



The Rational for Civil-Military Cooperation as Part of Humanitarian Response

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Abstract: "Although some critics contend that Civil-Military Cooperation is incompatible with humanitarian values, evidence suggests that such cooperation is essential, this paper critically evaluate the rationale for humanitarian actors and the military working cooperatively with each other as a part of humanitarian response" the paper is presented through the consideration of concepts and theories around the theme as well as the historical events that shaped Civil- military Cooperation.

Keywords: Civil-Military Cooperation, Humanitarian response, Organizations, Emergencies, Conflict

INTRODUCTION

During many scenarios such as conflicts, political unrest emergencies or natural disasters (all of which create the need for a humanitarian response) it is normal in many nations for the military or civil defense organizations to assist and facilitate humanitarian response efforts. In many cases, bilateral support for disaster-impacted nations is also given at the international level through the deployment of foreign military as well as civil defense resources. In all such situations, both national and international humanitarian organizations take part in emergency relief efforts simultaneously with military forces. It has been debated that military operations may not always be compatible with civilian humanitarian values, but a vast body of published data has shown evidence suggesting that civil-military cooperation is vital and can function in the same location without harming the civilian nature of humanitarian response (Haugevik and de Carvalho, 2007; Pramanik, 2015).

It has been acknowledged that many countries have an increasing tendency of using military assets in their emergency response to any humanitarian emergencies that take place. Even though a majority of the part played by the military is limited to complex emergencies, this practice has been critically examined by international humanitarian agencies so as to determine what part is best played by the military without compromising humanitarian values. Conventional humanitarian actors have also cautioned against very high levels of military involvement as this may result in extended roles, which in the humanitarian context might result in the effectiveness of their main function of providing defense for territorial integrity of the affected country. The concern of many of the humanitarian organizations is that because of the fact that traditional military training as well as operational standard for conduct

differ from the aims and ethics of civilian humanitarian staff the use of the military may compromise the humanitarian work ethics, concepts and theoretical frameworks and in turn place into jeopardy the safety of humanitarian staff or the civilian populations (Kamara, 2013).

Rationale for Civil-Military Cooperation Operations As a Part of Humanitarian Response

In the past, the roles of humanitarian actors and military forces involved in humanitarian response efforts in conflict as well as disaster situations were quite clear and well defined. At present there is a serious overlap between the roles played by humanitarian actors and the military forces due to the present trend of integration between political motives as well as the use of military forces for the provision of stability following conflicts or emergency response to disasters. Humanitarian actors feel that this trend promotes a high risk of weakening the perception as well as on the ground reality of providing impartial, independent and neutral humanitarian action, in the context of the military forces that often become the belligerents and impacted public, which are the beneficiaries. Humanitarian actors often find it increasingly difficult to maintain their ability and continue to be neutral as well as independent when making use of the logistics as well as the assets of military forces serving as peacekeepers. These forces usually end up becoming the belligerents in the very conflict situations they have been sent to mitigate (Marret, 2009; Pramanik, 2015).

Despite the possible issues pointed out by certain humanitarian actors, civil-military cooperation continues to be important and essential in providing much needed resources to conflict zones as well as safety for victims and



affected populations requiring urgent humanitarian intervention. The need to use military forces becomes consequently useful in humanitarian crisis situations through two factors namely their assets and their use in the provision of security (Pugh, 2001). Civil- military cooperation as well as positive relations has also become essential due to the increase in the scale as well as the number of natural or man made disasters on a global scale. Simultaneously there has been a corresponding increase in the numbers as well as the types of lengthy and complex emergencies that keep on nullifying the in place coping mechanisms of millions of susceptible people in civilian populations (most of such conflict situations are seen in the regions of the Middle Eastern group of countries and African nations). These crisis emergency situations continue to become more complex in nature in order to mitigate their effects, in addition to humanitarian actors there has been an increase in the number as well as variety of actors involved such as military forces, the police, private security agencies and, custom officials). In most situations humanitarian actors have to work together with the deployed multinational military forces gradually becoming involved and searching have to seek synergies when maintaining their impartial operation. In addition the present economic situation of the world has forced emergency crisis responders to find more efficient response systems since they now have far more accountability. As a result, ideas like comprehensive, integrated or entire government approaches involving civil-military cooperation have been developed and used (Saavedra and Knox-Clarke, 2015).

It has been seen that the utilization of foreign military assets for supporting humanitarian crisis response is absolutely essential in many kinds of exceptional settings especially during incidents related to large-scale natural disasters. For example during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the deployment of military forces played a vital part in the humanitarian aid effort that followed. It is common to deploy national military forces during times of national disasters in many countries. The military is therefore been increasingly used to serve role of first responders in crisis situations. Military interventions in humanitarian crisis response usually relies on the scale of disasters and the existing bilateral or regional agreements related to utilization of foreign military forces during disaster response. There is a need for civil-military cooperation to ensure the maximum benefits to the impacted population. This kind of cooperation is also essential in economic terms. It is important to count for the fact that at present there is an increasing gap between the rising levels

of required humanitarian aid and the reducing level of available resources due to the global economic crunch. This makes it essential to have a heightened civil-military cooperation which makes it possible to use effective means of aid delivery using the available resources while maintaining humanitarian operations that are coordinated, impartial and keep in mind the ethics of civilian humanitarian needs (HFP Stakeholders Forum, 2011; Nabi, 2014; Moore, 1999; Rollins, 2001).

