



# Civil Affairs and MOOTW: Four Balkan Sketches

Muslim residents,  
Jusici.

55th Signal Company, Combat Camera (Larry Aaron)

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# Joint Endeavor—The Role of Civil Affairs

By PAMELA J. BRADY

Under the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) NATO deployed a combined joint task force known as Implementation Force (IFOR) to Bosnia-Herzegovina. It consisted of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, which was designated Multinational Division North, while a British division controlled the southwest and a French division was assigned responsibility for the southeast part of the country (see map on next page). These multinational divisions were put under the command and control of Allied Command Europe (ACE) Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) which functioned as the land forces command under IFOR.

One cannot overstate the importance of the military aspects of establishing and maintaining a zone of separation and freedom of movement. These tasks were instrumental in establishing a secure and stable environment that allowed Muslims, Serbs, and Croats as well as both international and humanitarian organizations to execute their obligations, particularly the civilian aspects which included recovery, reconstruction, repatriation, and reconciliation.

Joint Endeavor marked the unprecedented involvement of civil affairs (CA) in this NATO-led mission which involved 36 countries. The 353<sup>d</sup> Civil Affairs Command of the Army Reserve and 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, an active unit based at Fort Bragg, embarked on a joint endeavor of their own which could set the tone for future missions of this type.

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This cooperation between active and Reserve components created the basis for Reservists to take responsibility for civil-military operations in a transparent manner. The IFOR commander formed a principal staff directorate known as combined joint civil military cooperation (CIMIC). Joint Endeavor consisted of building consensus and understanding among the Bosnian people to implement GFAP. Here civil affairs negotiating skills were instrumental. CIMIC was a vital link between military and civilian efforts, especially as operations evolved from the entry phase through implementation to transition to peace and then toward the desired endstate. Planning shifted from stressing rapid deployment of enabling forces, minimizing interference and promoting support for IFOR, and developing commissions for establishing and maintaining liaison with affected civilian organizations, coordinating freedom of movement, leveraging the capabilities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private voluntary organizations (PVOs), international organizations (IOs) and host nations, and identifying and transferring many civil-military tasks to nonmilitary agencies. While CIMIC was not chartered with nationbuilding, it created institutions by providing niche and unique resources to civil agencies to facilitate growth and ensure their success.

It was during the transition to peace that the civil aspects of the accords became increasingly important and IFOR occupied a greater role in supporting civil implementation. IFOR policy reflected this increased involvement in civil tasks by allowing and encouraging the military to assist civilian agencies (as far as resources permitted and without detracting from the military mission) whenever possible as a

means of stimulating civil restoration and return to normalcy. GFAP also clearly outlined supporting IFOR tasks to be conducted on request and within the limits of assigned principal tasks and available resources. Some reconstruction, rebuilding, and demining operations that supported the military had a beneficial collateral effect on civilian reconstruction through road and bridge building. While some may regard this as mission creep, civil and military leaders came to understand that exclusive oversight of the military provisions of the peace agreement would only postpone re-establishing normalcy and could prolong the need for an outside military presence.

CIMIC was involved on virtually every level of rehabilitation and reconstruction in Bosnia. Because of their unique expertise and linguistic capabilities, CA personnel were instrumental in facilitating relations among NATO forces, civil authorities, and various factions of the population. CIMIC soldiers had an operational grasp of the issues affecting Croats, Muslims, and Serbs. This understanding of local conditions provided IFOR with a baseline on strengths and weaknesses of the civil sector and indicated the types of civil-military operations that would be effective. It helped establish, maintain, and influence relations among the military, civil authorities, and the local population as they focused on a unity of effort rather than the traditional unity of command.

Recognizing that the civil dimension was equally if not more important than the military, the London Conference of the Peace Implementation Council established the Office of the High Representative headed by former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt. His mandate was to oversee the civilian implementation of GFAP and included creating political and constitutional institutions, fostering economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure, promoting respect for human rights, encouraging the return of displaced persons and refugees, continuing humanitarian aid for as long as necessary, and assisting with both free and fair elections.



Coordination of the myriad institutional activities critical to the return of peace and stability in Bosnia was a daunting task. Both Bildt and IFOR recognized that close coordination was vital to restoring political and economic infrastructure in a secure environment. This relationship was enhanced by the role that CIMIC played in facilitating, coordinating, monitoring, and reporting on civil-military projects. CA personnel oversaw projects to maximize interaction while encouraging independent initiatives among the parties. Coordination also ensured that priorities were consistent with policies of the host nation, Office of the High Representative (OHR), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), U.N. Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and a myriad of governmental, civil, and international agencies working in theater.

As required by GFAP, and as a means of giving both the military and civilians a venue to review and coordinate reconstruction efforts, a joint civil commission was established in Sarajevo as a template for representatives in Tuzla, Banja Luka, and Mostar. The commission consisted of a small headquarters and functional working groups that focused on the constitution, freedom of movement, telecommunications, infrastructure, refugees, and police.

