

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF *CIMIC* STRUCTURE IN THE AIR FORCE

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Abstract: *Specialized literature does not determine the level and structure of CIMIC specialized elements that are made available to the Air Force during missions outside the national territory.*

It is expected that the Air Force will participate in such missions as part of a Joint Force, either under NATO command or, as part of a multinational force, under UN or EU. Considering all these, we appreciate that the Air Force may receive specialized assistance to CIMIC in two complementary ways: by providing CIMIC with Air Force and by exploiting CIMIC activities in the area of responsibility, in favor of the Air Force.

Depending on the size of the Air Force, the nature and complexity of the mission, the degree of proximity and interaction with the civilian environment, we consider that CIMIC structure at the Joint Force level may provide a CIMIC cell or elements/officers/structures to the commandant of the Air Force structure.

Keywords: *CIMIC (civil-military cooperation), joint forces, Air Force personnel*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Romanian army has not always had any preoccupations to form and train specialized forces in the field of civil-military cooperation. The relations between Romanian militaries and civilians in operational areas were based on their responsible commitment, as well as on the ability to inspire confidence, good will, respect, appreciation and consideration. With the integration of the Romanian army into NATO structures, the experience of the Alliance in the field of relations between military and civilians made it possible to adopt the *CIMIC* concept and to establish the first specialized structures in this field. The process is still in its beginnings. The perception by various categories of armed forces of the role and importance of *CIMIC* in fulfilling their missions, especially in terms of their participation in missions outside the national territory, is not yet at the expected level.

2. REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

One of the guarantees of successful of the Air Force missions engaged in peacekeeping operations is the knowledge and understanding of “*the way in which civilian actors in the national civil administration, the civil administration of the host nation, the various political bodies, international and non-governmental organizations, global economic bodies and the population itself influence the leadership structure of military operations, while explaining their fundamental principles and purposes.*”

Specialized forces can not solve all the problems that may arise in relation to civilian actors in different situations, specific to mission accomplishment. The Air Force commandant, as well as his subordinate personnel, must have the ability to fully understand both the behavior of civilian actors and, above all, their response actions. *CIMIC* provides the appropriate communication environment and opens the communication channels. Actors in communication process are often the commandants and, sometimes air force personnel. As a result, the military personnel participating in missions, from the commandant to the last combatant involved, must be aware of the culture, religion, customs, traditions, mentalities, as well as the particularities of the political and administrative system in an operation area. They must be very well informed about obligations, prohibitions, taboos, in their relations with the population and institutions in the area of operations. They should also be familiar with the principles and norms of international law applicable in the area of operations as well as with the humanitarian principles adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, also taken over and listed in the Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation: humanity, neutrality, impartiality, humanitarian and developmental assistance, non-discrimination, respect for human dignity, transparency and responsibility, sustainability and capacity to act, consultation and participation, coordination, access, security and safety. The Air Force commandant, as well as his subordinate personnel, needs to know the significance of these principles in order to be able to follow them and to apply them in all circumstances.

The Manual for Civil-Military Cooperation includes, in Section 6 (*The conception of training CIMIC personnel in the Romanian Armed Forces*), the basic elements of a *CIMIC* training program, from which we can hold on to those of interest to *CIMIC* professional training of Air Force personnel. Particularly, we take into account the specific objectives of *CIMIC* professional training, subsumed in the manual to phrases of modern pedagogy: “to know”, “can”, “to be”. It is obvious that not all of the content elements contained in these phrases must be known by non-specialized *CIMIC* personnel. It is necessary to pursue those competences that support directly *CIMIC* appropriate behavior of Air Force personnel during missions. To this end, all air force personnel must participate in specific information and training programs. Analyzing the requirements of military doctrines in different fields, other documents of interest, as well as the experience of the institutions with responsibilities in the professional training of the military, we believe that the professionalization of the Air Force in the field of *CIMIC* must include the following forms of training:

1. **Formal** *CIMIC* personnel specialized training, within the framework of the national military education institutions or within allied forces;
2. **Non-formal** *CIMIC* personnel training, within some scientific, informative, documentary activities, organized by specialized education institutions or military headquarters, national or international military or civilian structures;
3. **Informal** *CIMIC* personnel training, by informing and individually documenting the staff, on the basis of their own initiative but especially through the accumulation of personal experience as a result of participation in missions outside the national territory;
4. **Immediate** *CIMIC* training of Air Force personnel within the deployment training program in a particular area of operations.

