The Challenges of Doing Good Work: The Development of Canadian Forces CIMIC Capability and NGOs

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A Paper Submitted for the CDAI Conference

October 2005

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Introduction

This paper is an examination of the development of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) in the Canadian forces since the end of the Cold War, and will focus particularly on the involvement of CIMIC units in reconstruction projects in war-torn countries. The military's incorporation of reconstruction work as part of its mission has been controversial, both within the military and among external actors, especially Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Many of these organizations argue that the military should not be doing reconstruction work at all, and many are concerned about losing their coveted neutrality and political independence. This paper will look at the evolution of Canadian CIMIC from its ad hoc first steps and Cold War roots to its current indoctrination as a regular part of Canadian military missions. The paper will identify internal accomplishments as well as future challenges that CIMIC faces, in light of the effects CIMIC activities have on NGOs and their operations. Because of the prominence of NGOs in peacebuilding, their concerns about CIMIC have been a factor in CIMIC's evolution.

In modern peacebuilding, reconstruction and development are integral to addressing the root causes of conflict and the creation of a healthy, sustainable peace. Destroyed infrastructure, human suffering, economic collapse, and social divisiveness are all endemic in post-war societies. If not addressed, these issues can severely limit the recovery of a war-ravaged land, possibly even preparing the area for renewed hostilities and further destruction. The donation and delivery of hospital supplies during a storm in Haiti, the reconstruction of the power grid in Najaf, the distribution of blankets to orphans in Afghanistan, and the construction of a new maternity ward at a Basra hospital all represent humanitarian and reconstruction work that is conducted by the international community.[1] Projects such as these are easily associated with the work of United Nations agencies, government development agencies like CIDA and USAID, and NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), CARE, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and Oxfam. Military forces do not immediately come to mind when thinking of development and reconstruction projects such as those just mentioned, but since the end of the Cold War, this has been an evolving role of the military. These projects, and hundreds of others like them, were, and continue to be, delivered by Canadian, American, British, and many other militaries involved in peace support operations (PSOs).

While this softer side of military power is welcomed by many of its recipients, many NGOs have expressed their unease with military reconstruction work.[2] This activity has been viewed as an invasion of their traditional sphere of operation, and has been the focal point in recent debates about civil-military relations. Different organizational cultures, operational approaches and levels of resources, poor communication and misunderstandings, and political allegiances have all tainted relations between military and civilian actors. Events in Afghanistan have fueled NGO-military tensions. In one well-publicized incident, five workers with MSF were killed in northern Afghanistan. In their denunciation of these killings and with their subsequent termination of operations in the country, MSF blamed the 'blurring of lines' between military and civilian (and thus legitimate and illegitimate) targets as a principal cause of the tragedy.

This 'blurring of the lines' supposedly occurs when the military undertakes the same tasks as civilian agencies, thus giving the appearance that civilian and military agencies are pursuing the same goals for the same reasons.[3] This incident highlights the raging controversy surrounding military reconstruction projects. It is also typical of the concerns of NGOs, which are a significant external pressure on the formulation of military doctrine and practice for CIMIC.

Despite the fact that the military's primary mission is security, the military has many reasons to pursue project activities.[4] If successful, these projects help to influence the perceptions of the people in an Area of Operations (AOO) in favour of the military. One sign of successful CIMIC projects is the amount of intelligence received from the local people. If the people can be won over, they are more likely to volunteer information to the task force, including information that may save the lives of soldiers. A friendly local population is also likely to result in fewer security incidents and attacks directed against the military, thus making operations easier. As one brigade commander put it, "no one likes having his house searched, no matter how polite the soldiers are, but if the home owner sees that those same soldiers also provide running water for his village, he may be more cooperative."[5] In theory, security means stability, and stability is one of the aims of the military mission. Actions that lead to the creation of a stable environment, such as projects, help to achieve the desired end state. This lesson was not lost on the military. By 1999 the fact that "CIMIC is a force multiplier and will greatly contribute to the success of the mission," was clear to elements of the Canadian Forces (CF).[6] However, the CF also recognized that CIMIC was but one small component of the military mission and a much smaller component of the peacebuilding effort on the whole. CIMIC was and is not intended to be a vehicle for the development efforts of organizations like CIDA, nor is it intended to replace civilian organizations that often have a greater capacity for undertaking development projects. Rather, the aims of CIMIC's activities are to support the mission goals of the force, not to become a development or humanitarian aid agency.

In the Canadian Forces, projects and civil-military relations are the responsibility of organized CIMIC units. The doctrinal publication Civil-Military Cooperation in Peace, Emergencies, Crisis and War makes the following claim in its preface: "CF civil-military cooperation doctrine is an evolutionary process and will improve as lessons are learned."[7] This statement leads to several significant questions relevant to the issue of projects and NGO relations. These questions will form the core focus of this paper. First, given that the track record of CIMIC has seen many difficulties in project implementation, has the military learned from CIMIC mistakes in the past? Second, inconsistency in past approaches due to poor carry-over between rotations of soldiers has undermined the effectiveness of CIMIC and relations with NGOs. Given this inconsistency, to what extent has the CF institutionalized its CIMIC approach? Third, currently the CF is undergoing a process of institutionalization and standardization of CIMIC. If inconsistency has been addressed through these processes, then how has institutionalization affected relations with NGOs? Are possibilities of mutual understandings improving?

In order to address these questions, this paper will begin by providing an outline of what CIMIC is and how it operates. It will then continue by highlighting historical precedents of reconstruction projects and their use by the Canadian military in peace support operations. NGO concerns about projects will then be outlined. With this background established, the paper will make use of the CF missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan as case studies to make clear that CIMIC has indeed evolved, despite past institutional obstacles like inadequate and inconsistent training, an absence of a method for passing on lessons learned, and short overseas rotations. These two cases were selected not only because of their large volume of CIMIC activities, but also because they represent two quite different operating environments, which will allow comparisons in approach. Moreover, they have been the most formative influences in Canadian CIMIC experience.

This study will work from two assumptions. First, military and civilian actors are codependent in PSOs. Without security, development cannot happen, and without development, lasting security cannot be sustained. The relationship between military and NGO actors runs deep; the military cannot simply ignore NGOs and act as it wishes in a Peace Support Operation. NGOs have become an important contributor to peacebuilding as they bring a large amount of resources and expertise to war-affected regions.[8] Stemming from this first assumption is the point that coordination is necessary in these complex peace operations to avoid duplication of efforts, interfering with each others' plans, and the consequent waste of energy and resources. As David DeRoos wrote,

> Primarily in peace-supporting operations, where the ultimate military objective is often related to the normalization of the civilian environment, this normalization is only possible by harmonizing the efforts of military and non-military organizations.[9]

Therefore compromises and understandings must be reached in order to create mutually beneficial relations.

Second, as the 2002 Canadian PSO doctrine states, "One of the centres of gravity of the operation will be "the good will of the people.""[10] Winning the support of the local population will be seen in this study as essential to the success of the military mission and force protection in PSOs. As CIMIC projects are very helpful in winning local favour and can have tangible benefits for the military, NGOs must accept some military involvement in this. This does not, however, exempt the military from trying to find an approach to projects that minimizes NGO concerns.

The context in which international peace support operations take place has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War. Optimistic views of a new world order soon gave way to the realities and problems of conducting PSOs in an era of confusing conflicts, shifts in the concept of sovereignty, new challenges for aid organizations, and the merging of aid and development in the form of the 'new humanitarianism.' Militaries have also had to adapt to the pressure associated with the much more complex operations they are undertaking. It is in this high-stress environment

that the military and NGOs have had to learn how to work in the same space as each other. This has not been an easy task.

