

Part V: Civil-Military Relations in Disaster Response

Chapter 18

Complex Emergencies: Disasters, Civil-Military Relations, and Transatlantic Cooperation

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This chapter examines approaches taken by the European Commission (EC) and the U.S. Government regarding civil-military relations in the area of disaster relief and preparedness. It analyzes EC and U.S. policies and strategies, as well as operational activities in the field. Military engagement in humanitarian assistance is often controversial. Yet more effective civil-military relations can mean better division of labor and more fruitful cooperation. The result could be greater efficiency in humanitarian assistance and disaster management.

This chapter identifies challenges and opportunities for the U.S. and the EC—two major donors providing disaster relief—when it comes to enhancing field cooperation, developing joint mechanisms, or conducting joint training and exercises. Since civil-military relations involve multiple actors, the study also explores ways and conditions to make military involvement more acceptable for the humanitarian community. It relies on empirical data collected through case studies.¹

The chapter focuses on humanitarian assistance and crisis management (from disaster preparedness to disaster management), but leaves aside civil-military tools, such as CIMIC (civil-military cooperation), that are used during periods of military stabilization. This distinction is not always easy to make. Militaries traditionally consider CIMIC as a full part of their contribution to humanitarian issues, whereas the humanitarian community is often skeptical or openly critical toward what may be called “militarized humanitarianism.”

A comparative approach to EC and U.S. Government efforts in this area is challenging, due to the different nature of the two transatlantic partners. The arrival of the Obama administration in the United States constitutes an additional challenge, since the new administration is likely to change approaches taken by the George W. Bush administration to humanitarian action and civil security. For these reasons, the chapter offers an overview comparison of these very important humanitarian actors, but does not claim to provide an ambitious comparative framework.

This chapter is organized in three parts. The first part deals with the historical and conceptual debate concerning civil-military relations in humanitarian assistance during a disaster situ-

¹ This chapter is the result of many interviews carried out by a study group on civil-military relations, and utilizes many American and European documents issued from official sources or from humanitarian organizations. Two in-depth workshops on civil-military relations in disaster situations were held at GPPI-CTR Transatlantic conferences in Berlin and Washington D.C in 2008, which offered opportunities to test different assumptions and proposals with international military and humanitarian experts.

ation. The second part discusses positive developments and challenges in the field of civil-military relations as developed by the U.S. and the European Union (EU) and EU member states. A balanced appraisal is given: there have been both success stories and inadequate responses. One of the chapter's basic conclusions is that the question no longer should be framed around the circumstances in which these major humanitarian actors should intervene militarily, but rather how they can intervene in the best way possible—with sufficient regard to civil-military relations and operational planning processes. The third part recommends ways the EC and the U.S. could improve their cooperation with each other and with the humanitarian community.

The Nature of the Problem

Increasingly, military, humanitarian and other civilian actors find themselves working together in responding to disasters (natural or man-made) and complex emergencies. These situations pose challenges for all parties concerned. Traditional humanitarian actors are asked to work in physically challenging environments and areas plagued by violence. In these settings, humanitarian relief workers may need the assistance of military actors for transportation or security. Yet for over a century humanitarian actors have strongly guarded their neutrality, eschewing government and military contacts that might infringe upon their special status.²

A basic difficulty in analyzing civil-military relations is the extreme variety of such relations. The military, concerned with security on the ground, may view civil-military problems as a means to enforce the safety of its personnel.

NGOs traditionally make a distinction between the “military” and the “civil” (which, from the NGO perspective, means “non-military”). This approach has been informed by historical precedents and legal (or moral) reasoning: international humanitarian laws make a clear-cut distinction between combatants and non-combatants to protect the latter from coercion. Humanitarian actors, in the broad sense, have produced a multitude of codes of conduct and guidelines that are intended to define the humanitarian field carefully. People and officials alike in areas of strife may accept humanitarian agencies because they are seen as providing impartial help to suffering civilians. Yet many humanitarians work to relieve suffering amid complex emergencies and unconventional crises, and need support from the military to do their job.

At what point in the spectrum of support does assistance by the military become interference? Should NGOs use military transport? What about the provision of armed guards (“armed humanitarianism”)? Iraq has become a watershed moment for the humanitarian community.³ Does having military security undermine the humanitarian mission?

This problem may create ambiguities. The UN *Civil-Military Coordination Officer Field Handbook* prescribes, as a general rule, that humanitarian convoys will not use armed or mili-

² For example, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement proclaim its principles of “humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality.” International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, *Fundamental Principles*, available at <http://www.redcross.int/en/default.asp>.

³ P. Cullen, “Armed humanitarianism,” *ISN Security Watch*, March 5, 2008.

tary escorts. But it also states that exceptions to the general rule may be considered “as a last resort,” after requirements of sovereignty, need, safety and sustainability have been met.⁴

The limited framework of this study does not make it possible to provide an exhaustive analysis of the humanitarian codes of conduct and guidelines. But they often bring out recurring humanitarian problems⁵ (issues of neutrality and impartiality; humanitarian access to vulnerable populations; perceptions of humanitarian action; the goal of a need-based assistance free of discrimination; civil-military distinctions in humanitarian action; the operational independence of humanitarian action; the security of humanitarian personnel; respect for international legal instruments; respect for culture and customs; the consent of parties to conflict, etc).⁶ Civil-military relations appear less problematic in natural disaster situations; the presence of the military and its logistical power are both better accepted and perceived as neutral since they are not engaged in the conflict.

Challenges to Civil-Military Relations

The problems of civil-military relations observed within the framework of this study are rendered complex by various additional factors. One complication stems from the fact that civil-military cooperation requires mixing two different logics with regard to doctrines, plans and circumstances, namely humanitarian assistance and civil security.

