

GUIDELINES ON IMPROVING *CIMIC* CAPABILITIES IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Cosmina-Oana ROMAN

Department of Fundamental Sciences, 'Henri Coandă' Air Force Academy, Brasov, Romania

Abstract: *The concept of public sphere, introduced by Jürgen Habermas, also called the leader of critical thinking, is seen as a way of coexistence and social integration. Starting from the idea that public events reflect social order, civil-military relations had and still have evolutions and manifestations varying according to the country in which they have exercised their capabilities. Moreover, civil-military cooperation has suffered in time, changes in approach and perception. The different perceptions related to the public sphere of organizations like NATO, the EU, the US and not only, are brought into discussion in this paper, alongside current concepts such as strategic communication and fake news. The public communication process involves military and civilian institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations that contribute to areas such as public affairs, public diplomacy, military intelligence operations and civil-military cooperation. Therefore, international cooperation, the multinational and intercultural context sometimes complicate the understanding and the communication between involved parties implicitly, due to certain existing barriers that must be overcome and always improved by the militaries within CIMIC structure.*

Keywords: *CIMIC StratCom; fake news; public sphere*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of a public sphere was introduced by Jürgen Habermas, also called the leader of critical thinking, who sees it as a way of coexistence and social integration. Going further on, he studies the bourgeois public sphere, with its transformations, from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century, in countries such as England, France and Germany. The author considers that the subject of this sphere is an audience of priests, professors, doctors, journalists and officers. They represented a social class within the middle class, which in the meantime emancipated, thus changing their views and approaches in relation to the opinions expressed in the public sphere (Habermas, 2005:83). Thus, language becomes the essential means of communication, and "using language to manipulate, forcing acceptance is a <parasite> use, that takes us away from the true meaning of language" (Dobrescu, 2007:224).

Starting from the phrase that public events reflect social order, civil-military relations had, and still have, evolutions and manifestations varying according to the country in which they have exercised their capabilities. Therefore, we can

speak of several typologies, determined by certain factors (both internal and external): 1.the military institution, including its capability, the socio-political context as well as the level of professionalism of its members; 2.the effect of the internal, social, economic and political environment; 3. the roles of international factors; 4.the past and present role of the military institution in the evolution of civil-military relations in a particular state (Soliman, 2015:68).

2. *CIMIC* AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Authors and recognized scholars / researchers have written about civil-military relations and their reflection in the public sphere. Among these, Huntington's, Luckham's and Janowitz's perspectives are relevant. So, Huntington bases his typology on the political objectives of the action taken by officers. The author groups them in three categories: the palace coup, the coup d'état and the revolutionary coup. Janowitz divides civil-military relations in the Western context, into three categories: aristocratic, democratic and totalitarian. In the context of peripheral states, the latter identifies five categories: authoritarian-personal, authoritarian-mass, democratic-competitive, civil-

military coalition and military oligarchy. The third, Luckham, offers a much wider model based on three factors: 1. the power or weakness of civilian institutions, 2. the power or weakness of the military institution and 3. the nature of the links between the military institution and its sociopolitical environment (Soliman, 2015:67).

Additionally, Rebecca Schiff has come up with an interesting approach to a theory of concordance between three groups: the military group, the political elite and citizens. In her article entitled *Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance*, she takes into account both the institutional and social factors and the cultural history of the concordance or disagreement between civilians and the military in the design relations between the two parties in different contexts/states. In her paper *The Military and Domestic Politics: A Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations*, the author develops this theory from both perspectives (institutional and cultural). Furthermore, unlike Huntington (who focuses on the separation of military institutions from the civilian ones), Rebecca Schiff's theory of concordance does not involve splitting civilians from military, she goes further on with the assumption that the balance between civilians and military within a society is based on the agreement between the military, political elites and citizens (Schiff, 2009:69).

In Turkey, for example, studies related to civil-military relations are addressed both politically and culturally. Lately, the military implications in politics are particularly significant, but the process of demilitarization of the political sphere does not always lead to a complete demilitarization process in the public sphere. Therefore, there are certain meanings and codes of the military symbols used in the Turkish public sphere. These include public events, national festivals and military parades, patriotic commemorations, formal education that have all strengthened the presence of military codes in the public sphere. The latter is a source of continuation of a particular culture. Certain norms, values and messages are passed through education. It is a means of socialization that is also an easy method of indoctrination and manipulation. However, there is an attempt to separate the civilian from the military side to support the military influence in the civilian political decision-making sphere.

After the 90s, *CIMIC* capability perception was quite different. Peacekeeping missions were the ones that initiated cooperation between military and civilians. In the first instance, the military

involvement in supporting civilians was hardly seen as an integral part of security operations. This tendency to minimize the military role originally manifested itself within NATO, where *CIMIC* capabilities were not perceived by the organization leaders at their fair value, especially in the initial stages of the interventions, where civilian and military missions overlapped.