What is CIMIC?

Before proceeding to historical precedents for CIMIC, a clearer idea of what CIMIC is, where it fits into PSOs, and what kind of projects are involved must be provided. Because of its wide acceptance among western militaries, the basic definition of CIMIC in NATO doctrine will be used. CIMIC is, at its simplest level, "The co-ordination and cooperation, 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 organizations and agencies."[11] According to the NATO Peace Support Operations doctrine:

> The immediate aim is to fully co-ordinate civilian and military activities to support humanitarian projects and to achieve the maximum support for the operation, at the expense of any opposition. The longer-term aim of generating sufficient stability and self-dependency is directly linked to the desired end state and exit strategy.[12]

The CIMIC units tasked with these goals usually consist of CIMIC liaison officers (LOs), or operators, who conduct assessments, arrange and monitor projects, and liaise with civilians in the area of operations (AOO). Operators, usually of officer rank, play a key role in identifying potential projects. They are paired with drivers, who also fulfill a security role. Behind them is a small headquarters staff that handles coordination of operations, planning, liaison with the force commander, evaluating assessments and project proposals, and information management.[13] Currently the size of CIMIC units has been standardized at thirteen, though numbers in the past have ranged from twenty individuals to only four.

In the Canadian military, reconstruction projects occur on what this paper terms two tiers. Tier one projects are those completed by soldiers, more or less on a voluntary basis, and usually on their own downtime. These tend to be very small, and not an official part of a 'hearts and minds' strategy, but rather they fit more into a 'good neighbour' style of operating. They reveal a great deal about the character of our soldiers overseas. These projects can be easily confused with CIMIC projects, or tier two projects, as they often overlap. Tier two projects are conducted by CIMIC units as part of a strategy to improve relations with the local people and increase the chances for overall mission success. To clarify these two categories, an example of a tier one action is a soldier distributing school supplies received from his home community in Canada. CIMIC soldiers assessing an area and using funding to contract out the installation of streetlights would be a tier two project. Tier two projects are specifically designed to further the goals of the mission, as opposed to being based principally on the desire of soldiers to help.

Hearts and Minds in PSOs and Military Reconstruction Projects

Counterinsurgency and low-intensity conflict provide a number of historical precedents to the 'hearts and minds' winning projects of modern PSOs. Armies have historically always had relations with local populations and have used various methods to gain acceptance, including doing public works projects. Military Civic Action (MCA), a term used by the American military to describe projects, was a common sign of an American military presence going as far back as the turn of the 20th century, as the American military undertook construction projects designed to influence the civilian populations in Cuba, the Philippines, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.[14] Based on experiences in the Philippines and the Caribbean, and acknowledging the beneficial effects of MCA, the US Marine Corps Small Wars Manual of 1940 recognized the need to pacify the population. The manual stated that small wars often have underlying social, economic, and political causes. Appropriately, the Small Wars Manual counseled that: "In small wars, tolerance, sympathy, and kindness should be the keynote of our relationship with the mass of the population.[15] These ideas became standard counterinsurgency doctrine in the latter half of the twentieth century. David Galula, in Counter Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, said that economic, social, cultural and medical projects can be commenced right away by the counterinsurgent.[16]

Counterinsurgency theorists were well aware of Sun Tzu's famous dictum: "those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle."[17] During the Vietnam War, the Marines, following the Small Wars Manual, actively carried out MCA. Marines built bridges, wells, and irrigation systems, carried out animal husbandry programs, and provided over four million medical treatments to Vietnamese civilians. Combined Action Platoons (CAPs), small groups of soldiers that lived together with villagers in order to create bonds and security, were seen as highly successful in improving security in a number of volatile villages.[18] The US military's Civil Affairs units were also active in Vietnam, constructing hospitals, schools, orphanages, fishing piers, and electric supply systems.[19] MCA was also used in counterinsurgency strategy during the Cold War in South America, Africa, and Asia.[20] As one Cold War commentator observed: "There is every indication that civic action programs which are carried out over a period of time create an enormous obstacle for those who would tear apart the fabric of a society for their own ends."[21]

Although less active than the American military in terms of projects, Canadian military history is not devoid of them. A key difference between American and Canadian experience is that Canada had no official capacity for MCA like Civil Affairs. Furthermore, Canada was not as involved in the small wars in which the Americans often found themselves. Records of MCA-type projects are few. A number of soldiers, including one who had operational experience in Cyprus in the 1970s, provided the same response when questioned about the history of CIMIC-type projects prior to the 1990s. Often these projects were motivated by altruism on the part of individual or small groups of soldiers, as opposed to a planned 'hearts and minds' strategy. Funding for projects usually came out of commanders' or individuals' pockets. Most work done in the past was assistance in the form of physical goods to address immediate needs, or small projects like playgrounds. Soldiers also undertook projects like adopting an orphanage in

Cyprus.[22] These types of activities can be considered tier one projects, or projects done outside of an official CIMIC context. As one commentator said, the army has always and will always do these kinds of projects.[23] As a matter of structure, there were no CIMIC cells in the past, but rather civil-military relations were conducted by liaison officers (LOs). They were responsible for ensuring smooth relations between the CF and the locals wherever the Army was deployed, whether in Germany, Cyprus, or elsewhere. With the deployment to the Balkans in 1992, the military began to use its first organized, though ad hoc, CIMIC cells.

The Significance of Projects for NGOs

For many NGOs, neutrality, impartiality, and independence are crucial conditions for action, as many NGOs feel that their freedom of action and safety in war zones are tied to these concepts. As the widely emulated ICRC Code of Conduct states, "we…formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government."[24] However, the symbiotic relationship between the military and NGOs makes maintaining complete independence very challenging. The change in the military role in PSOs has meant that tough challenges now exist for NGOs, as they must determine their niche in a greatly limited humanitarian space. The continued fragmentation of the aid community further hinders a resolution of the dilemmas currently faced.[25] In this context, the military role in peacebuilding has become a flashpoint in the debate over the role of NGOs in post-conflict situations.

In the battle over who should be delivering aid, NGOs have leveled a number of criticisms at militaries. Not to be disregarded are the issues of cost and efficiency, and a feeling that CIMIC is actually an attempt to subordinate civilian organizations to military control.[26] The high turnover of military personnel (the Canadian military works on six month rotations) is also frustrating for civilians, as they constantly have to adjust to working with inexperienced counterparts. Issues of principle also form a central criticism. The military's aim is to attain the objective of their mission, and CIPs are used as a tactical tool for doing this. This is clearly stated in NATO CIMIC doctrine.[27] Criticisms stemming from this issue are that the military neglects development goals in favour of immediate security benefits, and that the lack of experience in the delivery of aid can lead to an ignorance of a project's contribution to long-term stability.[28]

The military's use of aid as a tool for gaining favour, or, when withheld, to mete out punishment, has also been heavily criticized. Besides objections stemming from a belief that aid should be unconditional, many NGOs dislike these types of practices because they can backfire and generate mistrust among locals of those who would deliver aid, and are especially challenging when seen in the context of 'blurring the lines.'[29]

While the above points are all controversial in their own right, the issue of safety tends to draw the most vocal criticism. Recent years have seen a great increase in the number of deaths among aid workers, particularly among those working in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many observers have attributed this to the military's role in aid work and CIPs, which "blurs the lines" between who is politically motivated and who is motivated

by humanitarian principles. In their highly publicized withdrawal from Afghanistan after five of their personnel were killed, Médecins Sans Frontières cited this as one of the reasons for the greater danger they now face:

> The violence directed against humanitarian aid workers has come in a context in which the US backed coalition has consistently sought to use humanitarian aid to build support for its military and political ambitions. MSF denounces the coalition's attempts to co-opt humanitarian aid and use it to "win hearts and minds." By doing so, providing aid is no longer seen as an impartial and neutral act, endangering the lives of humanitarian volunteers and jeopardizing the aid to people in need.[30]

This comment is representative of the disproval expressed by NGOs regarding military forays into project activities.

