security environment by redefining international security organizations and concepts on the fight against terrorism. As the world is constantly changing and moving, the security environment is now perceived globally, as a concept that sums up all the existing challenges and threats generated by more or less known forms of violence, generally motivated by ethnic, religious misunderstandings, and last but not least, by economic and other distinct interests.

Europe is facing a new era, defined differently from the precedents, where the main trend is to unify, to become more and more powerful, a pillar of stability and security. In this context of geopolitical changes, it is worth noting the efforts of international stability organizations at the regional level and, in particular, of the entire international community for peace building in the

Balkans, the Middle East and Africa. In order to achieve stability, diplomatic, economic and military instruments have been used that were aimed at developing relations between states, cooperation or partnerships. multilateral cooperation and, last but not least, joint decisionmaking. Thus, at international level, we can discuss about alliances, coalitions or partnerships that meet the present circumstances and that try to manage efficiently certain crises or conflicts. In Europe, NATO and the EU play an important role in counteracting asymmetric threats, along with the UN and OSCE security structures to prevent and manage instability situations.

The real threats are migration, which may have a destabilizing effect, unemployment, poverty, conflicting situations, economic crises Southeastern Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, territorial disparities, all of which are destabilizing factors that increase risk situations, in the end, being real threats to global security. But beside all these, terrorism remains the main threat, manifesting itself both as a political pressure factor and asymmetrical battle of criminal groupings. The terrorist phenomenon brings with it proliferation of mass destruction weapons, as well as arms and radioactive materials trafficking, that represented in essence instability factors and permanent threats to international stability.

The globalization process brought with it precisely this political reconfiguration of the state in general, quite uncertain for the national value model, because sovereignty is essential in maintaining the national identity. This global culture is to some extent weakened by the local component, the state clearly fighting for the preservation of national values, symbolic values that give identity both to the state and to the members of the national community.

It is therefore obvious that the greatest risks are related mainly to regional armed conflicts, as well as to inter-continental migrations that have increased lately. The domestic armed confrontation is increasingly present, and it is taking place mainly between the forces of a state and non-state actors within the same state, as it happened with the conflict in Kosovo. These internal problems lead, in time, to regional conflicts, generating migratory waves and economical destabilizations. Besides, as if we are in tandem, we are witnessing the terrorist actions that have intensified lately (see the attacks in Paris, Brussels, Nice, Berlin, and so on).

The complex and dynamic international environment requires greater involvement of the military system as the main instrument to support the security of the country as well as international

security and crisis management by participating in peacekeeping operations, peace support operations and humanitarian assistance.

2. LESSONS LEARNED FROM CIMIC MISSIONS IN MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS

CIMIC is part of the military action. Its purpose is to accomplish objectives of the two parties involved, military and civilian, which also include political, military, civilian humanitarian elements. It is cooperation that refers to all measures undertaken between a military commander and national authorities in peacetime, crisis or war (civil and military). Furthermore, it means the relation between military forces, national government and civilian population in an area where military forces operate. CIMIC tasks are to establish as well as to continue the cooperation of civilian population and institutions within a commandant's area of operation so as to facilitate the civil/military conditions that offer him all possible moral, material and tactical advantages. It also aims at creating and sustaining conditions to support the achievements of solutions to crises.

At the United Nations level, CIMIC missions are in fact an application of its own management and of its functions by correlating the principle of interaction and transition between civilians and the military personnel. These missions are based on two main directions: 1. Civil-Military Liaison and Information-Sharing, being closely linked to the first CIMIC function, namely, the interaction between civilians and military; 2. Civil Assistance which is related to the second function of transition it includes management and humanitarian assistance missions. Thus, the UN confers on the CIMIC concept a wider perspective, which acts to achieve a common goal in response to a humanitarian crisis. Some of the contemporary CIMIC activities remain related to development of road / bridge / school / hospital reconstruction projects, or to the support of civilian authorities and the provision of civilian resources / supplies. An essential feature of CIMIC activities is the political non-involvement. The military, the functional CIMIC specialists, are used to provide support for the restoration of the economy and civil infrastructure.

