IFS Info 5/2006

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## Norwegian Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in Afghanistan

# Notes on the author

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by Lene Kristoffersen

### Introduction

The security landscape which arose after the end of the Cold War brought with it changes in international operations' nature and composition. The spectrum of tasks and players increased, and the traditional division of labour and roles between military and civilian contributors became blurred. Gradually, a more complex civil-military interface emerged. By acknowledging that neither the military nor the civilian component could succeed in achieving its goals in isolation, both parties developed and revised concepts of civil-military cooperation and coordination. International organisations and national governments made incremental efforts to institutionalise cooperation and coordination between civilian and military players. Nato, the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and a number of national governments developed civil-military cooperation and coordination doctrines, policies, guidelines and handbooks.[1] Civilian organisations also issued guidelines to be better equipped to handle the new, multidimensional environment of international operations.[2]

Civil-military cooperation and coordination has been and still is subject to conceptual confusion. This is due in part to the existing number of concepts, and in part to the different approaches to the same concept in operational theatres. The multinational nature of international operations gives rise to different mission interpretations and executions by national armed forces. Last, but not least, concepts of civil-military cooperation and coordination are torn between the recognition that a solid relationship between civilian and military players is required to

1 The UN has developed two definitions of civil-military coordination. The UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) has developed one definition, whilst the other definition, originating from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has a more humanitarian outlook. The reader is referred to Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), *Civil-Military Coordination Policy*, New York, 9 September (2002) (UN [online 20 June 2006]); and *Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies*, March (2003) (OCHA [online 20 June 2006]). In March 2006 the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) published a *CIMIC in UN & African Peace Operations* manual, (ACCORD [online 22 May 2006]). Council of the European Union, *Civil-military Co-operation (CIMIC) concept for EU led Crisis Management Operations* (Brussels, 18 March 2002) (EU [online 20 June 2006]), was endorsed by the EU Military Committee through expiring of the silence procedure 8 March 2002.

2 One renowned example is the *Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies – An IASC Reference Paper*, June (2004) (ReliefWeb [online 20 June 2006]). This document is meant to complement the OCHA Guidelines. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) comprises key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) outlook on civil-military relations is elaborated on in Meinrad Studer "The ICRC and civil-military relations in armed conflict", *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 83, no. 842 (June 2001): 367-391.

reach respective and common goals, whilst this relationship is complicated and to a certain extent unfamiliar terrain to those involved. Civil-military cooperation and co-ordination goes beyond the realms of what both players have traditionally defined as their core competencies.[3] In spite of increased focus and conceptual developments at both international and national levels, civil-military cooperation and coordination is still conceptually unclear and triggers a variety of associations in the various stakeholders.[4]

In this article I shall focus on the Nato concept of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC).[5] CIMIC is a military tool Nato developed to facilitate cooperation and coordination between the Nato commander and civilian players in the operational theatre. It is seen as one of a number of instruments available that the Nato commander may use to reach the military mission's goals.[6] Consequently, Nato CIMIC is not an end in itself.[7] Norway has adopted the concept, as one CIMIC officer emphasizes: "Norwegian CIMIC is Nato CIMIC, or Nato CIMIC is Norwegian CIMIC – that is our attitude."[8]

First, I shall present and discuss the Nato CIMIC concept and the Norwegian CIMIC capability. Next, I shall examine in an empirical case study to what extent the Norwegian CIMIC unit deployed to Afghanistan followed the Nato CIMIC doctrine. The Norwegian CIMIC unit contributed from February 2003 to February 2004 to the stability operation in Afghanistan. In this article I shall argue that despite the stated intent that Norwegian CIMIC is Nato CIMIC, a Norwegian approach emerged in Afghanistan that did not wholly concur with the Nato doctrine. Norwegian CIMIC had a project-oriented approach to the CIMIC mission that went beyond Nato's prescriptions. Six possible explanations for this lack of concurrence will be scrutinized. I have found that domestic political incentives and the Finnish CIMIC model exerted a strong and direct influence on the Norwegian CIMIC approach in Afghanistan. In the conclusion, I suggest that an elastic Nato CIMIC concept may be required so CIMIC can adjust to different operational realities. Yet an elastic CIMIC concept is challenging in a number of ways: how can it be combined with the goal of achieving unity of effort and a common understanding of the concept in the operational theatre?[9] How can the thin line between the military and civilian spheres be demarcated?

My informants in this article are Norwegian CIMIC officers, military and civilian ministry officials and one NGO worker, who give their insights into Norwegian CIMIC, and share facts, reflections and experiences of it. The interviews were performed between the spring of 2005 and spring of 2006. The CIMIC officers hold different military ranks, but to ensure their anonymity, they are all referred to as CIMIC officers. Anonymity was supposed to enable the informants to speak freely.[10]

## Nato CIMIC

War has always involved encounters between civil and military components, and civil-

3 Henrik Ø. Breitenbauch, "Transition til statsbygging efter intervention – en ny strategisk udfordring" [Transition to state building after intervention – a new strategic challenge], *DIIS rapport*, Copenhagen, 2005:13, p. 44.

4 Rune Jensen, *CIMIC i fredsstøttende operasjoner – en studie basert på erfaringer fra Kosovo* [CIMIC in peace support operations – a study based on experiences from Kosovo] (Forsvarets Stabsskole, 2003), p. 3, quoted with permission from the author.

5 The UN has developed the concept of Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord). Nato, the EU and some countries use Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), and the US and some countries use Civil-Military Operations (CMO) and Civil Affairs (CA). These concepts both differ and share similarities in their details.

6 NATO International Military Staff (IMS), *MC 411/1 NATO Military Policy on Civil-Military Co-operation* (Brussels, 2001), article 18.

7 Jensen, *CIMIC i fredsstøttende operasjoner...*, p. 10, argues that civil-military coordination might often be an operational goal to the UN.

8 Interview, April 6, 2005

9 "Unity of effort is essential to achieve maximum value from CIMIC. National and NATO CIMIC activities in a theatre should be closely co-ordinated and de-conflicted..." NATO IMS, *MC 411/1...*, article 16.

10 The author has translated all interview quotes from Norwegian to English. Informants were given the opportunity to read their quotes in English translation through.

military cooperation may be as old as warfare itself.[11] However, the actual concept of civil-military cooperation emerged during the Second World War, when the US established Civil Affairs (CA), a unit responsible for supporting the reconstruction of liberated areas.[12] CA established and managed cooperation with civilian players, contributed with capacities to reconstruct infrastructure, and provided humanitarian aid. CA's purpose was to enable the US armed forces to concentrate their efforts on the primary task of military combat. The US retained its national CA capability after the Second World War, and it has been and is still frequently employed by the US in military operations.[13]

During the Cold War, the concepts of 'civil affairs' and 'civil-military operations' were developed and used by the US and UK in various conventional military campaigns.[14] Civil-military cooperation was also a natural ingredient in UN-led, traditional peacekeeping missions from the 1950s onwards, despite the fact that the role of civil-military cooperation had not been "explicitly formulated".[15] The dynamics of the civil-military relationship during the Second World War, but also to some extent during traditional peacekeeping missions, may be denoted as being "top-down", with the military in charge. Intact government structures on both sides of an inter-state conflict reduced the degree of interaction between peacekeepers and civilian populations, and affected governments were also able to distribute aid.[16] During the traditional peacekeeping era before the late 1980s, there was no particular need for interaction between political/military and humanitarian concerns.[17]

The end of the Cold War saw a rise in intra-state conflicts that altered the precepts for the international community's response. The new conflicts frequently developed into humanitarian emergencies, and civilians often played the role of both main victims and main targets. State institutions collapsed, and warring factions consisted not only of regular armies, but also militias and armed civilians.[18] The conflicts sparked an increase in civilian organisations, and

> ...whereas in the Second World War the International Committee of the Red Cross was the largest of a small number of civilian aid groups, peacekeepers may now be faced with thousands of groups in a single theatre.[19]

The previous "top-down" relationship between the military and the civilian population and authorities changed considerably. In traditional peacekeeping, the UN forces had acquired the consent of the parties to the conflict. In the operations of the post-Cold War, the term "spoilers" emerged, suggesting that local formal or informal authorities commensurate a potential security threat.[20] Winning

11 Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Civil-military cooperation in peace operations: the case of Kosovo* (Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), p. 1.

12 Knut-Åge Greve and Ernst W. Hertzberg, *CIMIC i internasjonale operasjoner* [CIMIC in international operations] (Hovedoppgave ved Hærens Forvaltningsskole, 2001), p. 11.

13 Ibid.

14 Civil Affairs (CA) is designated personnel; Civil-Military Operations (CMO) is what they do.

15 Försvarsmakten, Högkvarteret, *Haandbook Civil-Military Co-operation* (Stockholm, Försvarsmakten, 2005), p. 3.

16 Sean Pollick, "Civil-Military Cooperation: A new tool for peacekeepers", *Canadian Military Journal* (Autumn 2000), p. 58.

17 James J. Landon and Richard E. Hayes, "National Approaches to Civil-Military Coordination in Peace and Humanitarian Assistance Operations", *Evidence Based Research, Inc.*, Virginia (1997), (DOD Command and Control Research Program [online 17 June 2003]), p. 2.

18 United Nations, General Assembly, Fiftieth Session: *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations* (New York: UN, 3 January 1995; A/50/60; S/1995/1), pp. 3-4.

19 Pollick, "Civil-Military Cooperation...", p. 58. NATO, *AJP-9 NATO Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Doctrine* (Brussels, June 2003), article 802, identifies three types of civilian organisations. The first group consists of International Organizations (IOs) established by intergovernmental agreements such as the various UN organisations and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The ICRC also belongs to this group. The second group consists of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). International and National Donor Agencies also belong to this group. The third group is called "other groupings" which is perceived to be within the above generic types. It consists of agencies such as Civilian Development Agencies and Human Rights and Democratisation Agencies.

