Co-operation between Civilians and Military in UN Peace Support Operations

Captain Leif Ahlquist (RSwN)

National Defence College
Stockholm, Sweden.
e-mail: lief.ahlquist@fhs.mil.se.

Captain (N) Leif Ahlquist joined the Swedish Navy thirty-five years ago. During his career he served as an officer on board several different kinds of surface attack ships, as an officer in operational staffs. He is a graduate of the Advanced Command Course, Swedish War College. Five years ago Ahlquist was appointed as project leader of the research project "Co-operation, Command and Control in United Nations Peace Support Operations" and has since then developed the project and its implementation in the training. He was also head of the international training at the Swedish War College. Ahlquist is the editor of the pilot study "Co-operation, Command and Control in United Nations Peace keeping Operations" and "Co-operation, Command and Control in United Nations Peace Support Operations, A report on the United Nations Peace Support Operations in Haiti" within the research project.

INTRODUCTION

Co-operation, Command and Control in UN Peace Support Operations is a research project at the National Defence College, Sweden. The main purpose of the project is to generate knowledge and experience that can be used to improve training programs at the College. The project is also intended to identify problem areas in international Peace Support Operations and how such problems might affect the success of an operation. During the first year of the project, a pilot study was conducted in order to establish an overview of the problem areas in this kind of operations.

The project started almost four years ago, and it has so far examined five different United Nations Peace Support Operations including: the operations in the Congo in 1960, Cyprus, Cambodia, Somalia, and in Haiti. The methodological basis of the study that links theory to practice can be separated into three phases: *(1). Literature studies and personal interviews, (2). Analysis of the material produced by these studies and interviews, and (3). Evaluation of the analysed material in a series of seminars.*

AN ETHNO-METHODOLOGICAL STUDY WAS UNDERTAKEN

These activities can be considered to be a part of an ethno-methodological study. In such a study, interpretations of the material collected in interviews are examined by experts other

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than those that were interviewed. Approximately 70 representatives of the different actors were interviewed for the project. These individuals included:

1. Host Nation personnel including those from government ministries and also from different political parties.

2. United Nations personnel.

3. Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) personnel.

4. Personnel from humanitarian agencies within the United Nations family including the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Within the United Nations operations three different categories of individuals were selected for interviews:

• The military component.

• The civil police component.

• The civil administration.

Within these groups of actors interviewees were selected from different hierarchical levels and branches. All those interviewed had first-hand experience in United Nations operations. The study of the literature included reports and other informal papers, sent from the field to United Nations Headquarters in New York. Study personnel have fortunately had access to such sources of information.

Frequently, study personnel arranged seminars in order to test their observations and experiences. At seminars of experts, corresponding to the group of interviewees, the personnel had an opportunity to test their theory of the problem areas in Peace Support Operations. Having analysed and tested collected information, the study team has painted a picture of the problem areas in Peace Support Operations. This picture forms the basis of the theory that has emerged from the study.

THE EIGHT KEY ISSUES

At present, the different elements of the theory are expressed in terms of eight Key Issues which are defined in the study. The study team has produced a significant understanding of the nature of the problem environment and the relations between the components of this environment. The eight key issues associated with the environment include the following.

1. *Co-operation between military and civilian components.*

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2. *United Nations versus the national command and control of troops.* This issue focuses on the command and control responsibilities of the United Nations versus troop contributing countries.

3. *Quality of troops and equipment.* Describes the problems arising from differences in the quality of troops and equipment arriving in the mission area.

4. *Language and cultural differences.* This issue views a wide spectrum of problems that occur when different professional and geographical cultures and languages meet in a crisis area.

5. *Control of logistics.* Control of logistics is powerful. This issue deals with civil administration, police and military, and also humanitarian organisations encountering logistics problems in crisis areas.

6. *The impact of Information/Intelligence.* Different actors have their own interpretation of information and intelligence. Military has a different focus on intelligence while the humanitarian and human rights organisations have their own need for and demand complete transparency in dealing with information and intelligence.

7. *Co-operation with and co-ordination of Specialised Agencies and humanitarian and human-rights interests.* Co-operation among and with these organisations is important and troublesome. Co-ordination is even more of a problem. This Key Issue discusses several problems that can be found with each of the actors involved.

8. *Security.* This issue is to be seen as the co-operation and co-ordination efforts taken by the different actors involved to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment.

CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ENTITIES

This paper concentrates on the co-operation and co-ordination between civilian and military entities:

- *Co-operation* is defined as the work being done by people, organisations, units which are not in a hierarchical position *vis á vis* each other. In a co-operative role, no one is obliged to defer to another individual.

- *Co-ordination* is defined as the efforts being made to co-ordinate the work to achieve common goals. In co-ordination the individuals and/or organisations are obliged to follow orders or directives.