CIMIC missions, understood as coordination and cooperation missions within the frame of planned and conducted operations by the HQs, (by coherent actions of supporting the joint operation as it results also from the Romanian doctrinal projection in the Romanian Army Doctrine, 2007:47), presuppose the implementation of the CIMIC principles (AJP 3.4.9, 2013: 3-1 - 3-5) in relation to the particular conditions of the theater of operations. These principles, summarized as follows: 1. understanding the context and raising awareness of the environment; 2. understanding the aims and objectives of military and civilian actors; 3. acting in accordance with the legal framework; 4. gaining respect and trust; 5. respecting civil supremacy and property; 6. integrated planning and 7. effective communication (which we will discuss in detail later on), must be regarded as particular principles in a context (theater of operations) where the principles of armed conflict remain valid and produce effects. The dynamics of the current security context and the changing physiognomy of the contemporary battlefield necessitate the adaptation of the sets of fundamental principles (of the armed struggle) and of the particular (mission type, CIMIC in our case) to the reality of the battlefield. For example, under the humanitarian intervention designed to protect fundamental rights and provide emergency assistance, usually carried out in the post-conflict phase, the Peace Operations military character is aimed at continuing training for engaging in combat. But four of the principles of the armed conflict became problematic (as an application): clear identification of objectives, unity of effort, concentration of force and achievement of surprise (Chestnut Greitens, 2016:274). In this context, CIMIC missions are meant to design those specific, particular principles, which will ensure the substitution of the problematic application of the abovementioned principles of the armed conflict. But, in the case of CIMIC operations (CMO in the American projection) the unity of effort is a fundamental principle, as it results from the US and NATO doctrinal apparatus, and as McNerney (2008:175) also remarks:

Unity of effort is a core principle for CIMIC and CMO doctrine (NATO AJP-9 p.2-1 and JP 3-57, from pp.I-1 to I-7). Yet in practice unity of effort in the civil-military context usually means military and civilian leaders take cautious, parallel steps toward common goals, while emphasizing information-sharing. Cautious, parallel efforts on the non-linear battlefield are a recipe for failure.

Under these circumstances, CIMIC missions involve searching for and identifying that extremely fine line of common values in the double sense of the parties involved in dialogue and of purely military interests and civil-military ones, to negotiate and preserve mutual trust. The

most convincing example of CIMIC missions under the dual military and cultural constraint is the theater of operations in Afghanistan. The American CMO structure (Civil-Military Operations) that consisting of militants with experience in the 1991 Gulf War - conveniently from CIMIC perspective, a short, linear war without further engagements in the post-conflict phase - met a theater of operations completely changed in terms of features, highly considered during specialized missions: the existence of many local leaders, some of them with a fundamental role in the configuration of the rebel nuclei, the socalled *foco*¹ of insurgent groups, the existence of a climate of ethnic and religious tension (between different factions), the bellicose environment (after 23 years of conflict in Afghanistan), the Talibanbased religious repression of the past five years. US troops have never encountered such an opposition in their attempt to provide humanitarian assistance from the Vietnam War, and the CMO structures have been effectively exceeded by the multiple and contradictory requirements, specific to the CIMIC double-constraint in theaters of operations. However, the lessons learned in the 1990s in Panama and Iraq, as well as the UN experience provided by the missions of the same period in Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique and, above all, Somalia, respectively NATO's experience in the Western Balkans conflict allowed specialized CMO structures, designed flexibly and thus adapted to the requirements of the theater of operations, to accomplish its mission.

The mission in Somalia involved the support of the post-conflict efforts of US military personnel by setting up a Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC). The mission in Somalia has turned from a humanitarian assistance mission into a peace enforcement one, following the evolution of the general situation in the theater of operations. Under these circumstances, CMOC has had to limit its usefulness and became irrelevant in the local political context (McNerney, 2008:177). The Somali lesson was later repeated in the humanitarian mission in Haiti (1994) when, once again, the efforts of the CMO were futile as a

representatives of the insurgent group.