Humanitarian assistance is defined as material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to humanitarian crises. The primary objective of humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity. It should therefore be distinguished from development aid, which seeks to address the underlying socioeconomic factors which may have led to a crisis or emergency.

Civil security is defined as an effort by all levels of public and private actors to protect a territory from hazards, internal and external, natural and man-made. It is striking to note the similarities of policies, programs and capacities between the European Commission and the U.S. Government, despite considerable differences in domestic political situations.⁷

The two fields share many common elements, particularly in the organizational area. Operational actors intervene in both cases (FEMA, firefighters, NGOs), etc. The problems of preparedness, logistical support, recovery, and disaster assessment are also often common. Yet in the end each endeavor is driven by different operational logic and doctrine. Efforts to improve transatlantic cooperation in disaster management must take this heterogeneity into account.

⁴ United Nations, *Civil-Military Coordination Officer Field Handbook*, v. E 1.0, March 10, 2008.

⁵ See for instance: UNOCHA documents, InterAction Guidelines on Civil-Military Relations (*Linda Poteat*): InterAction Guidelines on Civil-Military Relations, August 2007 (http://www.interaction.org/files.cgi/5896_InterAction_US_Mil_CivMil_Guidelines_July_07_flat.pdf); Oxfam, “OI Policy Compendium Note on the Provision of Aid by Military Forces”, September 2007 (http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/oi_hum_policy_aid_military.pdf), etc.

⁶ UNOCHA in collaboration with IASC, “Civil-military relationship in complex emergencies,” June 28, 2004.

⁷ P. Keilbach, “Internationalizing Civil Security: Comparing Coordination Efforts across the Atlantic” *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA’s 50th Annual Convention, “Exploring the Past, Anticipating the Future,”* New York Marriott Marquis, New York, NY, Feb 15, 2009, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p314267_index.html.

Disasters, Complex Emergencies and Crisis

Another complication stems from the different types of emergencies involved. Because these often require action by the European Union or the United States, the study group has analyzed natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes or floods, and manmade disasters such as Chernobyl or complex emergencies. It should be noted that these various forms of crisis are sometimes interdependent. A situation of drought can polarize a conflict or a complex emergency situation. A natural disaster can produce a major technological disaster ("Natech disaster"), etc. Civil-military relations are determined in part by the characteristics of the crises they intend to treat, their magnitude, their cross-border characteristics or their duration. The study group chose the following case examples for its analysis:

- Hurricane Katrina, an American example of a natural disaster with socio-economic and human consequences, makes it possible to assess American operational difficulties in the field. The participation of resources both foreign (in particular European) and civil (local NGOs for example) were also examined. It should be noted that it was beyond the mandate of our team to focus on the increase in post-Katrina doctrinal and operational responses and to bring in the comparative European elements.
- The tsunami that struck Southeast Asia is an example of a multinational disaster involving large-scale responses which were themselves multinational and which also involved civil-military relations, especially with regard to American military logistical power.
- Congo-Kivu is examined because of the weight of a certain type of civil-military relations: namely, the question of "armed humanitarianism;" a weak American presence—which has implications for the EU response; and a complex emergency situation. Moreover the team also looked at regional forms of violence against women ("femicide") and gender-based violence as an instrument of war.

The Balkans were also examined because of the dimensions of the post-conflict situation; issues related to current civil-military relations; and questions of ethnicity, which could be highly pertinent to other cases of regional disaster management.

The Track Record—Comparing Transatlantic Approaches to Civil-Military Cooperation

For means of transatlantic comparisons, this study distinguishes levels that are strategic (doctrines, general principles and values, discourse), institutional (organizations, decision-making process), and operational. These levels are obviously interdependent. Any reinforcement of transatlantic cooperation regarding the civil-military management of disasters must take this interdependency into account.

Strategic Level

There is a perception among observers and officials that there are two different "paradigms," doctrines and, in a way, agendas, on the two sides of the Atlantic on disaster response,

humanitarian assistance, and civil-military relations. These differences could limit the possibility of cooperation. The United States, under the Bush administration, showed a tendency of politicization, or even “militarization,” of humanitarian aid. The arrival of the Obama administration could redefine American doctrine and organization, which could potentially favor greater transatlantic compatibility.

U.S. Politicization

It seems that tensions have always existed between *raison d’Etat* and morality in U.S. Government humanitarian initiatives. In a significant number of instances, humanitarian aid, including support disbursed through OFDA, is overtly associated with U.S. military intervention. In these situations (Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo as peacekeeping operations; Afghanistan and Iraq as post-9/11 operations), U.S. humanitarian aid has been mobilized to respond to the humanitarian consequences of conflicts where the United States itself was involved. This trend has been accelerated in U.S. military interventions since 9/11.⁸ USAID, for instance, seems to have been operating recently within a conceptual framework dominated by security concepts. USAID has also often encouraged broad-based economic growth by facilitating micro and small-scale enterprise development (both urban and rural) for a broad range of people, while strengthening related financial markets and increasing access to credit and urban infrastructure.

The New U.S. Administration: Changes and Innovation—Toward More Compatibility with the EU?

