

The Role of Armed Forces in Context of Civil-Military Collaboration in Turkey



Sociology

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ABSTRACT

The cooperative activities of civil and military have always existed as long as men and wars ever existed. In addition to this, in parallel with the advancements in democracy, as humans and organizations gain importance within society, the cooperative activities of civil and military will continue being one of the most important factors in military operations. Today, to realize the understanding of civil-military cooperation, there is a new formation in the NATO military unions which are named as Civil-Military Cooperation. After the earthquakes in 1999 Turkish Armed Forces decided to found and develop search and rescue teams as unit. The unit which is subordinate to Turkish General Staff is qualified enough to maintain search and rescue activities during earthquakes, floods, fires, nuclear biological and chemical disasters. Turkish Armed Forces was actively participated in "peace support operation" that was being performed in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo.

INTRODUCTION:

The cooperative activities of civil and military have always existed as long as men and wars ever existed. In addition to this, in parallel with the advancements in democracy, as humans and organizations gain importance within society, the cooperative activities of civil and military will continue being one of the most important factors in military operations.

Looking retrospect, the relationship between civil and military and inter-institution cooperation, has been under debate in army-nation outlook. Especially the war of liberation (in Turkey), has been one of the most important example of the cooperation of civil and military.

The crisis, conflicts and natural/tectonic disasters in any region in the world have been included in the country's interests and affecting areas. As a result of all these, in many places of local crisis and conflict, Peace Corps activities, which are constituted to re-establish stability, gained more and more importance.

The most serious problem for the Peace Corps which have troubles with the many ethnic and complex communities in foreign countries is to reach out to the local communities.

Today, to realize the understanding of civil-military cooperation, there is a new formation in the NATO military unions which are named as Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC).

As a matter of point, CIMIC unions and elements can be briefly summarized as the organizations formed by the civil and military experts who have an important role to figure out the necessities of the regions which are deeply afflicted by crisis or conflicts on natural disasters. In order to support the sub-structure of the regions and meet the necessities they get the necessary financial and administrative support by providing national-international organizations.

Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has been an important part of both national and local disaster management system. In central and local committees and institutions, TAF is also represented. Especially during interfering disasters and improvement activities, using its own opportunities and sources, TAF has supported all the victims of disasters with its educated staff since the foundation of Turkish Republic.

After the earthquakes in 1999 TAF decided to found and develop search and rescue teams as unit. The unit which is subordinate to Turkish General Staff is qualified enough to maintain search and rescue activities during earthquakes, floods, fires, nuclear biological and chemical disasters.(1)

Also, search and rescue teams of Land, Naval, and Air Forces have the capacity to serve under all conditions both in Turkey and abroad.

Two big earthquakes that happened in 1999 and affected our country drastically have shown again the importance of an effective Civil-Military Cooperation to activate the facilities and equipment of Armed Forces and support especially civilians in peace. Civil-Military Cooperation areas in Turkey spreads out to a vast area ranging from central level to local level; areas in question are Civil-Military Cooperation in Peace, Civil-Military Cooperation in Natural Disasters and can be limited to Civil-Military Cooperation activities in Crisis and War Times.

Civil-Military Cooperation Improvements in Turkish Armed Forces:

Our country which is situated in the middle of Balkans, Caucasus and Middle East where are present and potential crisis/conflicts are intense; is considered to be able to get a mission in Humanitarian Help Operations and Peace-Support Operations both around the country and at the other regions by fulfilling its duty that international treaties loads upon it; and a Civil-Military Cooperation Union to be used both in the body of NATO and as national was founded in 2000 and started to function in parallel with the actions that start in NATO.

The personnel of TAF CIMIC Regimental Command have been still trained with both domestic and foreign courses. The same personnel are charged in units in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan in order to gain experience. In this context, the personnel serve in a wide range of missions such as avalanche, lost climbers, and earthquake victims.

TAF On Natural Disasters

In 1999 after the earthquake disaster that happened in Marmara region, Turkish Land Forces formed communication teams to provide uninterrupted communication during disasters.

To search the disaster area from air and land, some troops were formed and charged. First aid teams and emergency services were formed in the constitution of military hospitals and additional personnel were charged to respond the need of health personnel.

Troops which were suitably equipped with modern equipment for avalanche, fire, earthquake, and flood were formed and made ready to reach the disaster area in 3 hours.

As from the smallest unity level with the unities which take part in natural disasters, all types of coordination and collaboration are obtained with state and special foundations including universities. Protocols were signed with the foundations like Red Crescent. By the disaster region commands with the civilian administrations' coordination, every year as a planned activity, disaster related education, training and seminars are executed therefore reciprocal information and collaboration are obtained.

The Role of TAF In Peace Support Operation

It was actively participated in "peace support operation" that was being performed in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo.

