

AFGHANISTAN

LESSONS IDENTIFIED 2001-2014



PART III

**Danish Lessons from
Stabilisation & CIMIC Projects**

**Lieutenant Colonel Steen Bornholdt Andersen
Project Researcher Niels Klingenberg Vistisen
Student Researcher Anna Sofie Schøning**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report, which was commissioned at the end of 2014 by the political parties behind the Danish engagement in Afghanistan, is the contribution of the Royal Danish Defence College to the compilation of lessons from the Danish Integrated Approach concept in support of operations in Afghanistan. It is one of three studies and is intended to provide a concise, accurate and practical collection of the Danish lessons stemming from the projects that the Danish Armed Forces carried out within the defence budget framework in support of military operations (the so-called CIMIC (i.e. civil-military cooperation) projects), as well as the lessons from stabilisation projects carried out in cooperation between the Danish Armed Forces and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Afghanistan, and which were financed through the Global Framework Fund and its successor fund, the Peace and Stabilisation Fund.

The Royal Danish Defence College was furthermore tasked to investigate the stabilisation efforts and military operations in Afghanistan to establish how they were integrated and concerted and assess where possible their outcomes in relation to the indicators of progress, i.e. security, governance and development, to provide a basis for further recommendations in relation to future Danish stabilisation operations.

The report, therefore, only describes a fraction of the total Danish expenditures in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014, i.e. the 16 million Danish kroner allocated for stabilisation projects and the 7 million Danish kroner spent on CIMIC activities.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES USED IN THE COLLECTION OF LESSONS

The report is source-based and primarily captures lessons from existing written sources, including project documentation, directives and reports pertaining to CIMIC, stabilisation and integrated operations and activities. The working group has had unfettered access to the archives of the Danish Ministry of Defence and the Danish Armed Forces. However, the working group has only been permitted to request access to specific, relevant material from the other participating Danish government agencies. Despite recognising at an early stage that relevant documentation could be found in British archives, it was not possible to gain access to these archives within the time available for the completion of this report. Roundtable discussions and interviews with a wide variety of relevant interlocutors were conducted to supplement or clarify written documentation that was incomplete or ambiguous.

For the purposes of this report, a “lesson” is defined as the knowledge and understanding of the effects and outcomes that individually deployed military and civilian personnel, military units and government agencies have achieved and comprehended during the course of their work with stabilization and CIMIC activities in Afghanistan.

Two levels of lessons are epitomised in this report. The first and most prominent level is derived from the assessments made by deployed personnel and entities in contemporary reports. The second level consists of lessons that have been identified by the working group based on observations made from reading source materials and from interviews. The latter is particularly applicable to lessons that have been assimilated gradually over a longer period of time and, therefore, may have been identified in retrospect.

THE BASIS FOR DANISH OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

Danish operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 are to be seen as an integrated contribution to an international mission. Furthermore, the Danish operations were comprehensive and integrated, i.e. the operations in the conflict-affected area were not only a mission for the Armed Forces but also a cross-government endeavour. The Integrated Approach included assistance to civil-society building, e.g. law enforcement, local government, infrastructure as well as the establishment of basic services such as water, electricity and transport. The so-called Integrated Approach projects, which were planned in concert by civilian stabilisation advisers and the deployed military units, but carried out by the military units under circumstances where the security situation precluded the presence of civilian aid organisations, were intended to meet basic humanitarian needs, support the reconstruction of the local government or promote the legal rights of individuals or groups. The upper expenditure limit for such projects was fixed at 50,000 U.S. dollars.

From 2001 to 2014, Denmark had military units continuously deployed in Afghanistan conducting full-spectrum operations. The Afghanistan mission is characterised by its continually changing objectives, intensity and conditions. Therefore, it is difficult to make direct comparisons between the explosive ordnance disposal operations in and around the capital of Kabul, the operations in Feyzabad, Mazar-e Sharif and Chagcharan, which are all located in the relatively secure northern and western regions of Afghanistan, and the operations in the war-torn and insecure province of Helmand.

In addition to the deployment of Danish forces in different geographic areas, the character of the operations changed significantly during the years Denmark was engaged in Afghanistan. The most marked change can be observed in Helmand Province where counter-insurgency operations initially, i.e. on Rotations 1 through 4, were directed at combatting the Taliban with force of arms in difficult operations throughout the province. During Rotations 5 through 12, in which Denmark had a fixed area of

operations, a strategic change took place from a “Taliban-centric” to a “population-centric” approach. As the character of the mission in Afghanistan similarly changed several times during its duration, it is difficult to make direct comparisons between the various phases of the Danish engagement in Afghanistan.

LESSONS REGARDING THE UTILISATION OF INTEGRATED STABILISATION FUNDS

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were the principal element in the international stabilisation effort in Afghanistan. They coordinated the security and stabilisation effort in each of the Afghan provinces. At various times, Denmark contributed personnel and resources to PRTs under German, Lithuanian, Swedish and British leadership. The Danish Integrated Approach in Helmand was anchored in the Helmand PRT, which under British leadership coordinated the contributions of the Allied countries to the stabilisation of the security situation and the advancement of governance and development in the province.

This meant that the British Helmand Plans determined the direction of the Danish integrated effort and the implementation of the individual elements of the Danish Integrated Approach concept. The Danish Helmand plans, which were developed in parallel with the British plans, were a combined description of the Danish national strategic plan for the integrated effort and the desired objectives for development in Afghanistan.

However, there is a general consensus among the deployed personnel that one of the lessons is that there was a requirement for a Danish plan on how the integrated concept was to be realised by Danish contingents and individual personnel in order to avoid the tendency that each new six-month rotation developed its own plans instead of building upon the plans of the previous rotations.

At the same time that Danish forces were deployed to Helmand, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs initially funded one civilian adviser. And in 2007 when Denmark was assigned a fixed area of operations in Helmand, the Ministry funded the deployment of several additional development advisers to the PRT departments that supported Danish focus areas, primarily education and health care, as well as the appointment of a diplomat as the deputy head of the Helmand PRT. In conjunction with the expansion of the forces in Afghanistan during 2010-2012, the so-called “surge”, the stabilisation advisory component was reinforced by the posting of a high-level civilian advisor on governance to the PRT and an officer from the Danish Armed Forces to the planning section of the PRT. A general lesson was that the greater the contribution, the greater the insight and knowledge.

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The security situation was undoubtedly the single most important factor affecting the completion of stabilisation projects and their impact. It was precisely the security situation that caused mundane issues such as transport capacity to have a direct and negative effect on the success and sustainability of the projects.

In order to optimise task accomplishment and avoid loss of civilian influence, ready access to appropriate transportation and provision of adequate protection are important. This also makes flexible approval procedures essential in order to ensure the rapid implementation of projects and exertion of influence on local society. However, it is still the impression of the various actors in the Integrated Approach effort that the integrated use of resources to a great extent contributed to connecting the local community on the ground with the long-term stabilisation and development aid program.

LESSONS FROM CIMIC OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN FROM 2001 TO 2014

Cooperation between the local civilian authorities and the deployed military force (Civil-Military Cooperation – CIMIC) is the remit of a military unit specialised in conducting these relations. In Afghanistan, CIMIC proved to be an important and useful tool in counter-insurgency operations. Even though the achieved effect was often short-lived, the CIMIC effort contributed significantly to the establishment of direct contact to both local authorities and the civilian population.

During the years in Afghanistan, the Danish CIMIC units served as both an independent Danish capability in an Alliance framework and an integrated element in the deployed Danish contingents. There is however a lower limit to the size of the CIMIC unit if it is to have an effect. If a CIMIC unit is attached to an Alliance partner and has its own organic resources that may be at the disposition of the host unit, interest in including the Danish CIMIC unit in the decision-making process is increased. Likewise effectiveness is increased when the CIMIC capability is included at an early stage in the military planning process and in the operational priorities of the relevant military commands.

In the initial phases of the mission in Afghanistan, CIMIC was affected by the lack of standard procedures for project management. This led to each rotation developing its own procedures, which hampered the handover/takeover process between the rotations. The desire for a method that ensured the rapid implementation of lessons captured from the mission area resulted in a change in the CIMIC handover/takeover procedures from a cumbersome written end-of-tour report to a verbal transfer procedure that was conducted by the military branch school responsible for doctrine development in Denmark. This change in procedure led to a more expeditious transfer of lessons and knowledge; however, at the same time it appears that this has weakened the general institutional learning ability within the Danish Armed Forces as the transfer of knowledge depended on the personalities involved. And this led to an apparent lack of written documentation, which entails the risk that this knowledge will only be embedded in the mission-specific context.

With the establishment of a permanent and readily deployable CIMIC capability by the Danish Armed Forces in 2010, a systematic collection of lessons captured has been definitively ensured for the benefit of future international deployments.

FROM LESSONS CAPTURED TO INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

When lessons covering a longer period of time have been collected and collated, the deficiencies will often appear more prominently; however, on the whole the collected information indicates that the integrated projects and the CIMIC effort at least in the short run have contributed to stabilisation at the local level. Also, all indications suggest that the Danish authorities became more open to and better at integrating stabilisation efforts in Afghanistan.

The personal relations between the commanders of the rotating military contingents and the deployed civilian stabilisation advisers have been of great significance to the development of mutual confidence and understanding. However, the way in which military units were formed, trained and deployed and the procedures employed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in recruiting advisers did not always offer the best conditions for establishing good relations prior to arrival in the mission area.

As has been the case in other fragile states, it is an important lesson that the indiscriminate injection of funds into the local communities in the mission area easily leads to inflation and the distortion of local community structures. Also, stabilisation operations in the mission area require the deployed advisers and CIMIC personnel to constantly operate in an environment where corruption is a fact of life. The necessity of giving the deployed units and advisers freedom of action has to be balanced against the requirement for control over the expenditure of funds.

The report emphasises the importance of institutional retention of lessons captured in order to facilitate institutional learning. Even though improvements were made in how knowledge was transferred from one rotation to the next that made it possible to build on the lessons captured by the previous rotations, it is important that there is a systematic handover/takeover process and that written documentation is transferred and archived. Different systems for the registration of documents in Danish government archives have been a factor impeding the collection of lessons and their utilisation as lessons learned. Material relevant to this report was sent to Denmark, but cannot be retrieved from the archives. Other material was probably filed by the Helmand PRT and can presumably be found in British national archives but is not readily accessible for Danish use. Consequently it has not been possible to retrieve reports that were produced by Danish units as well as by Danish personnel serving in the Helmand PRT. It is therefore an important lesson that reporting of national interest must be preserved, as it is problematic to retrieve these reports from the archives of partner nations. In order to facilitate the further utilisation of lessons acquired during previous rotations it is even more important to capture in writing lessons that were conveyed verbally.

TASK DESCRIPTION

As a result of the political decision to capture lessons derived from Danish operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014, the Royal Danish Defence College has been tasked to collect lessons from the application of the Integrated Approach concept and from Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) operations as components of the integrated Danish effort in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014.

This collection of lessons is to be presented in the form of a concise, accurate and practical report based on already existing material such as directives, reports, and debriefings of deployed units and personnel from relevant ministries. Interviews and roundtable discussions with relevant resource persons may be conducted as well. The report will be produced in combination with and supplement two other studies on the international lessons regarding the integration of efforts in Afghanistan and on development aid in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 with the common aim of identifying lessons from the Danish effort in Afghanistan that may be applicable to future integrated efforts in fragile states.

TASK DESCRIPTION¹

The contribution of the Danish Armed Forces to the collection of lessons from the engagement in Afghanistan will entail a collection of Danish lessons regarding projects that the Armed Forces have carried out in support of military operations (the so-called CIMIC projects) as well as stabilisation projects carried out in cooperation between the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a view to investigating the manner in which and the extent to which stabilisation and military operations in Afghanistan were integrated. The intent is thus to draw upon extant Danish experience regarding the Integrated Approach at the operational and tactical levels.

The Royal Danish Defence College is requested to limit the collection of the Danish lessons to projects that the Danish Armed Forces carried out within the defence budget framework in support of military operations (the so-called CIMIC (i.e. civil-military cooperation) projects), as well as the lessons from stabilisation projects carried out in cooperation between the Danish Armed Forces and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Afghanistan, and which were financed through the Global Framework Fund and its successor fund, the Peace and Stabilisation Fund.

¹ See Annex 1: Task description.

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Furthermore, the Royal Danish Defence College has been requested to examine to which extent and in what way stabilisation operations and military operations were conducted in an integrated manner in order to facilitate further perspectives and recommendations on how future operations best can be measured against indicators of progress in the following areas: security, governance and development.

The Royal Danish Defence College has noted that the task description specifically states it is not the aim of this report to assign responsibility or evaluate the political process behind Denmark's decision to contribute military forces and civilian capabilities to the international effort in Afghanistan. Also, in accordance with the task description, this collection of lessons is not to address military operations at the tactical-operational level, issues pertaining to the treatment of detainees, or the Integrated Approach concept in general.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES USED IN THE COLLECTION OF LESSONS

This report has been produced by a Working Group appointed by the Royal Danish Defence College. It is source-based, as a comprehensive review of archival material has provided the basis for the report. The archival material has been studied without an overriding thesis or any prior expectations as to which lessons might be uncovered. The accessible written sources have subsequently been collated and critically evaluated against each other in order to identify lessons regarding those areas that are to be investigated in the report and also to determine to what extent parallel lessons from the implementation of the Integrated Approach and the conduct of CIMIC operations can be compared. This applies to topics such as project conditions, training, recruitment and collection of lessons.

The aim of this source-driven method is to reduce the risk of bias informed by hypotheses or other presumptions in the collection of the lessons. Roundtable discussions and interviews were conducted to validate written sources that were ambiguous and to gain greater insight into the acquired lessons. In relation to the collection of these lessons, this approach has the advantage that even though the participants in discussions and interviews express their subjective and retrospective views, which may be expected, having the point of departure in contemporary written sources ensures that lessons formed in hindsight are not included.

LESSONS

For the purposes of this report, a “lesson” is defined as the knowledge and understanding of the effects and outcomes that individually deployed personnel, military units and government agencies have achieved and comprehended during the course of their work with stabilization and CIMIC activities in Afghanistan. The primary sources for identifying the lessons from operations in Afghanistan are the end-of-tour reports of the deployed forces and the oral seminars that towards the last part of the military engagement in Afghanistan replaced the voluminous written exit reports. This approach makes it possible for the Royal Danish Defence College to present the deployed persons’ and units’ own assessments of what they would have done differently and what seemed to work at the time of deployment and shortly thereafter.

LESSON

For the purposes of this report, a “lesson” is defined as the knowledge and understanding of the effects and outcomes of civil-military cooperation that the actors achieved, acknowledged and documented in relation to the Danish Integrated Approach effort in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014.

This choice of methodology accesses two levels of lessons: In part, the primary lessons in the form of manifest written lessons from the actual period, e.g., lessons captured in contemporary reports and memoranda, often including recommendations on the utilisation of those lessons; and in part, the secondary lessons that have been identified by the working group based on observations made from reading source materials and from interviews. The latter is particularly applicable to lessons that have been assimilated gradually over a longer period of time and, therefore, may have been identified in retrospect.

SOURCE MATERIAL AND ACCESS TO ARCHIVES

The source material used in this report consists primarily of archival material pertaining to CIMIC, stabilisation and the Integrated Approach in Afghanistan. This archival material comprises project documents, directives, and reports on CIMIC, stabilisation and the Integrated Approach. The Working Group has had unlimited access to search the archives of the Danish Ministry of Defence and the Danish Armed Forces²; however, access to other Danish archives³ was granted upon the Working Group’s specific requests for pertinent material.

It has often been difficult to conduct precise searches in the voluminous archive material due to the structure of the archives and varying archival registration procedures. Thus it was a clear advantage to have free access to an archive, as the materials were not always filed where expected. Free access to archives also made it easier to find materials that contain actual lessons or hold information that on which lessons can be based. This free access can help prevent that relevant material is missed.

Archive searches revealed that not all reporting from the period has been saved. The Danish Armed Forces have not had the practice of saving working documents, which means that many of the deliberations that led to the choice of decisions, and thus potential lessons, have been lost. This is the case to an even greater extent for reporting

2 The archives of Defense Command Denmark, Army Operational Command, and other defence archives.
3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danish National Police.

from civilian advisers to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has preserved very few materials. The Danish National Police do not have an archive pertaining to the Afghanistan mission, as they considered their task solely to be that of recruiting police officers in support of the mission.