Traditionally military and police are connected to security matters. Their traditional national role as well as their role in Peacekeeping has been to deal with security issues. Both

these professions are trained mostly for security matters, although using different methods and tactics. Security is also an important factor for humanitarian and human rights workers although from a different perspective. Of course, the local population, local authorities, local police and local organisations are actors that also work for and depend on a safe and secure environment.

The police and military professions are used to dealing with security matters within their professional roles. The police deal daily with different kinds of events that may affect the security of the people. They play a preventive role as well as by bringing criminals to justice. The police system is part of the judicial system in democratic States. They are allowed to use the necessary force, even lethal forces. The policeman in the street has the right to do what he judges right in a certain situation. If he misjudges the situation and uses more force than necessary, he may himself be brought up on charges. In his job, he co-operates with other people. His commanders work in offices and in command and control systems. They rely on the policemen in the street to do the daily work and do it the right way. They expect the policemen to call them when necessary.

In the military profession on the other hand, the officers in leadership positions give orders about what will be done by their subordinates. The soldiers in the field wait for orders and directives. Military personnel work in units, while policemen work as individuals. The military is a top-led system; the police system is the other way around.

There are examples of two different professions with two different professional cultures, however, both working in the context of security matters. They normally know little about each other. Sometimes there is even a feeling of competition between the two professions. Deployed in a United Nations mission the police and the military are, however, expected to co-operate on common issues. These two components are given almost the same mandate regarding security. They will, of course, attempt to implement that mandate as they usually do in their home countries. Even within the military and police components in a UN mission, there are many different nations with different views on co-operation. Individuals from such nations also usually speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. Under such circumstances, understanding even relatively simple conversations and concepts may be difficult, and misunderstandings can arise.

Some of the issues where military and civilian police are expected to co-operate are described below. These areas include Information and intelligence, logistics, and security matters. Within the military, intelligence is an important part of the operation. It is sometimes a condition for the use of military forces. The higher the level of crisis, the more the need for intelligence. Traditionally, the military is used to handling intelligence. In some nations, there are special units assigned for collecting and intelligence work. Some nations have very qualified sources for collecting and dealing with intelligence while others do not. In the United Nations, dealing with intelligence has not been allowed. All information was expected to be open to everybody and transparent. UN explained it was not possible to be impartial when dealing with intelligence.

However, the military system is used to have and deal with intelligence. In a UN peace support mission they have none of their regular sources and, therefore, have to rely on the information they can get in the field from sources they are not normally used to. They often have to co-operate with the CIVPOL and others in gathering that information. Often it seems,

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however to be a resistance to give or share their information with the military. The CIVPOL have a lot of information, and feel reluctant to share it with the military. The CIVPOL like to be impartial and to have confidence in the local people. In the Haiti case the national military was an enemy of their own people for a long time before the Multinational Force intervened 1994. The people had not forgotten that the army at that time had used information to threaten people. The CIVPOL's task was to support and train the newly established Haitian National Police. They could not afford to be blamed for dealing with intelligence.

Humanitarian and human rights organisations generally have been active in conflict areas for a long time, and often before the deployment of any military force by United Nations mandate. Thus, the humanitarian organisation CARE has been in Haiti since 1959. The ICRC was active in Somalia for many years before the United Nations operation was deployed. People within these organisations have very good knowledge about the culture and almost everything else in the country. They have built up a high level of credibility and good relations with the local population. They rely on such relations. The humanitarian workers often have to rely on local individuals for their own security. They have learned how to establish a safe and secure environment for themselves. In Somalia, for example, some humanitarian organisations used guards that were a part of the local society and locally-provided weapons.

When a United Nations mission is established individuals associated with humanitarian and related organisations are expected to co-operate on intelligence issues. Again, there seems to be some reluctance by such individuals to undertake such activities. In our examination of the Haiti mission, a significant amount of effort was expended in elaborating inter-entity co-operation. It was very obvious that the military component really tried to co-operate with the humanitarian and human rights people. However, it was also obvious that there was a reluctance on the part of the civilian entities to collaborate with the military entities. Some answers tended to give a picture of the military as a single organisation with which personal contact and confident relations could not be established. There was a perception that the civilian entities had difficulty in establishing contact with military individuals and appeared to be dealing with an overall organisational structure. When contacts were established the military individual was often replaced after six month.

Again, it is for some actors a matter of trying to keep the balance of being impartial in the conflict. These organisations cannot risk to be seen as a part of the conflict even though they realise that there may be a need for intelligence to deal with security matters.

Intelligence often involves sensitive data and information so that, dealing with this issue has been done in different ways. In the Haiti mission, the SRSG at the end of the mission had an office of Public relations. This office had nothing to do with intelligence. Intelligence was a subject only to the military to deal with. This office knew neither about collecting information nor intelligence. In UNPROFOR, the conflict in former Yugoslavia, the UN mission was often blamed for leaking information to the other side, and it was used as a tool to delay or interrupt the negotiations with the parties and the United Nations.