20 According to Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler

the hearts and minds of civilian populations was given more attention, as the support of the population might be "... the Achilles heel of the intervention, or with a military term the centre of gravity".[21] International civilian organisations had longer-term commitments than the military, and did not feel obliged to leave the military in charge.[22] Consequently, the relationships between the military and various civil actors became less predictable, far more delicate and more intertwined.

Nato's involvement and role in peace operations increased during the 1990s. CIMIC was not a concept new to Nato, but traditionally it was seen "...as presenting little more than a logistic challenge".[23] In 1999, Nato approved its new Strategic Concept. The aim was to equip and enable Nato to be a viable player when faced with the new security challenges. Article 60 of the new Nato Strategic Concept establishes that "the interaction between alliance forces and the civil environment (both governmental and non-governmental) in which they operate is crucial to the success of operations." Accordingly, Nato views CIMIC as a potentially vital tool in achieving the end-state of international operations.[24]

Experiences from the intra-state conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s prompted Nato to completely reexamine and revise CIMIC policy and doctrine. Nato ratified Allied Joint Publication 9, *AJP-9 NATO Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Doctrine* in May 2004.[25] The primary objective of AJP-9 is to provide guidelines for the planning and execution of CIMIC.[26] Nato CIMIC policy is laid down in Military Committee document MC 411/1, which came into force in 2001. Most western states, Nato members in particular, broadly pursue the Nato approach to CIMIC though there are variations in their emphasis.[27]

*Definition and purpose*

Nato defines CIMIC as follows:

> The co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies.[28]

CIMIC is the Nato commander's tool with which to build effective relationships with the civilian component. Nato stresses that, "CIMIC has to be an integral part of the entire operation, requiring close co-ordination with other military capabilities and actions."[29] Nato CIMIC is to be executed in support of the military mission as part of the Nato commander's plan. According to Nato, CIMIC is applicable to both Article 5 and non Article 5 operations.[30] CIMIC activities and their profile will vary depending on the nature of the crisis or operation. Nato CIMIC policy identifies a short-term and a long-term purpose of CIMIC:

> The immediate purpose of CIMIC is to establish and maintain the full co-operation of the NATO commander and the civilian authorities, organisations, agencies and population within a commander's area of operations in order to allow him to fulfil his mission. This may include direct support to the implementation of a civil plan. The

Problems in Peace Processes", *International Security*, no. 2 (fall 1997), p. 5, the "...greatest source of risk comes from spoilers – leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it".

21 Nicolas T. Veicherts, "Samtænkning – modstand og muligheder" [Coordination – resistance and possibilities], *DIIS Report*, Copenhagen, 2006:5, p. 17, author's translation. "Winning hearts and minds" implies tacitly or actively winning the support and trust of the national population.

22 Pollick, "Civil-Military Cooperation...", p. 59.

23 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 101-1.

24 End-state: the stated political and/or military situation to be attained at the end of an operation, which indicates that the objective has been achieved. NATO, *AJP-9...*, annex B, B-3.

25 Interview, 23 August 2005.

26 NATO IMS, *MC 411/1...*, article 14-a.

27 Paul Rich, "Hearts and minds? Defining civil-military links globally", *Insight Issue*, no. 39 (2002) (Id21 insights [online 12 May 2005]).

28 NATO IMS, *MC 411/1...*, article 4.

29 Ibid. article 15.

30 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 103-1. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty states that an armed attack against one or more of the Allies in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against all.

> long-term purpose of CIMIC is to help create and sustain conditions that will support the achievement of Alliance objectives in operations.[31]

This demonstrates how civil-military cooperation is not an end in itself, but rather an instrument at the disposal of the force commander, to facilitate certain conditions that may support the commander in fulfilling his military mission. The wording "full cooperation" departs from UN terminology and hints at stronger forms of collaboration between civil and military players than what the UN envisages. The UN definitions of Civil-Military Coordination use "interaction" and "dialogue".[32]

The Nato CIMIC definition identifies three dimensions which constitute the civilian component: the national population, local authorities, and civilian organisations. The national population may be divided into several ethnic groups, with differing affiliations to the conflict. The local or regional authorities may comprise politicians, the police, religious leaders, public administration and so on. As the definition states "...civil actors, including..." one might argue that the definition also encompasses civilian players not explicitly mentioned. One such body might be private companies, which fulfil important functions in post-Cold War international operations by providing an increasing scope of provisions. Another important civilian player is the media. The definition does not differentiate between humanitarian and development organisations. These two categories of organisations are present at different yet at overlapping times of the operational cycle, operate under different mandates and consequently might require different modes of cooperation with the military component.[33] Most humanitarian organisations strive to abide by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, whilst some development organisations might be more politically integrated into the overall international operation.[34]

The term "in support of the mission" is crucial to the definition. The Nato CIMIC doctrine states that Nato forces will, when cooperating with a wide range of civilian bodies,

> ...as far as possible and within military means and capabilities, accommodate and support the activities of these bodies, provided this does not compromise the mission.[35]

"Mission primacy" is one basic principle in the Nato CIMIC concept, and mirrors "in support of the mission". The definitional term and related principle require further elaboration. A study conducted under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) suggests that the military experiences gained in the Balkans "...resulted in a new tone being adopted in military circles concerning their involvement in humanitarian work".[36] The new tone was that of "mission primacy", where "...the military aspect of a mission should always take precedence over any humanitarian action".[37] The study welcomed this development, continuing to state that, "...the view that a soldier should dedicate himself above all to his primary role appears to be regaining ground".[38] According to the study, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia is the most prominent example of the military being more involved in activities of

31 NATO IMS, *MC 411/1*..., article 9.

32 UN DPKO, *Civil-Military Coordination Policy*; OCHA, *Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets*... However, the OCHA definition, ibid., p. 5, states that "basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation".

33 The UN DPKO definition takes this into account: "UN Civil-Military Coordination is the system of interaction, involving exchanges of information, negotiation, de-confliction, mutual support, and planning at all levels between military elements and humanitarian organizations, development organizations, or the local civilian population, to achieve respective objectives". Ibid., article 8.

34 The seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. Nicolas T. Veicherts makes a case for differentiating between the two sets of organisations in "Samtænkning...", p.26.

35 NATO, *AJP-9*..., article 102-2c.

36 Studer, "The ICRC and civil-military relations...", p. 376.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

a humanitarian nature than with restoring peace.[39] This might explain why Nato was eager to avoid "mission creep", or "...the tendency for a force to begin taking on tasks perceived as civilian", when Implementation Force (IFOR) was launched in Bosnia in 1995.[40]

Consequently, the principle of mission primacy might have been the result of previous experiences of mission creep. At the same time, defining which activities are in support of the mission and which may not be is complex, and the transition might be very elusive. Further, how is CIMIC to execute mission primacy without bypassing civilian players? As one observer remarks: "In effect, it [CIMIC] is not a proposal for a genuine 'partnership' of equals."[41] Nato claims that "CIMIC implies neither military control of civilian organisations nor the reverse."[42] How Nato executes CIMIC in the field may hint at how different concerns are weighted. The British have developed a CIMIC definition that excludes "in support of the mission".[43] An analyst compared the UK concept with Nato CIMIC, and asked

> ...whether this represents an invitation to mission creep, or is it simply a sensible recognition that the narrow compartmentalisation of the military mission is now profoundly outdated?

Further:

> Does the British definition open up for the possibility of a more genuine form of partnership with all elements of the NGO community than the Nato definition and how will this be achieved in practical terms?[44]

A recent example of CIMIC seeming to cross the line from efforts "in support of the mission" to solving civilian tasks unconnected to the principle of mission primacy is the Danish CIMIC efforts in Iraq. In the Danish sector in Iraq, the originally purely military CIMIC efforts developed into a mission solving several civilian tasks – it even changed name to Rebuilding Unit Denmark.[45] Such developments give rise to a number of questions. How can we decide which activities are in support of the military mission and which are not? What does the transition from CIMIC to Rebuilding Unit Denmark tell us about the CIMIC concept? Some might argue that all civil/humanitarian activities are in support of the military mission and such questions are inextricably linked to the concept of CIMIC. The CIMIC concept the EU endorses seems to deflect from the Nato CIMIC doctrine on the prevalence of the military mission, as seen in the following EU description of the guiding principle of mission primacy:

> The mandate and the resulting mission of any EU-led CMO [Crisis Management Operation] take priority in all circumstances. If in exceptional circumstances however, additional CIMIC related tasks are to be assumed, it should be done after the prioritisation of the military tasks and an assessment of the necessary resources in co-ordination with civilian agencies.[46]

The EU CIMIC concept provides a window of opportunity, where "additional CIMIC related tasks" may be assumed in exceptional circumstances. The purpose of Nato CIMIC stipulates that direct support to a civil plan might have to be included to solve the military mission. Nato CIMIC also allows for the military to take on civilian tasks, but only in exceptional circumstances, "...where the appropriate civil body is not present or is unable to carry out its mandate and where an otherwise unacceptable vacuum

39 Ibid., p. 374.
40 Espen Barth Eide, "Peacekeeping past and present", *Nato review*, Web edition, Vol. 49 - No. 2 Summer (2001), (Nato [online 18 November 2003]). The precise meaning of "mission creep" is still unsettled, and the concept is to a certain degree contested.
41 Stuart Gordon, "Understanding the Priorities for Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC)", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, July (2001), [online 30 May 2006], p. 9.
42 NATO IMS, *MC 411/1...*, article 11.
43 Gordon, "Understanding the Priorities...", p. 9.
44 Ibid.
45 Veicherts, "Samtænkning...", pp. 38-9.
46 Council of the European Union, *Civil-military Co-operation (CIMIC) concept for EU led Crisis Management Operations*, p. 13.

would arise".[47] Nato stresses that support to the implementation, or possible execution, of civilian tasks by the military are to be carried out with a view to timely transition to appropriate civilian bodies.[48] Both Nato and the EU envisage that CIMIC might be engaged in non-military tasks in the civilian sector. The difference seems to be that the EU regards such engagements as being possibly exempt from the principle of mission primacy, whilst Nato regards such exceptional engagements to be executed in support of the military mission.[49] A pressing requirement is to decide which circumstances should allow for military engagements in the civilian sector. The guiding principle of Nato CIMIC is that CIMIC may take on civilian tasks if vacuums are identified in which appropriate civilian players are unable to carry out the tasks due, for example, to security concerns.