The arrival of the Obama administration is an important moment for the overall engagement of the United States, in so far as several public statements have called for an organizational, budgetary and doctrinal redefinition of humanitarian aid. This points to a new approach to civilian-military relations. Several recent works by experts and commissions have underlined the need to adopt a more strategic and less militaristic approach to overseas engagements.⁹

If such an evolution still remains imprecise, the consequences for transatlantic relations with regard to humanitarian aid or civilian security/disaster management and civil-military relations could potentially be very significant. Possibilities include the creation of a National Strategy for Global Development or the reorganization of specialized American administrations (for example reinforcement of USAID or its successor agency). Among the key questions in all reforms supporting an expanded civilian capacity, the attitude of the Department of Defense and the military is evidently fundamental (its Office of Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Relief, and Mine Action, part of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, provides and transports non-lethal excess property to countries in need, and implements foreign disaster relief and local preparedness). Similarly, the possible capacity of USAID to obtain the support of Congress is a significant factor, particularly regarding budgetary support. It is probable that

⁸ R. Kevlihan, “National security and humanitarianism: An Analysis of the Operations of USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance from 1929 to 2002,” *APSA*, 2004 Annual meeting, Chicago, p. 1–14.

⁹ C. Cohen and N. Unger, *Surveying the civilian reform landscape*, The Stanley Foundation and the Center for a New American Security, 2008; Center for the U.S. Global engagement, 2008; F. Barton and N. Unger, *Civil-Military Relations, Fostering Development, and Expanding Civilian Capacity*, Brookings-CSIS report, April 2009.

part of federal public funds used within the framework of American programs of economic revival will have an impact on emergency preparedness, disaster mitigation and recovery, even on humanitarian aid, in a narrow sense. It is striking to note, to date, the slowness of nominations for humanitarian positions in the administration, which is in sharp contrast to its performance in the diplomatic and economic areas. As of July 2009 USAID still did not have an administrator.¹⁰ The Obama administration appears to regard humanitarian assistance as a tool of public diplomacy. When he was a U.S. Senator from Delaware, Vice-President Joe Biden publicly stated that “in humanitarian terms, there simply is no other institution in the world that could have delivered the assets and capabilities of the US military... In political terms, this represented an example of supremely effective—and cost-effective—public diplomacy. It demonstrated a simple, yet all-too-often overlooked point: good deeds breed good will.”¹¹ This might point towards less independence for OFDA.

The EU and Humanitarian Aid—Crisis Management as Depoliticization?

Humanitarian assistance and crisis management have made the EU’s reputation.¹² This is mainly because they are less politicized than other fields, like European defense for example, in particular in the eyes of the member states. Member states were and still are more likely to delegate competencies to the European Commission in “apolitical” policy areas—for which humanitarian aid is a prime example, especially in situation of natural disaster.¹³

The *2005 European Consensus on Development* or the *2007 EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid* also emphasize EU commitment to respect human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice, and pays special attention to the needs of Africa and the Least Developed Countries. The European Commission takes account of the “Guidelines on the use of military and civil defense assets in disaster relief,” updated in November 2006 (“The Oslo guidelines”), and the “Guidelines on the use of Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA)” to support UN humanitarian activities in complex emergencies. DG ECHO was a member of the Review Committee that drafted the MCDA guidelines. A recent adopted communication stated that the EU should adhere to and promote the MCDA guidelines and reaffirm that its capacities must be deployed in a way compatible with the work of humanitarian organizations.¹⁴

¹⁰ www.alertnet.org/db/blogs/50892/2009/03/29-154114.htm.

¹¹ U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, “Tsunami response: Lesson learned”, February 10, 2005.

¹² See S. Davidshofer, “EU crisis management: the modalities and political implications of a reappropriation,” paper prepared for ISA 48th annual convention, Feb. 28–March 3, 2007.

¹³ H. Versluys, “Explaining Patterns of Delegation in EU Humanitarian Policy,” *Perspectives*, 28, 2007, p. 63.

¹⁴ See European Commission, communication “Towards a European consensus on humanitarian aid,” July 13 2007, COM (2007) 317.

Institutional Level

The U.S.

Over the last two years, there have been a number of organizational changes in the structure of U.S. Foreign Assistance. For instance, the creation of the post of Director of Foreign Assistance within USAID in November 2007 led to operational, budgetary and decision making consequences.¹⁵ Furthermore, humanitarian networks—empowered by these changes—have called for more autonomy from the Defense and State Departments in the process of developing aid, especially in the area of specialized “disaster” budgets. While several federal funds, such as the Millennium Challenge Account or the AID coordinator budget, still remain out of the director’s scope,¹⁶ it remains to be seen what changes the Obama administration will introduce to this area.

On the subject of preparedness, using the lessons from the Hurricanes of 2005, the federal Government released the National Response Framework (NRF) in January 2008. FEMA and the Red Cross agreed that FEMA should be the primary agency for mass care in the NRF, largely because it necessitated the management of federal agencies’ resources to provide mass care needs, which the Red Cross cannot do.¹⁷ This shift has operational consequences that create a paradoxical situation (see Saalman & Verneuil): FEMA does not have a sufficient number of specialized staff for coordinating the activities of voluntary organizations, unlike those of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD),¹⁸ an umbrella of private non-governmental, non-profit (and mostly faith-based) organizations.¹⁹

Numerous after-action reports, especially post-Katrina,²⁰ have demonstrated that many agencies and operational levels believe poor communication to be a major failure of policy-makers. Communication difficulties can have major consequences for interoperability and efficiency. The U.S. Congress has recognized the need for a broad strategy on this matter and has directed the Department of Homeland Security to develop what is claimed to be the first *National Emergency Communication Plan* (NECP), to facilitate the ability of emergency response providers and relevant officials to continue to communicate in the event of natural disasters. These plans focus on technology, coordination, governance, planning, usage, training and exercises at all levels.²¹

¹⁵ CRS Report RL33491, Restructuring U.S. Foreign Aid: The Role of the Director of Foreign Assistance; see also: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59398.htm> and remarks by Secretary Rice at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59408.htm>.

¹⁶ CRS report for Congress, “Restructuring U.S. Foreign aid: the role of the director of foreign assistance in transformational development”, updated January 2, 2007.