For NGOs, the 1990s were an era of increasingly difficult questions regarding their role in peace operations and post-conflict countries. Operating with complete independence and impartiality became more difficult as other players in peace operations sought to achieve a more 'integrated approach' to peacebuilding. The MSF incident is only a recent example of tensions between the NGO community and military actors. The Balkans deployments saw the emergence of much of this tension.

Case Study 1: CIMIC and its Development in the Balkans

The environment into which the Canadians deployed in the Balkans was one of utter destruction. In a situation of razed infrastructure, thousands of displaced persons, a countryside riddled with mines, rampant organized crime, and questionable consent to a foreign military presence, the military quickly found a practical purpose and a value in doing projects, and these soon became a part of the overall mission strategy. This held true whether in Croatia with UNPROFOR 1, Bosnia with UNPROFOR 2 and IFOR/SFOR, or the OPERATION KINETIC mission in Kosovo. Projects in the Balkans occurred on two tiers: the first were based on altruism by individual or small groups of soldiers, and the second were part of an official CIMIC strategy for winning hearts and minds. Along with counterinsurgency 'hearts and minds' reasons, troop morale was another motivation for projects in the Balkans. One of the key problems later identified with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from the mission was a feeling of helplessness. This came from not being able to stop ethnic cleansing and other crimes, often due to obstruction by belligerents. In the complex and violent environments of Croatia and Bosnia, soldiers often lost sight of the purpose of the mission.[31] Helping local people was one way to alleviate stress.

Project Implementation

Tier-one projects were a common feature of the Balkans deployments. Soldiers on patrol often came across obvious QIPs such as helping people winterize their homes or identifying buildings that needed repair, and took action. Tier two projects emerged

during UNPROFOR 1 as part of a targeted 'hearts and minds' campaign. CIMIC on HARMONY Roto 4 was active with projects, and the mission commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Daikow, who reportedly had a good understanding of the value of CIMIC, had each of his units adopt a project.[32] The involvement of CIMIC in projects increased as the deployment in the Balkans went on. Funding from CIDA and other donors facilitated this. Roto 11 of OP PALLADIUM will be used to demonstrate what has become the typical method in which projects were determined and delivered. The process first involved CIMIC officers making assessments of their AOO and identifying possible projects. CIMIC LOs would then go out into the community to consult with locals regarding their needs. Conversely, CIMIC, which often ran offices dubbed 'CIMIC houses,' was also occasionally approached by locals who had their own ideas of what their communities required. Proposed projects were then reviewed by the CIMIC and mission commanders in order to determine which proposal most suited the aims of the mission and could contribute to force protection goals.

Once a project was approved and funding was there, the role of CIMIC was to find local contractors or NGOs that were willing to take on implementation. This was unlike tier one projects, in which soldiers would often do the work themselves. In later rotations, projects were tendered with a minimum of three bids required from local contractors who had not been blacklisted for past poor performance. CIMIC would then play a supervisory role, interacting with the contractors, and filing detailed reports to CIDA in order to show that CIDA requirements were being met.[33] When a project was completed, CIMIC usually participated in an opening ceremony of some sort. CIMIC often worked closely with PSYOPS, Public Affairs, and Intelligence units in order to maximize the 'hearts and minds' impact of a project. However, not all rotations followed this model, and not all rotations implemented projects in this way. Some rotations devoted more time to projects. Others consulted less with local people and more with leaders, and others saw soldiers doing more actual implementation work and less coordinating with contractors. This depended on individuals' views of how to conduct CIMIC operations, and external influences such as funding.

Funding for CIMIC projects came from a variety of sources. During UNPROFOR funding was 'creative,' meaning money for projects had to be sought out by the CIMIC LOs. Soldiers would write home and ask for donations, and often contribute money from their own pockets.[34] Fundraising events such as 50/50 draws became popular ways to raise money for projects, and occasionally the BG could spare funds from its operating budget. During the SFOR period, CIMIC was able to tap into funds from CIDA, and from 2001 in Bosnia there was an official arrangement dubbed the Community Improvement Program between DND and CIDA in which six rotations received approximately $250,000 each. This program imposed some conditions on projects. First, there was a $50,000 cap on individual projects so that projects could not get out of hand and distract the military from its primary security mission. Furthermore, CIDA standard operating procedures (SOPs) had to be followed. In addition to detailed reporting requirements, civilian organizations had to be found to do implementation, minimum numbers of bids on projects had to be taken, and the long-term consequences of projects had to be considered. CIMIC was also to monitor implementation and make follow-up visits.[35] These conditions had a profound influence on project implementation and forced CIMIC to evolve, as will be shown below.[36]

In Bosnia CIDA funding was used on projects such as reservoir construction, installing road signs and garbage bins, rebuilding a veterinary clinic, installing traffic lights for a couple of main intersections, repairing fire halls and youth centres, and the old stand-by, school construction.[37] The amount of money was rather insignificant given the total sum of CIDA's contribution to the Balkans, though its effective use had an impact on the local population.

The Impact of Projects

The impact that projects have on a given population is hard to measure, as the effects of projects are often qualitative rather than quantitative. However, using post-operation reports (PORs) and anecdotal information, attaining a sense of how successful these projects were is possible. Besides utilitarian benefits, projects in the Balkans were seen as having a positive impact on 'hearts and minds' for the duration of the Canadian presence there. Roto 2 on OP PALLADIUM claimed that the projects they conducted were "well received by the local population and did much to garner their favour and co-operation thus contributing to the success of ops."[38] Roto 12 stated that projects had resulted in an environment in which people were more willing to meet with the Canadians and to provide information valuable to the force.

Overall, from the anecdotes and reports of field-experienced soldiers, it appears that projects were more than well received by the local population, and the army was impressed with their benefits to local relations and force protection. There is no reason to doubt that projects had the beneficial effects they are claimed to have had. But with so many projects having been done, believing that they were all successful is unrealistic.

Mistakes and Problems

There were a number of mistakes which plagued CIMIC operations in the Balkans. One common error was CIMIC operators being deceived into delivering a project by self-appointed community political leaders who had ownership interests in the project, or who received kickbacks from the local contractors who sold the peacekeepers the materials. Another situation was that peacekeepers often would show up and complete all stages of a project while community members watched. Though done with the intention of showing the people the military's good will, these types of actions were often short on consultation, and frequently did not have the expected impact. Tying these two problems together, Ray Salvatore Jennings wrote: "Local residents were often too polite to confide that peacekeepers had paid too much for the materials from the cousin of the mayor, or that the design and materials used in the building would prove impossible for the local people to maintain." [39] Working closely with the local authorities had the additional danger of SFOR appearing to support war criminals and/or the local mafia, which was often synonymous with municipal leadership. Moreover, care had to be taken not to appear to be supporting one ethnic group over another.