It has, therefore, been difficult to assess whether records of the staff work behind the documents containing information on the continual capture of lessons (in the form of reports, messages etc.) has been lost due to poor archiving, or whether the processing of these lessons never happened. This is especially the case regarding the archives to which the Working Group did not have free access.

The Royal Danish Defence College surmised early in the writing process that British archives would likely contain source material relevant to the report. This would include communications between the Danish Battle Group and the British higher headquarters, i.e. Task Force Helmand, and especially materials pertaining to the British-led Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team, which in practice led the stabilisation effort in Helmand. This material was not repatriated to Denmark at the end of the mission. Moreover, material from the British Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme could have been incorporated in the assessment of the indicators of progress. However, it was not possible to gain access to the British archives during the time frame allocated for the production of this report⁴.

INTERVIEWS AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

The lack of dedicated written compilations of lessons in this functional area is striking. It has also been an obstacle that the transfer of knowledge and lessons gained from operational experience in the mission area has often been done verbally and directly between units. Relevant knowledge was, therefore, normally transferred between the individuals in charge and not necessarily collected and embedded in those parts of the Danish Armed Forces which were responsible for the formation, training and deployment of next rotation. As a result, the Working Group has conducted a number of interviews and roundtable discussions with key personnel in order to expand on and qualify the written material.

The persons interviewed were chosen to ensure that the entire time frame of the mission in Afghanistan and the different operations that involved the Danish CIMIC and Integrated Approach organisations as well as the changing military operational effort are covered so that it would be possible to elaborate on and validate especially interesting findings from the sources. Therefore, the list of interlocutors includes Danish contingent commanders, commanders of the CIMIC detachments, CIMIC officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs), police officers and civilian advisers⁵.

⁴ No publicised NATO or British assessments or other publicly available documents relevant to the task description and this report have been identified.

⁵ See Annex 2.

The interviews of key personnel were conducted in a semi-structured manner in accordance with a standard interview form. These semi-structured interviews ensured that the Working Group did not influence the interlocutor's account and to a large degree permitted the interlocutor to relate his or her own experiences. Likewise, the interview form ensured that as many relevant lessons were covered in the roundtable discussions. The form also made it possible to compare the experiences of the different participants regarding the various CIMIC, stabilisation and Integrated Approach components.

When several interview respondents are placed together, it may cause them to assist each other in improving their memories, which can be helpful, but also problematic. There is a general risk when conducting interviews that the interlocutor can easily be led into telling about experiences that have been retroactively absorbed under the influence of colleagues, the media and later actual developments. Therefore, the interviews were primarily used to validate the written sources and used only with great care to identify new lessons. This enabled the Working Group to maintain a critical stance regarding data from the series of interviews and roundtable discussions that were conducted, thus avoiding a preponderance of retrospectively assimilated lessons.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The Working Group has endeavoured to produce a systematic description and presentation of the lessons that it has collected through studies of extant written material and identified as a result of a series of supplemental interviews with key persons pertaining to the CIMIC and stabilisation projects carried out with Danish funding and participation. Despite the limit on the size and scope of the complete report, the report seeks to cover the entire period of the Danish engagement in Afghanistan and the correlation between the training, organisation, operational situation and project planning of those involved in CIMIC and stabilisation activities. It is thus the aim of this report to provide the reader with a basis for evaluating the scope of the lessons from the CIMIC effort and the stabilisation projects that were carried out from 2001 to 2014 in Afghanistan by the stabilisation advisers and Danish military units and that were financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as for determining if and to what extent these lessons can apply to other and future operations in fragile states.

The main content of the report and collection of lessons are contained in three chapters. The first of these chapters – "The basis for the Danish operations in Afghanistan" – is mainly a description of the resources that Denmark employed and the international framework for the Danish contribution.

The next two chapters on stabilisation and CIMIC respectively address the specific and most important lessons that the Working Group has identified and selected from the available source material. The collection of lessons is organised in a number of sections, some of which are unique to the particular subject matter area or the specific operational environment, while other sections address specialty, geographic, security, operational and other topics across the board and are thus common to all projects regardless of whether they are carried out in conjunction with military operations or oriented towards civilian purposes.

The final chapter – “From lessons captured to institutional learning” – identifies selected lessons and provides perspectives that in the course of future Danish engagements in fragile states may transform the lessons from Afghanistan into institutional learning.

The lessons presented in this report are all supported by the source material that was accessible to the Working Group. However, there may be lessons that have not been captured in this report, but which can be found in source materials which were never archived or to which the Working Group did not have access. The archival material has proved to be deficient in certain aspects. It is the Working Group’s estimation that the sparse and poor archiving can in and of itself be a lesson, as it impedes the subsequent compilation and evaluation of lessons.

The main focus of the report will be on Helmand Province from 2006 to 2012, where the main Danish military effort in Afghanistan took place. However, operations in other areas of the country will be addressed insofar as they are deemed to provide relevant lessons.

THE BASIS FOR DANISH OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The aim of this chapter is to describe the Danish military contribution, which was part of the international effort in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. The Danish effort in Afghanistan must be seen as a fully integrated contribution to the international effort and not as an isolated and independent contribution. This chapter describes the guidelines on how the stabilisation advisers and the units of the Danish Armed Forces conducted the stabilisation effort that was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in their respective areas of operations. It also describes how military doctrine on stabilisation and CIMIC developed from 2001 to 2014.

There are two important political aspects regarding the Danish effort in Afghanistan that are relevant to this report: The effort was nationally integrated, and the effort was fully integrated into the international coalition.

MILESTONES IN THE CIVIL-MILITARY INTEGRATED APPROACH IN DENMARK

2004	The 2005-2009 Defence Agreement introduces the Integrated Approach concept and establishes a government committee led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2005	Defence Command Denmark issues the "Directive on CIMIC and CIMIC in Relation to the "Integrated Approach Initiative".
2007	The government and its parliamentary supporters expand the Integrated Approach Initiative to include aid to community development and establish that international crisis management is not solely a task for military forces.
2008	The Afghanistan Task Force is established with weekly meetings between the ministries and agencies to coordinate the effort in Afghanistan.
2010	The 2010-2014 Defence Agreement establishes the Global Framework Fund with an annual budget of 150 million Danish kroner for integrated civilian and military efforts.
2010	The Peace and Stabilisation Fund is established as well as a permanent Integrated Approach structure consisting of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defence and the Prime Minister's Office.
2010	Promulgation of the Danish policy on fragile states.
2010	The Armed Forces publish a revised doctrine on land operations, which incorporates stabilisation operations.

THE DANISH STABILISATION EFFORT WAS INTEGRATED

The Danish government presented an Integrated Approach Initiative as part of the Defence Agreement in 2004, in which the Integrated Approach to stabilising and normalising conditions in the area of operations was described.

THE 2005-2009 DEFENCE AGREEMENT

“Military operations are to be integrated with other Danish efforts in order to maximise the overall effort and strengthen Denmark’s possibilities of assuming responsibility. Relevant actors should be brought together as early as possible as part of the preparations for the deployment of Danish military contributions to make it possible from the beginning to define possible relevant civilian stabilisation tasks in the military area of operations.”

The Integrated Approach Initiative as well as the government and its parliamentary supporters from November 2007 stated that international crisis management operations were not only a military task. The Integrated Approach was to include assistance to community development such as police, local government, infrastructure as well as services such as water, electricity and transportation.

In this context, the Danish Armed Forces introduced in 2005 a directive⁶ for the implementation of the Integrated Approach Initiative contained in the Defence Agreement. The directive was above all a document that established in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the administrative regulations on the objectives of the projects that were to be financed by integrated funds provided through the Global Framework Fund

The so-called Integrated Approach projects were aimed at meeting basic humanitarian needs, aiding the vulnerable and socially outcast, achieving immediate results in the form of material assistance to the local population, assisting in the rebuilding of the local government or promoting the legal rights of individuals or groups. A maximum of 50,000 U.S. dollars could be spent per project. The directive stressed that the resources could only be used in situations where the security situation made it impossible for civilian aid organisations to operate. The military force commander was authorized to develop the projects, but was required to consult the stabilisation adviser detached by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the military unit, as a project could not be initiated without the approval of both parties.

After 2005 the Danish Armed Forces continued the development of the Integrated Approach concept. However, it was acknowledged that there was no operational definition of the term. In 2010, work on developing additional guidelines and a deeper understanding of the Integrated Approach effort led to the incorporation of stabilisation into Danish land forces doctrine, which states that the aim of stabilisation is to establish conditions that are conducive to civil reconstruction and secure the development of a society in the direction of the long-term strategic goals.

6 FKO DIR PL. 190-1, "The Directive of Defence Command Denmark on CIMIC and CIMIC in relation to the Integrated Approach Initiative", May 2005

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT⁷

The Danish Government understands the Whole of Government as an approach where all authorities or parts of an organisation (e.g. the UN) contributing support in a given fragile situation work together towards a common, defined goal. This encompasses collaboration on planning, implementation and lesson learning in connection with political, developmental, security policy and humanitarian interventions.

THE DANISH STABILISATION EFFORT WAS INTERNATIONALLY ANCHORED

The Danish civilian and military contributions and efforts had in common that they were anchored in the Coalition, and the different contributions were perceived to be permanently integrated into the lead-nation

The integration of both the civilian and military contributions into the PRT framework was based upon an expectation that the Danish contributions would be aligned with the operational framework as decided by the nation leading the PRT. In Helmand from 2006 to 2014, the Danish units were subordinate to the British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). It was thus expected that the United Kingdom would incorporate the operations of the Danish contribution in its stabilisation concept for Helmand. That meant that in this particular case Denmark also accepted that the objectives of the effort in Helmand were to establish a functioning local government, provide basic civilian services to the population, and create security as well as address the underlying causes of the conflict in the community. The three areas, governance, development and security, formed the general lines of operation. Denmark, therefore, did not develop its own national policy on stabilisation in Helmand.

THE OVERALL DANISH MILITARY ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

From 2002 to 2006, Denmark deployed a small unit of approx. 50 personnel to Kabul primarily tasked with ammunition disposal and mine clearing. This sub-unit included one CIMIC officer, who had very few means at his disposal. The CIMIC effort was limited and solely aimed at the area in close vicinity to the base where the Danish sub-unit was stationed. This was not part of the Integrated Approach effort, nor was it part of the overall stabilisation effort.

⁷ Peace and Stabilisation: Denmark's policy towards fragile states 2010-2015, p. 6.

Note: "Whole of Government" is the English translation of "Integrated Approach" used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From 2003 to 2007, rotations consisting of six personnel each were deployed to the British-led PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, where they conducted patrols in support of the civilian reconstruction effort.

From 2005 to 2008, Danish stabilisation advisers and approx. 50 personnel were deployed to the German PRT in Feyzabad. In part they conducted patrols in the inaccessible northern province of Badakhshan and in part served as staff officers, also in the CIMIC section. They had both CIMIC and stabilisation funds at their disposal.

Denmark deployed ten troops in 2005 to the Lithuanian-led PRT in Chagcharan in central Afghanistan. They partly conducted patrols and partly served as staff officers, including one CIMIC staff officer. The patrol was withdrawn to Denmark in 2009. However, a number of staff officer positions were retained until 2011.

Combat troops were deployed in 2006 to Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan under operational control of the British-led Task Force Helmand. In 2006 and 2007 (Rotations 1 through 4), Danish troops were conducting operations throughout Helmand Province, primarily as independent, longer combat patrols. During this period, Denmark deployed a CIMIC detachment consisting of a total of ten troops, which was directly subordinate to the British headquarters in Lashkar Gah and supported all units in Helmand. A stabilisation adviser (funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) was assigned to the British PRT at the same location.

From 2007 to 2012 the Danish Battle Group, consisting of up to 700 personnel, had its own area of operations and was responsible for security in Nahr-E Saraj District, which included the main town of Gereshk. The CIMIC detachment, which still consisted of ten personnel, was now directly under the command of the Danish Battle Group. Initially there was one stabilisation adviser, in 2008 there were three, and finally in 2011 there were four stabilisation advisers. The stabilisation advisers, together with their British and U.S. colleagues, were part of the civilian-led Helmand PRT. The Danish Battle Group, including its CIMIC section, was under the command of the military-led Task Force Helmand.

From 2010 to 2013 a small number of police officers were deployed to Gereshk, where they under the auspices of the Danish Battle Group trained Afghan police. During the 2008-2013 time frame, a diplomat detached from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs served as the Deputy Head of Mission of the Helmand PRT as well as head of the planning division of the PRT. He also held the position of Senior Danish Civilian Representative in the PRT. A number of civilian advisers dealt with stabilisation tasks pertaining to education, health and rule of law.

Beginning in 2012, the Danish focus shifted from security-driven operations to the training of the Afghan National Security Forces based in Camp Bastion. However, one company remained in Camp Price in the Nahr-E Saraj District. Two CIMIC personnel were attached to the company. Denmark retained a stabilisation adviser in the district until 2013 and a number of civilian advisers in the Helmand PRT until it closed in 2014.

During the entire period, Denmark also had up to 15 officers assigned to staffs and headquarters in, among other places, Kabul, Kandahar and Camp Leatherneck. Only a few of these positions were related to CIMIC and stabilisation. The most important of these assignments was the position of Chief Governance in Regional Command South (in 2009–2010), which was filled by a civil servant from the Ministry of Defence, and one staff officer position in the Helmand PRT, which was filled by a major in 2010–2011.

CIMIC – DOCTRINE, DIRECTIVES AND PRACTICE

Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) is a military function which supports military operations through cooperation with civil authorities, the local population, refugees, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other civilian organisations in the area of operations. The CIMIC sub-unit can carry out small and quick- impact projects through direct contact with the civil authorities and the local population. These projects can support ongoing operations and at the same time be beneficial to the local population (e.g. a footbridge across an irrigation channel), or they can win the sympathy of the population and thus contribute to improving security in the particular area.

THE NATO DEFINITION OF CIMIC

The co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civilian actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as International Organisations and Non Governmental Organisations. CIMIC supports the Commander in achieving this. CIMIC is a command responsibility.

The NATO Allied Joint Publication AJP – 9 *NATO Civil-Military Co-operation Doctrine* formed from the very beginning of the mission the basis for the Danish CIMIC effort and training. A national doctrine was, therefore, never developed. However, Defence Command Denmark and Army Operational Command both issued CIMIC directives as a basis for training, planning and operations, which were applicable in Denmark and in all missions. It was stressed in both directives, which were continually updated, that Danish CIMIC personnel in the mission area were to adhere to NATO doctrine, but adapt it to the situation on the ground and to national directives, as the national directives established

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coherence in relation to the Integrated Approach effort between the military force and the attached stabilisation adviser from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, CIMIC was included in mission-specific directives, i.e. the directives issued by the Chief of Army Operational Command to the deployed Danish force commander.

The directive of Defence Command Denmark regarding the implementation of the guidelines for the Integrated Approach Initiative and the CIMIC directive of Army Operational Command (issued in 2007) both state explicitly that CIMIC must be viewed in a broader perspective. The two directives made it clear that CIMIC was one of the contributions of the Danish Armed Forces to stabilisation and that CIMIC was part of the Integrated Approach effort. The CIMIC capability could also include limited humanitarian aid to the local civilian community in support of the Danish military presence in the area of operations. The latter gave rise to some confusion regarding the practical execution of CIMIC operations, especially in relation to projects that were financed by common funds, even though the directive of Defence Command Denmark established that the Armed Forces did not carry out reconstruction work and that CIMIC projects were to be clearly distinguished and kept apart from Integrated Approach projects. In a note from the inter-ministerial Task Force on Afghanistan written in 2009 regarding the funding of the Integrated Approach effort, it was stated that CIMIC funds could be used for minor consent-winning and force protection projects, while Integrated Approach funds were designated for limited projects. However, in reality the two sources of funding were used flexibly and pragmatically by the Danish Battle Group and the attached stabilisation adviser without further concern about the official rationale for the budgets.

The definition of CIMIC and the tasks of the CIMIC units and officers did not change significantly during the duration of the mission, and there were only minor amendments to the official directives.

THE IMPACT OF THE MULTINATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON THE DANISH INTEGRATED EFFORT

The Danish military contributions to the operations in Afghanistan were all deployed as part of a multinational framework and in support of another and often larger nation's operations. Without exception, the Danish contributions were competent and valued by the bigger partner. In addition to being trained and well-prepared, the Danish contributions added operational options that were needed by the partner nation, such as the ability to conduct longer patrols, disposition over flexible funds, or organic capabilities (e.g. CIMIC teams) that the partner nation itself did not have at its disposal.

However, it was also a lesson that the Danish contributions had to adapt to the structure in which they were deployed. Therefore, room for manoeuvre to organise and conduct the Integrated Approach in accordance with the Danish model was somewhat restricted.