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¹ The term *foco* has become a term in military sciences, in insurgency analysis, defining, according to the famous Latin American rebel Ernesto Che Guevara of Serna Rosario, the center of gravity of the guerrilla group, the initial critical mass of the insurgency movement that feeds the revolution / revolt and creates the conditions of maintaining the will to fight the

result of the failure of the humanitarian mission as a whole. As a result of these failures, the United States has adapted its own doctrinal apparatus in order to respond appropriately to the new realities of the battlefield in a continuous dynamics:

Experiences of Panama, northern Iraq, Somalia and Haiti were improving US CMO capabilities. Interagency coordination was improving at the strategic level and civil-military operations centers and other innovations were improving tactical coordination. But these improvements occurred in a US political context that sought to minimize risk through overwhelming force and narrowly-defined, short missions, or – preferably – avoiding missions completely that did not directly threaten US vital interests. Doctrine also improved. In 1994, the United States published Field Manual 100-23, Peace Operations, which included important distinctions between peacekeeping and peace enforcement, as well as guidance on the role of civil - military operations centers. Doctrine, for civilmilitary operations overall however, remained limited, particularly in its ability to describe a nonlinear operating environment (McNerney, 2008:178).

On the other hand, the United Nations also paid the lesson of non-adaptation and insufficiently flexible structures in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The CIMIC structures projected in the Western Balkans missions have failed accomplish their mission and, moreover, many atrocities have been committed against them. The attitude of the local population, based on stereotypes (especially anti-American) led to a repositioning of Allied CIMIC structures, and the effects of change were felt over time, given the rather long duration of the Balkan mission. In Kosovo, for example, civilian-military missions have had other effects, and the American CMO structures have been able to design and deliver not only assistance to Kosovo refugees, but also to create contacts with local leaders, and distribute information products, radio/TV broadcasting, etc. On the other hand, the lesson learned in the Balkan theater, namely the "Bosnian lesson" of CIMIC missions, translated into important changes in NATO doctrine (AJP-9), but also in American doctrine. The continuous adaptation of CIMIC actions to strategic objectives, the maintenance of civil-military links for a long time and training troops for flexible intervention in relation to the theater of operations (in the post-conflict phase), for Peace, building or peace enforcement, allowed the CIMIC/CMO structures to carry out their missions successfully. CIMIC missions in Kosovo are a case that has been the subject of a separate

study given the unintentional design of the KFOR mission on the five multinational brigades (MNBs) responsible for distinct areas (operation areas): MNB North French coordination), MNB Center (British coordination), MNB East (American coordination), MNB South (German coordination) and MNB West (Italian coordination). Practically, CIMIC lessons (meaning both good practices and mistakes) have to be clearly understood at the brigade level. The integrated plan of the CIMIC mission of MNB North not hierarchically but successfully implemented in civilian-military mediation, the limited definition of the CIMIC tasks of MNB East, the indisputable success of the Austrian CIMIC structures under MNB South, the relative calm in the field of operations of MNB West (and, implicitly, the lack of specific requirements for CIMIC related structures), i.e. the effective approach of CIMIC missions within the MNB Center, led to the need for a detailed and applied analysis of the mission, with positive overall outcome, resulting in a series of lessons learned of great importance for the adaptation of doctrinal apparatus at least at the level of combat manuals (Mockaitis, 2004).