In other words, in order to fulfill the main principles of humanitarian aid such as charity, humanitarian relief, global justice, rehabilitation, protection and prevention of civilian in complex emergencies, in today's conflict prone states, the use of military forces is essential (Moore, 1999). In such conflict situations, both national and international military forces can be deployed to serve an essential role by providing safe and secure work situations for both the civilians and the humanitarian actors that are operating in that location. It has been experienced in past situations that military and police can perform vital tasks in complex crises in which governments are not able to or simply unwilling to give required protection to their own civilians in a manner that breaches the theoretical framework of humanitarian aid. As such, civil-military cooperation is complementary in such situations (Rollins, 2001). Good examples of situations where such cooperation has been instrumental in the provision of humanitarian aid are the use of foreign and multinational military forces in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo during peacekeeping operations, in Afghanistan and Iraq as post-9/11 operations, in the Balkans post-conflict situation and in the aftermath of the Southeastern Asian tsunami. However, in these special situations where national or international military forces are involved in "militarized humanitarian aid" they may become a part of the conflict or might be viewed as a part. In these politically motivated yet militarized humanitarian effort settings both the military and humanitarian actors are required to carefully evaluate and play their specific roles so as to prevent the risk of the given military support having negative impacts on independent and principled humanitarian aid provision. At the same time, such civil-military cooperation in humanitarian aid must also follow the set norms like the rules of the Geneva Convention or the 2005 European Consensus on Development and the 2007 EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. These regulations focus on the fact that humanitarian aid must be delivered keeping in mind the maintenance of the culture of respect for human rights, respect for local culture as well as fundamental freedoms, ensuring peace, democratic process, maintaining gender equality while



following the rule of law, solidarity and global as well as impartial justice. Since a lot of the humanitarian aid requirements are carried out by USA and the European Union in the Middle East, African and developing nations, specific attention to their needs has been kept when such regulations were formulated (ATHA, 2008; Franke, 2006).

Humanitarians are viewing the increasing trend of involving other actors in humanitarian relief activities at present as a serious threat. A number of factors are responsible for this perception undermining independent work by humanitarian organizations, the integration of political as well as foreign policy objectives by the nations providing aid and in some cases past incidents of deliberate targeting of civilians and or staff giving humanitarian aid by the belligerent factions. Militarized humanitarian aid has been seen to, at times unambiguously take sides in conflict setting. This is one of the main issues, which require consistent focus, and the enhancement of the civil-military cooperation through better dialogue and relations. The errors that were committed in past actions have to be prevented. For example the approach used by the military forces deployed for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan were more or less motivated with a view of “winning hearts and minds” that convey as humanitarian several of the military actions that were actually designed for security aims and these had a whole range of impacts or consequences for humanitarian staff working there at the same time. The result was an undesirable blurring of where to draw the lines between humanitarian activities and military work to promote security and in turn the political motives of the nations providing this aid. Such activities are detrimental since they risk the safety of the humanitarian staff operating in the area; they also nullify their neutral as well as independent work concepts. In summary, this particular militarized humanitarian aid effort endangered the created humanitarian space in its entirety and contributed to the present conventional issue of non-compatibility between humanitarian actors and the military forces (Marret, 2009; Kovács and Spens, 2009; Pugh, 2001).

Keeping the above issues in mind, it can be clearly seen that an efficient strategy for civil-military cooperation through dialogue and better relations is a must or essential for the humanitarian actors both in terms of improved strategy and operations. It has been noted that civil-military cooperation requires vital dialogue as well as positive interaction between civilian and military actors working together within humanitarian crises. This is important for ensuring that a coherent and constant humanitarian initiative is adopted towards working with military actors. Such dialogue and

improved relations also ensure that the association between humanitarian and military or police actors is suitable and in accordance with the international or national functional as well as legal aspects. Properly established civil-military cooperation can result in good and timely utilization of military assets for supporting humanitarian operations in situations like disasters that overwhelm the local civilian systems and create a big gap in meeting humanitarian needs. Civil-military cooperation can also be instrumental in securing the humanitarian space by clearly distinguishing between the roles and identities as well as functions of the humanitarian staff and the military forces, thereby helping to give constant aid without overlapping or duplication (Saavedra and Knox-Clarke, 2015; Rollins, 2001; Nabi, 2014).