The local people also learned that each rotation was different, and thus if one rotation refused to take on a proposed project, they would just wait for the next rotation to come in. Although many NGOs are quick to blame mistakes like these on military inexperience, NGOs were often victims of the same schemes and made the same mistakes.

Captain Gary Collins, who served on PALLADIUM Roto 12, commented that this was simply "the nature of the beast."[40]

In addition to being manipulated, misdirected or poorly assessed projects were also not unheard of. Short-term thinking often led to long term failures. As stated, the purpose of CIMIC is to work for the commander to enhance security and further the mission. Some CIMIC operators thus adopted a short-sighted view, thinking of projects in terms of the impact the project would have for the immediate rotation. A lack of consistency in approaches between rotations occasionally led to a neglect for the sustainability of some projects, and even uncompleted projects. In one example, a PALLADIUM rotation began construction of a school, and handed it over to the next rotation, which finished the school and then built a bridge. The following rotation came in, deemed that the school and the bridge were enough for the area, and focused their attentions elsewhere. The fact that the school had no furniture was neglected. The school went unused and the windows were boarded up. Five years later a NGO capitalized on the situation and provided desks and chairs for the school, completing the project. The Canadian military received no credit for its role in the construction.[41]

Lessons Learned

Finding examples of Community Improvement Project mistakes made by CIMIC in the past is not a difficult task, as many former CIMIC operators have experiences to share. Somewhat more challenging is determining whether lessons were learned and applied to subsequent rotations. However, PORs, consultation with CIMIC officers, and changes currently taking place in the CF, indicate that some lessons are being absorbed, and that if institutionalization has not yet occurred, the need for it is recognized. Consulting more extensively with local people as opposed to just local authorities, blacklisting contractors who had demonstrated poor performance, maintaining liaison during a project in order to ensure standards were upheld, and working closely with Intelligence units to avoid 'grip and grins' with local criminals were all lessons that were absorbed by various rotations.[42] The military also realized that placing all control of aid in the hands of the local authorities was not a good idea, as they had the potential to use the aid as their own political weapon.[43]

Not giving local authorities complete control over a project did not mean leaving locals aside. With CIDA influence and as the Balkans theatre matured, the concept of 'local ownership' in development began to carry over from rotation to rotation.[44] Local ownership is defined by CIDA in the following way:

> Ownership refers to the relations among stakeholders in development, particularly their ability, power and influence to set and take control of the development agenda. Ownership is high when there is transparency, when intended recipients are highly involved in decisions, and implementing agencies are rooted in the host country.[45]

CIMIC units demonstrated an understanding of the development concept of local ownership through the use of local contractors and labour, purchasing materials from local suppliers, cooperating with local NGOs, and consulting with local officials and

everyday people. Involving locals in the decision making for projects had great benefits, as they were more willing to work for a project when they could identify with it. A USAID report claimed that "Initiatives that brought neighbours together to discuss the rehabilitation of common infrastructure and services and where local citizens identified, contributed to, and maintain projects have ultimately produced some most sustainable results…"[46] In a Canadian example, CIMIC arranged to provide the supplies for the construction of a school, and local groups agreed to handle the construction. With many in the community having free time only during evenings and weekends, much of the material sat unused for a year. Due to the interest the local people had in the project, nothing was stolen, even though crime was rampant in the area.

However, much of this learning was happening on an individual or rotational level, but not at an institutional level. While some rotations learned and applied lessons, others repeated old mistakes. Some rotations adapted well to CIDA requirements, while others continued to feel frustrated with CIDA 'red tape.' Little was passed on or published, with one notable exception. The February 1999 issue of the army publication Dispatches was entirely devoted to CIMIC. While this article was a valuable contribution to learning and contained a number of pertinent lessons, it was no supplement for an official doctrine.[47] This raises the following question. To what extent did doctrine influence CIMIC? By looking at the development of doctrine, the beginnings of a process of institutional learning can be seen.

Development of a CIMIC Doctrine

Although some make the point that in the dynamic and chaotic modern PSO environment strictly adhering to doctrine can hinder operations where flexibility is required, the benefits of a doctrine to fall back on cannot be ignored.[48] Doctrine also greatly contributes to institutionalization, which results in less inconsistency between rotations in application. In recognition of this and from operational experience, the 1996 Report of the Auditor General recommended that CIMIC doctrine be developed quickly and "implemented through appropriate training in all Commands."[49] With the mixed Balkans experiences providing a context, the CF made a first step in the process of addressing the ad hoc and inconsistent approach to CIMIC in 1999 by publishing Civil-Military Cooperation in Peace, Emergencies, Crisis and War. Canadian doctrine was based on American Civil Affairs doctrine, with influences from NATO as well. Differences were mostly in terminology and capabilities.[50]

Among other points, Civil-Military Cooperation in Peace, Emergencies, Crisis and War states that "The main objective of CIMIC is to achieve the necessary cooperation between civil authorities and the CF with a view to improving the probability of success of CF operations." CIMIC, Public Affairs, and PSYOPS must be coordinated to gain the support of the local population for the peacebuilding process.[51] However, in regard to standard operating procedures for projects the doctrine is vague. All that is provided is a brief definition of projects, and statements that they may be a necessary task in certain missions. This holds true for the American and NATO doctrines as well. Summarized, the definitions provided say that Community Improvement Projects or Military Civic Action consists of short-term projects with the long-term goals of fostering national development, and when done properly, they create support for the military

force.[52] Despite including the words 'long-term' in the description, no standard operating procedures for projects are provided, leaving CIMIC operators to pursue them as they, or the force commander, see fit.

Ultimately, formulating a doctrine is one thing, but ensuring that it is read and adhered to is a different matter. To what extent was this doctrine adhered to in Bosnia and Afghanistan? Captain Eric Boulianne, who served with CIMIC on Roto 9 of PALLADIUM, was not aware of the doctrine prior to his deployment. He received training from the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, but claims the training did not mention the document. Major Douglas Delaney said when he deployed in 1999 to Kosovo he did not even have time to read the document.[53] Capt. Graham Longhurst claimed that prior to his deployment on PALLADIUM Roto 11 they reviewed the document before training then promptly forgot it. However, he claimed that it has subsequently been helpful in efforts to standardize CIMIC. Indeed, the document is being used as part of a pre-course reading package for the new army CIMIC course. In sum, the 1999 doctrine was not the cure for the problems of CIMIC, though as time revealed it was part of a process aimed at creating a better CIMIC capacity.

Training

Creating a doctrine was only one step in improving the implementation of CIMIC. Providing adequate training was even more crucial. Reflecting the attitudes of many commanders, during the early deployments in the Balkans, soldiers like Capt. Mike ter Kuile were not receiving training that was appropriate for the role they would actually be undertaking. In ter Kuile's case, he was given the impression that his CIMIC duties would be a minor function, when in fact he was extremely busy with those duties while in theatre.[54] Indeed, officers untrained in a CIMIC capacity were often used in a CIMIC role, and though some adapted well to the role, poor performance was a problem. When ter Kuile's rotation arrived in Croatia in March 1994, he claimed they had to "reinvent the wheel" from the previous rotation, as little communication took place between the two and poor training led to a very poor CIMIC function in the preceding rotation. One particular area of complaint, as ter Kuile expressed it, was a demand for more mission-specific training.[55] Indeed, this was a common complaint on PORs. Six years after ter Kuile experienced this problem, Roto 8 from OP PALLADIUM expressed similar frustrations.