Danish priorities and focus areas had to be attuned to the policies and priorities of the coalition nations and other close partners. When PRT Helmand changed its plans or priorities, or when there was a change in the counter-insurgency strategy, Danish units and the Danish effort were affected as well. The large U.S. contribution in Helmand, which began in 2009, caused a significant change in the operational framework. The Danish contribution became proportionally even smaller, which in turn reduced the political and operational freedom of action. More and bigger international actors also resulted in more resources and more projects in the Danish area of operations. However, these projects did not necessarily align with Danish plans and priorities. Therefore, the overall effort was at best uncoordinated and at worst self-defeating.

Another lesson was that even though the Danish contributions were subordinate to the headquarters of another nation in the mission, e.g. a British, German or Lithuanian PRT, and that the operations involving Danish personnel were coordinated and directed by these headquarters, there was still a need for additional national planning with guidelines on how the Integrated Approach should be carried out in practice, and, just as important, prioritized. It is the Working Group's impression that in the mission area coordination was achieved through cooperation based on good will and compromises between civilian and military personnel. The official Integrated Approach structure in Copenhagen was not reflected in the mission.

Also, an important lesson was that Denmark benefitted from the international co-operation in the PRTs, where other nations could support with military engineers, Military Stabilisation and Support Teams (MMSTs) and other stabilisation expertise that the Danish units needed to conduct the necessary planning at the tactical level.

LESSONS REGARDING THE UTILISATION OF INTEGRATED STABILISATION FUNDS IN AFGHANISTAN FROM 2001 TO 2014

This chapter will focus on the specific efforts that were conducted in direct cooperation between the Danish military contingents and the stabilisation advisers who were paid by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and deployed in support of the Integrated Approach effort in the mission area. From 2001 to 2014 a total of 15.6 million Danish kroner were spent on these projects, of this amount a total of 11.9 million Danish kroner were spent on projects in Helmand from 2006 to 2014.

Danish lessons from the integration of the Danish effort in Afghanistan and pertaining to the stabilisation of Afghan society include lessons regarding cooperation in Denmark, practical lessons from the mission area regarding stabilisation as well as the Integrated Approach in relation to cooperation with the Allies and in the confrontation between civilian development aid and military security operations.

DANISH CIVILIAN INTEGRATED APPROACH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STABILISATION EFFORT IN AFGHANISTAN			
CONTRIBUTION:	PERIOD:	ADVISERS:	FUNDS
Danish Contingent in the Kabul Multinational Brigade	2002-2006	None	
Military Observation Team at PRT Mazar-e Sharif, British PRT	2004-2006	1 stabilisation adviser	
PRT Feyzabad German PRT	2005-2008	1 stabilisation adviser	SP/SIP: 3.7mill. ¹
PRT Chagcharan Lithuanian PRT	2005-2009	None	
PRT Helmand, British PRT	2006-2007	1 stabilisation adviser	
	2007-2014	1 Deputy Head of Mission, Advisers in the fields of education and health	
Danish Contingent as part of the British-led Task Force Helmand	2008-2014	1-4 stabilisation adviser with the District Stabilisation Team (DST)	SP/SIP: 11.9 mill. ¹
	2010-2013	2-4 politibetjente til mentor- og uddannelsesvirksomhed af det afghanske politi	

¹ Integrated Approach funds were managed by the military force commander, but the expenditure of funds had to be approved by the stabilisation adviser.

The point of departure for this collection of lessons is the Danish effort in Helmand in which the majority of Danish military operations were conducted. It is based on documentation provided by the *Whole of Government Stabilisation Secretariat*, reports from the Danish military contingent and supplemented by validation interviews with key officials in the Ministry of Defence and Defence Command Denmark, commanders of the Danish Battle Group, and not least, former deployed police officers, stabilisation advisers etc.,

THE HELMAND PLANS

The Danish Helmand Plan was developed by the *Whole of Government Stabilisation Secretariat* and the inter-governmental Task Force Afghanistan in close coordination with the United Kingdom, whose Helmand Plan provided the political basis for the Danish contributions, all of which were closely integrated into the British effort. The Danish Helmand Plan was a political document. It described in part the achieved results and in part the development aims that the politicians strived to accomplish. Also, the Danish Helmand Plan described how Denmark cooperated internationally to stabilise Afghanistan.

The framework for the Danish political direction of the Danish stabilisation effort was the United Kingdom's national Helmand Plan, which over time developed into the Helmand Road Map. The Helmand Road Map, which initially was a multinational plan for Helmand, finally became the Afghan plan for Helmand and was also signed by the Afghan provincial governor.

Therefore, the Danish Helmand Plan was not intended to serve as the basis for operational plans that could be developed by military units and stabilisation advisers and thus provide a foundation for coordinated cooperation. It was assumed that this foundation would be set by the United Kingdom, which was the Allied nation leading the Helmand PRT. Therefore, in 2008 Defence Command Denmark took the initiative to draft a plan for the development of the Danish troop contributions to Helmand for the period 2008 – 2012. This provided a good basis for planning the future Danish military contributions, with a strong emphasis on the development of the Army's contributions. However, this still did not contribute to the development of an operational concept for stabilisation for which the deployed units had articulated a need.

Even though there was no intention of developing a Danish stabilisation concept for Helmand Province, during interviews and roundtable discussions it is a recurrent lesson that the actors in the mission area lacked a concerted and overall plan for the stabilisation effort, which they had expected to receive. The planning basis provided by the British did not always meet the requirements of the Danish contributions. This point is also articulated in the interviews and roundtable discussion during which the participants stated that the Danish stabilisation effort in particular seemed unplanned and random.

LESSONS REGARDING THE HELMAND PLANS

- The Danish decision to accede to the British Helmand plans as the basis for the deployment and utilisation of the Danish CIMIC and stabilisation contributions was a positive factor in establishing a coordinated Allied effort in Helmand Province.
- The Danish Helmand plans were intended to serve as political documents that presented the political objectives of the integrated effort in Afghanistan to the Danish public. However, the expectation on the ground in the mission area was that the plans could function as the basis for the planning of the Danish Integrated Approach effort in Helmand.

INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

The purpose of this collection of lessons is, in part, to compare the lessons stemming from the Danish CIMIC and stabilisation operations with the indicators of progress to determine whether these operations supported the aim of the Integrated Approach effort. The three lines of operation in Afghanistan were Governance, Development and Security. However, the indicators of progress for these lines of operation are difficult to ascertain. Data and sources used to assess the progress of the three lines of operations did exist in Afghanistan, but this information was only to a very limited extent retained and subsequently archived in Denmark. In the absence of actual data and assessments, it would have been relevant to extract statistics from the routine reports that were regularly sent to Denmark. However, it has also proved to be extremely difficult to find these reports, as they have apparently not been filed in Danish archives. Only the monthly reports from the Danish military contingents have been systematically archived and have thus been available for this report.

In 2010 the Helmand PRT initiated the Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme, which was co-financed by Denmark for the specific purpose of measuring progress in the three above-mentioned areas. Data and reports derived from the programme have not been archived in Denmark and could, therefore, not be used. Also, the Danish stabilisation advisers who contributed to the programme considered the programme to have been of limited value and its results not particularly useful. In any case, the programme only covers the period from 2010 to approximately 2013. Accounts of the progress made in the Danish areas of the mission, which may be derived from the annual reporting on the Danish Helmand plans, cover only parts of this period and are generally more parochial in nature. These final reports primarily measure own results against national Danish targets rather than measure and report advances and setbacks in relation to Afghan society.

Another important factor impacting on an overall evaluation of whether or not the Danish CIMIC and stabilisation efforts supported the aims of the mission was the fact that there were several significant changes in the Danish engagement during the course of the mission. The Danish troop contributions in Helmand Province may be divided into different phases: Rotations 1 – 4, during which Danish forces were employed in mobile operations throughout the province, Rotations 5 – 12, during which the Danish forces had their own area of operations, and during which there was shift from a Taleban-centric to a population-centric strategy as well as a change in the main effort from north to south within Lashkar Gah District. Also, beginning with Rotation 12, the remit of the Danish forces was amended to focus on the training of the Afghan National Security forces. Therefore, it is only relevant to compare the results of the Integrated Approach effort with the indicators of progress during each phase of the mission. However, this can only provide a limited and tactical-level assessment. An actual assessment of whether or not the Integrated Approach effort promoted stabilisation has to be made over a long period of time, as stabilisation and development require time and perseverance.

Therefore, a lesson is that it is difficult to establish indicators of progress once operations are underway because it is less complicated to measure efforts in relation to own internal objectives and not the progress that has actually been made in the mission area. Such objectives should receive attention from the very beginning of the mission in order to ensure that the benchmarks adequately measure the progress of the common effort together with the local authorities in the mission area.

ERFARINGER MED INDIKATORER FOR FREMSKRIDT

- Indicators of progress can be a useful means of ensuring a common baseline for reporting on all aspects of the Integrated Approach effort.

HELMAND PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM (PRT)

The PRTs were unquestionably the central component of the stabilisation effort in Afghanistan. They coordinated security and stabilisation operations in each of the Afghan provinces. Denmark embedded its Integrated Approach effort in Helmand in the well-functioning, British-led PRT, which was responsible for the contributions of the Allied nations towards developing governance and promoting development in the province. As stated above, one of the salient achievements of the Helmand PRT was the Helmand Road Map, which set forth and coordinated the international stabilisation and development aid effort in the province.

The Helmand PRT was led by a British ambassador, as the British considered the civilian effort to be the most important component of the joint effort in Helmand. Therefore, the Helmand PRT also coordinated the civilian and military operations with Task Force Helmand, which included the Danish troop contribution. The Danish stabilisation advisers, who worked with the battle groups out in the districts, were also subordinate to the Helmand PRT.

In 2006, in connection with the deployment of the Danish troop contribution to Helmand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a fact-finding team and in a report⁸ identified the elements needed for an integrated effort, but a plan for this integration was apparently not developed.

Concurrent with the deployment of Danish forces to Helmand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initially funded one adviser. And after Denmark had been assigned a fixed area of operations and the PRT was consolidated, Denmark provided an additional contribution, a diplomat, who was appointed as PRT Deputy Head of Mission and head of planning for the PRT. He was also the Danish Senior Civilian Representative. Furthermore, a number of development advisers were assigned to the sections in the PRT that supported the Danish focus areas, primarily health and education. In conjunction with the expansion of the force, the so-called “surge”, in 2010 – 2012, there was a further augmentation consisting of a high-level civilian adviser on governance and a military officer, who served in the PRT’s planning division.

Based on the interviews conducted for this report, it is clear that during the first period of deployment in Helmand and on the first rotation there lacked an embedded and comprehensive stabilisation plan for the district level. CIMIC as well as integrated stabilisation projects were initiated extemporaneously and often in an uncoordinated and incoherent manner. While the military plans were continually being adjusted, the stabilisation advisers had difficulties in obtaining approval for the district plans they had prepared. The required planning cohesion was achieved rather late in the process, as the plan for Gereshk was not approved until 2011.

The lessons from the expanded contribution to the Helmand PRT in 2010-2011 were not only that it resulted in an increase in Danish influence, but also in better situational awareness regarding the province. This directly aided the Danish Battle Group’s efforts at the district level. Another lesson was that the continued presence for several years of a highly experienced advisor, in this case, on education, benefited Danish stabilization and development projects. Furthermore, it was realised that the political division of the Helmand PRT, which interacted with the Afghan politicians, played a key role in the planning and conduct of operations in Helmand Province. However, Denmark did not have an advisor placed in that key division.

⁸ Danish Assistance to the Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Factfinding Mission, March 2007. No follow-up on the report has been found in archives.

LESSONS FROM THE INTEGRATED DANISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE HELMAND PRT

- Presence and influence are complementary. Small troop contributions give limited insight into and influence over overall multinational planning; large contributions open the door to increased understanding and greater influence.
- Establishing objectives and planning the implementation of the Integrated Approach effort expedite influence and provide more effective results.

THE STABILISATION ADVISERS AND THE DISTRICT STABILISATION TEAMS

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs deployed stabilisation advisers in support of the stabilisation effort. One adviser was embedded in the Anglo-Swedish PRT in Mazar-e Sharif. Another adviser was deployed to Feyzabad from 2005 to 2008. In Helmand Province there were up to four Danish advisers attached to the Danish Battle Group as well as a varying number of advisers at the PRT level. There were no Danish stabilization advisers in Chagcharan, which had to be supported by the Lithuanian advisers in the Chagcharan PRT and the Danish advisers in Helmand.

The adviser in Feyzabad⁹ was co-located with the German PRT and, according to the available information, enjoyed close and good cooperation with the PRT as well as with the Danish force commanders, who were located with the German forces. The adviser reported to the Danish Embassy in Kabul and used funds from the Embassy to conduct Integrated Approach projects. The lesson from the limited presence in Feyzabad is that a joint contribution consisting of both a stabilization adviser and a smaller military force provides mutual benefits. The flexible use of Danish resources resulted in considerable Danish influence in the German PRT and was assessed to have had a stabilising effect on the rather peaceful province.

A technical agreement was signed between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating that the Danish Armed Forces were responsible for providing logistic support, transportation etc. to the advisers working in the mission area. The Armed Forces discovered that the division of responsibility between the military and the civilians in Helmand was not clear in the beginning, but this was later ameliorated.

⁹ The German PRT and the German military contingent were separately dislocated.

After the Danish Battle Group in 2007 was assigned its own area of operations in Helmand, Denmark deployed stabilization advisors who were embedded in the Battle Group. The stabilisation advisors were part of the multinational District Stabilisation Team (DST) that operated in the district which was in the Battle Group's area of responsibility. Organisationally the stabilisation advisers were subordinate to the Helmand PRT and also served as advisers for other military units in the district. Likewise, advisers from other nations, primarily the United Kingdom and the United States, advised the Danish Battle Group within their fields of expertise.

Over time the Danish Battle Group's military commanders and CIMIC detachment came to value the stabilisation advisers very highly due to their understanding of local society and their direct contributions to planning and to projects in the area of operations. It was a lesson that when the advisers and the military commanders had met each other in Denmark prior to deployment, some of the recurrent cooperation issues were avoided. The stabilisation advisers, who could be generalists as well as specialists, were often assigned fields of responsibility such as education, rule of law, health, governance, infrastructure, etc. However, the stabilisation advisers in certain cases lacked the necessary technical knowledge to assume overall responsibility for project planning and project management, and during the course of their work they had to seek the assistance of either Danish CIMIC personnel or British military engineers.

There was no official leader appointed for the DST in which the Danes worked together with British and American advisers. Everything had to be coordinated in concert and by consensus at the district level. At the same time, the Danish advisers were subordinate to the senior Danish representative in Laskhar Gar, but reported to the relevant functional section in the PRT on specialist matters. The lesson from this configuration is that it reduced the possibility of close cooperation with the Danish Battle Group, which had a hierarchical command structure and focused on the immediate tasks in the area of operations, and consequently needed someone who was in charge of the day-to-day operation of the DST.

The Danish Battle Group was responsible for the safety and security of the stabilisation advisers, but as the British PRT consolidated its internal procedures and integrated the Danish and other stabilization advisers into the PRT, the advisers became subject to British security restrictions, which meant – among other things – that civilians had to be transported in civilian vehicles and could no longer be moved in military vehicles. Especially as the security situation deteriorated, this meant that sometimes only the Battle Group – without the participation of civilian advisers – could attend meetings and monitor projects, particularly outside Gereshk proper, even though they all lived in the same camp. The lesson here is that the civilian advisers need to be transported together with the military forces with whom they are working; otherwise the military forces will, at least in part, take control of the contact with civil society, thus weakening and impeding the supervision of projects and the mentoring of local actors.

The difficulties in leaving the secured areas without sufficient protection meant that the stabilisation advisers in practice had to request the CIMIC detachment to assume responsibility for supervising the projects and participating in meetings with Afghan civilian authorities. Thus CIMIC to a certain extent became a supporting function for the stabilisation advisers with regard to administrative issues as well as the actual work on the projects. This caused some small conflicts because the CIMIC detachment found itself overburdened, and CIMIC, too, had limited possibilities to drive outside the camp. Also, the CIMIC personnel did not see themselves as assistants to the stabilisation advisers.

STABILISATION ADVISERS AND THE DISTRICT STABILISATION TEAMS

- The lack of leadership in the DSTs affected the coordination between civilian and military contributions to stabilisation operations.
- Adequate means of transportation and sufficient protection capabilities are essential to the optimal accomplishment of the mission and to the avoidance of loss of civilian influence.