*Principles*

Nato CIMIC is governed by two categories of principles and the first set of principles relates to the military direction.[50] In this category, the first principle is that of mission primacy, which has been examined. The second principle is that of command direction. This implies that military commanders are responsible for directing CIMIC activities, achieving unity of effort and securing military effectiveness. The third principle is economy and implies that military commanders must try to avoid using military assets on non-military tasks and civilian dependence on military resources. The fourth principle is prioritisation and concentration, which implies that military resources should not be dissipated, but concentrated on tasks of the highest priority. The final principle relating to the military direction of CIMIC consists of legal obligations and humanitarian considerations, i.e. stressing the importance of compliance with international law and the Law of Armed Conflict.

The second category of principles governs the civil-military relationship.[51] The first principle is cultural awareness, which entails the military having to form a sound understanding of local culture, customs and laws. The second principle underlines that objectives shared by Nato forces and civilian organisations should, wherever possible, be established and recognised. Third, the analysis of common objectives should lead to an agreed sharing of responsibilities. The fourth principle governing civil-military relations is that every effort should be made to secure consent, i.e. the willing cooperation of civilian organisations. The fifth principle is that CIMIC tasks and activities should be transparent, and the final principle underscores the necessity of maintaining open and constant communication.

The two categories of principles reflect upon the mission primacy discussion above. Principles relating to the military direction of CIMIC might not necessarily be harmonizable with certain principles governing the civil-military relationship. For instance, transparency and open communication might not necessarily combine well with the principles of military direction. Mission primacy and military effectiveness could imply that CIMIC officers must allow information they have gathered to be used for intelligence purposes. Yet CIMIC officers may be reluctant to assume a certain degree of affiliation with the intelligence branch, and they may be anxious that this might jeopardize their relationship with civilian bodies. In fact, the Nato CIMIC doctrine states that

> CIMIC personnel will be a valuable source of local information... but they will rapidly become ineffective if used for collecting information for intelligence production...[52]

47 NATO IMS, *MC 411/1*..., article 11-b.
48 NATO, *AJP-9*..., article 102-2d.
49 This is a matter of interpretation. The EU CIMIC doctrine is very much influenced by the Nato doctrine, and the wording is often similar. Yet Nato seems to be more rigid and explicit on the prevalence of mission primacy than the EU doctrine. This might give rise to confusions, given that 19 countries are members of both organisations.
50 NATO, *AJP-9*..., article 202.
51 Ibid., article 203.
52 NATO, *AJP-9*..., article 203-5.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) study points out that "...the question of information-gathering is a central issue in the relationship between military and humanitarian work", and poses certain questions, such as:

> To what extent should the ICRC be able to benefit from information provided by military sources? Conversely, what type of information could the ICRC give the military if so requested?

Information sharing is one example of challenges CIMIC officers might face on the ground, where the Nato CIMIC doctrine does not offer explicit guidance. Consequently, the CIMIC officers will be required to demonstrate good judgment on a situational basis. Returning to the purpose and definition of Nato CIMIC, CIMIC is intended to set up mechanisms for cooperation between military and civilian players so the Nato commander can fulfil his military mission. The imperative question to a CIMIC officer operating in the field and faced with specific conditions is thus: "How does this course of action support the military mission?"

*Execution of Nato CIMIC*

The Nato CIMIC doctrine identifies a number of CIMIC tasks and certain core functions that CIMIC is intended to fulfil in an operational theatre to achieve its purpose. To a certain extent, these tasks differ between Article 5 and non Article 5 operations.[53] The focus in this section will be on the non Article 5 application of Nato CIMIC to identify how Nato prescribes the execution of CIMIC in the stabilisation operation in Afghanistan.

The tasks Nato assigns to CIMIC are grouped into three overlapping stages, the pre-operational stage, the operational stage and the transitional stage. The activities at the operational stage are the most relevant for the empirical purposes of this article, so I shall only mention the activities at the other stages in brief. At the pre-operational level, CIMIC staff is intended to be involved in planning, education and training. CIMIC staff will pursue integrated planning with civilian partners, and try to incorporate civil related factors into the planning of other staff branches.[54] At the operational level, six specific tasks are identified.[55] The first is communication, where Nato prescribes proactive and constant communication at all levels. The second task is information exchange, which is likely to go in both directions. The third is coordination, stipulating Nato CIMIC coordinate with civilian players but also secure coordinated CIMIC efforts within an operational theatre.[56] The fourth task is to facilitate agreements necessary to support civil-military cooperation. The fifth concerns conducting CIMIC activities to fill identified critical vacuums. The sixth task involves conducting continuous assessments, which will form the basis for the other five tasks. Finally, the transitional stage is, according to the Nato CIMIC doctrine, intended to facilitate

> ...the hand-over, in as smooth and seamless manner as possible, of civil related activities to the proper, mandated authorities.[57]

The six CIMIC tasks Nato prescribes in the operational stage are expected to bring about the fulfilment of the three core functions of CIMIC.[58] The first core function is civil-military liaison, which should provide the coordination necessary to facilitate and support the planning and conduct of operations

53 Ibid., article 303-2a states that: "Many NATO nations have their own structures and procedures in place to deal with most aspects of CIMIC in the event of military conflict... Support to the civil environment will be a national responsibility... Even where a NATO nation has been subjected to significant destruction as a result of invasion, it is assumed that the national government will retain both the will and ability to organise and carry out civil reconstruction of the country, supported by international organizations... Nonetheless, CIMIC is as crucial to the Commander in this scenario as any other staff function."

54 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 302-1.

55 Ibid., article 302-3.

56 Internal coordination is also a challenge to the civilian component. A number of projects have been launched to improve civilian coordination and professionalism, such as the Sphere Project and the Humanitarian Ombudsman Project.

57 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 302-4.

58 Ibid., article 104-1.

at all levels. Liaison is the most important core function and implies connections being established via the creation of communication structures and channels. The second core function is support to the civil environment and covers a number of CIMIC activities and may involve a range of military resources, e.g. information, personnel, materiel, equipment, communications facilities, specialist expertise or training. The third core function is support to the force and acknowledges that Nato commanders to varying degrees will depend on different kinds of civilian support from within the operational theatre, such as civilian resources, information, and tacit civilian support for military operations. Nato views CIMIC as playing an essential role in obtaining such support.

One CIMIC officer stressed that various interpretations are possible within the given frameworks.[59] Military doctrines

> ...will seldom be specific and detailed but rather broad and general to allow for improvisation and adaptation in accordance with the special circumstances of each conflict.[60]

The Nato CIMIC doctrine prescribes an elastic CIMIC concept, which can be adjusted to situational requirements. Nato CIMIC officers on the ground in the various operational theatres are equipped with a Nato CIMIC doctrine to guide them in their mission. However, the Nato CIMIC doctrine contains aspects which may conflict with one another and this might oblige the CIMIC officer to rely on his or her own judgment in a particular situation. However, Nato prescribes mission primacy to be the basic parameter. The doctrine envisages a CIMIC capability which can build effective relationships with the civilian component, and positions CIMIC as a bridge-builder between the military and the civilian components.[61] The Nato CIMIC purpose is to be accomplished by fulfilling the three core functions of civil-military liaison, support to the civil environment and support to the force.

Nato CIMIC faces challenges in the interface between military and civilian domains. One challenge is the level of involvement in civil related tasks. And how is Nato CIMIC to bring together mission primacy and an actual partnership with civilian players? Is an equal partnership a possible or even a desirable goal to military players? Before examining how the Norwegian CIMIC unit in Afghanistan reconciled an Afghan operational theatre with the Nato CIMIC concept, I shall present the Norwegian CIMIC capability. For Nato to achieve a dedicated CIMIC capability, the organisation relied on the member states to develop national CIMIC capabilities.

## The Norwegian CIMIC capability

To execute CIMIC according to the prescriptions of AJP-9, Nato depends on developing a dedicated CIMIC capability. According to Nato, such a capability should consist of three components. First, a CIMIC capability should consist of a conceptual aspect encompassing policy, doctrine and concepts. Second, Nato needs to develop a common understanding and ability to put doctrine into practice through training, education, exercises and general awareness. Finally, a physical capacity is required.[62] Nato suggests that the physical capacity required to complete CIMIC tasks varies from situation to situation, but a minimum requirement would be CIMIC staff integrated into headquarters at all levels.[63] One asset of the physical capacity might be CIMIC Groups, trained to conduct CIMIC activities such as making assessments and establishing CIMIC centres.[64] The following examination

59 Interview, 6 April 2005.

60 Henning-A. Frantzen, *NATO and Peace Support Operations, 1991-1999: policies and doctrines* (Cass series on peacekeeping: 20, London: Frank Cass, 2005), p. 4.

61 A great deal of the literature on civil-military cooperation and coordination focus on the relationship between the military and civilian organisations. This is not to suggest that military cooperation and relations with the national population and local authorities are less essential to Nato and the military mission.

62 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 105.

63 Ibid., article 501-1.

64 CIMIC Coordination Centres are an important part of the CIMIC concept. The doctrine states: "CIMIC centres are locations where liaison and exchange of information between military personnel, civilian

of the Norwegian CIMIC capability focuses mainly on how it appeared upon deployment to Afghanistan in 2003, but also briefly on more recent developments.