Coming back to the theater of operations in Afghanistan, assuming the deployment of CIMIC missions in parallel with those launched in the Kosovo operations area, the first successes of the mission jointly designed and coordinated in line with the projected objectives were those of humanitarian assistance at the Afghanistan border and cooperation (the creation of the impression of goodwill and trust in the American troops in the eyes of the locals) based on the generous offer of tents, blankets, foodstuff, etc., namely the mediation of medical support provided by UNICEF. Subsequently, the foundation of the CMOC in Islamabad (Pakistan) to monitor the humanitarian situation and to maintain a climate of mutual trust created the premises for the success of the CIMIC structure. The real challenge was during counter-insurgency operations. The design of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) has allowed work in mixed teams, containing military, civilian and host nation representatives, all involved and held responsible for the common reconstruction goals. Through this type of civilmilitary dialogue, mediated by the CIMIC structures and designed in accordance with the natural requirement of power transfer to local specific missions have led to authorities, strengthening security, to increasing the role of central Afghan authorities and, of course, to reconstructing the country. Moreover, the accomplishment of the missions planned by the

CIMIC / CMO structures allowed the transfer of effects to other military missions in Afghanistan theater of operations, including the integration of coalition efforts with those of the United Nations:

The PRT's, perhaps unintentionally, also served to integrate Coalition efforts with those of the UN and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (McNerney, 2008:187).

To conclude, CIMIC missions in international theaters had the role of regulating a doctrinal projection appropriate to the current battlefield transformations and demonstrating that, unitedly designed and executed in accordance with the overall objectives of the mission, civil-military cooperation leads to the desired synergistic effect in joint operations and to the avoidance of unnecessary loss of life on the battlefield. In addition, these missions were designed to reshape the roles of CIMIC staff in line with the increased complexity of such actions, and, in particular, to design CIMIC tasks for each individual soldier, as Zaalberg (2008:23) noticed:

The first source of CIMIC is based in conventional warfare [...] The second foundation for CIMIC is based on the history of irregular warfare and counter-insurgency principles. Civil-military cooperation in counter-insurgency operation is a central tenet, 'every soldier's job' and a process or concept of operations geared towards political objectives rather than a function for specialized units and personnel in support of reaching purely military goals.

CIMIC has thus become an indicator of the transformation of the contemporary war, but also an indicator of the flattening of the military hierarchy, at least in the military actions in multinational theaters of operations. At an early stage, civilian-military cooperation was a purely military concept and developed in the light of the diversity of situations in which it operates, in line with the challenges of an ever-changing society. NATO counter-terrorism policy defines three basic counteracting terrorism (offensive, preventive actions), anti-terrorism (security measures), and managing the consequences that diminish the effects of an attack. All these should include the CIMIC structures.

3. THE CULTURAL FACE OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS

Conflict is a form of interpersonal or organizational interaction where there are

differences in values and statuses, goals and interests. Conflict is defined by Coser (1967:8) as "A fight between values and status claims, power and resources where opponents' goals are to neutralize, damage, or eliminate rivals", while Burton (1988) brings to the forefront the simple antithetic relation to goals, values, interests and conduct. The term "conflict" is strictly related to "competition", but the relationship is not a twoway one. Any conflict involves a competitive situation, but not every competition necessarily involves escalating the conflict. Concerning the peculiarities of competition between intra-state groups, or coalitions/alliances, states beligenic potential, not any such non-lethal confrontation involves a conflict. There are military theorists who consider, however, that this competition raises the conflict, and the current, silent, unpredictable war manifests continuously:

The area of confrontation has always been expanded by the addition of non-military fields, because each competitor wanted to win - politically, economically, financially, informally, culturally and psychologically - escalating the stages of the competition up to the one of armed violence. In other words, the war was, is, and will be multidimensional and continuous (Orzeaţă, 2011:31).