However, the need for CIMIC training did not go completely unnoticed. To address the problem of a lack of a training system for CIMIC, the Army began to send soldiers on CIMIC and Civil Affairs courses in other countries.[56] Varied ideas were brought back to Canada from places like the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Centre in Fort Bragg, a NATO CIMIC course in Oberammergau, Germany, and a UK CIMIC course.[57] Concurrent with the overseas training being done, CIMIC operators and other soldiers began to take the C46 CIMIC course at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in the mid-1990s. Though many commented that the overall view this course presented was "excellent," the course was also accused of not having enough detail for liaison and project officers.[58] In fact, the course was more of an operational level course and somewhat theoretical, which was not suitable for many of the non-commissioned and lower-ranking officers who made up the majority of participants. Furthermore, the

course was designed for an international group of students, and lacked Canadian-specific content. Few Canadian personnel took this course, which ran until 2002.[59]

Unfortunately, force-wide training remained non-standard and at the discretion of commanders, and complaints continued to emerge regarding training received. PALLADIUM Roto 13 renewed the complaint about not having enough training in negotiation skills, the same complaint made by PALLADIUM Roto 0.[60] Crucially, training often affected how soldiers related with NGOs.

Relations with NGOs

NGOs in the Balkans expressed many frustrations when dealing with CIMIC. One critical problem was the revolving-door style in which CIMIC was handled. Every six months, NGOs had to deal with new operators who had their own ideas of what CIMIC should be doing. 'Uniform fatigue' was another problem. Despite the desire of the military to reach out, in a multinational operation NGOs grew tired of visits from military personnel from a host of different countries, especially when new faces continued to arrive in theatre.[61] NGOs resented the apparent efforts by some commanders to exert control over civilian organizations. As testimony to this, Capt. Longhurst said that aggressive military leadership impaired relations in the past, and Roto 11 CIMIC had to mend a lot of fences.[62] Poor communication sometimes resulted in problems such as IFOR implementing projects for which an NGO had already prepared plans or sought funding.[63]

These problems were realities, and did complicate operations. However, relations with NGOs in Bosnia generally seem to have been cordial, as DND's final report on the Community Improvement Program testified.[64] PORs and soldiers who had participated in CIMIC operations both claimed smooth relations with NGOs. Capt. ter Kuile said that on his rotation the ICRC was one of the most cooperative of the NGOs he dealt with, and Capt. Longhurst said that CIMIC fixed the roof on Red Cross House during PALLADIUM Roto 11.[65] Also in Bosnia, a hospital was completed by the military in cooperation with MSF. The military rebuilt the hospital, MSF provided the medical equipment, and Pharmacists Without Borders provided the drugs.[66] During OP KINETIC, the CF and CARE had a mutually beneficial relationship on the ground, while relations with the ICRC were also smooth.[67] In the latter case, a personal connection between the representatives of CIMIC and the ICRC facilitated relations. This demonstrated not only that local need and proper communication could outweigh high-level differences and lead to effective cooperation on projects, but also that on the ground personality played a central role in building relationships.

The military recognized that there were problems with NGO-military relations. Preliminary efforts to address some of the problems can be found in the 1999 CIMIC doctrine. First of all, the issue of the military attempting to take control was addressed. The document said CIMIC houses should be passive coordination centres that facilitate the sharing of information. It also stated that commanders have no legal or moral authority to try to command civilian organizations, and the various mandates of key organizations must be understood. Second, in an attempt to increase understanding, the

doctrine also made efforts to address the different mandates and some of the characteristics of NGOs.[68] The Dispatches article also addressed the NGO issue, and recommended that soldiers make every effort to 'empathize' with their mandates.[69] Furthermore, the doctrine recommended more joint training with NGO personnel. As mentioned, in the later rotations of PALLADIUM, NGO personnel were occasionally brought in for pre-deployment courses on CIMIC, a practice which enhanced understanding between soldiers and civilians.[70] Both NGOs and the military praised this practice.

These actions were signs that on an institutional level the military was aware of the debate and was making its first efforts to change things. Despite indications of understanding the need for a consistent approach to NGO relations, the rotation of soldiers and inconsistent training pertaining to NGO concerns undermined the establishment of lasting working relations. While the Balkans saw a great deal of trial and error with CIMIC, Canada's current deployments in Afghanistan are also proving to be very influential evolutionary experiences for CIMIC.

Case Study 2: CIMIC and its Development in Afghanistan

The Operational Environment

Afghanistan confronted Canadians with much of the same destruction and despair as the Balkans, and many of the same logistical problems issues like mines caused. However, the operational context in Afghanistan was different. Canadian soldiers were part of an invading coalition, as opposed to being neutral peacekeepers. This presented obvious issues for consent as there was no peace agreement between belligerents, and international forces were seen more as participants in the conflict than they were in the Balkans. After the 2001 invasion Canadians clearly took the side of the new Kabul-based government. Furthermore, the ongoing campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda by allied military forces further complicated operations in the theatre. 'Blurring the lines' is much more of an issue in the context of this ongoing war.

CIMIC in Afghanistan

While the different environment affected tactics, the fundamental principles of CIMIC remained the same. CIMIC operators had the same tasks: liaising with civilian organizations, delivering CIPs, sharing information, winning consent to the Canadian presence, and facilitating the commander's mission.

Like Bosnia, CIPs have played a significant role in CIMIC operations in Afghanistan. By February 2005, Canadian CIMIC teams had completed 344 small projects, with 204 either underway or planned.[71] Like the later Bosnia rotations, projects over $5000 Canadian in value had to have at least three bids. In Afghanistan, insurgent threats were a high risk. Therefore, contrary to the lesson learned in Bosnia, local leaders were more involved with project selection and implementation, as this bought influence for the force.[72]

For the first two rotations of OP ATHENA primary funding for projects came from another arrangement with CIDA, also called the Community Improvement Program. Funding during OP ATHENA was divided, with $500,000 going to Kabul Multinational Brigade and the Canadian Battle Group respectively, and $200,000 used by CIDA for monitoring. This again worked out to roughly $250,000 each for Roto 1 and 2. The total funding allocated for CIMIC operations, $1.2 million Canadian dollars, represented a small fraction of the total aid provided to Afghanistan by CIDA, which amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars.[73] Funding for projects was again capped at $50,000 so as to avoid having the BG become tied up in nation-building type projects and to ensure projects were limited to force objectives. The conditions CIDA placed on the use of its funding continued to influence the behaviour of CIMIC.

The Impact of Projects in Afghanistan

In short, projects in Afghanistan received rave reviews from military sources. OP ATHENA Roto 0 said: "CIMIC activities greatly increased force protection throughout the Canadian AOO."[74] This rotation also claimed that the unwavering support and cooperation of the local population facilitated operations.[75] The results of QIPs were often readily apparent. For example, during the early stages of OP APOLLO in Kandahar there were children throwing rocks at the Canadian troops as they left their base. A school was built, and soon the children were in school and no longer throwing rocks. This demonstrated an ideal CIMIC project, one where both the force and the local population benefited.[76] CIMIC projects in KMNB V were targeted to areas of low security with the purpose of increasing the support of the local populations. Projects contributed to the local economies by using local materials and labour, and they also helped expand the influence of the Afghan government.[77]

The final report on the Community Improvement Program claimed that projects were effective in meeting the Program's short and medium-term goals of reestablishing basic infrastructure and creating a more secure environment. Results were evaluated by looking at quantifiers such as violent incidents, the number of refugee returns, school attendance, available clean water, cases of water-borne diseases, and the presence of key infrastructure needs like a fire hall.[78] Projects were also reported to have contributed to good relations with local leaders and officials. Combined operations helped to achieve this, as Information Operations were used to help attach projects to the Afghan government, which contributed to convincing the people that the Canadians were there to help them.[79] Long-term effects, however, have been hard to measure as scarcely two years have passed since the first projects were implemented. Projects had very little effect on the overall development picture, though this was not the aim of projects.