The main fact that is becoming increasingly clear is that context-dependent, case-by-case assessment of the interaction with military actors is necessary for upholding humanitarian work values and ensuring that humanitarian aid is provided in an impartial, independent and justifiable manner. Civil-military cooperation becomes particularly vital when the military forces are part of the conflict or in cases where they are viewed as being the cause of the issues especially when there exists any past incident of abuse. It also becomes problematic, when the goals of the humanitarian actors and the military are different (one wants to provide emergency relief while the other wants to provide security). No matter what the situation or goals are and even if the context for both parties is different, some bare minimum amount of coordination is a must when they are both working in the same space so as to ensure that there is no conflict of interest. This will help in optimizing use of the available resources, providing security for humanitarian organization staff in hostile environments where military operations are in full swing and the promotion of better understanding, respect for International Humanitarian legislation, local culture as well as upholding humanitarian concepts of protecting the humanitarian operations (Saavedra and Knox-Clarke, 2015; Rollins, 2001).

Some of the main challenges faced in implementing improved civil-military cooperation include conflicts in organizational identities and operational goals. This has been particularly seen when civil-military cooperation is needed during multinational and interagency crises response efforts. A lot of evidence from research studies indicates that in most cases cooperation is not sufficient or rather impaired because of lack of knowledge of the other actor's role and functionality. The military has been known to

object to the high degree of fragmentation within the humanitarian space while the humanitarian actors have been frustrated that the military forces acquire information from them but do not provide any information from their end. Diversity in operational methods is a factor that hinders civil-military cooperation and negatively impacts the efficiency of on-site activities (Haugevik and de Carvalho, 2007; Pramanik, 2015). It is shown in Fig. 1 below how such differences create difficulty since the military forces may use functional aspects, which may not be known to the humanitarian actors or vice versa. Some form of joint training and dialogue to increase such knowledge will improve cooperation between these two actors.

military cooperation. Varying organizational structures and the lack of any standard frame work for managing and improving the relations between military and humanitarian actors are also major issues that hinder their working together properly. The presence of multiple military actors and many humanitarian agencies also further complicates the smooth running of the emergency humanitarian efforts (Saavedra and Knox-Clarke, 2015; Rollins, 2001; Nabi, 2014; Haugevik and de Carvalho, 2007; Pramanik, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When one takes into account the various issues and problems that have been discussed above during civil-military cooperation in humanitarian aid efforts, it is clear that there is no standard formula or technique to assess how this can be improved. The severe needs and pressures created by present day complex emergencies and disasters in the context of extreme shortages of resources, mass casualties, unprecedented damage to built infrastructure conveys a need to understand the essential nature of civil-military cooperation between all the actors associated with the humanitarian response efforts. The major issues or challenges that affect civil-military cooperation include diversity in their operational methods, lack of knowledge of the other actor's role or identity and a resulting of stereotyped perception that hinder operations or transgress humanitarian principles or regulation.

For future efforts it is recommended that although certain issues will always be present some can be solved through solutions designed to address the normative issues within civil- military cooperation through the enhancement of operational ventures by use of joint strategies, reducing conflicts as well as incompatible concepts that are against basic humanitarian principles and last but not the least, ensuring stricter adherence to international regulations in place for civil-military cooperation during humanitarian crises.

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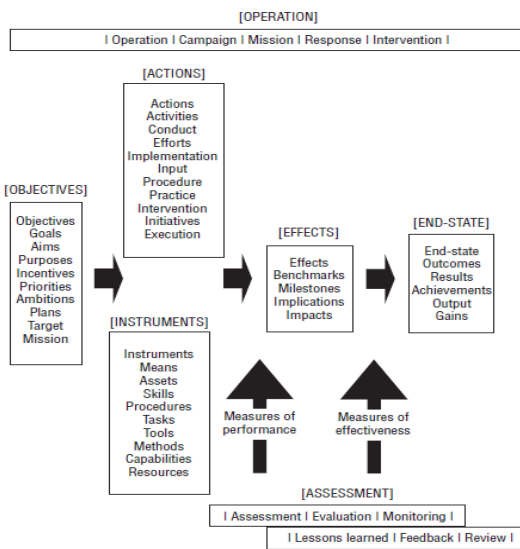


Fig 1: The needs and challenges in civil-military cooperation involving multinational military forces and several humanitarian aid agencies

[Source: Haugevik, K. M., & de Carvalho, B. (2007). Civil-Military Cooperation in Multinational and Interagency Operations. *Security in Practice* (2). Discussion Paper on Operational Terminologies and Assessment for Multinational Experiment 5 [MNE5].

The military forces provide their best contribution to humanitarian response efforts operating in complex crises through provision of logistics services as well as security. However, humanitarian actors like nonprofit organizations (NGOs) or the World Health Organization still perceive and debate the “instrumentalization” of the militarized humanitarian aid in many situations. The presence of underlying political agendas of the countries or organizations providing the relief aid may also be counter-productive to the humanitarian efforts as well as civil-



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