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HUMAN SECURITY – A CROSS-CUTTING TOPIC IN MILITARY OPERATIONS. A STUDY CASE FOR HUMINT IN NATO

Abstract:	*Cross-cutting topics encompass a range of subjects that can impact a military mission yet lie beyond the core responsibilities of military formation. Various capabilities, educational disciplines, headquarters' branches and the chain of command, or operational processes and functions, must consider these cross-cutting topics during the planning, preparation, execution, and evaluation of a mission. Some of these topics carry significant importance due to their specific sensitivity, potentially influencing the mission's outcome. It is a relevant theme for an effects-based approach to operations, where commanders must harmonize kinetic and non-kinetic actions to achieve a pursued objective in conditions of legality.*
	From the perspective of NATO Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) policy, several topics – the extensive civilian protection; the condition of children in crises and military conflicts; gender considerations - women, peace, and security; the protection of the cultural property; and building integrity (practically, the components of the human security concept recently promoted in NATO) – are approached as cross-cutting aspects in operations, analysis factors in the military decision-making process. The paper considers the integration of a human security model in military planning and advocates education and training on the larger concept of human security for specific military branches, particularly those interacting with civilians, with emphasis on Human Intelligence (HUMINT).
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Introduction

Cross-cutting concepts are elements that "bridge disciplinary core boundaries, having explanatory value"[378] materialized in patterns; cause and effect; scale, proportion, and quantity; systems and system models; energy and matter; structure and function; stability and change[379]. Having a foundation on the descriptive information of the concepts, topics provide detailed facts on a subject, with value related to its operationalization.

The common denominator of cross-cutting topics (CCTs) lies in their overlapping nature, meaning that multiple CCTs can intersect and interact with each other. This interplay can result in complex dynamics that affect various dimensions of any system. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of CCTs is essential for effective decision-making and successful business, including military operations.

Political, ethical, legal, and technical imperatives in NATO recognize that CCTs encompass interconnected issues that transcend traditional boundaries and have extensive implications across various sectors in the military domain. It is important to note that CCTs are influenced by cultural factors. When

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[378] Kelsey Bednar, *What is a Crosscutting Concept?*,
 https://blog.definedlearning.com/blog/what-is-a-crosscuttingconcept (01.11.2023)
[379] *Idem*

dealing with CCTs in the military domain, it is crucial to incorporate them throughout the entire operation, considering their impact on diverse aspects of the operating environment (which equally encompasses the "human terrain").

From the perspective of NATO Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) policy, several topics – the extensive civilian protection; the condition of children in crises and military conflicts; gender considerations - women, peace, and security; the protection of the cultural property; and building integrity (practically, the components of the human security concept recently endorsed in NATO) – are approached as cross-cutting aspects in operations. Thus, it qualifies them as analysis factors in the military decision-making process.

Our interest goes further to identifying how human security, as a cross-cutting topic, can influence the Human Intelligence (HUMINT) area as part of the Intelligence discipline.

Consolidation of the Human Security Concept in NATO

Peace, stability, and sustainable development are often threatened by various crises (security, economic, food, political, environmental, energy, etc.), involving various manifestations of human insecurity. At the UN level, the established analytical and planning framework of the human security approach and extended partnerships aid in crafting holistic and proactive strategies spanning various sectors. The promoted solutions (especially under the aegis of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security[380]) are tailored to specific contexts to achieve a world devoid of fear, wants, and indignity.

Inspired by the UN experience and recognizing the emergence and relevance of the human security approach in a complex security environment (hybrid warfare), NATO endorsed the human security concept in its latest Strategic Concept. If the previous relation with the civilian factor was to diminish the interference of military operations with local inhabitants, the commitment devoted to the *Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles*[381] (Madrid Summit, June 2022) marks a shift toward a more ambitious agenda, with a series of clear lines of development[382].

Anyway, some critics consider the terminology of human security employed by NATO as confusing, with the possibility of entering conflict with the distinct interpretation of the term by civilian scholars and professionals engaged in development work and posing the preventive work more as a defensive posture[383]. Based on priorities, responsibilities, and access to the resources involved, R. Reeve states that military actors (including NATO) "should not be leading responses to threats and challenges that are not military in nature"[384]. However, we consider the responsibility a military organization has over the theatre of operation where it legitimizes (even requires) a comprehensive presence in all the aspects defining local human security. The limited assets a military force has practically dictate the extent of the involvement and the need for cooperation and coordination with the civilian actors.