Where there is a minor conflict, there is also a cultural problem of surface or depth. Culture is always one of the causes of the conflict, whether it plays a central role or subtly influences it. Conflicts that are hard to solve, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or that between India and Pakistan for controlling the Kashmir region, are not only related to territorial or sovereign issues but also to the recognition and legitimacy of different identities and ways of life giving meaning to them. Life in harmony means also in cultural fluency. This means familiarization with certain cultures: their nature, the way in which they work, and the ways in which they intertwine with human relationships in times of harmony, but especially in times of conflict. Studying conflicts and the awareness of the different cultural dimensions, including communication, ways of settling and resolving conflicts, knowing their identities and roles in a community are defining elements in crises or conflicts resolution. There is no single approach to resolving conflicts, be it national or international, as long as culture is a fundamental factor and it has its own ways. Therefore, cultural fluency is a basic competence for those who intervene in conflicts. In addition, religion is a sensitive factor, considered to be a source of instability or conflict. Knowing all these aspects of a cultural nature is the attribute of the CIMIC structure, together with the ability to cooperate, which is essential to the accomplishment of the missions.

Cultural understanding is a necessary but insufficient component for the capability of CIMIC to meet present and future challenges. It must be able to use situational indices to determine when a culture becomes a relevant factor, as well as other interaction skills with members of that particular culture. For example, cultural knowledge may have limited utility at a time when some rigid interpersonal behaviors or ethnocentrism attitudes are not practiced. This ability is called intercultural competence. It is that ability to quickly and understand and communicate accurately adequately and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds in order to achieve the desired effect, without having in-depth knowledge of the other culture, and even if fundamental aspects of the other culture come to contradict their own opinions or beliefs. All these skills are needed so as to work effectively in a foreign culture. To have them, the starting point is knowing their own culture and understanding the obvious cultural differences. In this respect, a complex analysis of the sources, manifestations and consequences of a particular culture should be carried out. A second step is the attitude toward other cultures and the motivation to learn how to relate to members of another culture. In this case. empathy and openness are defining qualities of major importance. All of the above mentioned are packed with a set of skills that combines the ability to master their own reactions in a multicultural context, as well as the flexibility to assume the perspective of someone belonging to a different culture. Thus, intercultural competence is a set of general cultural knowledge, aptitudes and skills that develop through education, training / training and experience, all of which provide the ability to operate effectively within any complex cultural environment

CIMIC also has the task of gathering cultural information and enriching them by adding meaning and deepening them. Thus, culture is a useful but difficult concept, because everything is constantly moving, therefore culture is not a static concept. Moreover, the factors that define culture, phenomena and cultural manifestations help to interpret data and information gathered, giving them meaning in a certain cultural context and leading to the understanding of cultural aspects in an area where missions are carried out. Therefore, those who are deployed in a particular country must see the culture of the host community

through the eyes of its members. The fact that CIMIC officers are not members of the same cultural community can often be a disadvantage and can lead to mistakes when they want to understand some local cultural manifestations. Therefore, the process of knowing a different culture is one that occurs naturally, in which it is important to keep the lucid mind and to try and understand deeply behaviors and manifestations perhaps different from those already known. This approach will make it much easier to handle the bulk of information and the process of adapting/understanding the host culture.

The lessons learned from the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, place culture in a place of honor, being considered a fundamental element, with an essential role in modern conflicts. The identity of a group is reflected in cultural goods (documents, artifacts, buildings, etc.). Destroying them can cause a rupture of the past, wiping the identity of the group from historical memory. Furthermore, the deterioration and destruction of cultural heritage can undermine the hope of a community in the future. Thus, the lack of awareness and appropriate measures from an international (military) intervention affecting the value and status of certain cultural property can lead to a decline in welfare and may have a serious negative effect on public opinion about a military operation in a theatre, on national territory, and worldwide. The above mentioned are graphically represented by Abbe & Halpin model, see Fig.1.