¹⁷ GAO, “National disaster response: FEMA should take action to improve capacity and coordination between Government and voluntary sectors,” GAO-08-369.

¹⁸ www.nvoad.org.

¹⁹ GAO, “National disaster response: FEMA should take action to improve capacity and coordination between Government and voluntary sectors,” Feb. 2008, *passim*.

²⁰ For instance, the Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons learned, February 2006; The final report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina, February 2006.

²¹ HSD, “National emergency Communication Plan,” July 2008.

The EU

The EU has made efforts to clarify its administration for humanitarian aid, but the system remains complex: five general directorates are involved in humanitarian and development assistance. This could be viewed as characteristic or symptomatic of the history of the European integration process.

The EU is presently reinforcing its disaster response capacity within and outside member states' territories. The European Parliament and the European Council of December 2007 invited both the Council and the Commission to make the best use of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism.²² This was done at the same time when the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, a framework for improved EU humanitarian aid, was signed. The Community Mechanism for Civil Protection has a number of tools intended to facilitate both adequate preparedness as well as effective response to disasters at a community level. The Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) is the operational heart of the Mechanism. It is operated by DG Environment for the European Commission and accessible all the time. It gives countries access to a platform collecting all civil protection means available among participating states. The Common Emergency and Information System (CECIS)²³ is a reliable web-based alert and notification application created with the intention of facilitating emergency communication among participating states. Civil protection modules are made of national resources from one or more member states on a voluntary basis.

Since the southeast Asia tsunami of 2004, disaster relief has become a civil-military topic in the EU. It is normally a civilian topic which pertains to EU members, but which can also involve the European Commission via instruments like the Stability Instrument or DG ECHO. The possibility of having military assistance for disaster relief at the request of the MIC was recently developed. In consultation with the Commission, the EU Military Staff (EUMS) is responsible for pre-identifying capabilities and generic force packages.²⁴ A Crisis Steering Group has been established, consisting of the EU Presidency, Commission, Council Secretariat and concerned member states.²⁵ Following an informal meeting at Hampton Court in the U.K., an interest in the reinforcement of EU capabilities has developed. In May 2006, Javier Solana proposed that a crisis management board should be created in the Council Secretariat, to clarify tasks, roles and responsibilities, to ensure the implementation of both civil-civil and civil-military co-ordination, and at all levels of EU crisis management.²⁶ The new Helsinki Headline Goal 2010 was agreed upon in June 2004. It stated that the European Union should "*be able by 2010 to respond with rapid and decisive action applying a fully coherent approach to the whole spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the Treaty of the European Union.*"²⁷

²² <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/mechanism.htm>.

²³ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/pdf/specifications_en08051.pdf.

²⁴ H.-G. Ehrhart and G. Quille, "Civil-Military Co-Operation and Co-Ordination in the EU and in Selected Member States," Policy Department External Policies 2007.

²⁵ See Council of the EU, EU emergency and crisis co-ordination arrangements, doc. 15106/05, 29 November 2005, and CCA EX06, October 31, 2006.

²⁶ Council of the European Union, EU military C2 concept, doc. 11096/03, p. 20.

²⁷ Gustav Lindstrom, "The Headline Goal." EU Institute for Security Studies, 2006.

The agreement included the establishment of a Civil-Military Cell (CivMil Cell) within EUMS to support the coordination of civil and military operations. The Cell has its origins in the European Security Strategy of 2003, presented as a distinct European approach in the context of U.S. involvement in Iraq. Nevertheless, the development of the CivMil Cell was constrained because of the tension between the EU, NATO, and the U.S. on the independent development of security institutions of the EU. The CivMil Cell's objective is to quickly set up an Operations Center to serve as an integrated civil-military headquarters. However, the possible coordination of the Cell with humanitarian and civilian organizations has been a concern in the humanitarian world. As part of EUMS, it remains on the military side of the ESDP.²⁸ However it reports both to CIVCOM (Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management) and to the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and consists of half civilian and half military personnel. It also includes representation of the Commission to indicate the importance for the humanitarian space.²⁹ The Cell was established in January 2007, but so far a joint civil/military mission at the EU level has not taken place yet, except in some kind for the EU Security Sector Reform mission in DRC (EUSEC).

On the European side, it seems that the utilization of the inter-institutional framework devised at Maastricht and inter-pillar coordination are essential. DRC has been a test case for European Union crisis management involving no less than four operations: Operation Artemis in 2003, the European Force (EUFOR) in 2006, EUSEC since 2005 and the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) from 2005-2007.³⁰ These operations have seen the use of all valid means for supporting the transition of the DRC, including civilian and military crisis-management, humanitarian assistance and long-term development policies.³¹

As has been shown, the United States and the European Union face different challenges: how to reorient humanitarian aid on the American side; and how to simplify the actions of the EU between short and long term vision (ESDP missions vs. Commission for the long term). How may future civil-military relations be integrated in such a way that there can be no misunderstanding about the impartial, neutral character of the humanitarian component?

Operational Level

The U.S.: A More Integrated Approach

When it comes to operational plans, the U.S. has adopted a much more integrated approach than the European Union, even if EU member states may have visions and means for specific civil-military coordination. The Office of Military Affairs (OMA), placed within the USAID

²⁸ Radek Khol, "Civilian-military coordination in EU crisis management." Fundacion Cidob. 6th International Seminar on Security and Defence in the Mediterranean. Human Security. Civilian-military cooperation in humanitarian missions (2008). cidob.org/en/.../download/8282/84792/file/19_khol_eng.pdf.

²⁹ H.-G.Ehrhart and G. Quille, "Civil- Military Co- Operation and Co- Ordination in the EU and in Selected Member States", Policy Department External Policies 2007.