In Table 1 we provide an orientation for the connection between the human security fields developed at the NATO level and the seven areas of human security encompassed by the UN vision on freedom of fear, wants, and indignity. We can easily observe the natural focus of NATO towards the protection of communities and individuals, especially those vulnerable, in an area of conflict/ crisis where the military organization's security function is paramount. This approach is consistent with the Allied Command Transformation (ACT)'s view on human security as "mitigation and response towards risks and threats posed to populations"[385].

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[380] United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *What is Human Security*, https://www.un.org/humansecurity/what-is-human-security/ (04.11.2023)

[381] NATO HQ, *Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles*, October 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_208515.htm?selectedLocale=en (28.10.2023)

[382] Alexandru Kis, *Human Security (re)consideration by NATO*, "Studia Securitatis", Vol. XVI, No. 2/2022, pp. 56-65, https://magazines.ulbsibiu.ro/studiasecuritatis/studia-securitatis/ (28.10.2023)

[383] Richard Reeve, *NATO and Human Security: Obfuscation and Opportunity*, 2021, https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/2021/02/16/nato-and-human-security/ -:~:text=In%202019%20NATO%20set%20up%20a%20Human%20Security,the%20two%20concepts%20are%20conjoined%20in%20NATO%20thinking. (28.10.2023)

[384] *Idem*

[385] Allied Command Transformation, *Human Security in NATO*, April 2023, https://www.act.nato.int/article/human-security-in-nato/ (28.10.2023)

However, outside the human security's conceptual acceptance in NATO, the Alliance is also concerned and manages aspects related to the economic, food, health, and environmental issues in its areas of operations, or support of crises. The question is why these elements are not integrated in the conceptual arena of NATO's human security understanding, to ensure a complete harmonization and convergence with the global definition of human security.

	economic	food	health	environmental	personal	community	political
UN	crisis, inflation, austerity, energy security	sourcing and supply chains	pandemics, access to health services	climate breakdown effects	survivability, vulnerability by gender and age	inter-ethnic and confessional conflicts, cultural property	civil rights
NATO					protection of civilians; combating trafficking in human beings; children and armed conflict; conflict-related sexual violence	protection of the cultural property	

Table 1. Comparison Between the UN and NATO's Approaches to Human Security[386]

A possible response is the lack of preparedness to digest the extent of a full spectrum of human security topics – but we don't exclude the development of relevant areas that will be further acquired, especially as a result of the professional work at the level of specialized NATO Centres of Excellence (COEs), or partner organizations, in the fields of CIMIC, crisis management and disaster response, energy security, medicine, security force assistance, stability policing, gender considerations, etc.

In its approach to human security as a cross-cutting task, NATO HQ seeks coordination with relevant actors, enhanced situational awareness, regular messaging, including STRATCOM (to ensure internal and external understanding of the Allied efforts in this respect), and integration of the human security principles and functions in the operational know-how.

SHAPE, as a requirement authority for educational disciplines in NATO, already promotes the subject of human security in operations and educates staff in a series of Focal Point training events[387]. Further, in NATO's educational management system (Global Programming – GP) the human security topic is advertised as a trans-disciplinary subject (rather than a distinct discipline), then analyzed, adapted, and integrated at the level of each recognized discipline.

For instance, the CIMIC COE (department head for CIMIC&CMI/ Civil-Military Interaction) focuses on its Annual Discipline Conferences (ADC) on human security aspects and their addressability in education and training (E&T). In the 2023 ADC for the CIMIC&CMI organized by the CIMIC COE and Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT), Human Security and its military contribution to it, in its broadest sense, was the main topic, augmenting the human security integration in the analysis and assessment of the civil factor as a CIMIC function.[388] NATO's CIMIC units are equally concerned with developing understanding and enhancing their advisory role to the commanders related to the human security aspects; the

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[386] NATO HQ, *Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles*, October 2023, and the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security Handbook*, January 2016, https://www.un.org/humansecurity/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/h2.pdf (28.10.2023)

[387] NATO SHAPE News Archive, *Video: Human Security in NATO Operations*, Mons, 21 October 2022, https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2022/video-human-security-in-nato-operations (28.10.2023)

[388] CCOE, *Integrating the Civil Factors of the Operating Environment - Civil Factor Integration (CFI)*, https://www.cimic-coe.org/publications/ccoe-publications/CIMIC_Messenger/cimic-messenger-2023-1/ - 4 (01.11.2023)

2023 CIMIC Units Commanders' Conference dedicated to *"Human Security in Operations and its implications in Collective Defence from a CIMIC perspective"* provided a comprehensive view of the subject in the conduct of maneuver in a classic warfare context[389].