Infrastructure subcommittees were formed for eight technical subgroups: gas, electricity, water/sewer/solid waste, economic development, urban transport, roads and bridges, cemeteries, and railways. Technical subgroups varied on the regional level depending on needs in a particular area. CIMIC personnel were absolutely essential. They continually applied civilian knowledge, skills, and expertise while accompanying government

representatives and industrial specialists on assessments to formulate action plans and build consensus among the concerned parties.

The conditions for regional security created by IFOR significantly increased and facilitated humanitarian assistance throughout the country. Hundreds of NGOs, PVOs, and IOs were able to dispense aid on a larger scale because of the security and enhanced freedom of movement provided by the military. This support was furnished with measured, cautious, and judicious constraints. For example, it was provided in cases where the military had unique assets that were not available in the civil sector, where military assistance would facilitate or dramatically speed up the task, and where military goals and objectives were satisfied—that is, to drive civil recovery with execution of labor intensive projects to address employment of demobilizing soldiers.

The NGO/PVO infrastructure in theater was mature. These unsung heroes had been at work more than four years and had developed an extensive network. CIMIC was anxious to coordinate with them to maximize mutual capabilities. Theater-wide centers and computer discs with NGO/PVO spreadsheets facilitated such interoperability. In Sarajevo, the International Council of Volunteer Agencies and CIMIC set up a walk-in center as the focal point of NGO coordination. Participants met regularly to discuss current operations, share information, and lodge requests for military and NGO support. Security briefs and assessments were critical to working relations. Without security reinforcement, NGOs would probably reduce their risks by minimizing efforts. In addition to security information, CIMIC provided the NGO community with mine maps and awareness training.

CIMIC also coordinated intratheater space available flights and approval for transportation over military bridges. Through facilitating their entry into theater, CA personnel created conditions that leveraged NGO capabilities because bridge crossings were pivotal to

the prompt movement of humanitarian and reconstruction equipment. In some cases, by utilizing a joint movement control center, military bridges reduced the delivery time of relief supplies from five days to five hours.

Through CIMIC coordination, NGOs became force and resource multipliers. CA soldiers were especially adept at brokering and linking funds, personnel, and equipment to the task at hand. One example of this was demining the transit system in Sarajevo. In assessing public transportation, it was found that the tram line was not running because of land mines along the tracks. Demining the system was important for the economy, freedom of movement, and the city's return to normalcy. CIMIC expedited demining by contacting and facilitating the arrival of Norwegian People's Aid, which was geared for such operations. By using NGOs, CIMIC created conditions that allowed for the early restoration of transport throughout the city.

In addition to humanitarian agencies, CIMIC augmented the staffs of several organizations such as OHR, OSCE, World Bank, and International Police Task Force (IPTF). With expertise in banking, economics, law enforcement, etc., 353<sup>d</sup> Civil Affairs Command was instrumental in providing planning, operations, communications, computer, administrative, and logistic support to regional joint civil

commissions. It was directly involved with developing voter registration, analyzing loan approvals, and establishing plans and policy for reorganization of Federation and Republic of Serbska police forces in accordance with international standards.

While all these functions were important to the restoration of Bosnia, a major civil affairs focus for the first eight and a half months of Joint Endeavor was on supporting conditions for free and fair elections. Critical to success was continued public support for the IFOR mission, which would ultimately affect the legitimacy of political authorities. CIMIC engineers worked with both the Office of the High Representative and the International Federation of Journalists to establish the Open Broadcast Network for free access to radio and television campaigning. In conjunction with OSCE, the CIMIC civil information office created an inter-entity editors' forum to focus on accuracy and fairness in reporting the elections and improving cooperation.

Through such means civil affairs personnel were successful in influencing public opinion. Moreover, knowledge of language, history, and other factors provided insights into ethnic groups. Armed with this knowledge, CIMIC served as a force protection element by contributing valuable input to

the overall IFOR information campaign, whose key themes and messages were geared to increasing the popular understanding and acceptance of the peace accords. This was accomplished by various means including a "meet the mayors" information campaign to explain the peace accords to local authorities throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mobilizing public support was difficult. It was obvious that the civil war among Muslims, Serbs, and Croats had major political overtones. The Serb leadership in particular was not swayed by economic incentives. The objective of each faction was the territorial displacement of ethnic enclaves. Despite the show of force by IFOR, friction continued as evidenced by human rights violations and Serb migration. Such instability is attributable to both self-determination and a desire for sovereignty, issues which prove the value of regionally oriented CA professionals.

One lesson of Joint Endeavor was the value of a civil-military coalition and the power of unity of effort versus unity of command. Such missions require working with NGOs, PVOs, IOs, and host nation governments for the effective coordination and implementation of relief, recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction, reconciliation, and repatriation.

Civil affairs will become a critical element as the civil-military interface becomes more dominant than tactical elements in future peace operations. The international community will continue to rely on U.S. leadership and capabilities, especially in planning and implementing large scale peace and humanitarian operations. Joint Endeavor is only the most recent example of such combined joint and international efforts. Great strides have been made toward securing peace in Bosnia through a consensus of views and a unity of effort. The future is promising because combat arms and civil affairs complement each other's efforts in order to "secure the victory." **JFQ**



55<sup>th</sup> Signal Company, Combat Camera