Then, a first document was issued that regulated the policy of *CIMIC* principles describing the purpose of the structure, namely the military commander's co-operation with civil authorities, organizations and the local population. In 1997, civil-military cooperation was defined as the relationship between NATO commanders and civilian agencies / authorities in the operation area. In 2001, *CIMIC* was complemented and redefined as coordination and cooperation in support of the mission between the NATO commander and the local civilian population and authorities as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies. This definition was more focused on military capabilities and commanders' responsibility, but did not change yet the perception in the public sphere of increased involvement of the military personnel in peacekeeping or humanitarian missions. *CIMIC* has been associated since 1990 with the reconstruction of the war-affected nations, with humanitarian assistance, with the construction of hospitals and schools, which diverted attention from the main purpose of involving the armed forces, namely, protecting the local population against violence. Moreover, while the focus was not on public security according to *CIMIC* policy and doctrine, the key element in civil-military cooperation in most peacekeeping missions was cooperation between military and local policemen or international forces. This cooperation has brought *CIMIC* to light. Along with the deployment of NATO troops in Bosnia, *NATO CIMIC* foundations were also set up. Thus, the period between 1995-1999 represented an incentive of the cooperation between military structures and civilian structures, in the context of peacekeeping missions. Those who did not completely follow the NATO perspective on civil-military cooperation were the British who did not agree with NATO's focus on the reserve units designed to operate within a *CIMIC* working group subordinated to a command center, as in case of Bosnia. In this respect, the British did not consider it necessary to develop civilian relations or the *CIMIC* structure, since they were recognized for the success of the missions in Somalia and Cambodia (Zaalberg, 2005:424-426).

The comparison between the civilian-military operations of the 1990s and the civil affairs during the Second World War in Europe represent another argument for the differences in the *CIMIC* approach of Americans and the British. While the British preferred the integrated model of civil affairs, Americans tended to create a separate organization for the management of the conquered territory. However, the British model prevailed for pragmatic reasons; Britain's experience of counterinsurgency operations being significant. With a reduced number of forces but with a high degree of tactical flexibility, through cooperation with civilians and military, focusing on the gathering and dissemination of information, they have been successful in fighting insurgents. But, only a part of the insurgency campaigns can be considered lessons learned and applied in the case of peacekeeping missions (Zaalberg, 2005:428, *trad.*). Later, around the year 2000, the definition of peacekeeping missions was diluted. Also, after 2000, the Netherlands participated in two stability missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The main purpose of the military presence was to support the civilian power with the help of the military force, and thus, under the legend of the peacekeeping mission, the intention was to weaken civil power and to take it over by the military.

It is certain that the military must think about their profession and its link with public beliefs. As Huntington states, like Sparta in Babylon, a distinction must be made between the military and the political sphere due to differences in ideology. Beliefs and obligations of success in a sphere are not found in the other one. Therefore, according to Huntington, good cooperation between civilians and military could only be accomplished taking into account these differences. If the military do not have expressed ideological archetypes, then the question arises whether their beliefs in the public sphere contribute in any way to improving relations with civilians. Moreover, it is the question of what common normative beliefs/foundations lead to group cohesion/ thinking, when participating in different types of missions. The pluralism of the modern, diverse state makes this consensus impossible. Yet, in case of Americans, there is a common area in which the military personnel adhere, not only to the state, but also to its democratic character(Nielsen, 2009:187).

3. *CIMIC* AND STRATCOM

The framework of strategic communication emerged as a necessity of adapting messages to the

specifics of the recipients, as well as integrating all communication activities, as well as synchronizing them, with the actions of the military operations, in order to fulfill the political and military objectives. Communication becomes strategic when it serves political-military purposes and when it is applied uniformly to achieve the strategic objectives pursued.

From the point of view of the means used and the manner in which it is carried out, the Deputy Head of the Department of Information and Public Relations of the Ministry of National Defense states:

communication becomes strategic by assuming the role of integrator of all activities that can exert an impact on the informational environment and audiences, generating the effects pursued by the political-military leadership. Strategic communication therefore implies the synchronized and complementary application of several types of activities - public diplomacy, information and public relations (...), psychological operations and information operations, including high-resonance events, large-scale military exercises (Vasile, 2017:56).

The author goes further on saying:

the materialization of strategic communication can not be the prestige of a single institution requiring, at national level as well as at allied level, the inter-institutional coordination of all the activities carried out by the components under the umbrella of the strategic communication in support of the fulfillment of national and allied political and military objectives (Vasile, 2017:57).

Therefore, the framework of strategic communication requires a very broad approach, involving many civilian and military institutions. In this context, the circumstances, the purpose and the objectives whose achievement must not go beyond the specific legal framework of both military and civilian institutions in order to achieve a common strategic goal must be taken into account. Strategic communication harbors more valences and a comprehensive and complete view of the operations underway in the US, Britain, NATO and the EU. Thus, after the March 2017 edition of the *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, edited by the US Department of Defense, strategic communication is defined as:

The United States Government's concentrated efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or maintain favorable conditions to promote US Government interests, policies and objectives by using coordinated programs, plans,

themes, messages and products in a synchronized way actions of all instruments of national power (2017:223).