*Conceptual aspect*

Norwegian CIMIC is based on the Nato CIMIC doctrine, and Norway was an active participant in the forming of the Nato CIMIC doctrine. According to one ministry informant, "The AJP-9 gained Norwegian approval. We were part of the making and are content with the result."[65] No written Norwegian CIMIC handbooks or guidelines have been produced. It has been and still is an intention and a goal to produce a handbook or guidelines, but so far this has not been done, mainly due to a lack of personnel resources.[66] At the same time the "Norwegian CIMIC is Nato CIMIC" attitude has probably not accelerated this process. When the Norwegian CIMIC unit was established, it was asked whether documents such as a handbook and guidelines should be made. As it had been settled that Norwegian CIMIC would be based on Nato CIMIC, some questioned why time should be invested in producing Norwegian documents.[67] A Norwegian handbook or guidelines would arguably simplify the challenge of communicating what CIMIC really is, both within the military organisation internally and externally to civilian partners. By staking out a Norwegian CIMIC path, Norwegian guidelines might also alleviate the confusion of experiencing quite dissimilar national approaches to the Nato CIMIC doctrine in the field. On the other hand, national concepts and guidelines might further impede efforts to create an international consensus on what the concept of CIMIC should consist of.

The joint operational doctrine of the Norwegian armed forces, published in 2000, is not up-to-date or relevant to CIMIC.[68] The doctrine briefly identifies successful civil-military cooperation as being important on three accounts: first as an important force-multiplier; secondly for the contact with the civilian environment, and thirdly as an indirect means of force-protection. Further, the doctrine emphasises that successful civil-military cooperation is dependent on the existence of an overarching strategy, and integration with all other activities.[69] Such political incentives and an overarching strategy behind CIMIC work in the Balkans seem to have been lacking. One study concludes that:

> Our inquiries have not established whether the Norwegian government has any kind of vision, intention, policy or goal for civil-military cooperation in a peace support operation. The political agenda seems to be missing.[70]

This conclusion appears to be supported by another study:

> Despite increased emphasis on international operations and a general acceptance at political and military professional levels of the importance of civil-military cooperation in international operations, this is not reflected in the Norwegian approach to such operations. Lacking statistical evidence, I will claim that Norwegian (civil and military) efforts in the Balkans are not co-ordinated.[71]

The joint operational doctrine launches a

organisations and the local authorities and population takes place." The key functions of CIMIC centres are to a) Provide initial points of contact; b) Provide a focal point for liaison; c) Facilitate information exchange; d) Provide advice on the availability and mechanics of military assistance to civilian organisations; and e) Re-enforce the legitimacy of the Force in the eyes of civil authorities and the local population. NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 502-3.

65 Interview, 20 May 2005.

66 Interview, 6 April 2005.

67 Interview, 3 March 2006.

68 Jensen, *CIMIC i fredsstottende operasjoner...*, p. 30.

69 Forsvarets Overkommando, *Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine Del B* [Joint Operational Doctrine of the Norwegian Armed Forces Part B], (Forsvarets Overkommando, February 2000), p. 136.

70 Greve and Hertzeberg, *CIMIC i internasjonale operasjoner*, p. 21, authors translation.

71 Bjørn Inge Ruset, "Utfordringer for sivil-militært samarbeid i et fremtidig forsvar" [Challenges to civil-military cooperation in an armed force of the future], in Bjørn Inge Ruset, ed., *Militærmaktseminaret 2000-forsvaret ved et veiskille*, Conference Proceedings from Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (2001), p. 107, authors translation.

general interest in developing a national policy for civil-military cooperation, and specifically to facilitate cooperation with foreign ministry representatives in operational theatres to improve the coordination of Norwegian efforts.[72] CIMIC deployments have necessitated a dialogue between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Afghanistan a national policy for civil-military cooperation would have been less relevant, as the Norwegian CIMIC unit was not integrated into a Norwegian contingent, and there were no Norwegian civilian organisations present in the Norwegian area of operations.[73]

As a final point, the joint operational doctrine uses "civil-military cooperation" to refer to both CIMIC in international operations and civil-military cooperation in a Norwegian total-defence context. This might cause conceptual confusion from a Norwegian perspective.[74] Despite certain basic common features, these two concepts should not be mixed up. As of 2006, a new doctrine is underway and could play an important part in conveying the conceptual aspect of CIMIC.

*Training, education, exercises and general awareness*

The second component Nato identifies as part of a CIMIC capability is the development of a common understanding and ability to put doctrine into practice through training, education, exercises and general awareness. The Norwegian armed forces had its first serious encounter with CIMIC in Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia in 1995–96.[75] Hence CIMIC ought to be regarded as a quite new concept to Norwegian military personnel. An observer concludes, based on interviews with Norwegian military personnel serving in Kosovo, that, "In general there seemed to be no common understanding of the concept among Norwegian personnel."[76] A number of impediments to CIMIC execution were identified, such as a lack of extensive experience in the Norwegian officers performing CIMIC functions, unsatisfactory predeployment education and training and the lack of written guidelines and handbooks.[77] The Norwegian CIMIC personnel serving in Afghanistan had more CIMIC experience, education and training than the Norwegian officers performing CIMIC tasks in Kosovo. All the CIMIC informants had participated in at least one international military operation prior to Afghanistan, and they also had experience from CIMIC work, though perhaps under another name, though performing similar functions.

Intensive pre-deployment training of the Norwegian CIMIC officers who served in Afghanistan was conducted both abroad and in Norway. All the CIMIC informants had attended, or served as instructors on CIMIC courses abroad. CIMIC Group North, Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORCAPS) and the Finnish armed forces arranged courses.[78] The Norwegian CIMIC officers also received predeployment training in Norway before going to Afghanistan. There is still a lack of specific CIMIC courses at the Military Academy and the Norwegian Defence Staff College. As CIMIC competencies and experiences develop

72 Forsvarets Overkommando, *Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine Del B*, p. 136.

73 The UN "integrated missions" concept might become increasingly influential and spur developments. Espen Barth Eide et al., *Report on Integrated Missions (2005): Practical Perspectives and Recommendations*, Independent Study for the Expanded UN, ECHA Core Group, (2005).

74 The Norwegian "total defence" concept is based on the principle of being able to mobilise the collective resources of the nation if Norway or Nato were attacked. Recently the concept of "total defence" has been integrated into a wider perspective with the label "civil-military cooperation", incorporating the need for a comprehensive utilization of civilian and military resources to maintain Norwegian security and national interests. The reader is referred to Ministry of Defence, St. prp. nr. 45 (2000-2001) *Omleggingen av Forsvaret i perioden 2002-2005* [White Paper 45 (2000-2001) The reorganisation of the Armed Forces in the period 2002-2005].

75 Greve and Hertzeberg, *CIMIC i internasjonale operasjoner*, p. 11.

76 Sven Kristian Nissen, *Norwegian Security Policy and the Norwegian Armed Forces in the 21.Century – a case study of KFOR* (University of Oslo, 2002), p. 74.

77 Ibid., p. 73.

78 The Finnish arranged courses due to their command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) CIMIC branch from August 2003.

within the Norwegian military organisation, there is reason to believe that CIMIC will be given more attention in Norwegian officers' education.

The third Norwegian CIMIC detachment had the advantage of having participated in the field exercise 'Nordic Peace' in Finland before being deployed to Afghanistan. Hence they had acquired experiences from the exercise and CIMIC education before deployment. There seems to be a growing awareness of the importance of CIMIC in training. One CIMIC officer emphasised that the NATO exercise Battle Griffin in the winter of 2004 was the first exercise in Norway with the participation of specific CIMIC teams.[79]

The understanding of the CIMIC concept in the Norwegian armed forces has been, and perhaps still is, somewhat confused. According to one CIMIC officer, "...it was first as we arrived in Afghanistan that we have been doing CIMIC on a greater scale".[80] This experience is likely to add to the general awareness of CIMIC, combined with increased attention in training and education, and the potential development of a Norwegian handbook and a more relevant joint operational doctrine. Nevertheless, there is probably some way left to go. "Does everybody understand what CIMIC really is?" asked one of the CIMIC officers rhetorically.[81] The answer would seem to be "no". Another CIMIC officer remarked: "Many perceive CIMIC as a military NGO, both civilians and actually also military personnel. Still there are great misconceptions as to what CIMIC really is."[82]

*Physical capacity*

Norway acted upon the request from Nato, and made a commitment to establish a CIMIC unit operational as of 1 January 2003. The Norwegian CIMIC unit consisted of three CIMIC elements. Initially, and during the Norwegian CIMIC deployment to Afghanistan, the unit belonged administratively to the army's reaction force.[83] All three elements had 16 CIMIC officers on readiness contracts signed for a period of two to three years, in addition to a leading element consisting of four CIMIC officers. This amounts to 52 officers on contracts ready to deploy in 30 days. Consequently, the armed forces had CIMIC officers prepared at any time for deployment to international operations.[84] The CIMIC unit was originally lead by a lieutenant colonel and established as a section at the Norwegian Defence Staff College (NODSC).[85] Four lieutenant colonels and a civilian social anthropologist ran the daily work. They held CIMIC briefings at the NODSC, and functioned as a centre for CIMIC competence. However, due to the reorganisation of the NODSC, the CIMIC section there has been closed down, with only one CIMIC position remaining. The CIMIC positions have been moved to other parts of the military organisation, such as the army's transformation and doctrine-command.[86] The administrative responsibility for the unit was transferred to the army in December 2005, after a period of unclear divisions of responsibility.[87]

The Nato requirement to establish a dedicated CIMIC capability led the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Norway to establish CIMIC Group North in 2001.[88] The group was intended to function as a multinational CIMIC unit, ready to be deployed to international operations. CIMIC Group North was activated in January 2003, with its headquarters located in the Dutch city of Budel.[89] The membership of the Group was

79 Interview, 6 April 2006.
80 Interview, 6 April 2005.
81 Interview, 13 May 2005.
82 Interview, 6 April 2005.
83 The army's reaction force [Forsvarets Innsatsstyrke Hær, FIST-H] was closed down in 2004.
84 Lars Hojem Kvam, "De 52 gode hjelperne" [The 52 good helpers], *Forsvarets Forum*, nr. 13 (2002), p. 14.
85 Forsvarets Stabsskole (FSTS).
86 [Hærens transformasjons- og doktrinekommando (TRADOK)], authors translation. Interview, 6 April 2005.
87 Marius Eibak Lauritsen, "CIMIC overført til hæren" [CIMIC transferred to the army], *Forsvarsnett* (2006) [online 12 February 2006].
88 Italy, Greece, Portugal, Turkey and Hungary are members of CIMIC Group South with headquarters in Italy, operational as of late 2003.
89 Interview, 23 September 2005.

important to the decision to contribute with the Norwegian CIMIC unit to Afghanistan. As one CIMIC officer claimed:

> We contributed with CIMIC because we were in the establishing phase of CIMIC Group North, and it was a wish, a request from Nato to these different countries to contribute with CIMIC.[90]

In November 2004 the CIMIC Group North nations agreed to transform CIMIC Group North into a multinational CIMIC Centre of Excellence.