Considerations on Human Security as A Cross-Cutting Topic

Cross-cutting topics encompass a range of subjects that can impact a military mission yet lie beyond the core responsibilities of military formation. Various capabilities, educational disciplines, headquarters' branches and the chain of command, or operational processes and functions, must consider these cross-cutting topics during the planning, preparation, execution, and evaluation of a mission. It is a relevant theme for an effects-based approach to operations, where commanders must harmonize kinetic and non-kinetic actions to achieve a pursued objective in conditions of legality.

To effectively consider and address CCTs, a systematic approach is required. It involves identifying and analyzing the characteristics and dynamics of each CCT within the operating environment and a specific discipline. This analysis outlines interconnections and potential consequences of disregarding CCTs, enabling more informed decision-making (awareness and understanding) and targeted actions.

Moreover, the nature of CCTs requires a collaborative approach involving military and non-military actors. The involvement of diverse stakeholders, including governmental bodies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and experts from various fields, is necessary to address the multifaceted nature of CCTs. The cooperation between these stakeholders allows for a more holistic and integrated response to the challenges posed by CCTs.

The NATO CIMIC doctrine dedicates an annex to cross-cutting topics (protection of civilians; children and armed conflict; women, peace, and security; cultural property protection; and building integrity)[390] circumvolutory to the NATO approach to human security[391]. Four cross-cutting topics (protection of civilians, combating trafficking in human beings, children and armed conflicts, and cultural property protection are currently embedded within *Military Contribution to Peace Support* (MC2PS) discipline (managed by SHAPE Assistant Chief of Staff J9 as Requirement Authority/ RA and the Finnish Defence Forces International Center/ FINCENT as Department Head/ DH), while preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence resides under the *Gender in Military Operations* discipline (with SHAPE Gender Adviser as RA and the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations/ NCGMO as DH). The involved stakeholders oversee ensuring the alignment and coherence of training (which is currently focused at operational and strategic levels, in a debatable balance between requirements and solutions). Anyway, we can select the proposed solutions as an educational cluster for NATO training on the relevant aspects of human security, where it is worth listing a series of relevant NATO Approved courses recorded in the NATO Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue (ETOC)[392]:
- *NATO and UN Approaches to the Protection of Civilians* (delivered by FINCENT);
- *Gender perspective in Military Operations Course*, and *Identifying, preventing, and responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (provided by NCGMO (Sweden).

But how the human security concept can be reflected as a cross-cutting topic in other education and training disciplines? We will seek in the next chapter an answer for the case of HUMINT, an Intelligence collection function based on human engagement.

Human Security and HUMINT

HUMINT has a discreet, but relevant contribution to the operational planning process, and employs a complex tradecraft in Intelligence operations. It supports early situational awareness, contributes to the Intelligence estimates and the Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (JIPOE), and

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[389] Multinational CIMIC Group, *16ᵗʰ CIMIC Units Commanders' Conference (CUCC) preparations start*, 21 June 2023, https://www.cimicgroup.it/int/en/article/736/16th-cimic-units-commanders-conference-cucc-preparations-start (01.11.2023)

[390] NATO Standard AJP-3.19, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation,* Edition A, Version 1, November 2018, Annex B, p. B-1, https://www.cimic-coe.org/resources/external-publications/ajp-3.19-eda-v1-e.pdf (01.11.2023)

[391] NATO HQ, *Human Security*, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_181779.htm (01.11.2023)

[392] Allied Command Transformation/ Joint Force Development, *NATO Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue*, https://e-itep.act.nato.int/Guest/ETOCindex.aspx (01.11.2023)

answers priority intelligence requirements (PIRs) that facilitate the understanding of the evolving situation around intelligence interest. HUMINT gained prevalence in the counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns, has developed its capacity for regular warfighting, and demonstrates an exploratory approach to hybrid warfare.

Despite inherent limitations and several "pathologies"[393] that may affect its effectiveness, HUMINT is approached by various professional schools as a resilient collection asset, ranging from "atmospherics" collection (in the absence of dedicated assets, like Human Engagement Teams or Liaison Monitoring Teams[394]) to sophisticated source operations, in multi-domain operations.