³⁰ The current EUPOL mission, in operation from July 1, 2007, builds further on the EUPOL mission limited to Kinshasa from February 2005 to June 2007.

³¹ M.Martinelli, "Helping Transition: The EU Police Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUPOL Kinshasa) in the Framework of EU policies in the Great Lakes," *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Volume 11, 2006.

DCHA, was established in 2005 as an operational link to enhance USAID's coordination of humanitarian assistance with the U.S. military. Senior USAID staffers are assigned to the five geographic Combatant Commands and help assess development needs. The OMA is also a contact point between NGOs and the military, and, in theory, allows them to benefit from each of their operational experiences.³²

On a lower level, each *Combatant Command* has humanitarian tools. For example, the U.S. Southern Command constantly manages a series of humanitarian and disaster response programs—from the construction of emergency operation centers, shelters, wells and schools to the provision of medical, surgical, dental, and veterinary services. One such program is the *Medical Readiness Training Exercises (MEDRETEs)*. In a MEDRETE, a small team of military medical professionals are deployed for two weeks to underdeveloped areas to obtain valuable real-world training while also providing medical and veterinary services to citizens in need of treatment. U.S. medical personnel benefit by providing medical care in a challenging and often unique environment; local medical professionals develop closer relationships with U.S. medical personnel; and the local population receives quality medical care.³³

Because of its philosophy, the EU maintains much less integrated civil-military relations of this kind. One of the reasons being that DG ECHO, unlike USAID, is not responsible for crisis management. On the contrary, DG ECHO was built to be perfectly independent, taking into account the priorities and the values of NGOs.

Challenges for Closer Civil-Military Cooperation

In the field, civil-military relations in the field on both the European and American sides face a range of traditional difficulties. The development of guidelines for activities on the ground has certainly been a step forward. Some of the most pressing remaining challenges include the following:

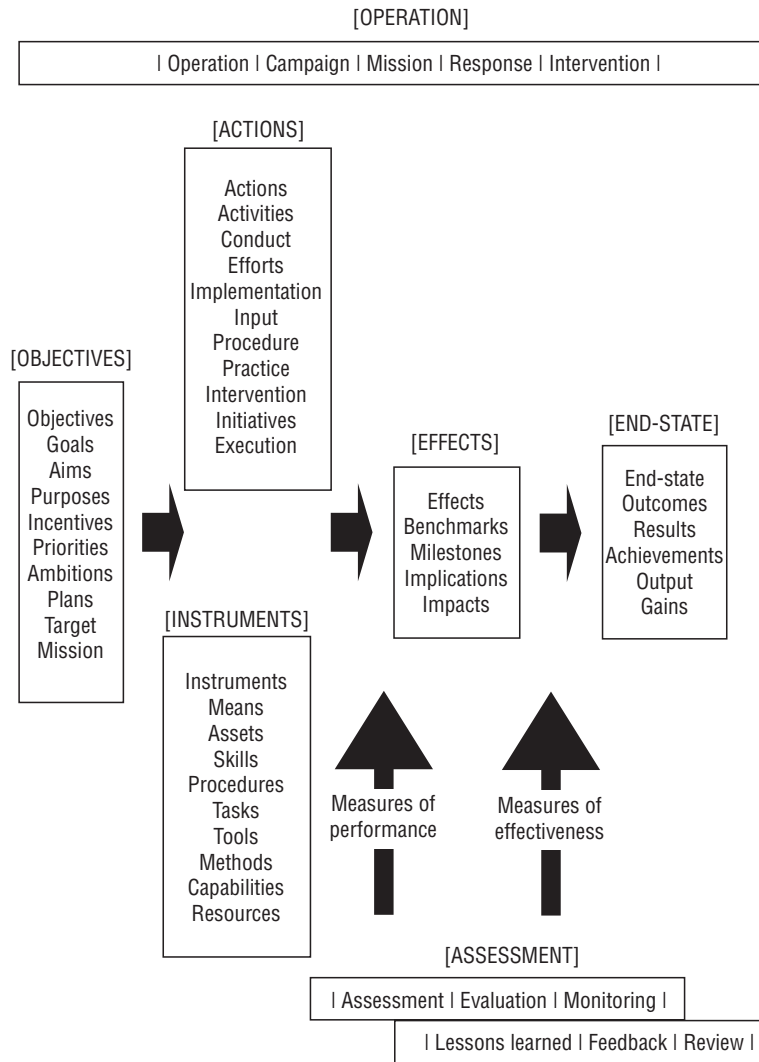
Conflicting Organizational Identities

While many attempts have been made to improve civil-military relations, particularly in the context of multinational and interagency operations, field studies still show that cooperation too often remains inadequate or too specific. The first challenge has to do with the limited knowledge of the other side's organizational identities. This can present root obstacles to civil-military relations. One thus finds reoccurring difficulties in humanitarian aid, even when progress has been achieved. Negative perceptions prevail on both sides: The military complain about the extreme fragmentation of the humanitarian environment; on the civilian/NGOs side, a frustration is often expressed that while the military frequently turn to them to get information, they are often reluctant to return the favor. Divergent working procedures between the two actors can be detrimental to the effectiveness of actions on the ground.

³² CRS, "International crises and disasters: U.S. humanitarian assistance, budget trends, and issues for Congress," Report RL33769, January 29, 2008.

³³ www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/humanitarianAssistance.php.

Figure 1. Overview of Variations in Operational Terminologies



Source: K.M.Haugevik and B. de Carvalho, "Civil-Military Cooperation in Multinational and Interagency Operations", NUPI, Security in practice n.2, 2007, p.12

Lack of Common Language

Divergent operational terminologies represent another challenge. Any international or multi-agency humanitarian mission will have experienced that difficulty. There are broad differences in the use of languages, not only between military and civilians, but also between civil actors themselves. Figure 1 gives a general overview of some variations in these operational terminologies.