The Norwegian CIMIC environment has thus experienced a period of high activity during the establishment of the CIMIC unit, membership in CIMIC Group North with two Norwegian positions in the CIMIC Group North headquarters, the deployment to Afghanistan in 2003–04 and the activities of the CIMIC section at the Norwegian Defence Staff College. After having moved closer to creating a professional CIMIC milieu, the ongoing transformation process of the Norwegian armed forces caused some setbacks, as CIMIC "...fell between two chairs", and lost its momentum due, for example, to unclear divisions of responsibility.[91] Another setback is the fact that Norway has opted to discontinue its participation in the new CIMIC Centre of Excellence, due to the reduction of the number of positions to be held by the Norwegian armed forces abroad. This will probably make Norway less able to keep up with developments.[92] Nevertheless, it seems that Norway is incrementally progressing towards a dedicated CIMIC capability as described in the Nato CIMIC doctrine.

## The Norwegian approach to CIMIC in Afghanistan

Norwegian CIMIC is in principle based on the Nato doctrine. However, a Norwegian approach to CIMIC emerged in Afghanistan that in some respects did not concur with the Nato doctrine. The Norwegian approach may be denoted as being "project-oriented" CIMIC and this label has two main implications. First, projects increasingly became the main activity of the Norwegian CIMIC-elements, though this does not necessarily conflict with the Nato CIMIC doctrine. Secondly, in facilitating and implementing projects, the focus of the Norwegian CIMIC elements seem to have been gradually disconnected from mission primacy and the definitional requirement that CIMIC be executed in support of the mission. By moving into the realm of civilian activities in Afghanistan without a constant, comprehensive and conscious view of mission primacy, the Norwegian CIMIC unit diverged from the Nato doctrine in its execution of the mission.

Afghanistan was confirmed as a Nato top priority at the Nato summit in Istanbul in June 2004. Afghanistan is also a main priority for Norwegian military commitments abroad. In accordance with the Bonn Agreement, the UN Security Council passed a resolution on 20 December 2001 authorizing the deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Kabul and its surrounding areas.[93] Nato assumed the command of ISAF in August 2003. What makes the case of Afghanistan particularly interesting is the fact that this was the first time Norway had contributed with specific CIMIC elements. Previously, such as in the Balkans, CIMIC was an integrated part of a larger Norwegian force.[94] In the following sections, I shall outline the assignment and execution of Norwegian CIMIC in Afghanistan.

The Norwegian CIMIC unit was offered to Nato in the fall of 2002 and the Ministry of Defence was responsible for identifying and assigning the Norwegian CIMIC unit to ISAF.[95] The Norwegian Defence Staff and the Norwegian Joint Headquarters were responsible for implementing the Norwegian

90 Interview, 6 April 2005.
91 Lauritsen, "CIMIC overført til hæren".
92 Interview, 3 March 2006.
93 United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1386 (2001).
94 Interview, 20 May 2005.
95 Interview, 20 May 2005, and e-mail correspondence with Ministry of Defence official, 13 May 2005 and 20 July 2005.

CIMIC mission in Afghanistan.[96] Three CIMIC elements comprised the Norwegian CIMIC unit. The first element was deployed in February 2003, and the mission was terminated in February 2004 upon the return of the third element. Accordingly, Norwegian CIMIC had three rotations, and each element was deployed for a period of four months. Each element consisted of two CIMIC teams with six CIMIC officers in each team. In addition, each element had a commanding officer and an administrative officer. Approximately half of the officers were army professionals, whilst the rest were reserve officers with civilian occupations. CIMIC element one and two had female CIMIC officers, whilst element three did not. The Norwegian CIMIC elements were barracked at the engineer camp of ISAF Kabul Multinational Brigade, Camp Framheim.

During the one-year period of the Norwegian deployment, several countries made CIMIC contributions to ISAF. Finland and Sweden contributed with six teams each, Norway and Germany had two teams, the UK one team and, in addition, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Turkey deployed CIMIC teams in the period.[97] Furthermore, many contingencies had CIMIC integrated as part of their force, then usually liaison officers or CIMIC officers. Consequently, the first Norwegian CIMIC team that left for Kabul in February 2003 was not entering a vacuum. The CIMIC presence on the ground was already substantial, and certain countries, in particular Finland, had managed to set a footprint on CIMIC execution in Afghanistan. The Norwegian CIMIC elements were responsible for two districts in the north-western part of Kabul, Mir Bacha Kot and Shakadara and the two districts were part of the French area of responsibility. Mir Bacha Kot had approximately 100,000 inhabitants, whilst Shakadara had approximately 140,000. The front line between the Taliban regime and the Northern Alliance had cut straight through these districts, causing massive destruction. Geographically, the districts were not extensive, but the population density was high, as often ten people lived in every house. Mir Bacha Kot had approximately 30 villages, Shakadara about 40, and each of these had a "malik", a local village chief.[98]

*Civil-military liaison*

To briefly recapitulate, Nato CIMIC doctrine anticipates the execution of six CIMIC tasks on the operational stage: communication, information exchange, coordination, facilitate agreements, CIMIC activities and assessments, and that this will lead to the fulfilment of the three Nato CIMIC core functions. The first Nato CIMIC core function is civil-military liaison, which aims to create the necessary coordination with civilian bodies. Establishing, promoting and maintaining coordination are perceived as preconditions for the other two CIMIC core functions. Liaison is also intended to garner the support of the national population, International Organisations (IOs) and NGOs.[99]

The three core functions are closely intertwined, and certain activities may serve more than one function. Arguably, the CIMIC informants to a certain extent blended civil-military liaison into the other two core functions, and this might explain why liaison, which is intended to be the most important core function, was the least emphasised and elaborated by the CIMIC officers. The CIMIC informants seemed to agree that what the Norwegian CIMIC teams in Afghanistan did the most was support the civil environment. But as the CIMIC teams travelled around and collected data on the state of affairs in their districts, they developed an understanding of what happened and what the situation was like in that particular area, and hence this activity would simultaneously support the force.[100]

The CIMIC officers were asked to describe the course of a "regular day". It would start with a morning brief on which tasks were to be carried out during the day. Then the

96 Ibid.
97 Interview, 6 April 2005.
98 Interview, 6 April 2005.
99 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 104-a.
100 Interview, 6 April 2005.

teams would drive out to the villages, usually with no appointment in advance due to security concerns. They would contact the district governors, civilian administrations or a "malik" with a needs assessment form covering the water, health, education, nutrition, electricity situation etc. The CIMIC teams would also talk to people in the streets, and hand out the ISAF newspaper. Civilian organisations operating in the districts would be identified. Patrol reports would be made upon return to the camp. The aim was to form a correct and comprehensive picture of the situation in the districts and to map out local needs. The patrol reports would be delivered to the CIMIC Coordination Centre which would then try to assess where the needs were greatest in the area of ISAF operations.[101] After a period of time the Norwegian CIMIC elements became increasingly preoccupied with identifying, facilitating and implementing projects.

Coordination mechanisms are arguably mainly established during the early stages of deployment. After rotation, a new CIMIC element should be able to adopt and exploit the channels that have already been established in the area of responsibility. The Norwegian CIMIC unit identified NGOs operating in its districts, and started building relations. Local power players were pinpointed, and formal contacts established.[102] Civil-military liaison, in terms of activities such as coordination and communication seem to have been important to the Norwegian CIMIC elements in Afghanistan. Relation building and sensitivity to local populations are arguably a trait of Norwegian peacekeeping traditions, and hence something which might easily be accomplished.[103] Yet civil-military liaison implies setting up and maintaining a constructive web of relations and mechanisms to further coordination and cooperation in support of the military mission. The low presence of NGOs in the Norwegian districts was probably an impediment to effective liaison with civilian organisations. Liaison with local authorities seems to have been good, but the question remains whether liaison led to effective channels for communication and coordination that served the military mission being set up.

*Support to the civil environment*

Support to the civil environment refers to the interaction with civilian bodies. It covers a wide spectrum of activities and resources, such as information, material, equipment, training, communications and transport facilities.[104] We have already seen how CIMIC informants emphasized that support to the civil environment was the most time-consuming core function. The Norwegian CIMIC teams had daily contact with civilian players, and provided a range of resources and activities.