Regarding *formal training* of Air Force personnel in the field of *CIMIC*, the needs imposed by the perspective of the Air Force participation in missions outside the national territory have already led to the adoption of some decisions on the implementation in military education at all levels, of training programs with impact on *CIMIC*-related knowledge, such as knowledge of foreign languages or international and humanitarian law. We suggest, for a further stage in the improvement of study programs, the introduction, within the limits allowed by the legislation in force, of a discipline that includes elements of culture, religion and universal civilization.

Within “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy a one-semester (56 hours) university course is underway, “*Civil-Military Cooperation*”, within the MA program, entitled “*Security Systems*”, so that Air Force officers that graduate these courses can become the most competent commandants` counselors in the field of *CIMIC*. They may be military pilots, non-flying personnel, air surveillance staff, radars officers or coming from missiles and anti-aircraft artillery branch. As the master program is open both for military and civilian personnel, it may be in the interest of the Air Force to train it in the field of *CIMIC*, personnel with higher education background who have already acquired competences of interest for this domain (foreign languages, universal culture, intercultural law, etc.) and who, if necessary, can be employed even for a limited period, to carry out missions outside the national territory. After the graduation of the first MA course, we intend to make both a quantitative and a qualitative assessment of skills acquired by graduates in relation to *CIMIC* support requirements of the Air Force carrying out missions outside the national territory. Thus, we will be able to make the necessary adjustments to ensure that the Masters is in full accordance with the needs of the Air Force.

The non-formal training of Air Force personnel in the field of *CIMIC* is already an ongoing process. The Air Force staff participates in national and international scientific conferences with papers, reports and interventions on *CIMIC* topics, particularly at scientific events organized by “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy and by NDU. Officers participate in information and training activities within *CIMIC* activities organized in the country, or in training, drills and exercises organized under NATO umbrella or in joint activities with non-NATO international fora.

Between **15-18 January, 2018**, during the Romanian-American exercise “*CIMIC VICTORY*”, specific civil-military cooperation activities were carried out in Timișoara and Arad garrisons by a military team from the 1st *CIMIC* Battalion of the Land Forces Staff, together with a team of US military specialists in Civil Affairs.

In 2017, the Romanian Land Forces militaries participated in the largest multinational exercise in our country, SABER GUARDIAN 17 (SG17). SG17 was led by United States Land Forces deployed in Europe (USAREUR). It took place 2017 in the national territories of Bulgaria, România and Hungary, between 11-20 July, with the participation of 25.000 troops, from 22 allied and partner countries. The Romanian land forces troops belonging to “Sarmizegetusa” 2nd Mountain Brigade și to the Multinational Brigade South-East accompanied the American military from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment in DRAGOON GUARDIAN 17 marching, organizing together with the 1st *CIMIC* Battalion activities of relating with local authorities and communities in Arad, Sibiu, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Sinaia, Ploiești și Slobozia, where they organized military art exhibitions or ceremonies.

1st *CIMIC* Battalion hosted on **09 October 2014**, a joint training activity with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within the course on “*Post – Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilization*”. The activity brought together participants from: Afghanistan, Azerbaidjan, Egypt, Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Tunisia, Belarus and Romania. The practical part of the course, meant to complete the academic training in the field, took place at the headquarters of the 1st *CIMIC* Battalion. Thematic presentations specific to *CIMIC* field were held, workshops where practical activities for post-reconstruction and post-conflict stability were carried out. On this occasion demonstrations were presented: local assessments, meetings with local leaders, meetings with local female population, conducted by *CIMIC* and *FET* (*Female Engagement Team*), humanitarian and medical assistance, as well as aspects regarding the organization and functioning of a *CIMIC* Center. The foreign participants, the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of different echelons present at the activity, mainly appreciated the level of training of the 1st *CIMIC* Battalion staff and its substantial contribution to the joint training, the premise of efficient, timely and beneficial cooperation for both institutions.