INTEGRATED APPROACH FUNDS AND STABILISATION FUNDS

The aim of the Danish Integrated Approach effort was to stabilise local Afghan society in order to create a security situation in which it would be possible to provide effective development aid and thus contribute to the normalisation of the country. Therefore, the Danish force commander had at his disposal the so-called Integrated Approach funds (from 2006 to 2009), which were later renamed stabilisation funds (from 2009 to 2013). These funds were provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Global Framework Fund and were intended for use in mid-sized projects (costing less than 50,000 U.S. dollars), which were of more lasting importance than typical CIMIC projects and needed to be implemented more quickly than development aid projects.

Each force rotation had at its disposal 1.4 million Danish kroner (DKK). The military force commander managed the funds, but all projects had to be approved by the stabilisation adviser. In practice this functioned rather smoothly and did not give rise to any discord. Later, in 2011, funds from the Global Framework Fund could be used for capacity-building projects, but these projects had to be approved in Copenhagen. The advisers and the military units found the ensuing delay reduced the usefulness of these projects¹⁰.

¹⁰ The approval procedures were the same as for other programmes and were introduced to shield the projects from corruption.

STABILISATION PROJECTS IN HELMAND 2006 - 2013

TYPE OF PROJECT	NUMBER	COST IN DKK	AVERAGE COST IN DKK
Government and society building	51	2,552,023	50,036
Infrastructure	120	4,095,968	34,420
Protective measures ¹¹	12	922,211	76,851
Emergency relief and humanitarian work	24	969,493	55,285
Education	41	2,200,487	56,423
Women's development	11	240,469	21,860
Miscellaneous	18	939,842	55,285
Cancelled	9	N/A	N/A
Total	286	11,920,492	50,023

The Danish military contingents in Helmand spent the funds on projects in accordance with the overall aim of launching actual stabilisation initiatives . This meant that the expenditures had to fulfil one or more of the following requirements: The Danish military contingents in Helmand spent the funds on projects in accordance with the overall aim of launching actual stabilisation initiatives¹² This meant that the expenditures had to fulfil one or more of the following requirements:

- Alleviate basic humanitarian needs
- Aid the vulnerable and socially outcast
- Achieve immediate results in the form of material assistance to the local population
- Aid in the (re-)construction of the local government
- Promote the legal rights of individuals and groups

However, it was the impression, confirmed in interviews and roundtable discussions, that the unstable security situation and the poor infrastructure severely reduced the possibility of initiating the substantive projects that were intended within the intended parameters of the stabilisation effort. The security situation entailed that the planning and completion of CIMIC projects, and especially the civilian stabilisation projects, could only be done in those geographic areas where an acceptable level of security could be

11 Protection includes measures and projects to protect and preserve the ability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to operate from protected facilities. A major part of the resources were used to construct protective structures at ANSF checkpoints and other facilities.

12 Guidelines for military-civilian cooperation in humanitarian and reconstruction operations funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, revised in October 2006.

maintained. Therefore, the focus was on what was possible from a security point of view, and this is presumably why the stabilisation funds as well as the CIMIC funds increasingly were spent on capacity building and physical infrastructure projects, while training activities and humanitarian work ended up consuming a relatively small share of the resources. It appears that in practice cost was the factor determining whether a project ended up as a CIMIC project or whether it was substantial enough to become an Integrated Approach project. There are examples where a project was charged to another account than the one to which it had originally been posted; for example, a CIMIC project could be redesignated as an Integrated Approach project and subsequently posted to that account. Under the prevailing security conditions, the division of projects according to the allocated funds could not determine the type and aim of the projects; this was primarily a question of whether the project was useful and whether it was within the funding limitations.

The main lesson regarding the use of allocated funds and different funding pools is that it is necessary to have responsive and flexible approval procedures, so that funds can be used immediately for the identified projects. Dividing funds into separate pools for different purposes did not appear rational to the involved parties in the mission, since the funds were used when and where relevant without too much attention to their source. The rapid initiation of projects was important to involved parties. This was found to be necessary to security and important to the stabilisation mission and to a society such as Afghanistan.

STABILISATION FUNDS

- Flexible approval procedures facilitated the rapid implementation of aid projects. Integrated approach funds served to a great extent as a gap filler between short-term aid to the local community and the longer-term stabilisation and development assistance.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Stabilisation projects were often initiated by the stabilisation advisers, who identified a need in the local community, and normally following a dialogue with the local district authorities. Initially most of the projects were aimed at building facilities such as schools, government administration buildings etc. As more of the larger projects were completed, and as more buildings were finished, it became evident that there was a shortage of trained local officials to operate them. During the mission period there was a gradual shift in focus from physical projects to capacity-building projects for the personnel in the local government structures. This was called “investing in people instead of bricks

and mortar” by the advisers. This led to an emphasis on handing over responsibility for project management and supervision to the Afghans, thus developing their ability to handle these activities. The lesson was that the building of basic institutions and the development of competent officials requires a long-term effort, and it requires that the stabilisation advisers have the necessary professional expertise.

In 2009, Military Stabilisation and Support Teams (MSSTs) were attached to each battle group, including the Danish Battle Group. They were to support the stabilisation advisers in their work and answer to them. The main purpose was to support the stabilisation effort. A MSST consisted of five or six military specialists, including engineers and craftsmen as well as specialists in information operations. They were mainly British Army regulars, but there were also reservists among them. The MSSTs, with the necessary technical and craftsmanship skills, assisted the stabilisation advisers in monitoring projects in areas where the advisers could not go due to the security situation. The lesson was that specialists such as these added very useful competencies to the stabilisation and CIMIC efforts; competencies that the Danish government and military structures could not provide. The support provided by the MSST attached to the Danish Battle Group was limited to a certain extent by the team’s dependency on the assignment of a security escort and vehicles from the Battle Group, the allocation of which was often given a lower priority due to the security situation and ongoing combat operations.

The large-scale projects, some of which were development projects or PRT projects, also had to be monitored by the stabilisation advisers, or they had to support monitoring teams coming from, e.g. Kabul. These large-scale projects were carried out by Afghan contractors, who had won the tender. The lesson from Helmand was that this process favoured the large contractors who could be based outside Afghanistan, while the local contractors did not have a real chance of winning the tender. As with other types of projects the Danish stabilisation advisers experienced a high level of corruption and political patronage in connection with the large-scale projects, which also often took longer to complete than planned. Since the stabilisation advisers were not involved in the selection process, which was supervised directly by the Embassy in Kabul, they had neither the possibility of uncovering irregularities nor the possibility of intervening if things did not go according to plan. As a consequence, the lesson is that large-scale projects, especially development projects, must be coordinated and integrated into the comprehensive operational concept for stabilisation efforts in the local area, since these projects have an impact on each other, just as stabilisation and CIMIC projects do.

The lesson regarding the larger projects is that they were difficult to handle for the local Afghan community, because the local capabilities are poor, and because it was difficult to ensure the timely availability of teachers for the newly built school, prosecutors and judges for the new justice centre, physicians for the clinic, and so on. Another lesson is that it is necessary to have actual craftsmanship and professional skills to supplement the stabilisation adviser’s work, when these skills are not present in the local community due to, for example, the security situation.

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Furthermore, it was also learned that some projects had a higher status than others, and that there was a sort of competition. Sometimes a project initiated by Denmark was made redundant or even pre-empted by a nation that could complete the project faster, had more resources at its disposal or was considered a more attractive partner by the Afghan decision makers. The lesson is that there was insufficient coordination of stabilisation efforts within the mission area.

Cooperation between the stabilisation advisers and the local authorities was basically good, but the advisers often learned that there was no unified Afghan side. Depending on the government level (provincial, district, municipal, local community) and the choice of local partner, priorities and specific project requests changed frequently. Furthermore, the Danish side had to pay attention to the risk of corruption in Afghan society.

The security situation was the single most important factor affecting the stabilisation effort. The practicalities of establishing a dialogue with the Afghan authorities and subsequently supervising the projects were vital to the favourable development of the projects. The stabilisation advisers often had to either abandon a project or request the military forces – especially CIMIC, with which there was a cooperative relationship – to look after the advisers' interests.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Stabilisation advisers have great difficulty in developing, implementing and supervising stabilisation projects when the security situation prevents them from moving outside the bases.
- A centralised tender process can inhibit corruption. However, at the local level, it entails the loss of influence and knowledge regarding aid projects.
- The lack of awareness of the limited ability of the local Afghan authorities concerning the use of stabilisation and development funds reduced the effectiveness of many aid projects.

RECRUITMENT OF STABILISATION ADVISERS AND THEIR TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs endeavoured to recruit advisers through its International Humanitarian Preparedness entity, which is a pool of experts who are willing to be on call for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a variety of missions. However, the entity could

not provide enough candidates and volunteers. Despite attempts at recruitment from a larger pool of potential candidates¹³, it was very difficult to recruit advisers during the duration of the mission.

It was intended that the stabilisation advisers would be deployed for at least one year in order to ensure continuity. However, especially in the beginning, it was difficult to recruit qualified personnel for such long assignments. Some were deployed for as little as three months, while others were in the mission for several years. The advisers were employed under a one-year contract with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) in accordance with the standard employment procedures of the Agency. Experience showed that the longer the advisers worked in the mission, the greater their knowledge and expertise became, thus increasing the effectiveness of their work. On the other hand, long deployments in a high risk area caused the advisers to wear down psychologically. They could work so long in the mission area that they finally became fatigued, and thus less effective. Initially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no procedures for the reception of advisers returning from Afghanistan who had been employed on short-term contracts as external consultants, and consequently were not considered to be employees of the Ministry.

Civilian advisers (often with backgrounds from the development world) as well as advisers with military backgrounds and foreign nationals were recruited to fill the Danish positions. Stabilisation advisers with military backgrounds, e.g. reserve officers, learned that they fitted well into the military environment, but lacked experience in development work. Likewise, the stabilisation advisers with a development background found that they did not know enough about the military profession, e.g. planning procedures, and that they lacked knowledge of the special military terminology and the military decision-making processes, which was important to mutual cooperation.

It was not until the position of Deputy Head of Mission of the Helmand PRT was established rather late during the mission that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted a career diplomat. All other Danish stabilisation advisers were externally recruited on short-term contracts.

The lesson is that the Danish practice of ad hoc recruitment of stabilisation adviser positions encountered difficulties in filling positions with candidates who had the right qualifications and could serve for the duration of the desired periods of deployment.

One of the lessons from the first rotation in 2008 was that there needed to be at least three stabilisation advisers attached to the Danish Battle Group to ensure that there was always at least one adviser present in the area. Under their terms of employment, the advisers were entitled to two weeks' leave after each six-week period in the mission area in order to prevent psychological fatigue. Conversely, the advisers were usually

¹³ There was direct recruitment of personnel from the Ministry of Defence as well as of reserve officers who had been on international deployments.

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deployed for longer periods of time than the Battle Group's personnel, who deployed for six months. This ensured continuity through overlapping rotations. However, some of the stabilisation advisers had shorter tours of duty due to recruiting difficulties.

RECRUITMENT AND TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- It was difficult to recruit suitable candidates to serve as stabilisation advisers under the extremely challenging security conditions in Afghanistan.
- The employment of external consultants on short-term contracts can contribute to the desired effort, but in the long term it entails a loss of competency and challenges to the institutional learning of operational lessons.

TRAINING AND PREPARATION

The stabilisation advisers did not receive any actual training or professional preparation prior to their deployment. The civilian advisers normally had previous experience from development work in other countries, and a few had experience from or knowledge of Afghanistan. However, the interviews show that they did not find themselves prepared for stabilisation operations in the framework of a counter-insurgency campaign or for close cooperation with military units. The interviewed advisers point out that they were not briefed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in preparation for their deployment, and they did not receive instructions regarding the task that was expected of them. In their interviews the advisers stated that they were ill prepared regarding the general task in the mission area and that much of the preparation resided with the advisers who were already in the mission area and could teach the new advisers.

The civilian personnel completed a hostile environment awareness training course prior to deployment. Reserve officers who were recruited as stabilisation advisers by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately after their deployment with the Armed Forces also did not receive any supplementary training in preparation for their new position. In the beginning of the mission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had difficulty issuing the necessary personal protective equipment to the deployed personnel. Some of the initially deployed advisers were reserve officers who instead used the combat body armour and helmet they had been issued by the Danish Armed Forces. However, a fixed procedure for issuing the necessary equipment was quickly established.

During the interviews a number of advisers have stated that they do not recall having received any briefings by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prior to their deployment, and that they were not sufficiently instructed on the task that was expected of them. Therefore, several of the advisers considered themselves ill prepared regarding their general task in the mission area and stated that much of the preparation resided with the advisers who were already in the mission area and could teach the new advisers.

At an early stage, the Danish Armed Forces proposed that the stabilisation advisers could participate in the training of the unit that was preparing for deployment. The Armed Forces also requested that the pre-deployment training of military units included working with stabilisation advisers. However, this was rarely possible, as the advisers were not deployed in synchronisation with the rotations of the military units and were normally recruited immediately prior to deployment.

A general lesson is that the stabilisation advisers found their training and preparation insufficient, and that this resulted in initial difficulties building a working relationship with the military personnel, who they perceived to be part of a cohesive and professional military organisation. The stabilisation advisers were unanimous in emphasizing that they had to pass a steep learning curve in the mission before they could contribute effectively.

TRAINING

- The efficiency of the stabilisation advisers is increased if they receive effective and comprehensive training and preparation for working together with military units in a challenging security environment.

TRANSFER AND CAPTURE OF LESSONS

A seminar on the lessons from the stabilisation effort in Afghanistan was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 2008. The seminar was conducted under the supervision of an external consultant with the participation of all advisers deployed at that time, relevant desk officers from the Ministry, and representatives of the Armed Forces and the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). The lessons from Feyzabad, the different headquarters in Afghanistan, the Danish Embassy in Kabul, and from the advisers working in Helmand were captured in the final report. The final report made a number of recommendations regarding the training of advisers as well as the improvement of the planning of Integrated Approach efforts. However, no information on any follow-up measures has been found in the available archival material.

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Presumably due to the difficulties recruiting stabilisation advisers for the mission in Afghanistan, it was difficult to ensure an overlap between the departing adviser and his or her replacement, and thus the possibility of transferring personal knowledge and lessons learned between the two in person. The in-person transfer of knowledge and lessons learned, including the handover of projects and contacts in the local community was, therefore, the exception and not the rule.

It is known that the Helmand PRT regularly reported to the British authorities and that the individual DSTs periodically submitted regular reports. However, neither these reports, nor the reports submitted through the national chain of command to the Embassy in Kabul have been found in the archives; or this reporting has not been made accessible to the Working Group by the relevant Danish authorities. Furthermore, it is known that systematic reporting from the Danish stabilisation advisers to the Danish Deputy Head of Mission at the Helmand PRT was instituted in 2010. But it has not been possible to retrieve this material. Finally, it has been revealed through interviews that a few advisers on their own initiative produced written handover/takeover documentation, but it has not been possible to find these materials, or end-of-tour or similar reports, in the archives.

To all appearances, there were no end-of-tour procedures including a formal debriefing of the advisers or a systematic collection of the individual adviser's lessons from the deployment. In a few cases individual interviews were conducted with the advisers. A few advisers who had originally been in the Danish Armed Forces have later served as instructors in stabilisation operations at the schools of the Danish Armed Forces.

COLLECTION OF LESSONS

- Seminars in which the key actors involved in Integrated Approach operations meet in order to identify and capture lessons contribute to the further development of the Integrated Approach concept.
- Failure to conduct a systematic collection of lessons identified and lessons learned as well as failure to properly hand over projects and personal contacts result in diminished effectiveness and loss of competencies.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILISATION AND CIMIC

From 2001 to 2014 no common doctrine was developed on the stabilisation concept or on how the various government agencies could in practice contribute to the integrated stabilisation effort. The lack of a doctrine on stabilisation, i.e. an operational method of how to carry out stabilisation activities in practice, caused the stabilisation advisers to base their work on their personal experiences and interests rather on a common understanding of the aims to be achieved.

The lack of a common understanding of the stabilisation effort turned into a conflict of interest between the military leadership and the stabilisation advisers regarding exactly where, when and how the stabilisation effort was to be conducted. The stabilisation advisers tended to think more long-term and focused primarily on the main town of Gereshk, where the majority of the population lived, whereas the military leadership put more emphasis on stabilising the outer regions and the rural areas where the military units were conducting combat operations. This situation was not unique to the Danish area of operations; it turned out to be the case in most of Afghanistan.