A standardization of these terminologies is not a realistic solution to this challenge. The primary reason is that terminology describes practices, and practices are at the center of the values of an organization. It is thus difficult to imagine the military using doctrinal or operational concepts worked out by humanitarian workers, and vice versa. A more useful and concrete step in this context, therefore, is to increase the various actors' knowledge of each other's use of operational terminologies.³⁴ This could happen for example through joint training.

Diverging Needs Assessments

In view of the difficulties and stakes described above, it is not surprising to note that to date there are no standardized mechanisms or methods for the collection or the analysis of humanitarian needs. Each actor uses his own guidelines and there are few examples of joint evaluations of need. However, the advantages of such joint needs assessments are numerous and include for example bringing together complementary points of view, joining mutual resources, and forming multidisciplinary teams.³⁵

The United States and the European Union, but also other important actors of humanitarian assistance such as the United Nations,³⁶ have their own teams which can be sent very rapidly to disaster areas:

USAID sends DARTs (Disaster Assessment and Relief Teams), multidisciplinary and experimental teams which set up on the ground procedures of analysis for the specific needs and networks for co-operation with NGOs, IOs, the authorities, local armed forces, and services of civil security.³⁷

The European Union has several mechanisms in this area. DG ECHO uses "Global Needs Assessments," a whole-scale system of evaluation of risks. It also uses also experts posted on the ground. The EU Rapid Reaction Mechanisms³⁸ and the MIC also include various means of collecting and analyzing information on situations and needs.

NGOs typically have tools and special methods to evaluate needs *in situ*. These tools can be developed more or less depending on the size of the NGO. Competition among NGOs for donor funding often leads to a reluctance among NGOs to share information.

To enhance information exchange between civilian and military actors, several initiatives recently have been developed. The *Office of the Secretary of Defense, Networks and Information Integration* (OSD NII), for example, has been working on the question of a collaborative information environment since 2005. While it is not possible to go further into the technological

³⁴ K.M.Haugevik and B. de Carvalho, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

³⁵ Cf. F. Grunewald and alii, "L'humanitaire et son interaction avec les acteurs militaires", *EPMES* 109–115, Jan 24, 2008, p. 26.

³⁶ <http://ochaonline.un.org/Coordination/FieldCoordinationSupportSection/UNDACSystem/Concept/tabid/1419/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

³⁷ http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/resources/pdf/fog_v3.pdf.

³⁸ http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/l_057/l_05720010227en00050009.pdf.

aspects,³⁹ the question of information sharing is at the center of civil-military relations and challenges.

The Way Forward: Policy Recommendations

Some obstacles to closer civil-military cooperation are likely to persist, whereas others can be addressed. To achieve progress, concrete proposals involving the transatlantic partners should address the following issues:

- resolving normative problems of civil-military cooperation;
- improving operational (and joint) approaches;
- minimizing conflicts or incompatibilities with humanitarian principles;
- strengthening adherence to international standards on civil-military relations.

The study group proposes the following focus areas for enhancing transatlantic cooperation regarding civil-military relations in humanitarian assistance. It should be noted that a number of initiatives addressing these issues are already under way in Europe and in the United States.

Strategic Level

Towards a Common Agenda, Solidarity and Burden Sharing?

The military makes its strongest contribution to humanitarian action by providing logistics services and security. NGOs, however, will continue to fear the “instrumentalization” of humanitarian assistance by the military. The European Commission and the U.S. Government now have an important opportunity to reshape their approaches to civil-military cooperation in disaster response and preparedness and to work more closely together in this field.

Despite potential reservations from individual member states of the European Union, the EU and the U.S. could use the current political momentum to increase their cooperation in this area and explore the question of transatlantic burden sharing in expenditures for preparedness, logistical capacities, and humanitarian assistance, in a period of international economic recession.

The Military and the Oslo Guidelines: A Normative Framework?

Many actors, in particular NGOs and international organizations, call on both transatlantic partners to adopt the so-called Oslo guidelines to frame the activities of the military in situations of disaster management or humanitarian assistance. The European Commission subscribes to these guidelines through the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. It is not clear, however, whether U.S. or European militaries back these guidelines.

³⁹ See for instance: L. Wents, *Information and Communication Technologies for Civil-Military Coordination in Disaster Relief and Stabilization and Reconstruction*, CTNSP, National Defense University, June 2006.

It is necessary here to distinguish between the internal and external deployment of military capabilities. In local disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, the deployment of military forces poses a minimum of problems in terms of safety and security. Interventions outside U.S. or EU territory face different conditions. All of the examples studied here (Kosovo, Southeast Asia tsunami, DRC), as well as others (Pakistan earthquake, etc), show that local non-state armed groups act quickly on the territory they control. This can extend to controlling the distribution of aid. It is thus very rare for the military to find disaster situations perfectly clear, inoffensive, and without potential safety and security problems. If the role of the military were in fact reduced to a tool of “last resort,”⁴⁰ the military would no longer be able to benefit from the public relations benefits of humanitarian activities. This not only has an impact on military strategy, focusing increasingly on winning the “hearts and minds” of affected populations, but also on military budgets.

Institutional Level

While many EU-U.S. dialogue techniques exist in various areas, in the field of disaster management they remain a work in progress. The same applies to EU-NATO relations on this question. How can these major actors coordinate their responses to ensure effective interoperability, especially with regard to the emergence of a European disaster relief force? Or how may they interact better with NGOs or non-military actors in all of their diversity?