By participating in such activities, the batallion actively contributes to the promotion of the image of the Romanian Land Forces, both at national and international level, demonstrating that it is always ready to assume and fullfil the assigned missions, following the motto: “*For the mission, for people, for the future!*”. All these activities were also attended by Air Force personnel who had the opportunity to take direct note of the support that the Air Force can benefit from during missions carried out outside the national territory.

Informal training of Air Force personnel should not be neglected. The permanent widening of the cultural and linguistic horizon, the mastery of at least one NATO widely spread foreign language, as well as the orientation towards a second foreign language, the knowledge of major cultures and religions, other than the Christian one, of the customs, traditions and mentalities specific to major genres the world population must be a serious personal concern for those who, in their careers, expect or wish to participate in missions outside the national territory. In particular, people with higher military or civilian education have access to such a cultural orientation.

There is, in the public debate everywhere, the dispute between narrow, expert and broad professionalism, of the Universalist type. Our perspective is that the officer, specialist, professional of any rank must also be an effective military ttool and an informed educated person. In the field of *CIMIC*, comprehensive information and extended cultural background are not just rewarding but also elements of professional competence. Air Force personnel participation in missions outside the national territory, either within a distinct Air Force structure or within joint forces, or in groups of observers, in training teams of troops from the forces of host nations, represents an excellent opportunity for non-formal training. It is about personal experience, the direct contact with reality, culture, traditions, the habits and mentalities of those we come into contact with. Here we learn, from our own experience, what is allowed and what is not, in terms of how interlocutors are, what they accept or not from our own culture. In order to accomplish missions, one must temporarily assimilate indigenous behavior, verbal and non-verbal expressions, ritual gestures and protocols, gestures and taboos. However, without all these, communication is sometimes almost impossible. But with them, the competence in the field of *CIMIC* sometimes increases in a much higher proportion than the competence acquired through formal or non-formal training carried out at home.

A particular role in acquiring *CIMIC* competences in this way is the attitude towards the population and people we come into contact with. From discussions with participants in missions outside the national territory, as well as from the military and civilian press reports regarding the participation in such missions of Romanian contingents, we have drawn some conclusions of great interest for our paper: goodwill, cultural modesty, willingness to understand and cherish the cultural aspects of others were all high-value landmarks that allowed our troops to adapt to the local population and institutions. On the contrary, arrogance, contempt, indifference, alleged cultural superiority and civilization, treatment from “the top” of civil dialogue counterparts or local militaries, practiced by representatives of participating forces, has blocked them from communicating channels, with major prejudice in mission accomplishment.

It is significant to report to a former state secretary in the Ministry of National Defense about his intention to distribute to the local population of Muslim religion from an area of operations, on Christian Christmas, a large quantity of color televisions, donated by a Romanian businessman. The Romanian soldiers entered the Muslim`s door with the TV and he tahnked nicely, and, as soon as the soldiers left, the TV was thrown out off the window.

A similar result was obtained when, at the recommendation of multinational force specialists, the local government decreed the liberation of women from the Islamic veil. According to the Romanian military reports, only brothel women have given up the Islamic veil. We cannot impose our culture on those who do not have access to it through their own culture, traditions and habits, or who consider our culture to be inappropriate. On the contrary, temporarily adapting to their own culture, we have unlimited access to the channels of communication with them.

The immediate CIMIC training of Air Force personnel is carried out within the general training program for deployment in a particular area of operations. As stated in the Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation, “*all military forces in joint operations areas need to know the specifics of civil-military cooperation missions. The type and profundity of training for this purpose is determined by the mission. The training and education of these units, prior to deployment, must include a theoretical CIMIC module and integrated training by planning and executing exercises or training specific to mission preparation.*” Thus, *CIMIC* training of Air Force personnel should not be confused with the mission preparation of specialized *CIMIC* forces. Such training involves direct identification of the operation area, starting with staff orientation on geostrategic aspects and ending with those related to the individual behavior of each participant in the operational area.