The Helmand PRT gradually introduced locally developed district plans that became the basis for the prioritisation of resources. Even though this led to an increased understanding of the common task, interviews with both military and civilian person revealed that in critical situations in which an operation had to be prioritised due to the security situation or to a lack of resources, the individual Danish officer or adviser tended to defend his or her remit and demonstrated a tendency not to integrate the efforts. There are also cases in which good personal relations led to common solutions. It should be noted that the Integrated Approach structure that was established within the Danish central government with an official forum for the coordination of the Integrated Approach effort was not reflected in the mission area.

Despite the formal Danish differentiation between the stabilisation and CIMIC efforts, in the mission area there was a clear connection and often a direct correspondence between the two. In reality it was often the security situation or the total costs that determined whether the project turned out to be a CIMIC project or a stabilisation project. Nothing indicates that the Afghans could distinguish whether a project was CIMIC-related or stabilisation-related.

In the initial phase in Helmand (from 2006 to 2007), many stabilisation operations were conducted by a mixed team consisting of Danish CIMIC personnel and British military engineers and specialists from Task Force Helmand. They were called Development and Influence Teams and carried out stabilisation tasks in immediate continuation of the military operations in the province. The lesson from the mission area was that this combination proved to be effective.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STABILISATION AND CIMIC:

- No common understanding (i.e. doctrine) was developed for the operational implementation of the politically articulated Integrated Approach policy in the mission area.
- In the mission area, there was in practice no real differentiation between CIMIC operations and stabilisation efforts.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIGHER STAFFS AND HEADQUARTERS

In addition to the main military contribution, a number of staff officers were often deployed to the various headquarters in the mission area. By contributing personnel to the various multinational headquarters, Denmark gains experience, receives information, and influences the planning process. Some of these officers also held positions that dealt mainly with CIMIC, stabilisation and the Integrated Approach. During the greater part of the duration of the mission, Danish officers served in CIMIC positions in the headquarters of Task Force Helmand and in Regional Command South, as well as in the headquarters of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul. However, the establishment of continual contacts and the exchange of ideas and information were not established between the Danish personnel serving at the various headquarters levels or down to the Danish Battle Group. Only a few of the deployed officers were experts in the specialist fields or functions to which they were assigned; most of them were generalists.

In 2009-2010 the Danish Armed Forces attempted to establish continuity in the area of governance from the strategic level in Kabul to the Battle Group level by deploying two civilian officials in key positions in the Regional Command South Headquarters. The lesson was that this resulted in greater professional influence and raised Denmark's profile. However, as the positions could not be filled again by Danes, the positive effects were short-lived. The Danish Armed Forces also deployed a major to the Helmand PRT; his military planning skills supplemented the civilian competencies. Only a small number of these persons were later to work in the same areas of expertise after their return to Denmark; however, for the most part this experience was seldom exploited after redeployment.

STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS

- The posting of staff officers in key positions offered insight and influence. However, this advantage was seldom exploited.

POLICE TRAINING AND RULE OF LAW

The need to train the Afghan police was recognized very early in the mission, and became imperative during Rotation 5 (in 2008), when Denmark was assigned a fixed area of operations around the large town of Gereshk. The corruption within the local police was a destabilising factor. Early on the British began to deploy police officers to mentor the local police. In 2010 Denmark also assigned police instructors to train the police in Gereshk and later sent police officers as instructors to a police training academy in Laskhar Gah. These police officers were deployed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of an Integrated Approach contribution together with the military contingent, whereas other Danish police officers were seconded to the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan.

The Danish police personnel were deployed as part of a Police Mentoring and Liaison Team (POMLT) in which two senior Danish police officers were supported by military police NCOs and a small military security detachment for protection. Despite the corruption and the other problems with the local police, the POMLT proved to be the best way of training the Afghan National Police. A specific lesson was that the best results were obtained by mentoring mid-level leadership, while it was very difficult to mentor the police chiefs, as they were often entangled in politics and possibly even corruption. The Danish combination of police and military personnel, living together at the police station, was praised by the cooperation partners as a best practice.

The deployment of Danish police train the local police under the protection of a dedicated military component proved to be effective and promoted stabilisation and security. Another lesson was that conflicts of interest arose between the police and the Battle Group in the mission area, because the terms of cooperation were not clearly defined and coordinated by both parties.

Another lesson was that the local police play a key role in the stabilisation of the local community and the security of its citizens. In interviews it was pointed out that for this reason a police contribution should be deployed at the very beginning of a Danish Integrated Approach effort.

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The Danish National Police, which deployed the police personnel on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, viewed the deployments administratively as temporary tours of duty in support of and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and not as an actual operational task for which the police had ownership.

One of the Danish stabilisation advisers in the district was a Rule of Law Adviser, who focused on the local judges and prosecutors. In 2011 it was decided to strengthen Denmark's efforts by assigning a senior Rule of Law Advisor to the PRT with a focus on mentoring the provincial prosecutor. The lesson was in part that it was especially difficult to recruit an adviser with the necessary qualifications, i.e. a judicial background and good mentoring skills, and in part that it was a very difficult task to change Afghan society in this area. One of the reasons was that institutions and structures in Afghan society – if they even existed – were weak, so it was necessary to begin from scratch. A lot of the time in Gereshk there was neither a judge nor a prosecutor who could be mentored.

POLICE TRAINING AND RULE OF LAW

- Building a trustworthy police force is a key element in the stabilisation of the local community.
- Police training and rule of law assistance are not fully integrated into the Danish Integrated Approach to stabilisation.

THE DANISH LESSONS REGARDING STABILISATION AND THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

The Danish Integrated Approach concept and the actual Danish stabilisation effort in Afghanistan have been under constant development since the deployment of the first military troop contribution and the first stabilisation advisers. During Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan formal procedures have been established that delineate how Danish stabilisation efforts are managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence and how the funding is controlled.

According to the sparse reporting from the mission area on the broader stabilisation effort and the interviews, both the stabilisation advisers and the military personnel agreed that they supplemented each other well in the conduct of the common stabilisation effort in the mission area, even though there was no established common understanding on how the political intentions behind the Integrated Approach and stabilisation effort were to be operationalised and coordinated in the mission area. For the personnel on the ground

stabilisation was primarily a political intent and not a well-defined process that was known and shared among the relevant parties. The lesson from the attachment of stabilisation advisers with the authorisation to use funds flexibly to military units is that it gives them an additional capability and it increases the understanding of the civilian focus on operations, which military unit's CIMIC organisation alone could not provide.

The Danish lesson regarding the contributions to the Helmand PRT was that the PRT was a focal point for planning and decision-making. It was essential to Denmark's situational awareness, participation and influence to have personnel embedded in the PRT. However, there is practically no documentation to be found in the Danish archives indicating how the decision-making process was conducted and what influence Denmark had on this process. The lessons derived from conversations and interviews with persons who had served in the Helmand PRT are that in the case of stabilisation and counter-insurgency operations it is important for Denmark to have a representative in the PRT's political section in order to obtain insight and influence. A Danish national contribution of a government official assigned to a leadership position within the PRT is also important to attaining influence. However, it also appears that the prerequisite for the acceptance of such an official by the partner nations is a substantial national contribution to the mission.

It was a recurrent topic in the interviews with the key persons who had been deployed in the mission area that they had no clear idea of how the political intentions behind the Integrated Approach concept should be implemented. The deployed stabilisation advisers expected to receive supplementary and detailed directives on how they were to enhance and develop the Coalition's planning in the mission area. According to the deployed personnel, activities that adhered to the Integrated Approach in the politically focused Helmand Plan appeared to be carried out in real-world Afghanistan without any correlation between the security effort and the provision of civilian aid. Therefore, it was the general lesson articulated by deployed personnel that there lacked a coordination mechanism in order to better implement an integrated Danish stabilisation effort in Afghanistan.

In general it is an important lesson that the human resources aspect had a great impact on the ability of the mission to stabilise Afghan society. The recruitment of advisers with the right qualifications was very difficult, and their training did not receive sufficient attention. And finally, it is a lesson that the lessons that were learned in the mission area seldom became embedded in the relevant Danish government structures.

The Integrated Approach effort was conducted in areas of Afghanistan without basic infrastructure, and among a population with a generally low level of education and a chronic shortage of trained officials. Stabilisation and CIMIC activities in such an environment were difficult, because the local population was quickly able to figure out which projects and types of projects were the object of Danish focus and priorities. They also were quick to determine the rotation cycle of the Danish units, which brought new resources and new projects every six months. During the course of the mission it was learned that there were Afghans who exploited the NATO and coalition forces and their

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presence to duplicate a number of CIMIC and stabilisation projects while prices rose steeply. Village elders as well as district government officials, i.e. the people who were to benefit from the support and capacity building provided by the Helmand Plan, participated in the fraud. One of the persons interviewed for this report expressed it in this way: “We were always playing somebody’s game.”

As lessons were not continually captured, little was learned from these mistakes. Instead these lessons had to be relearned when projects were replicated in another area or when the next rotation arrived in the mission.

Another general lesson from both the CIMIC and the stabilisation effort was that from the start there was too much focus on Danish work methods and Western processes, which poorly matched the Afghan way of doing projects. It was learned that centralised mechanisms for preventing corruption, e.g. sealed bids for tenders, actually made it more difficult to monitor corruption, among other issues, in the local community. The Western management traditions, which the deployed stabilisation advisers and CIMIC personnel had to respect, also failed to recognize the established role that corruption plays in Afghan society, where bribes to a certain extent can be compared to user fees, which in turn subsidise the fragile governmental structures. So, in some aspects, the Western approach was in some respects an obstacle to the stabilisation of Afghan society; because they created the basis for extreme corruption, and because it was difficult not to favour one party over another. The local power structures and fractions exploited the situation to their advantage, and therefore, not all local actors had an interest in stabilisation or development in the local community.

LESSONS FROM CIMIC OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN FROM 2001 TO 2014

The Danish CIMIC effort in Afghanistan was a continuation of the CIMIC structure and the CIMIC lessons learned that the Danish Armed Forces had retained from operations in Iraq. However, this effort varied to a great extent according to the types of operations conducted in the different geographical areas of Afghanistan and during the existence of the mission. Only the units deployed to Helmand from 2006 to 2012 had actual CIMIC units attached, which, except for a few adjustments, consisted of a platoon of approximately 10 troops.

DANISH CIMIC CONTRIBUTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN			
CONTRIBUTION	PERIOD	NUMBER OF CIMIC PERSONNEL	FUNDS
Danish Contingent in the Kabul Multinational Brigade	2002-2006	1 CIMIC officer during the duration of the engagement	Limited CIMIC funds
Military Observation Team at PRT Mazar-e Sharif British PRT	2003-2007	6 observers, none dedicated to CIMIC	N/A
PRT Feyzabad German PRT	2005-2008	2 CIMIC staff officers out of 50 Danish personnel	CIMIC: 0.5 million DKK
PRT Chagcharan Lithuanian PRT	2005-2009	1 CIMIC staff officers out of 10 Danish personnel	CIMIC: 850,000 DKK Expenditures: 146,000 DKK
Danish Contingent as part of the British-led Task Force Helmand	2006-2014	CIMIC detachment of approx. 10 personnel	CIMIC: 6.9 million DKK

The CIMIC units reported regularly on the progress of the individual projects, and until 2008 they also produced comprehensive end-of-tour reports, which form the basis for this chapter. As most of the CIMIC assets were deployed in Helmand Province, the operations in that province will constitute most of this chapter in the report.

KABUL 2002-2006

The Danish troop contribution in Kabul (primarily explosive ordnance disposal personnel) had a CIMIC officer attached, but no larger projects were completed. The few activities conducted during this period consisted of fund raising for the local Afghan population, sports events etc. Therefore, there are no significant lessons from this period.

MAZAR-E SHARIF 2003-2005

The Danish troop contribution to PRT Mazar-e Sharif consisted of six officers and NCOs, none of whom were tasked with CIMIC duties. The main tasks consisted of outreach and collection of information about the local communities in Balkh Province by conducting patrols in light armoured vehicles on behalf of the then British-led PRT to determine the need for reconstruction and development projects in the province.

FEYZABAD 2005-2008

As was the case with the Danish troop contribution in Mazar-e Sharif, the Danish troop contribution in Feyzabad was part a German-led PRT. The Danish troops conduct patrols in the northern and relatively stable province of Badakhshan. The patrols sought and collected information on the local communities mainly in the areas that were far from Mazar-e Sharif, as the German mandate prevented the German forces from operating and maintaining a presence in the remotest parts of the province. The Danish patrols planned and carried out many small CIMIC projects in cooperation with the local communities.

The projects often served to achieve protection and goodwill in those places where the patrols spent the night and where it was not possible to obtain actual development aid to meet basic schooling and education needs. The projects were limited by the lack of space in the vehicles for carry larger amounts of cargo on the long patrols. Therefore, most of the projects consisted of providing school supplies (books, small desks, chairs) or winter equipment for the local population. The donations were very useful and benefitted the security of the patrols and the ability to obtain knowledge about local conditions.

There was rarely room for the CIMIC staff officer to join the patrols, as the vehicles were fully loaded. It was soon realised and subsequently recommended that the members of the patrols should receive CIMIC training prior to deployment. However, the combination of a CIMIC staff officer and observation patrols that identified and carried out the projects worked quite well under the circumstances.

Cooperation with the German PRT was good. The lesson was that the flexible use of the limited Danish assets was highly effective in this situation. Also, it gave the Danes opportunities and influence in the German sector, which was affected by the limitations of the German mandate and thus contributed to improved coordination of efforts in the PRT's area of responsibility. In the beginning there were difficulties in initiating the

projects, because all projects had to be approved by the Army Operational Command or the Danish Embassy in Kabul. This process was time consuming and perceived as problematic; however, this was soon corrected so that small projects could be started immediately¹⁴.

In aggregate, the lesson from the CIMIC effort in Feyzabad is that CIMIC enhanced the security of the patrols and supported their operations. The Danish CIMIC effort also contributed to the mission of the German PRT by conducting stabilisation and reconstruction activities. The ability of the Danish detachment to drive in areas distant from the PRT meant that the relatively small Danish contingent made a pronounced and visible contribution to the work of the PRT in Feyzabad.

CHAGCHARAN 2005-2009

The Danish contribution to the Lithuanian PRT in Chagcharan consisted of patrols as well as staff officers. At times it was difficult for the patrols to drive in the mountainous terrain, as they did not have the best vehicles for driving under the conditions in the area. The Danish staff officers, including one CIMIC officer, found it very difficult to work with the Lithuanian staff due to the language barrier and the lack of willingness to include the Danes in the operational planning process. Later during the mission the patrols were withdrawn, and only the staff officers remained. After that, the Danes had very little possibility of carrying out any projects.

HELMAND 2006-2014

During the first three rotations in Helmand (ISAF RC(S) rotations 1 – 3 in 2006-07), the Danish CIMIC detachment was attached to the British Task Force. For several reasons, primarily because the British did not have a CIMIC capability, the Danish CIMIC detachment was co-located with the British headquarters in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, while the main body of the Danish Battle Group was based in Camp Bastion, which was located northwest of Lashkar Gah. The detachment deployed CIMIC Support Teams (CSTs) consisting of an officer and a NCO. These teams were permanently allocated to the main towns of Lashkar Gah and Gereshk and deployed when needed to the Danish and British companies. The Danish teams were often reinforced by a British military engineer who could assess buildings and other structures, something the Danish personnel were unable to do. The Danish contribution, which was considered effective and was in demand by the coalition partners, operated throughout Helmand Province and supported both Danish and British units.

¹⁴ The approval procedure was similar to the approval procedures for other programmes and were introduced to shield the projects from corruption.

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The Danish units learned that CIMIC personnel were not always a natural and necessary component during mobile combat operations in the desert. However, the units requested permanently attached CIMIC teams that could be deployed immediately when needed. In practice it proved difficult for the Danish Battle Group to have an assigned team, as its operational deployments were prioritised by the British Task Force.

On Rotation 2 (2006-2007), the Danish force commander and the stabilisation adviser requested specialists with specific competencies in the fields of building, construction, and agriculture in order to support the development of necessary community services. Thus there was an early realisation that there was a need for more specialised CIMIC functions and for personnel contributions that could directly support the civilian population¹⁵.

When the Danish Battle Group on Rotation 4 was assigned its own area of operations, the CIMIC detachment was integrated into the Battle Group and would then only support its operations. The CSTs were permanently assigned to the company areas of operations, which resulted in a much better local knowledge. The lessons from permanently attaching a CST were generally very positive. However, in some interviews it was pointed out that the company commander focused so much on kinetic operations that it became difficult for the CIMIC officer to get the necessary support to carry out his work.