One option would be to create a bilateral decision-making body focusing on transatlantic relations and civil-military cooperation. Such a body could for example be modeled on the EU-U.S. Senior Level Group created as part of the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda, or on the more recently created Transatlantic Economic Council. Even if only minimally institutionalized, such a specialized forum would have several advantages, including creating possibilities to include representatives of NGOs and other volunteer organizations.

The EU and the U.S. have already taken steps in that direction. They regularly exchange technical and verbal notes that confirm their intention to implement initiatives outlined in U.S.-EU technical dialogues; they are also increasing their cooperation in crisis management and conflict prevention, particularly in the civilian realm. A work plan was approved by the Council of the EU and by the U.S. Government in December 2007. Exchanges at a high level took place for example under the Political and Security Committee Ambassador and representative of the Slovenian EU presidency, and the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in the U.S. State Department.⁴¹ More recently, in March 2008, the EU and the U.S. met in Brussels to exchange note verbales confirming their intention to implement the initiatives outlined in their technical dialogue and increased cooperation in crisis management (and conflict prevention).⁴²

Similar interactions could enhance the effectiveness of transatlantic and civil-military cooperation, especially if they focused on developing:

⁴⁰ Oslo guidelines, Rev. 1.1., November 2007, 5, p. 4.

⁴¹ http://useu.usmission.gov/Dossiers/Natural_disasters/mar1808_USEU_CrisisManagement.

⁴² <http://useu.usmission.gov/Dossiers/Democracy/default.asp>.

- a comparative analysis of methods and procedures in term of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery;
- elements of operational coordination;
- exchanges of good practice and lessons learned;
- research on cost sharing and economies of scale, etc.

Operational Level

Toward Transatlantic Disaster Exercises?

Joint training exercises have a number of advantages: they reinforce preparedness; establish best practices; and allow people to get to know various partners. For these reasons, such training activities may also reinforce transatlantic relations between civil, military, and humanitarian partners.

The United States has an organized hierarchy of different exercises which does not seem to exist as such in Europe, and by doctrine, is regularly using exercises in the framework of multi-lateral or regional military cooperation. For instance, the Black Sea Initiative “Albatross 2006/07 Table Top Exercise” took place in Batumi, Georgia on February 12–15, 2007. A series of BSI Exercises were organized and conducted within the framework of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Civil-Military Emergency Preparedness (CMEP) Program.

The EU regularly organizes exercises for improving its emergency and crisis coordination. The coordination arrangements exercises (CCAEX06, -07, -08), approved in June 2006, are conducted by the Presidency, with the support of the Council Secretariat and the Commission, with the aim of verifying the ability of the arrangements and to test the capability of the EU bodies to support members’ response efforts. In September 2008, the exercise was based on a fictitious twin storm affecting a large number of member states and causing damage to public and private infrastructures, disruptions and power cuts.

Chosen events need to interest and mobilize the U.S., the EU, volunteer organizations and NGOs. It is probable that a huge forest fire would only interest some of the EU members (presumably the Mediterranean ones) and California, but not the northern European countries or the U.S. east coast. Tsunamis or hurricanes seem mostly to concern non-European areas, or overseas European territories. Therefore, an exercise should focus on a probable threat and event that could potentially occur both in the European mainland and in the U.S. For these reasons, floods and earthquake exercises have a strong popular interest.

From an inter-organizational point of view, “Viking ‘08” (November 3–14, 2008), involving NATO and EU forces,⁴³ or the “Strong Angel” exercises could be a source of inspiration. They are a series of civil-military demonstrations that show methods for civilians and military agencies around the world to enhance cooperation in the field. The teams include medical, military,

⁴³ See Chapter 21 by Roy Williams.

Box 1.

Strong Angel is the name of a series of civil-military demonstrations that show how civilian and military authorities can work effectively in response to disaster. The Strong Angel demonstration series focuses on experimentation in the use of cutting-edge techniques and technologies to facilitate improved information flow and cooperation across the civil-military boundary in post-disaster and post-conflict field environments. Members of the Strong Angel team include medical, military, humanitarian, and technology experts. These team members are drawn from many walks of life: public and private sectors, civilian and military, domestic and international, including engineers, UN staff, humanitarian NGO workers, academic researchers, journalists, policy makers, and active duty military officers.

The first Strong Angel (SA-I) was held near Puu Pa'a on the Big Island of Hawaii in June 2000 to address problems seen in the international response to the Kosovo refugee migration.

The second Strong Angel (SA-II) was also held on a remote lava bed in Hawaii and pursued problems identified by members of the first Strong Angel team who were later deployed to post-9/11 conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. SA-II eventually incorporated 83 tasks designed to propose answers to problems seen in civil-military integration during those conflict deployments, including such topics as trans-boundary communications, civil-military transportation coordination, sustainable power provisioning, machine-based translation services, and extensive cultural awareness.

The third in the Strong Angel series, SA-III was designed to address problems seen in multiple natural and man-made disasters where Strong Angel members have deployed since 2004. Those events include the South Asian Tsunami in December 2004, Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, Hurricane Rita in September 2005, and the Pakistan earthquake in October 2005. SA-III was held in San Diego, California from 20–26 August 2006.