As cross-cutting topics, the human security parameters are naturally included in the list of information requirements, as they influence the decision-making process. In this respect, aspects related to the protection of civilians and protection of the cultural property are sequenced into essential elements of information - simple questions to be answered by friendly entities (international organizations, NGOs, host nation's agencies, etc.) and/ or intelligence collection assets. The collection management process further allocates the collection tasks, based on the access to target/ information and suitability/ opportunity.

CIMIC alone would virtually face a "bona fide" posture concerning a large spectrum of actors involved in human security activities. Anyway, having in mind the complex network of priorities and motivations of the external entities, the information retrieved through civil-military interaction must be completed with Intelligence, to generate proper understanding and awareness. HUMINT is one of the collection disciplines ideally positioned to support this endeavor. Furthermore, HUMINT has a substantive contribution to Identity Intelligence (I2)[395] and supports targeting processes by identifying high-value human targets (violators of human security standards), tracking their movements, and uncovering patterns of behavior, contributing to more effective planning and execution of operations and achievement of the desired effects.

As HUMINT has a two-fold operational footprint requiring distinctive knowledge and skills - collection and analysis[396], the qualifications expected in dealing with human security-related topics may vary. Both the collector and the analyst should be aware of the theoretical aspects of human security in NATO and understand the human environment around intelligence interests. Further, the collector is directed towards engaging human sources with access to information about the human security aspects relevant to NATO[397]:

- **protection of civilians** (PMESII factors related to the communities' survivability; organization and key persons; the relation between various human groups; local habits; population mobility; threats to communities and individuals, etc.);
- **trafficking in human beings** (indicators on the illicit trade and exploitation of individuals for various purposes such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, organ harvesting, and other forms of abuse; criminal organizations; organized crime TTPs; financing of criminal activities, etc.);
- **children and armed conflict** (indicators of threats to, or attacks on schools and hospitals, or access denial to humanitarian services education, healthcare, psychosocial support, and safe living conditions; recruitment as child soldiers or use as human shields, abduction, killing, and mutilation, sexual exploitation, or any other harm[398]);

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[393] Michael Gallagher, *Human Intelligence in Counterinsurgency: Persistent Pathologies in the Collector-Consumer Relationship*, in Small Wars Journal, June 2011, https://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/784-gallagher.pdf (28.10.2023)

[394] Warren W. Wright Jr., *Liaison Monitoring Teams: Specialized teams provide Kosovo populace link to KFOR mission*, 138th Public Affairs Detachment, June 7, 2022, https://www.army.mil/article/257327/liaison_monitoring_teams_specialized_teams_provide_kosovo_populace_link_to_kfor_mission (01.11.2023)

[395] (I2) encompasses collecting, analyzing, and managing information about individuals' and entities' identities, affiliations, and activities. I2 methodology facilitates the identification of perpetrators and members of groups/ organizations involved in violations of the human security "freedoms".

[396] Alexandru Kis, *Procesul de selecție, etapă fundamentală în efortul de îmbunătățire a capitalului uman în HUMINT*, "Infosfera", Vol. XIV, No. 2/2022, pp. 89-98

[397] Alexandru Kis, *Human Security (re)consideration by NATO*, "Studia Securitatis", Vol. XVI, No. 2/2022, pp. 56-65, https://magazines.ulbsibiu.ro/studiasecuritatis/studia-securitatis/ (02.11.2023)

398 UNICEF, *Staggering scale of grave violations against children in conflict revealed in new UNICEF analysis*, *27 June 2022*, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/staggering-scale-grave-violations-against-children-conflict-revealed-new-unicef (01.11.2023)

- **conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)** (local gender issues, indicators on the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and a tactic in armed conflicts[399], identification of perpetrators, etc**.**);
- **protection of the cultural heritage/ property** (identification, location, and local arrangements for the protection of significant cultural, historical, and artistic assets, such as artifacts, monuments, sites, and traditions; indicators of threats to, or attacks on the cultural property, etc.).

Additionally, to specific interpersonal skills and tradecraft application, HUMINT operators must develop niche knowledge on several aspects related to human security, especially on the applicable legal framework and specific terminology. Spotting on the appropriate human resources is another challenge, which may pose ethical or security risks (about potential criminal elements).

Moreover, in selecting the appropriate handling team, Field HUMINT Team leaders must demonstrate gender awareness. Based on the proven practice in Afghanistan to develop trust-based and enduring relationships with the local women by establishing Female Engagement Teams[400], female operators must be employed as suitable to deal with female sources in culturally constrained communities.