GENERAL LESSONS REGARDING CIMIC OPERATIONS IN AN ALLIANCE CONTEXT

- A CIMIC detachment can contribute as an independent Danish capability within an Alliance framework. There is however a lower threshold for the size of the unit if it is to have any influence on operational planning.
- If a Danish CIMIC unit is attached to an Alliance partner and has organic resources that the host unit can utilise, the incentive to involve the CIMIC unit in the decision-making process is increased.
- CIMIC is an important and useful instrument in counterinsurgency operations.

¹⁵ No records have been found indicating that this request was ever staffed.

INTEGRATION OF CIMIC INTO THE DANISH BATTLE GROUP'S PLANNING AND OTHER STAFF WORK

CIMIC is a staff function and military occupational specialty just as operations, intelligence, logistics etc. The study of archival materials and the validating interviews have furthermore indicated that, in addition to the general lessons, there are lessons associated with the specific circumstances pertaining to each individual CIMIC position. On most of the Danish Battle Group rotations, CIMIC operations were coordinated by the Battle Group's second-in-command, who was often responsible for the day-to-day contact with civil society, including the governor, mayor, chief of police, etc. This cooperation functioned well and provided the necessary clout in relation to the local partners. However, this meant that the civilian effort, including CIMIC, was conducted in parallel rather than in coordination with the planning of combat operations by the chief of staff and the operations section. During interviews several CIMIC officers stated that CIMIC was often not included in the preliminary planning process and issuance of directives for the military combat operations. They also stated that specific plans for the CIMIC effort were lacking, and they expressed their frustration that CIMIC often became a required addendum that was not prioritized in the planning process.

Written sources as well as interviews point out that the CIMIC personnel and the intelligence section could to a great extent support each other in a stabilisation mission, where the civilian population was the centre of focus. Several interviews indicate that the CIMIC detachment's need for information and the Battle Group's intelligence requirements regarding the local community and the threat were complementary. CIMIC personnel could provide information from patrols and conversations, and the intelligence section could provide information about the enemy and the situation as well as collect and process all the information in databases and provide continual analyses.

There seems to be a broad consensus that during the first years of operations in Helmand the emphasis was on combatting the enemy, i.e. the Taliban. Therefore, the CIMIC personnel did not have sufficient information about the local communities and the local power structures and interests. On later rotations the intelligence section was enlarged, and there was greater focus on protecting the civilian population, which made understanding societal factors increasingly important; and to this end CIMIC played an important role.

In interviews and roundtable discussions, several CIMIC personnel have stated that personal relationships were of great importance to CIMIC development and efficacy. In some company areas of operations, the CIMIC personnel experienced that company commanders were very willing to send out patrols on purely CIMIC missions, while other CIMIC personnel in order to carry out their tasks had to join patrols that had other

missions. The conclusion was that actual combat missions drew all the attention, which had a great impact on the ability of the CIMIC personnel to work in the area. The lack of integration regarding CIMIC and what was experienced as a need to rely on personal relationships often caused the CIMIC personnel to experience their efforts as fragmented, haphazard and short-sighted.

INTEGRATION OF CIMIC IN THE OPERATIONAL PLANNING OF THE DANISH BATTLE GROUP

- The operational effectiveness of CIMIC is increased through its integration into the operational planning process and through close cooperation with intelligence.
- The clout of CIMIC in relation to local authorities, institutions and the local population is increased through a close and visible relationship with the host unit's leadership.

CIMIC PROJECTS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A wide range of CIMIC projects were completed in Afghanistan. The projects varied from funding to feed the needy, shuras (consultative assemblies) with the local population, construction of small footbridges, wells; simple repairs to buildings, schools, bridges and other infrastructure. Some projects contributed directly to enhancing the security of Danish and Allied forces, i.e force protection. CIMIC projects are characterised by being relatively inexpensive and easy to complete once an agreement has been made.

CIMIC PROJECTS IN HELMAND 2006-2013			
TYPE OF PROJECT	NUMBER	COST IN DKK	AVERAGE COST IN DKK
Government and society building	184	1,132,949	6,157
Infrastructure	635	3,082,104	4,854
Protective measures	96	1,728,546	18,006
Emergency relief and humanitarian work	21	157,750	7,512
Education	6	48,700	8,117
Women's development	12	67,826	5,652
Miscellaneous	107	720,744	6,930
Cancelled	15	3,500	N/A
Total	1076	5,213,573	8,175

The validating interviews were clear about the fact that the personnel serving in the mission area were aware that the projects in and of themselves were not decisive. However, the contacts that they created with the local population were the most important result. To a certain extent this contradicted the impression brought from Denmark that the projects were the most important result. Therefore, this created pressure on the CIMIC organisation (and the Danish forces) to carry out projects that could be measured quantitatively, e.g., the number of wells drilled; furthermore, the expenditure of all the allocated funds was in itself a criterion for success.

An important lesson was that by actively searching for projects that could win the support of the local population, CIMIC set a precedent that was difficult to break later in the mission. As was the case with other Western funding of works in the mission area, the pressure to enter agreements on projects led to the inflation of prices of labour, bricks etc. The officers and NCOs furthermore indicated in roundtable discussions that the projects were not vital to the local community and were only created because the foreign forces paid for them. During the roundtable discussions it was also revealed that the CIMIC personnel experienced that after each rotation of a Danish contingent the local population tried to pressure the new CIMIC team to carry out more of the same projects that its predecessor had completed¹⁶.

The CIMIC personnel learned that small projects, called “quick impact projects” (QIPs), facilitated contact with the local population and supported security operations, albeit their effects were often extremely short-lived. Also, they learned that only a very few projects benefitted the local community as a whole, and that the projects almost always were to the advantage of a small part of the community, such as a single family. The lesson from the QIPs is that they only promote lasting relationships with the local community insofar as they are followed up continually. Furthermore, it was learned that projects and contributions for the common good did not in and of themselves create secure conditions for the military units.

As previously mentioned, supervision of the projects was important; however, in many cases the CIMIC detachment did not have the technical expertise needed to inspect a building under construction, a road, etc. In such cases the British MSSTs supported the Danish CIMIC personnel with military engineers and craftsmen with the necessary technical skills. Technical resource persons were not provided despite an articulated demand in 2007 for precisely these specialists from Denmark. A lesson is that the Danes did not possess the necessary technical competencies to supervise even smaller construction and infrastructure projects.

¹⁶ The reason is probably that the local population was primarily interested in the money that accompanied the projects and not the projects themselves.

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It is stressed both in reports and in interviews that project planning required patience. Regardless of the size or purpose of the projects, it was a recurrent lesson that most of the projects took longer than planned, by both Danish and Afghan standards, which was due both to the formal approval procedures and to Afghan mores.

Another general lesson was that it was necessary to monitor the projects to ensure that they were actually completed. Even though it was quickly discovered that insufficient supervision led to an increased risk of error, fraud and failed projects, it was difficult to conduct the necessary supervision due to security-based restrictions on movement. In some cases payment for projects was made on the basis of photographs that the Afghan contractor had personally taken, as it was not possible to send a CIMIC patrol due to the security situation or because the escort had been assigned to a task with a higher priority, thus causing the supervisory visit to be abandoned.

A seemingly trivial, but actually very important, lesson was that it was a bad idea to pay the local contractors in U.S. dollars. This made it easier for the Taliban to identify who was working for the foreigners, including the Danes, and to subsequently charge special currency exchange fees. As a consequence, only the local currency, the afghani, was used to pay local persons, even though some of the larger contractors preferred U.S. dollars.

PROJECTS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Small-scale and simple goodwill projects actively support military operations and are effective in winning the support of the local population, but their effect is short-lived. These projects require follow-up action in order to sustain their effect in time and space.
- The uncritical infusion of large sums of money into the local communities easily leads to inflation and distortion of the local societal structures.
- The necessity of supervising the expenditure of resources and the proper completion of infrastructure projects requires technical guidance and oversight capabilities.

CIMIC AND THE SECURITY SITUATION ON THE GROUND

It is clearly stated in many of the sources and in the validating interviews that the security situation in reality determined the tactical conditions for the deployment and employment of CIMIC personnel as well as their working conditions. Even though CIMIC is a support function enabling the military forces to accomplish their missions, it was learned that

CIMIC regularly carried out tasks that normally would have been considered development or humanitarian aid tasks, because the civilian organisations that usually carried out these tasks were prevented from doing so for security reasons.

Reporting also shows that the CIMIC units and the military authorities had a well-developed understanding of the boundary between where the military deployment of CIMIC ended and where a consolidating stabilisation effort could and should be initiated. In 2007 CIMIC assessed that development in Lashkar Gah had reached the stage where traditional development aid could and should be initiated, while Gereshk at the same time was not open for development projects, as the security situation required a continued and considerable military presence in the city. During a later rotation the situation in Gereshk improved to the point where the city could be handed over to the local authorities and an actual stabilisation effort could be initiated. At the same time CIMIC operated to a greater extent in support of the military units engaged in operations outside the city. However, CIMIC continued to support civil society building and the stabilisation effort in the city of Gereshk by monitoring the projects in person and participating in coordination meetings.

In the company areas of operations around Gereshk there were likewise great differences as to when CIMIC activities could be conducted. The security situation was almost always the determining factor. The CSTs learned that when there was heavy fighting, it was difficult to maintain contact with the local population and impossible to carry out and supervise even small projects. It was also learned that there was little possibility of conducting CIMIC activities during combat operations in the desert, where there was no permanent or regular military presence.

THE IMPACT OF THE SECURITY SITUATION

- The security situation has an overarching significance for the ability to complete even limited CIMIC projects.

CIMIC TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

The transportation of CIMIC personnel to visits with local contacts, meetings, and project planning and supervision activities was often hampered by the poorly developed road network and the critical security situation. Every movement from the base had to be planned and prepared in detail in order to minimise the many and varied dangers as much as possible. A general lesson learned during the duration of the mission was that the possibility of obtaining escorts and protection as well as the lack of suitable vehicles affected the ability of the CIMIC detachment to accomplish its tasks.

CIMIC units often had older equipment than the combat troops, e.g. vehicles with less protection, or they simply lacked vehicles. This affected their ability move outside the bases. The link between mobility and being able to get into direct contact with the civilian population is demonstrated by the impact that the Danish observation teams had at PRT Feyzabad. The work of the Danish team at PRT Chagcharan was severely hampered by the harsh weather conditions, the terrain, and the older vehicles with insufficient protection. This had a great impact on what the CIMIC teams could initiate and achieve. And in Helmand having older vehicles with an insufficient level of protection meant that the CIMIC teams were either prevented from driving to several of the places where they wanted to go or that they were dependent on external support.

Due to security concerns, the CIMIC teams could seldom leave the base on their own and were therefore in reality dependent on the allocation of escorts from other military units. Therefore, the possibility of getting an escort was determined by the Danish Battle Group's general operational priorities.

The CIMIC units sought continually to find other ways of obtaining transportation. This included the possibility of coordinating transportation with the civilian stabilisation advisers, riding with a British civilian close protection team or with British military units. In practice the CIMIC personnel and stabilisation advisers often need to attend the same meetings, and they can often, to their advantage, supervise projects together. However, the civilian stabilisation advisers could not ride in military vehicles without special (i.e. civilian) permission. Therefore, there was a continual need to be able to cooperate on transportation issues and coordinate the use of transport.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

- Access to timely and coordinated transportation has a direct operational effect.
- And the lack of transport capacity increases the risk of fraudulent use of Danish funds.

CIMIC RECRUITMENT

The Danish Armed Forces have a professional CIMIC training and development structure. However, it was not until 2010 that a national CIMIC unit was formed. During the greater part of Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan, CIMIC officers and NCOs were individually selected for deployment by the centralised Danish Defence Personnel Agency; this was also the case for other military functions that were not found in the national peacetime

military structure, It was also possible to volunteer for specific posts. A number of persons volunteered out of interest in CIMIC but very few of the CIMIC officers and NCOs had any CIMIC experience prior to their deployment.

Apparently the comprehensive military skills requirements, the high physical fitness standards and the strong personality qualities required for deployment made recruitment difficult. Also, in several cases the selection of CIMIC officers and NCOs took place so late that they could not complete parts of the CIMIC training or could not participate in the pre-deployment training together with the rest of their rotation. During roundtable discussions several of the participants have stated that it appeared that CIMIC did not have a high priority in the Armed Forces, because the competent officers and NCOs were assigned to other occupational specialties.

It was seldom possible to find a replacement for a repatriated CIMIC officer or NCO due to the fact that immediately qualified candidates were seldom to be found on short notice in the national military personnel structure. A general lesson from a long mission with a medium-sized CIMIC contribution is that there is a requirement for a well-developed national CIMIC structure in order to train and deploy the right personnel at the right time.

RECRUITMENT

- The extensive military fitness and functional requirements that CIMIC personnel had to meet made recruitment and deployment difficult.

TRAINING

The training of CIMIC personnel comprised a combined stand-up and training program of up to three months' duration, of which two weeks were allocated to a dedicated CIMIC qualifications course. Later a one-week project management module with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was added to the training. The training program concluded with a series of exercises for the whole Danish contingent, during which the CIMIC personnel had the opportunity to test their skills and operate jointly with the rest of the Danish Battle Group in a realistic scenario. The exercises were often the first time that the CIMIC personnel met the other units in the Battle Group. However, there were only a very few CIMIC injects in the final exercises for the Danish contingent, which were often played during breaks in the combat operations.

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Some of the CIMIC teams participated together in a two-week course at the CIMIC training centre¹⁹ in the Netherlands. The course taught the participants CIMIC doctrine at the operational level; however, the course did not reflect the tactical reality they encountered in the mission. In any case, the course strengthened team cohesion and imparted a good understanding of CIMIC to the participants.

On the first rotations, CIMIC had to follow the units into battle (and was called “combat CIMIC”). As a number of CIMIC officers and NCOs were older and came from the combat support and combat service support branches, the training program was adapted to emphasise combat skills such as marksmanship, first aid, and physical training. This was done to such an extent that it completely detracted from CIMIC functional training and exercises. The attrition rate during training was generally high, which to a large extent can be attributed to the fact that CIMIC personnel had to meet the same physical fitness requirements as the combat soldiers. It was also difficult to find candidates who met the requirements regarding maturity, age and good people skills and who could also meet the same stringent physical fitness and military skills requirements as the combat troops. Therefore, a number of otherwise qualified officers and NCOs washed out shortly before deployment.

The regular reporting clearly stated that the efficacy of CIMIC in the mission’s area of operation requires comprehensive mission-specific training, including training in local as well as particular societal conditions and relationships.

Most CIMIC personnel ascertained that the cultural awareness training they received prior to deployment in preparation for their work among Afghan and Muslim communities was beneficial and useful but quite insufficient, because it was too general and vague regarding local society in Helmand. In the mission, the Danish CIMIC personnel learned, however, that the contact skills they had been taught were less important, because the Afghan interlocutors respected the nice and polite behaviour of the Danish CIMIC personnel.

During interviews and roundtable discussions the participants have characteristically expressed the opinion that the training did not adequately prepare them for their tasks and for the reality on the ground that they encountered in the mission area, and that this did not change during duration of Denmark’s engagement in Afghanistan. Their retrospective conclusion is that the unit responsible for pre-deployment training considered CIMIC operations to be a secondary task.

19 Civil-Military Centre of Excellence in The Hague, which has been accredited by NATO in 2005 as the Alliance’s CIMIC doctrine development and training establishment.

TRAINING

- The military skills and physical fitness requirements that have to be met for deployment can clash with the people skills and personality profile of a good CIMIC officer or NCO.
- Thus the training did not sufficiently prepare the individual CIMIC officer or NCO for the reality on the ground in the mission area.
- Training and education in societal conditions, local culture and social conventions not only contribute to the preparation of the individual CIMIC officer and NCO for deployment but also increase the effectiveness of CIMIC operations.

TRANSFER AND CAPTURE OF LESSONS

The capture of lessons was an important and integral part of the force rotation procedures in connection with the operations in Afghanistan. The procedures introduced during the operations in the Balkans were for the most part continued in Afghanistan.

The force commander²⁰ shall furthermore transfer the lessons the force has learned to the next rotation, and also ensure that the general guidelines for the completion of – and support to – projects are handed over from rotation to rotation.

A handover/takeover procedure initially consisted of four elements, but this model was continually adjusted as the number of lessons captured increased.