3. REFERENCE AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The training of non-CIMIC specialists, within the framework of what the Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation calls the theoretical CIMIC module, should pursue at least the following *reference* and *operational objectives*:

1. Reference objective: ensuring an optimal collaboration of Air Force personnel with civilian actors in the operation areas, for successful mission accomplishment.

Operational objectives:

1.1. The Air Force personnel should be aware of the political, social, administrative structures which the Air Force is to come into contact with.

1.2. Staff orientation on potential barriers and vulnerabilities in dealing with civilian actors of interest to the Air Force.

1.3. Informing the staff about the possibility of unconventional, terrorist or sabotage forces that may be hostile to, or threatening to carrying out Air Force missions.

2. Reference objective: ensuring proper behavior of Air Force personnel in relation to the population and vectors of interest in the operation area.

Operational objectives: 2.1. The Air Force personnel should be aware of the culture, religion, traditions, customs and mentalities specific to the population in the operation area; 2.2. Ensuring that the Air Force personnel has such a behavior so as to avoid cultural, religious conflicts, to observe specific obligations and prohibitions, to behave with indulgence and respect with the population in the area of operations; 2.3. The Air Force personnel should know and comply with the main obligations arising from the applicable rules of international humanitarian law. On the basis of these objectives, *CIMIC* personnel, meant to provide specialized assistance for Air Force mission accomplishment trains and transmits, within the theoretical *CIMIC* module, informal and educational content for each category of personnel, depending on the degree of their involvement in relation with vector civilians.

One of the most effective tools for the direct training of Air Force staff to carry out missions outside the national territory is to develop and distribute *The Manual of the Military*, from the moment of receiving the mission.

According to the Manual for Civil-Military Cooperation, “the purpose of the manual is to provide the military with relevant information related to the specifics of operations associated with the theater of operations”. Since, as stated in the manual, “*the content of such a manual depends on the specificity of the theater of operations*”, we consider that, the content must be detailed in terms of its elaboration for the Air Force military branch. Special attention should be paid and clear procedures should be established for sections such as: geography (03), where details of relief that may have a particular impact on flight missions, *incidents reporting* (15), with clear procedures for reporting incidents of flight, *common phrases* (19), that should include helpful expressions for staff potentially arriving in critical situations in hostile territory or *contact details* (20), with procedures for contacting the flying personnel eventually arriving in hostile territory as a result of flight incidents. But, the main attention should be given, within the theoretical module, to the Air Force commandant, as well as to those specialists who have active roles in ensuring its connection with civilian actors that are of interest. Within the integrated training, exercises and practical applications *CIMIC* specialists will follow the application of knowledge acquired by the Air Force personnel within the theoretical module.

CONCLUSIONS

The participation of the Romanian Air Forces in missions outside the national territory is no longer just a working hypothesis for military applications and training. Local and regional instability in different parts of the globe, determined by ethnic, political or religious rivalries, by actions against human rights, by terrorist and separatist actions, by actions of dissolving states has already led to the engagement of the international community through its representative bodies, but also of the North Atlantic Alliance under international mandate to protect populations and legitimate authorities. Thus, the Romanian army has not always had any preoccupations to train specialized forces in the field of *CIMIC*. The relations between Romanian military personnel and civilians in the operational areas were based on the former responsible commitment as well as on the ability to inspire confidence, good will, respect, appreciation and consideration. With the integration of Romanian army into NATO structures, the experience of the Alliance in the field of relations between military and civilians made possible the adoption of the *CIMIC* concept and the establishment of the first specialized structures in this field. The process is still in its beginnings. We also hope that the MA program proposed will be of interest to the licensed military and that it will significantly increase *CIMIC* skills in the Air Force that will thus be able to secure their own contingent of specialists in this field.

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