Intelligence received from the local people was also well appreciated by the Canadians, and in this way building relations through projects helped to save lives. During Roto 2 Colonel Jim Ellis, the task force commander, claimed that some wells they dug had a very positive impact on their relations with the locals, and subsequently for force protection. Colonel Ellis, in a presentation at The Centre for International Governance Innovation, gave an anecdote where a local man provided the Canadians

with intelligence that directly saved the lives of Canadian soldiers.[80] CIMIC activities had been undertaken in the man's neighbourhood.

More Mistakes

Despite the enthusiasm demonstrated in PORs and the Community Improvement Program report, many issues that were problems in the Balkans continued to hinder CIMIC. In Afghanistan a lack of understanding on the part of commanders as to the proper way to use CIMIC continued to reduce its efficacy. Another misunderstanding was the belief among some commanders that CIMIC was all about projects, virtually the opposite end of the spectrum from commanders in Bosnia who neglected CIMIC and its benefits. This led to too much emphasis on projects at the expense of liaison activities, and lost chances at establishing better relations with NGOs were one result of this.[81] Rotation lengths, misguided projects, and poor training also caused problems for CIMIC in Afghanistan.

Lessons Learned…Again

Despite mistakes and misunderstandings by some commanders, the articles by Majors MacEachern and Demers in The Bulletin made clear that the idea that CIMIC is not just projects was sinking in.[82] Interviews with officers involved with CIMIC often produced the same line, "CIMIC is not projects." Rather, projects are being seen in their proper role as one tool for CIMIC to use to influence the Area of Operations. These articles and interviews also reaffirmed a core CIMIC principle, that CIMIC should only be doing projects where other organizations are incapable. Interviews with CF personnel who served in Afghanistan also backed up this point, saying that CIMIC looked to 'plug holes' with its projects, meaning that they looked for projects that were not being undertaken by other organizations.[83] As Demers said, "In the end, we must always remember that CIMIC is not, after all, an NGO in uniform."[84]

The fact that the long-term consequences of CIMIC actions are being considered by CIMIC operators also became clear in Afghanistan. In his article Major Demers asked questions like "what are the impacts of building a school for girls in a village steeped in Islamic traditions? What are the effects of digging wells on the water table?"[85] Working in partnership with CIDA has also helped to force CIMIC to think of projects from a development point of view, and in the Community Improvement Program long-term goals and results had to be considered.[86]

Lessons from Bosnia and Afghanistan gradually began to take hold in Canadian CIMIC circles. As has been shown, several principles, such as a limited role for projects and long-term thinking, have become common threads in CIMIC thinking. But how have these changes affected relations with NGOs?

Relations with NGOs

Canadian Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony Stack, who served with KMNB CIMIC, claimed that on the tactical level relations with NGOs were fine, and that, as in the Balkans, personality was critical in ensuring smooth interactions.[87] However, there was a misunderstanding in KMNB headquarters during ATHENA Roto 0 that led to CIMIC teams being told not to seek out partnerships with NGOs. Efforts were focused instead on trying to build relations with the local community. Interaction was largely limited to the sharing of information. This proved costly, especially when considered in light of the success of relationships that were established. One such relationship was a mutually beneficial agreement with CARE to distribute excess charitable donations received from Canada.[88] There were other more obvious costs. For example, Roto 1 assessed potential projects that had already been assessed by other agencies, wasting the time and effort of these agencies. In acknowledgement of this problem, Roto 1 tried to improve NGO/CF relations but had limited success at integrating with the NGO community, and especially had difficulties getting NGOs to attend meetings. Through persistence and earning respect, however, Roto 1 CIMIC was able to establish good relations with several NGOs that were initially uncooperative.[89] This demonstrated the efficacy of personality-driven approaches to relations at the tactical level, and also effective use of CIMIC.

At a higher level, though, meetings often became rather heated, reflecting institutional tensions between the military and NGOs. The following anecdote testifies to this issue:

> Unfortunately, a prominent NGO (Medicines Sans Frontieres [sic]) misconstrued CIMIC activities with the delivery of relief supplies – two very separate activities – and was involved in several op-ed pieces that criticized both DND and CIDA for their cooperative arrangements. A meeting was held between DND, Foreign Affairs Canada, CIDA and the NGO in question to discuss their concerns. Although the DND-CIDA arrangements were clearly presented and a thorough explanation of CIMIC was provided, MSF remained philosophically opposed to any CF interaction with local populations. Its representatives did, however, concede that the op-ed pieces were, at best, misleading.[90]

While the CIMIC budget of $250,000 per rotation for small projects may seem substantial, Col. Randy Brooks, an Army officer who worked closely with the Americans in Afghanistan, claimed that the American military was devoting $500,000 to $1,000,000 US dollars per day to projects.[91] Even though the Canadians are doing small, limited, and focused projects, their limited activities have been perceived to be as controversial as the larger projects the Americans undertake.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams

No other issue has fueled the civil-military debate like the emergence of a new form of civil-military cooperation, the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). To truly assess the relationships with NGOs in Afghanistan the PRT concept must be given

attention, as these units have stirred the civil-military debate to a great extent. Canada deployed the initial contingent of a PRT to Kandahar in August 2005, and there is a CIMIC component in the Canadian PRT.

A concept reminiscent of the Marine Corps' Combined Action Platoons of the Vietnam War, the PRT notion came from American ideas as to the best approach to expanding the Karzai government's influence outside of Kabul, in a situation of limited resources and funding, and lack of will to commit either of these.[92] The primary objective of the PRTs is to strengthen the central government's influence in the countryside, and to improve the security situation in their areas of operation. This is supposed to open the door for reconstruction activities by civilian agencies. They are also expected to carry out many of the same tasks as CIMIC: liaison, information sharing, and CIPs.

PRTs are not a purely military endeavour as they include government and aid officials as members of the team. For example, American PRTs contain USAID, State Department, and Agriculture officials, and the Canadian PRT involves CIDA, Department of Foreign Affairs, and RCMP personnel. In this integrated team approach, the security provided by the soldiers, in theory, enables the civilian components of the PRT as well as NGOs to pursue their diplomatic or developmental objectives.[93] CIMIC will also conduct its work under the PRT security umbrella.[94]

This team-up of diplomatic, development, and defence actors has raised the ire of many NGOs. The fact that many PRTs utilize military CIPs is but one of the irritants. For NGOs, the integration of the '3Ds' (diplomacy, development, and defence) is deeply troubling. NGOs perceive this integration of functions as a threat to the aid community via a 'blurring of the lines' and a reduction in the humanitarian space. Simply put, the formal integration of aid, politics, and defence that the PRTs represent threatens the principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence. Because the politically motivated PRTs undertake many of the same activities as NGOs, NGO actions can often also be perceived as political.[95]