First, a visit to the mission was organised for the commander of the incoming rotation and selected key personnel. The CIMIC commander could personally get an impression of the demands and conditions pertaining to the CIMIC detachment's mission and receive the opportunity to conduct internal discussions regarding the general preparations for deployment.

²⁰ Inter alia Annex 1 to the Commander's Force Directive for Afghanistan, 2007.

Rotations 1 – 5 in Helmand produced official end-of-tour reports, which were usually written shortly (approximately two months) before the unit returned to Denmark. The reports had a standard format, in which all functional areas, including CIMIC, were systematically addressed; and the outgoing unit's lessons identified, recommendations and proposals for changes in doctrine, procedures, organisation, equipment, training, etc. were clearly stated. However, the lesson was that the work required to staff the copious reports was so time-consuming that it took up to one year (i.e. two rotations) before the lessons could be utilised in the mission's area of operations. Therefore, it was decided to replace the formal reports with a seminar that was conducted immediately after redeployment to Denmark. The returning unit, the unit that was rotating approximately five months later, and the responsible functional agencies, commands, schools, organisations and authorities met for a systematic debriefing, the results of which were immediately actionable. In the roundtable discussions, the participants expressed great satisfaction with the informal seminar structure, which made it possible to present relevant lessons. However the Working Group producing this report should also point out that the informal debriefing structure has entailed that there is scant documentation – and often a complete lack of documentation regarding the later decisions to change doctrine, organisation, training etc. This change in procedure led to a more expeditious transfer of lessons and knowledge; however, at the same time it appears that this has weakened the general institutional learning ability within the Danish Armed Forces as the transfer of knowledge depended on the personalities involved. And this led to an apparent lack of written documentation, which entails the risk that this knowledge will only be embedded in the mission-specific context.

Then there was a period of several weeks during which there was a direct handover/takeover between the rotations in the mission area. It was essentially possible for each person to meet with his counterpart for approximately one week. In interviews and roundtable discussions, the participants, however, stated that the course of events turned out differently. Weather conditions and the security situation sometimes shortened the time available for an ideal handover/takeover, and the outgoing rotation was responsible for the actual conduct of the handover/takeover procedure. Some rotations had an effective handover/takeover from their predecessors, during which the incoming personnel were introduced to all the local cooperation partners, while others observed that no handover/takeover whatsoever had taken place. The lesson is that personal attitudes and efforts are of great importance to the outcome of the handover/takeover process.

After returning to Denmark, a few selected CIMIC officers and NCOs participated in the training of the next rotation, which would deploy six months later. This arrangement had functioned for a number of years prior to the mission in Afghanistan. It was introduced to include the latest lessons learned from the mission in the training of the new CIMIC rotation, even though some of these lessons could be outdated when the rotation deployed. Roundtable discussions have shown that each rotation developed new procedures for its

daily routine work based its own perception of best practices, which probably diminished the effect of the transfer of lessons learned. This practice made the long-term transfer of lessons learned more difficult and caused the incoming rotation to develop its own procedures as well. Beginning in 2010, a staggered rotation of one of the CIMIC officers, who was deployed two months prior to the deployment of the next rotation, was introduced to ensure an overlap between the outgoing and incoming CIMIC rotations. This resulted in a better handover of contacts and projects, and it also improved continuity.

Especially from interviews and roundtable discussions it is rather clear that close and personal relationships with the local population are considered very important, and the need to hand over these personal contacts requires special attention in order to build confidence while during the handover/takeover between the rotations.

Finally, it is clear to the Working Group behind this report that it has been a challenge to the systematic collection of knowledge and lessons from a functional area such as CIMIC that a standing, professional CIMIC organisation within the Armed Forces that can capture and transform the lessons identified and learned by the deployed personnel has been established so late in the process. Many of lessons have been transformed into learning for the present and not for the future and have, therefore, been lost. Hardly any of the deployed CIMIC officers have subsequently served in CIMIC positions, and therefore, their knowledge was never utilised for the benefit of subsequent deployments, and it has only lately been exploited by the Armed Forces to develop an actual CIMIC capability.

TRANSFER AND CAPTURE OF LESSONS

- The collection and retention of lessons captured did have the attention of the leadership of the Danish Armed Forces; and handover/takeover procedures were continuously developed.
- However, a lack of standard procedures for project management can entail that new procedures are developed by each rotation, which may impede the smooth transfer of projects from the outgoing rotation to the incoming rotation. The fact that there was no permanent, readily deployable CIMIC capability in the Danish Armed Forces until 2010 has diminished the ability to systematically collect lessons from operations.
- With the establishment of a standing CIMIC unit, the Danish Armed Forces have increased their ability to contribute to international operations.

FUNDING: CIMIC OR INTEGRATED APPROACH?

Specific funds were allocated for CIMIC projects, and each rotation had a fixed sum at its disposal, which during most of the mission was approx. 500,000 DKK. In total, Rotations 1 – 13 in Helmand (from 2006 to 2012) spent 6.9 million DKK on the CIMIC effort. Only one rotation requested an increase in funding, which indicates that the budgeted amount was generally found to be sufficient.

In the early phase of operations in Helmand, the procedures for spending Danish CIMIC funds were more flexible than the British procedures. And, therefore, the Danish contribution was highly appreciated. Later the British company commanders received their own discretionary funds, which they could use for small projects and shuras. The expenditure of these funds did not have to meet the same accounting standards as those of the Danish government, and their utilisation was, therefore, even more flexible.

Based primarily on the experience with the British procedures, it was decided in 2011 to provide the Danish contingent commander with a special, more flexible “commander’s pool” of funds, which could be spent directly and on short notice on mission-support projects. To a certain extent, this put the Danish contingent commander on an equal footing with his British and U.S. counterparts. A large portion of these funds, which came from Integrated Approach funds, was spent on capacity-building projects in direct support of the Afghan National Security Forces, i.e. the Afghan National Army as well as the Afghan National Police. This contributed to the stabilisation effort by developing institutions that benefitted the Afghan citizens. At the same time there were fewer projects aimed directly at Afghan civilians.

In practice the changing Battle Groups shifted pragmatically between spending CIMIC funds and funds from the “commander’s pool”. The budget constraints often determined whether a project ended up being a CIMIC project or a project financed by the “commander’s pool”.

FUNDING: CIMIC OR INTEGRATED APPROACH?

- A lesson is that whenever the military units had identified a worthwhile project, resources were used pragmatically and with a view to achieving the desired result.

CIMIC COOPERATION WITH STABILISATION ADVISERS

The CIMIC detachment was often used by the civilian stabilisation advisers serving, e.g., at PRT Helmand and later with the Danish Battle Group, to supervise and inspect projects that were inaccessible to the stabilisation advisers for security reasons. Consequently, CIMIC personnel supplemented the civilian effort, thus straining the already limited CIMIC resources. This caused some frustration among the CIMIC officers, who found that they were being exploited as staff officers and administrators in support of the stabilisation advisers and their work.

In interviews as well as roundtable discussions it became clear that the CIMIC pre-deployment training and preparation did not include instruction in how to work with stabilisation advisers. The actual cooperation that took place in the mission area was highly dependent on the chemistry and personal relationships between the two parties and apparently to much lesser degree on a commonality of interests.

In interviews with several of the Battle Group commanders, it was made clear that they were aware that CIMIC was being used for other tasks than just CIMIC operations and information collection. Several of the commanders expressed the necessity of making CIMIC revert to its core task, which is to support military operations, as they found that CIMIC had become too involved in stabilisation and development work. Conversely, they were aware that as there were no civil structures, there was no alternative to deploying CIMIC assets due to the security situation and humanitarian considerations.

It was a lesson that the military rotations, which deployed for a period of six months, viewed projects and progress within the time frame of their own deployment, often without studying past planning or considering the results to be achieved by future rotations. The stabilisation advisers had a longer-term perspective, which often meant that the advisers assigned a lower priority to short-term activities, which the Danish Battle Group, on the other hand, considered necessary to achieving its desired operational results during its period of deployment. This was due to the fact that it was not possible in practice to set tenable and long-term goals for the mission. This naturally gave rise to conflicts among the actors at the tactical level within the area of operations, which had the effect that the projects were not always fully coordinated.

COOPERATION BETWEEN CIMIC PERSONNEL AND STABILISATION ADVISORS

- Good personal relations between CIMIC personnel and stabilisation advisers are important to the mutual coordination of their work.

FEMALE CIMIC PERSONNEL

The Danish Armed Forces deployed at least three women in CIMIC functions, which facilitated contacts with the local women in Gereshk. It was learned that it was easier to make contact with women in a larger town like Gereshk, whereas outside the towns it was more difficult, but less important to the mission. However, a lesson was that contacts with women actually provided much valuable information about local society, which could also be exploited by military intelligence and give a better understanding of the power structures in the local community. Female CIMIC officers did not experience any difficulties in relation to Afghan men, who generally accepted that women have a different role in Danish society.

DANISH CIMIC LESSONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTEGRATED APPROACH OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The main lesson is that CIMIC as an operational function performed as intended and supported the military operations. Another lesson is that although CIMIC has the potential to do much more (including cooperating with and supplementing stabilisation advisers in their work, planning and supervising larger projects etc.), these activities exceeded the competencies of the Danish CIMIC units and CIMIC officers in Afghanistan. The prerequisite for an effective CIMIC effort is freedom of movement within the area of operations in order to maintain contact with the local population as well as supervise projects. Another requirement is the flexible allocation of funding. In order to carry out its mission optimally, CIMIC should be fully integrated into the planning and execution of operations. This was not always the case.

CIMIC and small projects, such as QIPs, can only serve immediate military purposes and cannot be considered as contributions to actual stabilisation or reconstruction. It is also a lesson from Afghanistan that local communities quickly adapt to the CIMIC focus on certain types of projects, and this creates a rigid, interdependent relationship, which can be difficult to break.

The selection and training of CIMIC personnel for deployment to Afghanistan was inconsistent and deficient during the duration of the mission, but in spite of this they accomplished their mission in Afghanistan. However, a lesson is that there is a need for a broader recruiting base and that CIMIC training needs to enjoy a higher priority and should include a detailed introduction to the particular mission area and the prevailing societal conditions.

Only a very few CIMIC officers and NCOs subsequently utilised their experience and knowledge or served again in CIMIC positions. A lesson is that the Armed Forces had difficulties transforming lessons into institutional learning before 2010, when an actual CIMIC capability was established.

FROM LESSONS CAPTURED TO INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

The combined Danish stabilisation effort was a counter-insurgency operation. During almost the entire duration of Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan the security situation was very challenging – especially in Helmand. Counter-insurgency was a new mission for both the Danish Armed Forces and the Danish civil authorities. Even though the Danish effort was based on close integration with the British contribution to the multinational operation in Helmand, it is evident that the deployed units and individual persons lacked a common doctrinal foundation. This entailed that the units in Afghanistan had to develop their own methods while they were deployed on operations. The Danish Armed Forces did not develop and implement a doctrine for the contribution of the Armed Forces to stabilisation operations until late in its engagement in Afghanistan. And there are still no documents establishing common procedures or structures for the Integrated Approach among the involved Danish authorities at the tactical level in the mission area.

The dangerous security situation and the asymmetric warfare in Afghanistan were the main challenges to the Afghan operation. It was also a real obstacle to the completion of many stabilisation projects. It should be expected that comparable security issues will also block civilian stabilisation efforts in similar future missions. There are no signs that the intervention of international organisations to secure a peaceful and stable development in fragile and conflict-afflicted states will immediately create a security situation in which humanitarian operations and the reconstruction of vital societal structures can be conducted without danger to the civilian population or the staff of the humanitarian organisations.

The numerous CIMIC projects were tactical activities that almost always supported tactical military objectives. On the patrols in Mazar-e Sharif, Feyzbad, and Chagcharan CIMIC were activities that helped secure the goodwill of the population towards the military units and thus contributed to the units' force protection. In Helmand the CIMIC projects contribute both to establishing good relations with the local population and to collecting information that was important to establishing a tolerable security situation in the area.

Even though many CIMIC projects were identical to Integrated Approach projects, CIMIC activities did not necessarily support longer-term stabilisation objectives. The CIMIC activities aimed at achieving a short-term, favourable effect and were integrated into the other military activities and the military operations in areas where the adversary, the Taliban, was active, especially against the local population. There were, however, cases in which CIMIC activities had a destabilising effect because they favoured one party over another in the local community or because the money injected into to the local community had a destabilising effect.

The contributions to the three PRTs, Mazar-e Sharif, Feyzabad, and Chagcharan directly supported the stabilisation effort that was ongoing in these PRTs. Danish patrols augmented by staff officers and a stabilisation adviser were a well-functioning combination as long as the security situation was permissive. The contributions were also considered valuable by Denmark's partner nations. In connection with the withdrawal of the troop contributions from the PRTs, it was a lesson that without attached national stabilisation funds many of the possible stabilisation projects disappeared as well. In Chagcharan, it was eventually clear that a handful of staff officers without funds or patrols may only contribute to the international effort as tokens of Denmark's political support, but their efforts are not significant in supporting or promoting stabilisation.

In Helmand the tactical operations have to be viewed in relation to the changing objectives during the period of the engagement. The CIMIC detachment supported the work of the stabilisation advisers and other civilian contributors throughout the period, thereby also contributing to the stabilisation effort. The activities of the stabilisation advisers were conducted in cooperation with the Danish Battle Group and adhered to the concepts and plans in the mission area. Integrated Approach projects as well as CIMIC projects were aimed at building infrastructure; it was not until later in the mission that focus shifted to capacity building through mentoring. It was also not until the middle of the mission that Denmark contributed to the training of the local police, which is an important element in the stabilisation.

The combined Danish activities thus supported stabilisation efforts in the local community, but the efforts continued to have a narrow focus, as there was a lack of specialists in several fields, e.g., agriculture, government administration and rule of law. The deployed units and advisers tried to cover all areas, but lacked important competencies to be effective, even though a number of requirements for a broad-based civilian effort had already been articulated by Rotation 2 in Helmand. Viewed from a narrow Danish perspective, this may have been due to the fact that the conduct of the Integrated Approach effort was limited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence. Also, the infusion of very large amounts of Western funds into a society with competing factions had a destabilising effect. All things considered, the Integrated Approach Effort did not explicitly support the long-term stabilisation of the local community, even though some progress could be seen as long as the effort was ongoing and it was possible to maintain a tolerable level of security.

The general assessment is that the utilised instruments were rather effective under the circumstances, but also short-sighted. The lesson is also that a short-sighted, positive effect does not automatically lead to lasting stabilisation in an area. A long-lasting, long-term development effort with the permanent presence of both security structures and civilian institutions responsible for the whole country was required. That level was not achieved, in part because the security situation could not be maintained at a level where the development effort could take effect, and in part because the country's civilian

institutions were not capable of assuming full responsibility for the development effort. Furthermore, both the stabilisation advisers and the CIMIC personnel had difficulty identifying Afghan solutions, because the Afghan partners at different levels articulated very different aims.

It is an important lesson from Afghanistan that when someone steps in as actor in a counter-insurgency war, one becomes a party to the conflict, and that affects the security situation, stabilisation and reconstruction. The CIMIC units and the stabilisation advisers learned that the population had to adapt to both parties to the conflict and that they, therefore, sometimes would not cooperate with the Danish units, because that could cost them their lives. Likewise it was a lesson that when coalition forces ceased to be physically present in an area, the Taliban exploited the vacuum and re-established control over the local population. The completed projects were then often destroyed or stood unused.

Even though it seems obvious, it is still a very basic lesson that the personal relations between the Danish military forces and the civilians deployed to the mission were very important to the achieved results. The personal relations functioned best when the parties had met each other in Denmark prior to deployment and had worked together during common training and exercises. However, stabilisation advisers rarely participated in the exercises of the Battle Group, because the Integrated Approach had not reached the tactical level during the preparatory phases. Almost all the civilian stabilisation advisers who have contributed to the report point out that their encounter with the “military planning machine” was almost intimidating, because all the members of the staff already knew each other closely, and because the staff did not have the necessary knowledge to comprehend the development effort.

The lessons from the Danish way of recruiting stabilisation advisers and also from the individual posting of CIMIC personnel are that key persons often did not become part of the Integrated Approach framework before arriving in the mission area, where the military commanders for many reasons concentrated on the combat operations. Therefore, there is near unanimity from all the conversations that this was the cause of disagreements that were an obstacle to the development of the necessary knowledge of each other’s tasks and capabilities, and to the building of mutual trust.