In the two districts where the Norwegian CIMIC teams operated, there was a low presence of civilian organisations. Two NGOs did operate in the districts, namely the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and the French Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development.[105] The Norwegian CIMIC officers did not seem to encounter any particular problems or reluctance when co-operating with these civilian organisations in the field. One officer remarked:

> We had an ok relationship with them. On the tactical ground level, I did not experience any particular difficulties when cooperating with humanitarian

101 CIMIC Group North ran the CIMIC Coordination Centre from August 2003, when Nato assumed leadership of ISAF. Norwegian CIMIC officers have been deployed to the CIMIC Coordination Centre in Kabul. Arguably, the intention that the CIMIC Coordination Centre should coordinate CIMIC and identify and concentrate the efforts where the needs were greatest did not materialize to the extent envisioned.

102 Interview, 13 May 2005.

103 Norwegian peacekeeping during the Cold War was considered part of the "Nordic model". The reader is referred to Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations. A new model in the making?* (Routledge, London and New York 2006), pp. 10. On UN peacekeeping during the Cold War: Åge Eknes, *FNs fredsbevarende operasjoner* [UN peacekeeping operations] (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, 1995).

104 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 104-b lists a wide range of conceivable military support.

105 Agence d'aide à la cooperation technique et au development (ACTED).

organisations.[106]

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan had been in the country for a long time. According to a CIMIC informant, efforts were made to draw on their background expertise to implement projects followed by common profiling when the project was finalized. The officer did not know how successful these efforts were due to rotation, but remarked on the willingness of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan to be part of such an arrangement.[107]

An important CIMIC activity is to make assessments to provide the military commander with a means of examining the status of a specific area,

> ...in order to identify critical shortfalls or capability gaps in the civil environment that may affect his mission, or that of the opposing force or forces.[108]

According to one CIMIC officer:

> It is important to make proper assessments. It is easy to go to the village chief and ask: what do you need? This approach lacks an essential focus: what makes this good for ISAF? The Norwegians sometimes fell in this trap.[109]

Projects might be categorized under the umbrella-CIMIC task of "CIMIC activities", and may help fulfil the core functions of support to the civil environment and support to the force. Nato states the following concerning CIMIC execution of projects:

> Projects must be in support of the commander and the mission. The commander must sanction any amendments to the project or its emphasis when they do not conform to the military mission. This may not always be in concert with the aims of some or all of the civil actors involved with the project. Nonetheless, "mission creep" must be avoided. Projects should not be undertaken unless they support the military mission. When possible, the military should co-opt civilian agencies to complete projects that meet the military requirements.[110]

The Norwegian CIMIC unit was increasingly preoccupied with projects in Afghanistan. The projects were financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) budget for humanitarian activities, and the Norwegian CIMIC unit had been granted five million Norwegian kroner. All projects needed approval from the MFA. In reality, this meant approval from the embassy in Kabul, which received all project proposals and cost calculations. The embassy would send it to the MFA, but usually, if the project were approved by the embassy, it would also be approved by the MFA. The Ministry of Defence and the MFA had drawn up some criteria on which projects were to be launched, including schooling, education, health and small infrastructure programmes. Approval implied that the project was thematically placed within this frame. After a project had been approved, a tendering process was initiated by inviting firms to tender estimates. The CIMIC Coordination Centre would function as a project organisation which made the specifications, deals, contracts and so on, and then it was mostly the CIMIC teams who followed up the projects. During the one-year period, the Norwegian CIMIC unit carried out a number of projects, such as building five schools, establishing medical clinics and female dressmaking workshops, donating school material and medical supplies, building wells and restoring qanat water arteries, establishing a patient shuttle from the villages to the Norwegian and Dutch surgical hospital units in Kabul, securing water supplies and vaccinating cattle.

The Norwegian CIMIC elements seem to have been much focused on activities supporting the civil environment. Projects may be part of such CIMIC efforts, but are not

106 Interview, 6 April 2005.
107 Interview, 9 May 2005.
108 Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), *CIMIC tactics, techniques and procedures*, Allied Command Operations manual, number 86-1-1, article 2-1.
109 Interview, 3 March 2006.
110 SHAPE, *CIMIC tactics, techniques and procedures*, article 5-3c.

prescribed to be the main effort in Nato CIMIC. CIMIC is not supposed to perform nation building, and projects lacking a focus on mission primacy may be connected to nation building activities.[111] The Norwegian CIMIC unit was involved with both immediate humanitarian and more development-related projects. This is in line with the Nato CIMIC doctrine:

> CIMIC activities may have to be conducted to fill any vacuum in the provision of services or facilities required to meet the immediate life sustaining needs of the local population and/or to ensure the stability and long-term sustainability of the society...[112]

The question is what kind of effect in terms of support to the mission the Norwegian CIMIC elements acquired for example by establishing female dressmaking workshops and building schools. According to one officer, the CIMIC-path ventured upon was

> ...not related to the military mission in Afghanistan. It was advantageous to the local population but lacked military gains.[113]

The Norwegian CIMIC elements did support the civil environment as such in their work, but seemingly lost track of the greater mission framework.

*Support to the force*

The Nato CIMIC core function of support to the force suggests that CIMIC plays a major role in achieving civilian support in the operational theatre. The force may be partly dependent on civilian information and resources, and commanders will seek as much tacit support as possible.[114] By being present on the ground, having constant interaction with both authorities and ordinary locals, assessing needs and perhaps by launching projects based on the needs' assessments, support to the force will be obtained via good will. This reflects the "winning hearts and minds" thinking. According to one informant, support to the force implies the national population becoming willing to improve the ability of the international military force to reach the end-state.[115]

Operating in the French area of responsibility, the Norwegian CIMIC elements were supposed to support the French in the first instance, and then ISAF. This was not easily accomplished, as a CIMIC-officer explains:

> We worked a lot on our own. In other areas the CIMIC units were more integrated into the force. Ideally, we should have been integrated into the French contingent and worked more directly for them, not on the outside. Then we would be able to support the force in a better manner at the same time as they could provide security for us in cases where it might be called upon. Occasionally we wished for a stronger attachment, also believing that it would be more secure for us if we had back up. Yet we did get support in special situations, and we could certainly not drive around with armoured vehicles in front and behind us for protection at all times. That would have sent out completely wrong signals.[116]

One CIMIC officer stated that his element spent half of its time on civil-military liaison and the remaining half on activities supporting the civil environment. Accordingly, the informant suggests that his element did not support the force at all. The fact that the Norwegian CIMIC elements did not live with the French was an impediment according to the officer, as social relations are of the essence to be able to cooperate. He continued:

> We were meant to support the French and ISAF, but we supported ISAF in lack of relations with the French. On the other hand, did we primarily support ISAF or were we busy spending MFA money?[117]

111 J.W. Rollins elaborates on Nato and nation building in "Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in Crisis Response Operations: The Implications for NATO", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (London: Frank Cass, Spring 2001), pp. 122-129.
112 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 302.3-c.
113 Interview, 23 August 2005.
114 NATO, *AJP-9...*, article 104-c.
115 Interview, 3 March 2006.
116 Interview, 6 April 2005.
117 Interview, 13 May 2005.

The Norwegian CIMIC elements in Afghanistan did not seem to be dependent on civilian resources. Hence, achieving support to the force was a matter of obtaining civilian information and tacit support. Arguably, the Norwegian elements did gain some support for the force through activities more related to civil-military liaison and support to the civil environment. Yet the focal point here is that the increased focus on projects apparently did not result in support to the force. Several CIMIC officers questioned the support to the force-effect by doing certain projects. This created a sense that what the Norwegian CIMIC elements were doing was in fact "not CIMIC". In the words of one officer:

> I am uncertain whether it helped win the hearts and minds of the Afghans. We did a lot of good work, and what we did we did very well, but we did not do the right things. This was not CIMIC.[118]

## Why was there a Norwegian approach to CIMIC in Afghanistan?

The CIMIC informants seemed conscious that their mission in Afghanistan increasingly had been executed in the "project window". To some, this realisation evolved after returning to Norway. Certain CIMIC informants approved of the project-oriented CIMIC approach, whilst others dismissed it. In the following sections I shall examine a set of possible explanations why Norwegian CIMIC, in its project-oriented approach and lack of focus on mission primacy, diverged from the Nato CIMIC doctrine.

### *Political incentives*

The armed forces are a political instrument, and an implement in the foreign-policy toolbox.[119] Consequently, the Norwegian CIMIC unit in Afghanistan might have been subjected to political pressures, providing superior directions on CIMIC execution. An article examining the effects of civil-military interactions in peace operations launches a number of causes why soldiers increasingly tend to become involved in humanitarian work. One of these causes is "a desire from governments to promote a positive image of their armies engaged in peacekeeping duties overseas".[120] The study continues to argue that:

> The image of a soldier with a child in his arms will attract more sympathy back home than the coverage of most military actions he might undertake. It will generate support in the public opinion that can considerably ease possible opposition against overseas military deployment. At a time when media (the so-called "CNN-factor") play a central part in shaping foreign policy, governments can be tempted to encourage the active participation of their soldiers in humanitarian operations.[121]

There seems to have been a common understanding within the Norwegian CIMIC elements of certain expectations linked to their deployment from the political authorities back home in Norway. As one officer remarked:

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs most probably expected it, and the political authorities certainly expected that as we went down with CIMIC elements, we would do projects to put the Norwegian flag on display.[122]

One officer stated:

> I may be naïve, but I would claim that Norway did not have a national agenda.

118 Interview, 6 April 2005.

119 According to Jonas Gahr Støre, former Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross: "I prefer to call it political-humanitarian relations rather than civil-military relations. Humanitarian organizations are but one of many civilian elements, and the military is indeed only one among several political instruments". Støre: "In the new types of conflict we face, how to define and defend humanitarian space?", The Norwegian Atlantic Committee's 40th annual Leangkollen Conference, the Nobel Institute, 31 January 2005.

120 Joëlle Jenny, "Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies: Finding Ways to Make it Work", *European Security*, Volume 10, Number 2 (London: Frank Cass, Summer 2001), p. 27.