An issue which may well be of a common concern to everybody is logistics. This issue is also in many ways linked to security. In many kinds of operations, even those in low-level conflicts, delivering humanitarian aid is not free of challenges and risks, especially if any party tries to prevent convoys from reaching their destinations. In conflict areas, the lack of

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food, medical, water, and other supplies increases the risks of robbery. That was the case in Haiti. This also means risks to the personnel that have to deliver the aid. The military, in turn, has as its own mandate to maintain a safe and secure environment. The protection of people providing humanitarian aid is therefore, a part of their job.

Today, there are many humanitarian organisations in conflict areas. In Haiti there were only a few compared to Bosnia, where there sometimes were several thousand. Protection of these people must be done in close co-operation with them and the people in charge of the convoys or other transports.

My perceptions regarding this kind of co-operation in the Haiti mission are very mixed. On the military side, they did not regard this protection as being a important part of their mission and recognised the willingness to co-operate being connected to the convoys only. Some of the humanitarian aid workers did not like the co-ordination with the military. In missions like Haiti, and in some respects even Somalia, the military is the only organisation with the necessary resources to handle the logistics problem. In the beginning, in the Haiti mission, the infrastructure was extremely bad, before the MNF and later the United Nations mission, made it possible to use the roads. In Haiti, but also to some extent even Somalia and Cambodia, the communication systems were destroyed or were not generally functional.

Regarding security matters, it was of great importance to be able to communicate with members of the United nations force, civilian entities, and others. Reporting of bands and gangs of criminals and illegal activities was necessary for those who were responsible for the security. This work was perhaps the most comprehensive one to maintain a safe and secure environment. In Haiti but also in Somalia and Cambodia, there was a high level of criminality and illegal trading in small arms when the UN missions were deployed. In the Haiti case, the Secretary General reported to the Security Council in 1994 that *a safe and secure environment* was established and the mission of the UN operation would be to *maintain the safe end secure environment that was established*. This task was assigned for the military and CIVPOL component of UNMIH.

The following represents some of my observations regarding how that task was solved in the context of co-operation. It is important to remember that the CIVPOL was mandated to support and train the newly established Haitian National Police and not to maintain a safe and secure environment. The HNP was very young and some of them has only a couple of months of training, no cars and other police resources. The CIVPOL was therefore in fact a very important player in maintaining security.

To ensure security, it was important for the military to establish a 24-hour watch system. The CIVPOL also established a similar system. The impact of different military and civilian cultures was really obvious at that time in Haiti. Eventually the CIVPOL and the military established a common headquarters after having had their own separate facilities for a long time. The CIVPOL had initially no communications system, but at the end of the day, the military and CIVPOL would share the military system.

Patrolling was of course necessary, in a country where there was electricity only temporary, only 20 per cent literacy and a very poor population. The people are highly religious. Their religion is voodoo. Rumours were spread very rapidly and to find the truth it was necessary for civilian and military entities to be out in the field. It was a new experience

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to both the military and the CIVPOL to conduct patrolling together sitting in the same car. The civilian and military personnel had quite different attitudes to the local population in Haiti.

For the CIVPOL, it was necessary to build confidence with the people, and for the military it was an objective to maintain security. Normally, CIVPOL does not carry weapons in the United Nations Peace Support Operations. In Haiti an exception was made and the police were all armed with pistols. The CIVPOL officers were mostly deployed for one year and the military for only six months. In cultures like Haiti, it took a significant time to establish confidence and the ability to develop such confidence can often depend on the personalities of the individual concerned. Many CIVPOL individuals came from the Caribbean Islands and from similar cultural backgrounds to those in Haiti. Even so, they found 12 months a short time to establish a working level of confidence with the local population.

The military did not need to find a similar relationship with the local population, but used their authority to maintain the secure environment. The CIVPOL, on the other hand, was assigned to support the HNP. They had to work in a very particular judicial environment where the jails were full, few were brought to court, and trials very often resulted in setting the prisoner free. No journals were established and human rights could scarcely be followed. The CIVPOL could not avoid being involved in all that.

Security so much depended on the treatment of people, justice and following national as well as international laws and orders. In cases like Haiti, where there were limited resources, people have to work closely and co-operation may be the most necessary characteristic of the working environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The most obvious conclusion of the case study of Haiti as well as of the other case studies is that a close and well functioning co-operation between civilian and military professionals is important to the success of Peace Support Operations.

I think that there are no endurable solutions to be found for co-operation between civilian and military in the Peace Support Operations of tomorrow. The solutions should be seen in a somewhat longer term perspective and that they need to be developed and improved through training. We have to bring the actors together in the same seminars, exercises, conferences etc. This training has to start early in the military career, it has to be a part of the training of diplomats , and individuals associated with humanitarian and human rights organisations.

We ought not to train military personnel to became civilian professions or *vice versa* but put efforts into learning from each other's professions and cultures.