On top of these overarching criticisms, much debate continues to revolve around the use of reconstruction projects by the PRTs. However, PRTs exist in a variety of working models, and the model Canada has stated it wishes to emulate is the British model.[96] According to the Coalition Bulletin the job of the PRTs is to enable, rather than implement, change.[97] This is the concept that the British attempt to follow with their PRTs in the northern cities of Mazãr-e Sharif and Meymaneh. The UK PRTs, unlike their American counterparts, split their civil and military tasks. The military focuses on demobilization and police-training activities, pursuing projects that pertain to security sector reform. Support to institution-building and the promotion of economic development are tasks allocated to the civilian segment of the UK PRTs. The UK PRTs have also stated that they have no intention of controlling or coordinating NGOs or of militarizing aid. In practice, DFID does have an allocation of funds for projects, but care is taken to avoid imposing on core areas of NGO actions.[98] The UK PRT in Meymaneh had an integrated civil-military command structure that used a consensus-based approach

to decision making.[99] The model fielded by the UK has so far met the demands of local and international NGOs, and has received praise from NGO personnel.[100]

Whoever leads the PRT, CIMIC can play a vital role in coordination and liaison between the military and civilian contingents, and the local actors. Ideally and in line with the British model, CIMIC will only use projects to a very limited extent. However, the situation on the ground in Kandahar must also be considered. The security situation in the Kandahar region is more volatile than the regions to which the British deployed. Canada is also taking over from an American PRT that has used a lot of MCA. For the sake of consistency and not ignoring work already in progress, an abrupt change from the American operating methods is less likely than a gradual transition. Indeed, abruptly changing the PRT operating methods has potential security risks, as a population used to receiving project aid may not appreciate its sudden termination.[101] Hence, one can expect that the model used by the Americans in Kandahar will initially be emulated, meaning that CIMIC will continue to have project functions. The CIMIC component currently numbers only four soldiers, and funding may be received from the Americans in Kandahar. The amount of money that may be received is more than four operators can handle, and the possibility of an overlap with an American Civil Affairs team or an increase in the number of CIMIC operators exists.[102] This influence will be profound in the approach taken by the Canadians.

Consequently, in the short term the Canadian PRT's actions may not be appreciated by NGOs. All the same, in the long term those involved in the planning of the PRT maintain that as time passes the PRT will more closely resemble the UK model with a Canadian flavour.[103] Over time the PRT could very likely be an opportunity for the CF to apply CIMIC to its fullest effect, demonstrating the benefits of a coordinated relationship with NGOs when projects are used minimally and selectively. CIMIC's main challenge in the PRT may be to ensure a smooth transition between American and Canadian styles of civil-military relations.

Comparing Afghanistan and Bosnia makes clear that the fundamental tasks and principles of CIMIC have been consistent from theatre to theatre. Liaison, information-sharing, and the use of projects have been and will remain core functions. Despite the repetition of some mistakes and a continued failure by some commanders to understand the benefits of properly-conducted CIMIC, Afghanistan has been a further step on the evolutionary path of CIMIC. Events in Afghanistan, like in the Balkans, have also shown that, when conducted properly, interaction with NGOs can be rewarding for both sides. Successes like the agreement with CARE show that this is possible despite the heated nature of the NGO-military debate in Afghanistan. Communication and proper training of CIMIC personnel are significant parts of this. Inconsistency remained an impediment to effective operations. Again, each rotation had different approaches to CIMIC, some focusing more on projects, others more on liaison. Indeed, rotation lengths were a problem affecting all theatres of operations.

Length of Rotations

As noted, CF overseas rotations last for a period of six months each. Even if a soldier wished to stay longer, army policy currently does not allow this. Consequently, every six months new people with their own approaches to CIMIC were and continue to be brought into theatres of operation. Depending on training, individual approaches, and the views of commanders, some rotations saw projects as fundamental to success, and devoted a great deal of attention and effort to their implementation. Similar factors also affected the level of success in dealing with NGOs. Handovers between rotations are also connected to inconsistency. Handover periods between rotations are too short and thus inadequate for new operators to learn about the operating environment and the types of relationships the previous rotation had with the actors there. While some defend short handover periods based on the desire of new operators to begin 'doing their own thing,' a number of valid criticisms outweigh this concern. One major problem is that new operators do not have sufficient time to learn "who's who in the zoo," resulting in a greater potential for abuse of CIMIC project funds by unreliable local actors.[104] The example of local actors requesting and receiving funding from a new rotation for a previously-denied project was one consequence of this. A short handover also can result in an insufficient transfer of knowledge and the repetition of mistakes previously made. One further consequence of short lengths of stay in an AOO was not being able to see projects through to completion, which for some soldiers was a source of disappointment.[105]

The effects felt on the ground were only one of the negative elements of short rotations and poor handovers, as institutional learning also suffered. Especially during the ad hoc 1990s, with a lack of an established method to pass on lessons learned or a publication as a regular voice for CIMIC operators, information was not communicated well from rotation to rotation. This problem was present at the command level as well. The lack of communication between rotations and the failure of commanders to realize the value of CIMIC can be seen in the POR questions on CIMIC, in which many of the same concerns about training were repeated from rotation to rotation.[106]

What possible solutions exist for the problem with rotations regarding CIMIC? One is to lengthen rotations and give soldiers the option to stay longer. This, however, is strongly resisted by the military, as multiple and lengthy deployments have historically taken their toll on morale and the personal lives of soldiers. Despite an awareness of the problem among higher leadership, a lack of bureaucratic will to think outside of 'red tape' has also hindered efforts to adjust rotations.[107] Therefore, a second and more practical solution which is being given some consideration is to stagger the deployments of CIMIC operators so they overlap. In this way there will always be an experienced operator in the field and enhanced continuity will be achieved. The staggered system used by the Finnish military in Kabul is being considered as a template for this.[108]

Institutionalization and Training

Continuity would not be as significant a problem for operations if the CF had a highly institutionalized approach to CIMIC. Resistance at the command level to CIMIC-type activities, a lack of an organization devoted to assembling and disseminating lessons learned regarding CIMIC, a lack of a widely read and understood doctrine, and a cultural issue of regular force commanders being unwilling to take advice from reservists are all past obstacles to institutional learning. Headquarters level was not very informed about CIMIC, as until recently there was no officer responsible for CIMIC at a national level. A symptom of this was that the Army Lessons Learned Centre had very little documented information on CIMIC in the form of articles, and moreover had not been tasked to investigate CIMIC widely.[109]

Despite this, in recent years steps have been taken to solidify the Army's CIMIC capability. The declaration of CIMIC as a reserve force capability saw the creation of standing CIMIC units across the country. Recognizing the beneficial capabilities of CIMIC and wishing to eliminate the haphazard approach used throughout the 1990s, in 2000 the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff wrote in Action Directive 7/00 that CIMIC should be a permanent capability and that it should be staffed primarily by reservists. Decided in a time of reserve force restructuring, this move borrowed from the Americans the idea that reservists brought unique civilian capabilities to CIMIC. The Americans had long exploited the talents reservists brought to civil affairs.[110] Moreover, the officers who wrote the staff paper recommending that CIMIC become a reserve capability had attended CA courses in the United States.[111] Following Action Directive 7/00, the army made efforts to organize reserve units devoted to CIMIC, and the personnel that have deployed since have largely been drawn from these new CIMIC 'detachments.' Each of the land force areas has since stood up a CIMIC detachment composed of reservists.