121 Ibid., pp. 27-28.

122 Interview, 9 May 2005.

> But, of course, by using the Norwegian flag, then we did, we could have chosen to do ISAF projects and downscale the national, but then again no one did that.[123]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, via the embassy, acted as the relevant authority for the Norwegian CIMIC elements. "The Ministry of Defence did not wish to steer CIMIC", claimed one officer, and continued: "Political concession was granted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."[124] Asked whether Norwegian CIMIC work was successful in Afghanistan, one CIMIC officer replied:

> Successful, yes, when we received money, but it was far out in the project window, and it is dangerous to do that too often, as it sends a signal to politicians about a "feel-good" thing, where the military focus is lost.[125]

This officer warns against the temptation of using CIMIC as a foreign policy tool to such a degree that the focus on the military mission is endangered.

Perhaps the Norwegian CIMIC elements felt committed to doing activities which were not in accordance with the CIMIC doctrine due to the five million Norwegian kroner granted.[126] One CIMIC officer warns against the incremental development of CIMIC into a "half-military NGO", due to the domestic political authorities being tempted to provide "guidelines" on CIMIC activities not in conjuncture with the Nato CIMIC doctrine.[127] The criteria agreed upon by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence (such as schooling, education, health and small infrastructure programmes) do not necessarily go beyond the Nato CIMIC prescriptions. But with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of project approvals, one might question whether the principle of mission primacy was taken into consideration. One CIMIC officer highlighted the difficulties, due to differing national economic presuppositions, of adopting the doctrine entirely. Ideally all means would be channelled through Nato and then out to the operational theatres. But this was hardly attainable, the officer suggested, as it would be hard for political authorities to grant money to CIMIC efforts if forces from other countries were to spend them.[128]

National interests have occasionally left their imprint on CIMIC work. Certain countries have been especially eager to exploit CIMIC to serve national interests. According to one CIMIC officer, France is renowned for using CIMIC to further national agendas.[129] In fact, France is quite frank about this inclination. The French CIMIC concept adds a fourth core function, which is support of national interests, claiming that, "Considering national interests within a multinational framework is accepted by every nation."[130] The French support of national interest consists of "preparing the potential deployment of French state assets", "supporting the implementation and action of diplomatic missions" and "providing support to French companies".[131] This serves as an illustration of the various national approaches to CIMIC within Nato ranks.

The Norwegian CIMIC contribution in Afghanistan cannot be considered devoid of a national agenda. The Norwegian CIMIC unit was a visible contribution, particularly due to projects and the consequent "flagging" of such. National financing made it possible to concentrate efforts in the Norwegian districts. The fact that the armed forces must be considered a foreign policy tool, and accordingly subjected to political incentives, helped steer the Norwegian CIMIC elements further into the project window, and made a direct impact on mission execution.

123 Interview, 6 April 2005.
124 Interview, 1 June 2005.
125 Interview, 13 May 2005.
126 Interview, 13 May 2005.
127 Interview, 13 May 2005.
128 Interview, 9 May 2005.
129 Interview, 9 March 2006.
130 Délégation à l'information et à la communication de la défense, *The French armed forces and Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)*, DICoD Creation (October 2005), [online 20 June 2006], p. 9.
131 Ibid.

*The Finnish CIMIC concept*

Certain CIMIC officers argued that the main reason for the discrepancy between the Nato CIMIC doctrine and mission execution was the fact that CIMIC in Afghanistan was very much influenced by the Finnish concept of it. As one CIMIC-officer said:

> The reason why we did what we did in Afghanistan, I would claim, is that it was a well established procedure upon our arrival. And I would also claim that such project-oriented CIMIC is very much a Finnish legacy, as they ran CIMIC from the beginning, and their CIMIC policy is very project-oriented. In my opinion, this is not CIMIC.[132]

A path, presumably designed by the Finnish, had already been laid out before the Norwegian CIMIC-unit's arrival. The Norwegian elements continued along this path, with the other CIMIC elements under the ISAF structure. Finland, with fifty personnel stationed, was the greatest CIMIC contributor to ISAF during the Norwegian deployment.[133] In August 2003, Finland assumed command of the ISAF CIMIC branch, just as Nato assumed command of ISAF. It seems most likely that Finland would be able to exert operational influence after having assumed command of ISAF CIMIC. Yet several informants deployed to Afghanistan prior to August 2003 suggested that the project-oriented CIMIC approach was due greatly to Finnish influence. Accordingly, the Finnish seem to have had an impact on CIMIC execution prior to August 2003 as well.

Finland is not a member of Nato and thus not obliged to follow the Nato CIMIC doctrine. Yet Finland is a partner in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), and the Nato CIMIC doctrine is assigned as a combined Nato/EAPC document. In the Basic Document for the EAPC, the following is stated: "...Partners will be able to decide for themselves the level and areas of cooperation with NATO" to maintain self-differentiation.[134] Consequently, the EAPC framework does not commit Finland to adopting the Nato CIMIC doctrine.

The Finnish Chief of Defence in a recent publication identifies CIMIC as a Finnish niche capacity.[135] He argues that the requirement for experienced CIMIC personnel was the reason why Finland deployed a CIMIC detachment to ISAF in January 2002. Further: "We have learned that our CIMIC concept also works in ISAF, but the implementation has to be adjusted to the situation and culture."[136] The Chief of Defence does not elaborate on the Finnish CIMIC concept in detail, but states that,

> In the Finnish CIMIC concept, specialists are used to provide assistance and manage reconstruction efforts, but do not actually do the work. The aim is to encourage locals to learn by doing and help themselves...[137]

The Finnish CIMIC concept seems to emphasise the facilitator role of CIMIC, and the 'help-to-self-help' idea. This does not conflict with the Nato CIMIC concept. What is noteworthy about what he says is that mission primacy is not mentioned.

Substantial Finnish CIMIC experiences, expertise and presence probably enabled the Finnish to exert influence on CIMIC execution in ISAF. As one observer claims:

> Finland has created an effective CIMIC model, and Finnish CIMIC contingents have gained a reputation for being among the best in the field.[138]

The suggested, profound project-orientation of the Finnish CIMIC concept has not been documented. Yet certain traits seem to have opened a window of opportunity:

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132 Interview, 6 April 2005.
133 Jakobsen, *Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations...*, p. 136.
134 Nato, *Basic Document of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council* (Sintra Portugal, 30 May 1997), (Nato [online 1 June 2006]).
135 Juhani Kaskeala, "From Traditional Peacekeeping to Stabilisation and Reconstruction Operations", *Military Operations Today*, RUSI Defence Systems (Spring 2006), [online 5 July 2006].
136 Ibid., p. 77.
137 Ibid.
138 Jakobsen, *Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations...*, p. 3.

> Another strongpoint of the Finnish model is the ready availability of considerable funds for CIMIC projects and procedures allowing for their quick dispersal.[139]

It is credible that the Finnish CIMIC model had a direct impact on Norwegian CIMIC in Afghanistan by strengthening the project-oriented approach.

*The Bonn Agreement*

The Agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions, known as the Bonn Agreement, was signed on 5 December 2001. The Bonn Agreement is an attempt to map out the future of Afghanistan. Two CIMIC informants emphasised that the Bonn Agreement allows military forces to perform projects.[140] As one claimed:

> It is stated in the Bonn Agreement that military forces may do nation building, and hence it was legitimate per definition that the forces engaged in the kind of support they did in Afghanistan.[141]

The following formulation in the Bonn Agreement provides room for the international security force to carry out certain projects: "It would also be desirable if such a force were to assist in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's infrastructure."[142] This narrow formulation might have provided ISAF with a opening for military forces to do civilian related work. In this context "rehabilitation" and "infrastructure" are keywords in need of a definition by ISAF. The CIMIC informants are unclear whether the Bonn Agreement supposedly opens up for projects exempt from the principle of mission primacy. The word "nation building", which one informant uses, might imply that the projects do not require a clear view on mission primacy. Despite the fact that two CIMIC informants stressed the opening in the Bonn Agreement, it turned out hard to pinpoint the actual formulation. Would Norwegian CIMIC in Afghanistan have been project-oriented only due to the provision in the Bonn Agreement? It seems credible that the Bonn Agreement played an intermediary part, strengthening the direct impacts of political incentives and the Finnish CIMIC model. The provision of the Bonn Agreement provides room for interpretations. Given the impact of political incentives and the Finnish CIMIC model, it was natural to interpret the provision in terms of opening up for projects beyond mission primacy.

*Few NGOs in the Norwegian districts*

That few NGOs were present in the Norwegian districts offers another possible explanation for the project-oriented approach to CIMIC by the Norwegians. Perhaps it was natural for the Norwegian CIMIC teams to take projects upon themselves in the absence of humanitarian organisations? One CIMIC officer denied this:

> Well, it is not natural. CIMIC is not project work, our job is to establish and maintain contact, liaise, map out the situation, and point out which needs might be present in certain areas. And then, ideally, other organisations are meant to go in and do the projects.[143]

Another officer stressed that being able to gain information about the humanitarian situation may be very hard if the local population does not believe that they will receive something back in terms of projects.[144] With few NGOs operating in the districts, the local population might have turned to the military with this request. As the ICRC study argues:

> A widely held opinion within the military is that, irrespective of their mandate, the local population will expect peace-keepers to help meet their needs, particularly in situations where humanitarian organizations alone cannot cope.[145]

139 Ibid.
140 Interview, 23 August 2005 and 9 March 2006.
141 Interview, 9 March 2006.
142 The Bonn Agreement, (Afghan Government [online 4 May 2006]), Annex 1, article 4.
143 Interview, 6 April 2005.
144 Interview, 9 May 2005.
145 Studer, "The ICRC and civil-military relations...", p. 378.