Another specific point is the debriefing of victims or witnesses of abuses, where the support of a psychological adviser is paramount to understanding the specific condition and psychology of the subjects. Still, the debriefing of children as human sources is sensitive and obstructed by doctrine; the recall of trauma in questioning is a stressful experience for both parties involved[401] and requires specific training and qualification[402]. These cases will be usually directed to forensic interviewers/ criminal investigators/ prosecutors, as available.

Having human security as a cross-cutting topic, cooperation, and coordination with other force elements and external entities will remain essential. CIMIC's primacy in dealing with these aspects in theatres of operations remains evident; on the other hand, early warning and detailed information on critical events harming the individual and communities' security cannot be obtained without access to some specific indicators and information on the identity, relationships, motivations, and intentions of various actors involved in human security scenarios – and this is an area where HUMINT retains a particular insight. Military intelligence liaison is just another level of formal cooperation with the services and the agencies of interest.

Equally, proper informational coverage of responsibility cannot be obtained without the involvement of all military assets engaged in the interaction with the human environment ("*every soldier is a sensor*"). Force collection activity must be based on proper human security awareness, direction, development of cultural sensitiveness, and oversight by the HUMINT management level (in coordination/ cooperation with other force elements involved in sensing the human environment in a theatre of operations).

These are just a few issues in considering HUMINT collection on topics related to human security; some of them require orientation and integration, while others necessitate specific education and training for the development of specific knowledge and skills.

Conclusions

By recognizing the legal and political imperatives surrounding cross-cutting topics, acknowledging their overlapping nature, embracing collaboration, and conducting a thorough analysis, NATO can develop comprehensive strategies to address their integration.

Equally, a bottom-up contribution of the various NATO functions/ disciplines (through the requirements authorities and department heads, or other responsible entities involved in capability transformation) can decisively support the assimilation of the new conceptual framework – in our case, human security – through intellectual debates, study of the lessons learned, harmonization of doctrine and procedures and, ultimately, incorporation in education and training.

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[399] This term encompasses various forms of sexual abuse, exploitation, and violence perpetrated against individuals in conflict-affected areas. These acts include rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced marriage, and other forms of gender-based violence.

[400] Christopher McCullough, *Female engagement teams: who they are and why they do it*, 22 February 2013, https://www.army.mil/article/88366/female_engagement_teams_who_they_are_and_why_they_do_it (01.11.2023)

[401] Danielle Rousseau, *Vicarious Trauma and Burnout for Prosecutors and Investigators*, 27 April 2021, https://sites.bu.edu/daniellerousseau/2021/04/27/vicarious-trauma-and-burnout-for-prosecutors-and-investigators/ (02.11.2023)

[402] Council of Europe, *Child-friendly justice*, https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/child-friendly-justice (02.11.2023)

Further, identifying cross-cutting topics as a specific category in NATO ETOC ("*CCT clusters*") would help educational managers and students to query and determine the number of relevant courses falling under the human security topic (or other CCTs), if the incumbent subjects are shared among several disciplines and various educational providers.

Human security awareness as a cross-cutting topic cannot be properly generated without analyzing the implications at the level of each interested domain. This is a reason why experts from the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence from Oradea (Romania) track the subject's development in NATO and assess human security's implications in the HUMINT professional tradecraft.

Following a practical integration model, the addition of various instructional vignettes related to the extended protection of civilians and cultural property in the HUMINT courses and exercises would contribute to the promotion of human security among HUMINT experts and facilitate debate, which is afterward taken over at, or paralleling the academic level. The next step is integrating human security requirements into the HUMINT standards, which entails harmonizing with other doctrines and delegating specific responsibilities at various HUMINT levels (collection, analysis, management). The contribution of the legal advisers is of major importance, as human security – a cross-cutting topic – has broad coverage at the level of various functions and disciplines, and thorough deconfliction and top-down guidance are needed.

A better-qualified contribution to an operational picture that incorporates human security aspects is critical. The war in Ukraine demonstrates once again that unlawful practice and human alienation are inherent parts of any conflict, at a grievous scale.

All the steps described in this paper converge to the integration of human security as the cross-cutting topic and increasing its presence in the operational dialogues. As the subject will grow in understanding and relevance at the leadership level, then reflected in practice, the lessons learned process will contribute to consolidating its integration and effectiveness for the ultimate benefit of humanity, in any context.

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