Each Land Force Area is expected to raise about eighty members for CIMIC by 2006.[112] In further recognition of the value of CIMIC to a mission, the size of CIMIC units for deployment has been standardized at thirteen operators and eight drivers.[113] Now there are four members in a CIMIC cell at Joint Force Headquarters, and a liaison at National Defence Headquarters. A rise in the publication of articles pertaining to CIMIC in recent years has also encouraged debate about CIMIC and aided the process of standardization, and an updated CIMIC doctrine is also being written. According to Canadian officers it will contain more Canadian content, based on operational experiences.[114] Lessons learned should continue to receive greater attention as a CIMIC centre of excellence is being developed at the Peace Support Training Centre in Kingston.

Intrinsically linked to institutionalization is training. Before any changes at the institutional level can be felt at the tactical level, they must be disseminated through improved training. Currently, the CF is making efforts to improve its training for CIMIC operators. In addition to the C44-E course offered by the Pearson Centre, the CF has developed its own army specific course that was given for the first time this year. This course will be applied as a general course for all reservists who become CIMIC operators, and will be provided in addition to theatre-specific training. In the past, courses did not

have a pass or fail, resulting in people unsuited for CIMIC duties gaining the qualifications necessary to perform CIMIC. The new course does have a pass or fail standard.[115] Time has also provided other advantages for improving CIMIC training in the sense that more personnel with operational experience in CIMIC are available to teach courses. Instructors with experience in different theatres can be brought into courses. Whereas training was once Balkan-centric, now experiences from Haiti and Afghanistan are being drawn upon. Furthermore, many courses now include representatives from NGOs such as CARE.[116]

The extent to which these moves will affect relations with NGOs and the use of projects can only be guessed at, but signs point to a reduced use of projects in CIMIC activities. This concept is being institutionalized, and the judicious use of projects on a reduced scale should go far to address NGO concerns about the impact of CIPs on their safety and bank accounts.

Relations with NGOs: Prospects

Examples from the field illustrate that positive and mutually beneficial relations with NGOs are possible. Minimizing the use of projects, avoiding the large-scale nation-building activities of the American military, incorporating NGO mandates into doctrine and NGO personnel into training, and adopting a longer-term approach to projects that are implemented are all signs of an effort by the CF to address NGO concerns. Proper communication between organizations is fundamental to ensuring that neither group gets in the other's way. There are some other issues that must be addressed. First of all, uncompromising attitudes by NGOs towards the military will not improve the situation for either actor. NGOs must come to understand that their 'space' is not exclusive and that some action by the military will be seen in this area. This also has implications for funding. For the military, implementing projects has concrete force protection benefits. The small percentage of CIDA funding used for projects is a worthy trade when considering that a potential result of projects is saving the lives of a number of Canadian soldiers.

Second, there exists no hard evidence that the 'blurring of the lines' is responsible for the increase in the dangers NGO personnel face. Despite MSF's claim that what the military was doing was a direct factor in the deaths of their employees, this cannot be proven, and according to a former UN official, looting was a more likely motive for the June 2004 attack.[117] Claims of neutrality alone cannot be expected to protect NGO workers when they are perceived as being part of an enemy coalition, or when they are perceived as using financial resources that could be going into the hands of locals. Indeed, in a CARE USA survey of NGOs working in Afghanistan, most believed security in Afghanistan had improved, due to Afghan National Army and Coalition/ISAF efforts. Only five percent of those surveyed believed that a 'blurring of the lines' was responsible for the deterioration of security. Coming elections, poppy eradication programs, and worsening perceptions of NGOs were cited as more prominent concerns. All of these concerns reflect the dangers to those who claim neutrality while operating in a politically-charged environment.[118]

Conclusion

The CF has demonstrated that serious efforts are underway to create greater continuity in theory and approach regarding CIMIC. In addition to operational experience, external actors have also influenced the development of CIMIC thinking. In recognition of the important roles they can play in post-conflict reconstruction, extensive consideration has been given to relations with NGOs, and current CF CIMIC philosophy is very conscious of NGO concerns. CIMIC projects are deliberately kept small, both in size and funding. NGO personnel are invited to speak on CIMIC courses in order to translate their concerns and operating principles to the tactical level. Information on NGO mandates and methods of operation can also be expected in the forthcoming CIMIC doctrine. A much greater threat to NGO neutrality are the integrated approach towards peacekeeping, which is becoming entrenched, and increasingly hostile attitudes towards all things Western among some belligerents. This is a bigger problem than small-scale CIMIC projects and poses more difficult questions to organizations whose simple presence in a country can lead to them being perceived as partial.

Although military use of CIPs can be expected to continue, discretion must be used in their application. Fundamentally, the roles of civilian organizations should not be usurped. The CF recognizes this and understands that civilian organizations are often much more capable and efficient in implementing projects. However, in some theatres there may be a need for CIPs due to the lack of an NGO presence and the degree of need among the people. Furthermore, in a situation where the CF takes over an area from a force that has been heavily involved in projects, terminating project activities could result in a deterioration of security.[119] The utility of projects in buying influence and protection for the force must not be forgotten. Current thinking on CIMIC in the CF is that liaison should form the dominant part of operations, and that projects should be used minimally to help facilitate communication.

Canadian Forces CIMIC has come a long way from attitudes like this one expressed during the ill-fated Somalia mission in 1993: "If I hear any more hearts and minds bullshit, I'm going to fucking barf."[120] Ultimately, as the 1999 doctrine said, CIMIC truly is evolving, and the process has gained momentum in recent years. In an era where the 'three-block war' concept will guide thinking of military operations, there will always be a role for CIMIC.[121] Simply providing security will not be enough for military forces in an environment where perceptions and ideas are centres of gravity in the conflict. Evolution will continue as more lessons learned are incorporated from more theatres, and ideally projects can find a less controversial niche. Theatres of operation are dynamic, changing environments, and a universally applicable model to CIMIC is therefore difficult if not impossible to obtain. CIMIC will therefore remain in a state of evolution. Despite this, institutionalization is occurring. Problems like rotation lengths remain, but in the end CIMIC is being deployed in a much more consistent, professional, and effective capacity. If this trend continues, improved relations with NGOs are likely to be a consequence of CIMIC's evolution.

Endnotes

[1] See "Birth of a New Iraq." UK 4th Armoured Brigade Press Release, 3 January 2005 http://www.operations.mod.uk/telic/pn_03jan05_maternityward.pdf ; Cpl. Matthew S. Richards, "Flipping on the Switch for Najaf Electricity." 16 January 2005 http://www.marines.mil/marinelink/mcn2000.nsf/ad983156332a819185256cb600677af3/e4860f69de5af81785256f93001c2382?OpenDocument ;
Capt. Dave Devenney, "Civilian and Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Projects make a Difference in Port-au-Prince." 4 May 2004. http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/lfaa_hq/news_desk/cimic.htm ;
WO Michael O'Neill, "Winning Hearts and Minds." 21 January 2004.
http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/Feature_Story/2004/jan04/21_f_e.asp

[2] Officers interviewed for this study unanimously expressed the feeling that aid from the military was greatly appreciated by the local population. This was especially true in the extreme poverty of Afghanistan.

[3] MSF, "MSF Pulls out of Afghanistan." July 28 2004.
http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=8851DF09-F62D-47D4-A8D3EB1E876A1E0D

[4] Documentation supports the focus on security. According to NATO's MC 411/1: "The military will normally only be responsible for security related tasks and for support to the appropriate civil authority…" This is true in the case of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan: "The primary role of ISAF is to assist the Afghanistan Transitional Authority in providing a safe and secure environment within Kabul and its surrounding areas…" See: NATO, MC 411-1 "NATO Military Policy on Civil-Military Co-operation." (2001): 11-a.
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