In this context Turkey:

- a. In Somalia, in order to stop hostility and provide a safe environment for humanitarian aid, it was participated in "Hope Operation" which was performed between 1992 and 1994 with a mechanized infantry company.(2)
- b. Starting from 1994, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is contributed to "peace support operation" that was operated in the leadership of UN, NATO, and EU. Turkey, also, is in charge of one of the five Regional Coordination Centers that operate mainly Civil-Military Cooperation activities.(3,4)
- c. Turkey has contributed to Kosovo Force Operation with Battalion Mission Force and personnel who were appointed in Kosovo Force Headquarters. In this period of time, Turkey has also performed the Kosovo Force Multinational South Mission Force Commandship mission for one year between May 2007 and May 2008.
- d. Turkey contributed to Essential Harvest Operation in Macedonia with an infantry company team between 26 August and 26 September 2001.
- e. Turkey has contributed to International Security and Aid Force Operation that is performed by NATO in Afghanistan since 20 February 2002. Turkey has been the leader of the mission in the 2nd (June 2002-February 2003) and 7th (February 2005 - August 2005) periods of International Security and Aid Force Operation. Türkiye also has been in charge of Kabul International Airport in the 7th period.

Turkey has performed the Afghanistan Regional Command for the first time between April-December 2007 and again starting from 1 November 2009 for 1 year. Upon Afghan and NATO executives' request, Turkey has decided to keep the mission for 1 more year since 1 November 2010.

In addition to Afghanistan Regional Command, Turkey contributes to the education of the following personnel;

- (1) Afghan units and sergeants with the help of Ghazi Education Center since February 2010,
- (2) Afghan battalions and brigades with the help of 5 operation leading and liaison teams,
- (3) Afghan officers with the help of teachers, trainers, consultants who are assigned in Afghanistan Defence University, Command Staff College, Military Academy, Military High School, and Kabul Military Education Center.

Turkey, also, built and mended 27 schools. In this context, education opportunities have been introduced to 38000 students. A high school for girls and women development center buildings, and also some other projects in education, agriculture, security and health fields are still in progress. Especially TAF's activities in Afghanistan are decent examples of Civil-Military Cooperation.(5)

- f. It is contributed to United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon with a military construction company since October 2006.

- g. In order to provide continuance of security and stability in South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Turkey has led the establishment of Southeastern Europe Brigade Multinational Peace Force (SEEBRIG) to which Albania, Bulgaria, Italy, Macedonia, Romania and Greece have also contributed. (6)
- h. Owing to the lack of peace and bad governance of country with the civil war that began in Somali in the 1990s, sea pirates' acts at a large area, their abduction of civil and trade ships and the ambiguousness of their judging, international community has begun to do something. With the appointment of Turkish Sea Forces at Aden Gulf, territorial waters of Somali and Arabian Sea and neighboring areas, Giresun Frigate that belongs to Turkish Sea Forces sent to the area and carry out his mission successfully.

Turkey which has carried out "The Peace Support Operation" (PSO) at different places of the world, finally in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Lebanon since Korean War, completed the mission successfully and whereupon he will continue to support the world peace.

TAF and Humanitarian Assistance Operations

In addition to its observers that he sent to abroad in order to contribute to international peace, Turkey sent equipments and staff to support humanitarian assistance. After the first Gulf War, over 400.000 refugees escaping from Saddam Hussein moved towards Turkey. Turkey accepted certain number of refugees and provided them humanitarian assistance. In this context, Turkey provided them sheltering and in order to meet their basic needs, Turkey provided food and sheltering for refugees both in its borders and along borderline. Within this scope, TAF played an important role and ensured security and undertook humanitarian assistance.(7)

Also, after the Hurricane Katrina, the appointment of C-130 Hercules transport aircraft by TAF between 30 September and 08 October 2005 in the support of NATO to USA can be used as an example of global humanitarian assistance of TAF. Moreover, immediately after the earthquake in Pakistan in 8 October 2005, Turkey sent search and rescue team to the friendly nation and dispatched medical equipment needed urgently by the nation. The equipment sent to the area with the 19 sortie of C-130 planes that belongs to Turkish Air Forces. (8)

Also, in 2006 February, TAF allocated two C-130 cargo planes to send the humanitarian aid to the Algerian disaster area. In 2006 August, TAF elements helped the evacuation of the Turkish and foreign staff in the war when Israel attacked Lebanon. (9)

As a result, it is going to be suitable to organize military and civilian teams to work together in natural disasters and to establish a pool of experts from the military and civil defense, and to make the countries create excellence centers to make, at first, their own regions and international community take advantage of them. It is thought that if it happens to meet these goals, many problems, including natural disasters, will be overcome with less damage.

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