So, we find again that where there is a conflict, there is also a cultural problem of surface or depth. Culture is always one of the causes of the conflict. whether it plays a central role or subtly influences it. Furthermore, it is clear that the new strategic environment requires the initiation of a mix of instruments, military and civilian capabilities together to resolve a conflict. Experiences related to crisis management operations have shown that an operation requires, from the outset, a combination of civilian and military capabilities. If military security is quickly established, organized crime and other factors continue to impede a return to normality. Thus coordination of military and civilian efforts is necessary, both at strategic level and in theaters of operations, in order to cope with complex challenges in the future. This global culture is somewhat truncated by the local component, the state struggling to preserve national values, values that give identity to both the state and members of the national community. Therefore, ensuring the national security of the state means the co-operation of several internal structures, ranging from the army, to public order

structures, to intelligence and counterintelligence, and ending with governmental and non-governmental institutions and agencies. What is clear is that CIMIC is a necessary means for civilian and military objectives to be consistent, especially in hostile environments or in conflict situations where the powers of the military side do

not harmonize exactly with those of the civil one (international or non-governmental organizations). Thus, CIMIC structure is a binder, a mediation zone between the two structures with common purpose and mission. It facilitates the transition towards the civilian governance by ensuring access to local resources.

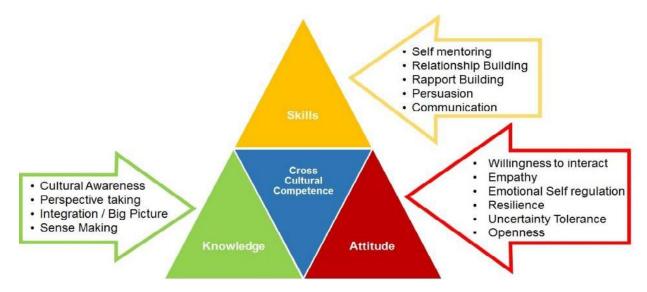


Fig.1 Abbe & Halpin Model, 2009, apud Foliant (2015)

The human factor from different cultures as well as the involvement of civilian actors have increased the degree of involvement of CIMIC component within military operations. Moreover, a good knowledge of the local situation, of the specific cultural aspects of a particular conflict zone can facilitate communication and cooperation with local authorities and locals, which gives specificity to CIMIC actions. Therefore, in theaters of operations, it is important to identify the most effective way of dealing with civilian actors, for coordination at all levels during military operations. At tactical level, confusion and duplication of effort must be avoided during missions. CIMIC relationship and collaboration structure must be both flexible and missionoriented. In any situation that may occur, civil structures are fundamental to achieving the goal at all levels. However, communication within a country, within the community of these organizations is a complex and sensitive subject alike. In some cases, parallel UN / Military Coordination Structures are being founded, which only complicate the communication process. Better relations between NGOs and the military, resulting from increased opportunities for close co-operation in areas such as joint training, planning and evaluation, help in understanding each other and bring a plus in terms of efficiency during missions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Studying conflicts and the awareness of the dimensions of culture, different including communication, ways of settling and resolving conflicts, knowing their identities and roles in a community are defining elements in resolving crises or conflicts. There is no single approach to whether resolving conflicts. national international, as long as culture is a fundamental factor and involves ways and means. Cultural understanding is a necessary but insufficient component for CIMIC's capability to meet present and future challenges. The intercultural competence is a set of general cultural knowledge, skills and abilities developed through education, training / training and experience, all of which provide the ability to operate effectively within any complex cultural environment. From complexity also arises the heterogeneous and diversified role of CIMIC missions as well as the multilateral skills that the officers of CIMIC structures have to hold, many of them not being taught and trained in specialized courses but being acquired in time. To sum up, civil-military cooperation leads to the desired effect in joint operations and to the avoidance of human loss. In addition, these missions had in general, the role of remodeling the roles of CIMIC staff, in line with the increased complexity of such actions and, in particular, of designing CIMIC tasks for each individual working in the military system.

The most important personal contributions are those relating to the reconfiguration of the CIMIC officer's approach as part of the structure, but also the emphasis on him as an individual who must possess certain skills to carry out CIMIC missions. Furthermore, he must be trained on this line by competent structures in training centers where these skills are practiced and applied to increase awareness and knowledge of how to act in difficult situations in different areas, especially from the cultural perspective. The intercultural element, with all its specific elements, must help the CIMIC officer in his awareness and adaptation to the new environment in which he will act.

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