So the Strategic Communication Framework (*NATO StratCom Framework AJP-01*) is seen as a cumulation of individual contributions that are synchronized and coordinated. This process involves military and civilian institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations that contribute to areas such as public affairs, public diplomacy, military intelligence operations, civil-military cooperation, and beyond.

Regardless of the type of mission, the level at which it is carried out and the nations involved, intercultural communication is achieved both between members of a military structure and between them and representatives of the host culture or local institutions. This communication is vital from the projection of objectives perspective. Cooperation cannot be achieved without communication, and for the efficiency of communication, not only linguistic but also non-verbal aspects, plus a whole range of cultural values and norms should be taken into account. In addition, strategic communication (*StratCom*) and media communication come to complete the effective communication framework in the theater of operations, necessary for *CIMIC* militaries participating in multinational missions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Communication within *CIMIC* structures, between military and locals or local authorities, is accomplished differently, by specific methods and means, so that the mission in a conflict area or in a multinational framework is successfully accomplished. Militaries are part of international missions, being deployed in all regions of the world, which vary substantially from linguistic, cultural and ethnic point of view.

In theaters of operations, the ever-dynamic ratio between resources and requirements makes it necessary to cooperate with the institutions or citizens of the host nation. Therefore, the necessity of legitimacy makes even the most powerful countries cooperate with the armed forces of other nations but, in particular, with the structures of the state on whose territory the military operations take place. In the first case, this cooperation may be *joint* or *combined*, in an international context and with a multinational character. In the case of dialogue with host structures, the *CIMIC* mission is fundamental, aimed at negotiating with the

belligerents of the parties involved in a conflict, while the military is forced to remain neutral and be able to defend itself against possible aggressions. They cooperate with international actors in theaters of operations, including representatives of various NGOs.

International cooperation, multinational and intercultural contexts sometimes complicate understanding, and, therefore, communication between parties is characterized by the imposition of certain barriers that need to be overcome by militaries of *CIMIC* structures through their experience of intercultural dialogue. Equally, this communication leads to outstanding results, with intercultural differences often being a plus in the attempt to initiate dialogue. The fundamental requirement for *CIMIC* military personnel is to preserve national/ local values, to respect local attitudes and the culture of a particular area.

In the case of peacekeeping missions, the multinational character leads to the achieving of multiple relations with a high degree of international cooperation, especially at tactical and operative level. The effectiveness of coordination and cooperation at strategic, interstate or state level, organizations and alliances is also a determining factor in the success of a mission.

In the case of missions in theaters of operations or in conflict zones, the *CIMIC* military have a very difficult mission. Communication between them and local or local structures must be thoroughly prepared. Any known information, on cultural, linguistic, religious, political, social or caste organization is a plus in the successful cooperation. In this respect, a key role is played in this context by interpreters who are the main mediators and who have to know not only the linguistic norms, but also the cultural ones as a whole, specific to the host country. Sometimes, through this cultural, sociological and anthropological knowledge, interpreters are the only ones who can smooth away a conflict situation or one in which *CIMIC* officers fail to make themselves understood.

Starting from the common projection framework of communication between civilians and military, and from the understanding of the *CIMIC* concept in the projection of the two main organizations that are of interest, as an EU member state and NATO, we have brought into discussion the possibility of understanding the issues on the upper level. It leads to the promotion of political objectives, being an instrument used to develop national interests, to promote them at the communicative level, so as to influence the

attitudes and behaviors of the citizens of the host state, and of its political, social, military and cultural organizations. The fundamental role of CIMIC is the dialogue with the structures of the host country and its citizens. But, in order to avoid any possible syncope or barriers, it is necessary to focus on interpreters, who fill the gaps in training or the inability of trans-cultural dialogue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Department of Defense. (2017). *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. Washington, DC: American Ministry of Defense.
2. Dobrescu, Paul ; Bârgăoanu, Alina & Corbu, Nicoleta. (2007). *Istoria comunicării*. Bucharest: comunicare.ro.
3. Habermas, J. (2005). *Sfera publică și transformarea ei structural*. Bucharest, comunicare.ro
4. Huntington, Samuel, P. (1957). *The Soldier and the State. The Theory of Civil-Military Relations*. London: Harvard University Press.
5. Janowitz, Morris, ed. (1981). *Civil-military relations: regional perspectives*. Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications.
6. NATO. (2017). *NATO Standard Allied Joint Doctrine. AJP-01*. Brussels: NATO Standardization Office.
7. Nielsen, Suzanne C. & Snider, Don M. (eds.). (2009). *American Civil-military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*. (2009)., Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
8. Schiff, R. (2009). *The Military and Domestic Politics: A Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations*. New York: Routledge Press.
9. Soliman, Amany Salaheldin & Coskun, Gulcin Balamir (eds.). (2015). *Guardians or Oppressors: Civil-Military Relations and Democratisation in the Mediterranean Region, cap. IV Demilitarization of Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
10. Vasile, Valentin. (2017). Comunicarea strategică – repere conceptuale și evolutive (I). *Gândirea militară*. No. 2. 47-60.
11. Zaalberg, Thijs W. Brocades. (2005). *Soldiers and Civil Power. Supporting or Substituting Civil Authorities In Modern Peace Operations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.