VIKING 08 was a multinational and multifunctional exercise in the Spirit of NATO's Partnership for Peace. The exercise was executed November 3–14, 2008. This exercise was the fifth in the VIKING Exercise series, which started in 1999. In VIKING 08 the scenario was based on a peacekeeping operation. With both military and civil parties involved, questions of gender and diversity formed an important part of the exercise. The exercise was built on a fictitious scenario involving several countries in deep crises. A substantial NATO Joint Task Force was intervening in one country, while a European Union Battle group was giving assistance in a neighboring country. Both forces were operating under UN Security Council resolutions and co-coordinating with one UN Mission covering both countries. The UN was present on the ground with a mission headquarters, several regional headquarters and agencies co-operating with international aid organizations and non-governmental organizations.

humanitarian, and technology experts who represent various perspectives (public and private sectors, civilian and military, domestic and international).⁴⁴

The process of creating and staging an exercise is challenging and must meet the requirements of the actors. Transatlantic exercises, for that reason, seem to be both sensitive and complex to organize, but politically and operationally very valuable. First, a natural disaster transatlantic exercise scenario could involve a common domestic problem. Expenditures for exercises involving the domestic security problems may be easier to justify. At the same time, humanitarian missions overseas pose specific problems for which training (transatlantic in particular) is necessary. Therefore, a focus on a natural disaster triggering a technological disaster (a “nat-tech” disaster) could be a suitable choice for joint training exercises.

Joint Courses

Another critical opportunity for enhancing transatlantic and civil-military cooperation in disaster response lies in joint training and formation. Formation programs, including civil or military schools, local, national and public or private initiatives, offer many possibilities for enhancing mutual knowledge and furthering the exchange of good practices between civil and military actors. To further this kind of exchange, European and American firefighters, civil security personnel and NGO members should be regularly dispatched on a formalized basis to take part in each other’s formation activities.

Moreover, common courses could be created. To achieve this, it would be necessary to resolve some preliminary logistical problems such as insurance and agreements concerning level equivalence, but these obstacles seem surmountable.

On-Line Exchanges of Information

Several initiatives are currently underway to create specialized online fora for exchanging information between civilian and military actors from both sides of the Atlantic. A CSIS study, for example, recommended that the U.S. Government create a dedicated forum for global humanitarian research and analysis.⁴⁵ Several initiatives already cover more operational aspects. The UN’s Reliefweb (www.reliefWeb), for example, is widely regarded as a leading on-line gateway to humanitarian emergencies and disasters. Another initiative currently under development is the web portal www.ResourceNexus.org. It intends to facilitate the exchange of timely, educational and practical information that will enhance the ability of civilian and military entities to more productively liaise when responding to natural disasters. A web-based knowledge portal for disaster management could also be coordinated by the UN-SPIDER program (Space Information for Disaster management and Emergency Response).⁴⁶ A dedicated transatlantic web portal could in addition describe the operational structures, methods and practices of civilian and military actors on both sides of the Atlantic, and in particular pro-

⁴⁴ www.advancedprep.com/documents/Strong%20Angel%20Preliminary%20Report.pdf/.

⁴⁵ K. Von Hippel and alii, CSIS, “Responding to catastrophe,” March 2008.

⁴⁶ www.dlr.de/en/DesktopDefault.aspx/tabid-1/86_read-12747/.

mote joint approaches on training, exercises and various initiatives from the strategic level to the operational level.

Conclusion

The reinforcement of transatlantic “coordination” of civil-military relations is not simple:

- First, humanitarian assistance is an important activity that is morally and politically motivated. Thus, political agendas can be either useful or counter-productive.
- Second, the actors concerned have different interests, practices and operational languages. How should stronger cooperation between the EU and the U.S. be considered when challenges to cooperation remain strong within their own bureaucracies and operational networks?⁴⁷ Moreover, enhanced cooperation in the civil-military realm encounters strong opposition from many actors, especially operational actors.
- Third, EU member states have different views with regard to civil-military cooperation in disaster relief, and to date the European Commission’s authority in this realm is limited. This could change, however, as the Commission has its own political agenda on reinforcing the Union’s disaster response capacity,⁴⁸ aiming at a gradual build-up of a more integrated approaches, as well as designing responses to specific disasters, alert and coordination mechanisms. Community programs such as the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS), the European Flood Alert System or *Meteoalarm*⁴⁹ are important steps in this direction.
- Finally, both the European Commission and the U.S. Government have an interest in the economic impact of the research and development that they finance, such as the Galileo program on the European side. This interest could also hinder a strengthening of transatlantic cooperation.

In order to strengthen transatlantic cooperation in the field of civil-military relations in disaster response, steps need to be taken by top-level administrative actors and by field/operational actors in both the United States and the European Union:

- Top-level support within the European Commission and the U.S. Government for enhancing the transatlantic relationship in civil-military relations is a precondition for achieving progress.
- The field and operational levels, in turn, are critical for implementing change, not least because civil-military relations also depend on interpersonal relations. As mentioned above, joint transatlantic civil-military courses, training and disaster management exercises could play an important role in improving these relationships.

⁴⁷ A. Boin and M. Rhinard, “Managing Transboundary Crises: What Role for the European Union?” *International Studies Review*, 2008, 10, 1–26.

⁴⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on reinforcing the European Union’s disaster response capacity (COM(2008) 130 Final), 5.3.2008.

⁴⁹ Commission Staff Working document, “Towards Better Protecting Citizens Against Disaster Risks: Strengthening Early Warning Systems in Europe,” SEC (2007) 1721.

Paradoxically, the current relative weakness of the European Commission in civil-military relations and disaster response could be used as an opportunity to reinforce transatlantic cooperation in this area. As the European Commission, following the Barnier report,⁵⁰ seeks to reinforce Europe's civil response capacity, it could benefit from a rapprochement with the United States. This would involve establishing the MIC as a real operational center for protection interventions, reinforcing European humanitarian aid, and creating a European disaster response training network based on existing courses and networks such as NOHA.⁵¹ Reorienting these activities to ensure they take into account American experiences and link with U.S. counterparts would make it possible to promote the European Commission's authority in this area and strengthen Europe-wide coordination, while placing the Commission at the center of transatlantic relations.

⁵⁰ ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/rapport_barnier_20060508_fr.pdf.

⁵¹ The NOHA is an EU intensive program on humanitarian action, contemporary humanitarian issues and challenges.