The reason why there were such few civilian organisations operating in the two districts is unknown, but it might have distorted the ideal division of labour and moved the activities of Norwegian CIMIC further into the "project window". I do not anticipate that the presence of few NGOs in the Norwegian districts directly influenced the Norwegian CIMIC approach. Rather, it strengthened the direct influence of political incentives and the Finnish CIMIC model.

*American legacy*

Another suggestion is that project-oriented CIMIC is in part an American legacy. The Nato CIMIC doctrine may be viewed as a European edition of the doctrine, which is put under increasing pressure from the Americans. One informant stated that the Nato doctrine is in itself conservative and easy for civilian players to accept.[146] The American Civil Affairs concept focuses on nation building. Certain Civil Affairs activities are similar to Nato CIMIC, but in general Civil Affairs is much broader, and it may be imprinted with a national agenda. CIMIC is not meant to perform nation building, but is supposed to support the Nato Commander. Despite the fact that Nato might be moving closer towards nation building activities and taking a more holistic view to operations, CIMIC will not equal Civil Affairs.[147]

Civil Affairs were operating in Afghanistan when the Norwegian CIMIC elements were deployed. It has not been established whether Civil Affairs had any impact on the Norwegian CIMIC-units' approach to their mission. Perhaps potential American impact could rather be anticipated on a political-strategic level, e.g. influencing the framing of the conceptual aspect of Nato CIMIC in future documents.

*The "feel and do good syndrome"*

The study asking why soldiers increasingly tend to become involved in humanitarian work also proposes the following grounds: "a very understandable desire of peacekeepers to help the local population in the theatre of operation where they are deployed".[148] Later, the study stresses that "the "feel-good" effect on the morale of soldiers when providing aid to civilians cannot simply be discarded".[149]

A "feel and do good syndrome", or perhaps "Santa Claus syndrome", was not explicitly cited by any of the informers as an explanation for the Norwegian approach to CIMIC in Afghanistan.[150] Yet it should be added as a possible explanation due to the easy inclination towards doing good which might appear in peacekeeping operations. This inclination might be particularly pressing for officers provided with both means and possibility, such as the Norwegian CIMIC elements were.

One CIMIC officer emphasised the lack of a clear dividing line between humanitarian aid on one hand and, on the other, military support to the civil environment and support to the force. The informant continued to question whether there should be a clear dividing line. A common purpose is to help the nation, and the result of projects is a win-win situation for both the military and the civilian population, according to the officer.[151] This officer also suggested that the Norwegian CIMIC efforts in Afghanistan were more directed towards winning the hearts of the local civilians, and not so much their minds.[152] As another informant claims:

> The CIMIC mission was very successful. It was very narrow, too narrow, and needs to be further developed. But we spent our money, and I disagree that it is wrong for men in green to use assistance means. It is important for the military to support the civil environment.[153]

Perceived success in accomplishment might go hand in hand with the feeling of having done something meaningful. Different percep-

146 Interview, 3 June 2005.
147 Interview, 3 March 2006.
148 Jenny, "Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies...", p. 26.
149 Ibid.
150 Interview, 23 August 2005.
151 Interview, 3 March 2006.
152 Interview, 3 March 2006.
153 Interview, 1 June 2005.

tions of CIMIC created variations in understandings of success and meaning.[154] Informants have not mentioned any direct impact from the so-called "feel-and-do-good" syndrome on Norwegian CIMIC execution in Afghanistan.

## Conclusion

Each unique conflict requires a specially designed response from the international community. This is also true for civil-military cooperation and coordination, which need to be adjusted to the conflict scenario at hand. Consequently, an elastic CIMIC concept, such as the one presently endorsed by Nato, is called for. However, the flexible Nato CIMIC concept gives rise to certain conceptual ambiguities and challenges vis-à-vis CIMIC execution in international operations. Two such challenges are found in the various national approaches to CIMIC on the operational stage, and the lack of a common understanding of the concept. Another is the elusive demarcation between where military tasks end and those of civilians begin. Are Nato CIMIC officers supposed to act like soldiers or saints? Should they stick to the military mindset of mission primacy, or also be able to venture into the civilian-humanitarian field if the opportunity arises and means allow for it? Nato CIMIC calls for soldiers, not saints. It calls for humane soldiers, but not humanitarians.

Norwegian CIMIC aspires to follow the Nato CIMIC doctrine. In this article I have argued that despite this aspiration, a Norwegian approach emerged during the Norwegian CIMIC deployment to Afghanistan in 2003–04 which cannot on certain counts be equated with the provisions of Nato CIMIC. Several aspects of the Norwegian efforts in Afghanistan were in conjuncture with Nato CIMIC, but Norwegian CIMIC also entered a project-oriented path, which implies that projects, which were not necessarily in support of the military mission, increasingly became the main activity.

Why then did the Norwegian CIMIC unit go for the "project window" in Afghanistan at the expense of the imperative principle of mission primacy? Six possible explanations have been examined. Two of the explanations seem to have had a direct impact on the Norwegian approach to CIMIC, whilst two others played more intermediary roles. The remaining two explanations apparently had less impact. First, available funds and directions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seem to have had a strong direct impact on the Norwegian approach to CIMIC. The Norwegian CIMIC unit was granted five million Norwegian kroner, and felt obliged to spend this money on 'visible' projects. Arguably, the political incentives aimed at promoting the saints, and not necessarily the soldiers, to a number of audiences, including the Norwegian and Afghan populations. Second, the Finnish CIMIC model also seems to have had a strong and direct impact on the Norwegian, project-oriented CIMIC approach. An early and substantial Finnish CIMIC presence, of good repute, solid prior experiences and available funding enabled the Finnish to take a lead along the ISAF CIMIC path. The Norwegian CIMIC detachment followed this established path on arriving in Afghanistan.

Third, the perceived opening in the Bonn Agreement had an intermediary impact on the Norwegian approach to CIMIC. Political incentives and the Finnish model had provided grounds for doing projects, and interpretations of the provision in the Bonn Agreement further strengthened this inclination. The Bonn Agreement has not been judged a comprehensive peace agreement. Key provisions in a comprehensive agreement might exert more direct influence on mission execution. Fourth, the presence of few NGOs in the Norwegian districts is also believed to have had an intermediary impact, and may have strengthened the Norwegian

154 Bård Mæland, *Skadeskutt idealisme: norsk offisersmoral i Kosovo* [Wounded idealism: Norwegian officers morale in Kosovo] (Bergen, Eide, 2004), proposes the label "humanitarian military" to build a bridge between "humanitarian" and "military", in an attempt to create a professional self-image and identity for soldiers which might absorb the search for meaning in service abroad.

project-oriented approach. One could ask how a stronger NGO presence might have affected the outcome; perhaps it would have weakened the direct influence of political incentives and the Finnish model and have made the operational scene less disposed to project-oriented CIMIC. Fifth, impact from the American modus operandi of Civil Affairs was not established. And sixth, the existence of the "feel and do good syndrome" with the Norwegian CIMIC officers has not been demonstrated, but at an individual level such a syndrome might have impeded a critical view of the projects undertaken by Norwegian CIMIC in Afghanistan.

These six explanations are only a part of the puzzle. The ambiguities in the definition of the Nato CIMIC concept and the consequent weakness of such have not been examined as an explanation for the Norwegian CIMIC approach in Afghanistan. The Nato CIMIC concept is not the product of a theoretical process. Rather, it has evolved from military experiences with the growing complexity of the civilian environment. The lack of theoretical stringency might have spurred the multitude of national approaches to CIMIC in international operations. A weak Nato CIMIC concept makes CIMIC execution subject to the impact of a number of sources. It enables a strong degree of political steering, but other factors are also allowed to intervene.

Further, Norwegian CIMIC was not integrated into a Norwegian contingent operating in a Norwegian area of responsibility. Neither was it integrated into the French contingency, which was responsible for the area in which Norwegian CIMIC operated. As one ministry official suggested: "CIMIC should be integrated into the force rather than a unit of 20 men. This was an experiment, and it was not successful, not optimal."[155] Another official would not view CIMIC in Afghanistan as an experiment, but added that in the case of a new CIMIC deployment it would be sensible to attach it to a greater Norwegian contribution.[156] Whether CIMIC operates on the sidelines, or as an integrated part of a greater force-contribution, might also have an impact on mission execution.

The Nato CIMIC concept provokes a number of questions and challenges, which need to be addressed while carving out an effective CIMIC concept. The principle of mission primacy appears as a focal point of definitional contention. But is mission primacy realistically achievable? Is it possible to avoid national agendas interfering with mission primacy? What are the ramifications of excluding the principle, such as in the British CIMIC definition? Studying national approaches to CIMIC in the field may reveal best practices and common mistakes and provide lessons that might inform the conduct of current and future operations.[157]

The development of an "enhanced CIMIC" concept is partly due to the experience of doing civil-related work without a clear view to mission primacy. "Enhanced CIMIC" is a working title for a concept which is intended to improve Nato's CIMIC capability. This concept is part of the Nato "effect-based approach to operations" concept (EBAO), which can be seen as a military perspective on the UN "integrated missions" concept. In short, the basic philosophy of the "effect-based approach to operations" concept is the integrated use of all Nato instruments to achieve the right effects, in particular the right strategic effects, and reaching the end-state. Whether the concept of "enhanced CIMIC" will reconcile the inherent challenges in the Nato CIMIC concept remains to be seen. It also remains to be seen whether this concept is intended to supplement the present CIMIC concept, or possibly supplant it.[158]

155 Interview, 3 June 2005.
156 Interview, 20 May 2005.
157 Douglas C. Lovelace Jr. quoted in Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Civil-military cooperation in peace operations...*, p. iii.
158 Many thanks to Kjell Inge Bjerga for constructive comments and good guidance on previous drafts.

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IFS Info 5/2006

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# Soldiers or Saints?

## Norwegian Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in Afghanistan

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