The conclusion of these lessons is that the success of the Integrated Approach is dependent on the cooperation at the personal level between the military unit and the deployed stabilisation adviser, which usually was not established before arrival in the mission area. Good will and personal commitment seem to have been the driving factor in the Integrated Approach effort rather than standard and common operating procedures for the military and the civilian efforts in the mission area.

One remarkable lesson from the Integrated Approach effort in Afghanistan is that the lessons were neither captured nor systematically exploited. During the duration of the mission in Afghanistan, there were several fact-finding missions either prior to the launching of an Integrated Approach project or at the beginning of a project, which offer certain lessons. These fact-finding visits often resulted in useful and concrete proposals and considerations, which have proven to be correct and farsighted. However, there are only a few cases in which it has been documented that these proposals were subsequently staffed or implemented. Therefore, it has not been possible to determine whether the failure to utilise these valuable assessments was an issue of a lack of capacity or a low prioritisation on the part of the involved authorities.

The civilian and military authorities who managed the Integrated Approach effort have only to a limited extent captured and learned from the lessons of Afghanistan. And the process of collecting these lessons has been onerous.

This applies both to the concrete lessons that should have been handed over from rotation to rotation during the course of the mission as well as the knowledge that should have been continually developed from rotation to rotation in order to adjust or improve the Integrated Approach effort. This definitely meant that each rotation went through the same phases of the learning process as the previous rotation and re-learned the same lessons as its predecessors, because these lessons had not been passed on to the succeeding rotations. The lessons are, therefore, almost cyclic in nature and not progressive and expanding. The lessons learned by Rotation 12 are to a large degree identical to the lessons learned by Rotation 5. The conclusion is that the way in which the deployments and the Integrated Approach operations were planned and directed encouraged each rotation to see itself as a unique entity and not as part of a long-term effort that began before the rotation's deployment and would continue after its return.

Furthermore, a general lesson is that most CIMIC officers and stabilisation advisers were specifically selected and trained to fill the particular position for which they were being deployed. Only a very few returned to positions in which they could put their knowledge and experience to good use and thus maintain and advance overall organisational learning and development.

When it was realised that the official end-of-tour reporting from the Battle Group in Helmand actually delayed the exploitation of the lessons, a direct transfer of lessons and knowledge in the form of seminars was instituted. These seminars were led by the responsible training authority, which in the case of CIMIC was the Army Fire Support, CIMIC and ISTAR Training Centre in Varde, with the participation of personnel from the rotation that had just returned from the mission and the rotation that was being formed for the next deployment. In this way the time factor was reduced. Furthermore, the staggered rotation of the second-in-command of the CIMIC detachment was introduced.

Immediately after the seminar, the CIMIC detachment's second-in-command deployed to the mission area in order to consolidate the transfer of the knowledge, lessons and experience gained in the area of operations to the incoming rotation.

The lesson from the direct and verbal transfer of lessons and knowledge in the mission area was not subsequently documented. Therefore, lessons and decisions were lost to all but the persons who were directly involved. Also, the practice of not archiving mission-related operational documents and materials in Denmark meant that it is very difficult to conduct a retrospective study or collection of lessons.

Also, it must be noted that the national reporting that was sent to Denmark from PRT Helmand has regrettably not been preserved in the archives. Therefore, it is not possible to reconstruct the regular assessments of the indicators of progress at the PRT level. In general, it is, therefore, important that materials are archived in such a way that it is possible to retrieve lessons in order to transform them in actions that benefit new operations.

ANNEX 1

To the report of the Royal Danish Defence College: *Lessons from the Integrated Approach in Afghanistan 2001-2014 – The Stabilisation and CIMIC Projects of the Danish Armed Forces*, 13 May 2016

The Contribution of the Danish Armed Forces to the Collection of Lessons from the Danish Integrated Approach Concept in Support of Operations in Afghanistan 2001 - 2014.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK

TASK DESCRIPTION

Office: International Department/Security Policy Division (SIN)
Desk Officer: LEI
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18 March 2015

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE DANISH ARMED FORCES TO THE COLLECTION OF LESSONS FROM THE 2001 – 2014 DANISH INTEGRATED APPROACH CONCEPT IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

Project Background

The NATO-led ISAF mission in Afghanistan closed at the end of 2014. As of 2015 the complete responsibility for Afghanistan's security and political, economic and social development will rest with the Afghans. The political parties supporting the Danish effort in Afghanistan agree that the time is now ripe for the collection of the lessons that have been garnered from the last approximately 13 years of Danish operations in Afghanistan.

Throughout the entire period Danish operations have rested on a solid UN mandate and have been conducted as an integrated part of a broad international effort. The Danish military contribution has been made within the framework of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force and has thus been under international command. The Danish development effort has likewise been conducted within the framework of the principal agreements between Afghanistan and the international donor community, including the Afghanistan Compact (2006) and the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (2012).

The Danish military effort has had broad political backing in the form of a number of acts of the Folketing (Danish Parliament), just as a very broad majority of the political parties in the Folketing behind the agreement on Danish participation in the international mission in Afghanistan have

supported the general political framework for the overall Danish political, military, development, humanitarian and police training effort in the form of coordinated strategies and plans. In that context it is not the aim of the report to assign responsibility or evaluate the political process behind Denmark's decision to contribute military forces and civilian capabilities to the international effort in Afghanistan. Furthermore, this collection of lessons is not to address military operations at the tactical and operational levels or issues pertaining to the treatment of detainees, which are to be dealt with by the commission of inquiry on Danish participation in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Aim

The collection of lessons is to focus on the integration of the Danish efforts, which took place under very demanding security conditions. The ambition is to produce a realistic and useful collection of lessons with a view to presenting what Denmark can learn from the operations in Afghanistan that may be applicable to future integrated efforts in fragile states.

Task Description

The contribution of the Danish Armed Forces to the collection of lessons from the engagement in Afghanistan will entail a collection of Danish lessons regarding projects that the Armed Forces have carried out in support of military operations (the so-called CIMIC projects) as well as stabilisation projects carried out in cooperation between the Armed Forces and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a view to investigating the manner in which and the extent to which stabilisation and military operations in Afghanistan were integrated. The intent is thus to draw upon extant Danish experience regarding the Integrated Approach at the operational and tactical levels.

To the extent that projects were carried out in cooperation with international partners, the report will confine itself to those projects that were completed using Danish funding and with Danish participation.

With a focus on the aim of the collection of these lessons, the intent is to base the report on already existing material, i.e. project guidelines, reports from the mission, lessons that have already been collected from deployed CIMIC and Foreign Ministry personnel or other relevant resource persons, e.g., by conducting roundtable discussions.

If the Armed Forces assess that there are source materials residing outside the archives of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will support the identification and procurement of such source materials as well as the establishment of contacts to former stabilisation advisers. The Ministries will also facilitate contacts to international partners for the purpose of collecting materials from them. Accordingly it is intended that already extant empirical data are to be used as the basis for the collection of these lessons.

Finally, the collected lessons regarding the Integrated Approach at the tactical level in Afghanistan should contextualize the indicators of progress, i.e. security, governance and development, with a view to determining whether the stabilisation efforts subsequently supported these objectives at the tactical level (e.g., CIMIC projects aimed at supporting military operations) as well as at higher levels from the perspective of development and the Integrated Approach concept.

Deliverables

The Armed Forces are expected to task the Royal Danish Defence College with producing a written report by the end of 2015. The report will be part of a combined written report that will be put together by the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) and presented during the first half of 2016. The analysis produced by the Royal Danish Defence College will be written in Danish and English. The total size of the contribution is not expected to exceed 30 pages.

Organisation

The task is in practice to be completed by the Royal Danish Defence College, which is the joint knowledge centre of the Danish Armed Forces. Primary responsibility for the completion of the report rests with the Dean's Office, which is also responsible for quality assurance. The Dean's Office is also responsible for the selection of researchers for the report (and for the involvement of necessary resource persons from other agencies) as well as coordination and direct contact with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and DIIS.

Time Frame

Work on the collection of lessons will be initiated in 2015 and concluded with the publication of the report during the first half of 2016. A detailed programme of work will be developed in coordination with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence Command Denmark, DIIS and the Royal Danish Defence College.

Finance

The contribution of the Danish Armed Forces to the collection of these lessons will be financed through the present budget of the Armed Forces.

ANNEX 2

To the report of the Royal Danish Defence College: *Lessons from the Integrated Approach in Afghanistan 2001-2014 – The Stabilisation and CIMIC Projects of the Danish Armed Forces*, 13 May 2016
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LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Name Rank/Title	Area of Endeavor/ Contribution to the Report	Position(s) Held Deployment Period
Individually deployed persons/Contributions to Staffs		
Ole Kværnø, Dean	Sub-national governance track etc.	Chief Governance Regional Command (RC) South and Southwest, 2009-2010
Thor Hilton, Colonel	Governance, COIN, HQ ISAF	Political Adviser to Commander ISAF (NATO force in Afghanistan) 2009-2010
Kim Nødskov, Major	Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) lessons captured	Helmand PRT J5 2010-2011
CIMIC Platoon/Detachment/S9 (Staff Officer CIMIC)		
Anne-Kathrine Riebnitzki	Reconstruction and women's projects	CIMIC, DANCON 4; Stabilisation Adviser on DANCON 6
Anders Johansen	Start-up of CIMIC in HQ DANCON 6	Commander CIMIC, DANCON 6; Stabilisation Adviser (STABAD), DANCON 8
Christan Starnov	Start-up of CIMIC in Task Force Helmand	CIMIC Officer, DANCON 3
Markus Knuth	Reconstruction at RC level, CJ9 (CIMIC) staff at HQ RC level, European Police Office (Europol)	CIMIC Officer, DANCON 6; STABAD
Lars Carl Gruby	Transition from Task Force Helmand to Danish Battle Group	Commander CIMIC, DANCON 4
National Police		
Jørgen Hoxer, Chief Superintendent	Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (POMLT) lessons captured (Integrated Approach and	POMLT in Gereshk 2011-2012

Name Rank/Title	Area of Endeavor/ Contribution to the Report	Position(s) Held Deployment Period
	stabilisation)	
Danish Ministry Of Defence		
Nicolai Christoffersen	Defence ministry stabilisation policy	Desk Officer, International Office 2011-2014
Lars Nygaard	Military contribution to stabilisation operations	Staff Officer, International Operations Department, Defence Command Denmark 2010-2012
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs		
Casper Klyngø	Civilian contribution to stabilisation operations, PRT Helmand	Danish Senior Civilian Representative, Deputy Head of Mission 2010-2012
STABADs		
Ole Brams	Stabilisation	STABAD 2009-2011
Lars Nejsig	Stabilisation	STABAD 2007-2008
Kim Schulz Petersen	Stabilisation	STABAD in PRT 2007-2011
Bruno Lauritzen	Stabilisation	STABAD and Chief of District Stabilisation Team 2011-2012
COMMANDERS		
Jens Lønborg	COIN, operations in fixed area of operations, stabilisation	Commander DANCON 5
Ken Knudsen	Late-stage stabilisation, partnering	Commander DANCON 12
Jens Riis-Vestergaard	Late-stage CIMIC	Commander DANCON 11
H. C. Mathiesen	Early-stage CIMIC and stabilisation	Commander DANCON 2
Mads Rahbeck	Transition to fixed area of operations	Deputy Commander DANCON 4
Staff Officers		
Christian Ishøj	Defence Command stabilisation policy	International Operations Department, Defence Command Denmark 2008-2010
Roundtable discussion 1		
Nicholas Veicherts	PRT development	Commander Danish PRT in Feyzabad Team 4 (2006)

Name Rank/Title	Area of Endeavor/ Contribution to the Report	Position(s) Held Deployment Period
Preben Bille-Brahe	CIMIC	DANCON 3
Henrik Lehmann Madsen	CIMIC Support Team (CST)	DANCON 13
Frank Carlsen	CST	DANCON 10, 14
Rundbordssamtale 2		
Valdemar Secher	CST start-up, PRT	DANCON 2
Brian Karup Weber	CST, planning	DANCON 5
Steen Bødker	Patrols, administration	DANCON 7
Mads Silberg	CST	DANCON 9
Jens Svensson	UK CST	DANCON 10
Peter Storegaard Jacobsen	UK CST	DANCON 11
Torben Brandt Pedersen	Second-in-Command (2IC) CIMIC	DANCONs 4, 11, 12
Anders S Hansen	2IC CIMIC (staggered rotation)	DANCON 11

ANNEX 3

To the report of the Royal Danish Defence College: *Lessons from the Integrated Approach in Afghanistan 2001-2014 – The Stabilisation and CIMIC Projects of the Danish Armed Forces*, 13 May 2016
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List of the Most Significant Lessons Regarding CIMIC and the Integrated Approach Concept in Support of Operations in Afghanistan 2001 - 2014

Lessons regarding the Helmand plans	<p>The Danish decision to accede to the British Helmand plans as the basis for the deployment and utilisation of the Danish CIMIC and stabilisation contributions was a positive factor in establishing a coordinated Allied effort in Helmand Province.</p> <p>The Danish Helmand plans were intended to serve as political documents that presented the political objectives of the integrated effort in Afghanistan to the Danish public. However, the expectation on the ground in the mission area was that the plans could function as the basis for the planning of the Danish Integrated Approach effort in Helmand.</p>
Lessons regarding the Danish integrated contribution to PRT Helmand	<p>Presence and influence are complementary. Small troop contributions give limited insight into and influence over overall multinational planning; large contributions open the door to increased understanding and greater influence. Establishing objectives and planning the implementation of the Integrated Approach effort expedite influence and provide more effective results.</p>
Stabilisation Advisors and the District Stabilisation Team (DST)	<p>The lack of leadership in the DSTs affected the coordination between civilian and military contributions to stabilisation operations.</p> <p>Adequate means of transportation and sufficient protection capabilities are essential to the optimal accomplishment of the mission and to the avoidance of loss of civilian influence.</p>
Stabilisation funds	<p>Flexible approval procedures facilitated the rapid implementation of aid projects.</p> <p>Integrated approach funds served to a great extent as a gap filler between short-term aid to the local community and the longer-term stabilisation and development assistance.</p>
Project management	<p>Stabilisation advisors have great difficulty in developing, implementing and supervising stabilisation projects when the security situation prevents them from moving outside the bases.</p> <p>A centralised tender process can inhibit corruption. However, at the local level, it entails the loss of influence and knowledge regarding aid projects.</p> <p>The lack of awareness of the limited ability of the local Afghan authorities concerning the use of stabilisation and development funds reduced the effectiveness of many aid projects.</p>

Recruitment and terms of employment	<p>It was difficult to recruit suitable candidates to serve as stabilisation advisers under the extremely challenging security conditions in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The employment of external consultants on short-term contracts can contribute to the desired effort, but in the long term it entails a loss of competency and challenges to the institutional learning of operational lessons.</p>
Training	<p>The efficiency of the stabilisation advisers is increased if they receive effective and comprehensive training and preparation for working together with military units in a challenging security environment.</p>
Collection of lessons	<p>Seminars in which the key actors involved in Integrated Approach operations meet in order to identify and capture lessons contribute to the further development of the Integrated Approach concept.</p> <p>Failure to conduct a systematic collection of lessons identified and lessons learned as well as failure to properly hand over projects and personal contacts result in diminished effectiveness and loss of competencies.</p>
The relationship between stabilisation and CIMIC	<p>No common understanding (i.e. doctrine) was developed for the operational implementation of the politically articulated Integrated Approach policy in the mission area.</p> <p>In the mission area, there was in practice no real differentiation between CIMIC operations and stabilisation efforts.</p>
Staff contributions	<p>The posting of staff officers in key positions offered insight and influence. However, this advantage was seldom exploited.</p>
Police training and rule of law	<p>Building a trustworthy police force is a key element in the stabilisation of the local community.</p> <p>Police training and rule of law assistance are not fully integrated into the Danish Integrated Approach to stabilisation.</p>
General lessons regarding CIMIC in an Alliance context	<p>A CIMIC detachment can contribute as an independent Danish capability within an Alliance framework. There is however a lower threshold for the size of the unit if it is to have any influence on operational planning.</p> <p>If a Danish CIMIC unit is attached to an Alliance partner and has organic resources that the host unit can utilise, the incentive to involve the CIMIC unit in the decision-making process is increased.</p> <p>CIMIC is an important and useful instrument in counterinsurgency operations.</p>
Integration of CIMIC in the operational planning of the Danish Battle Group	<p>The operational effectiveness of CIMIC is increased through its integration in the operational planning process and through close cooperation with intelligence.</p> <p>The clout of CIMIC in relation to local authorities, institutions and the local population is increased through a close and visible relationship with the host unit's leadership.</p>
Projects and project management	<p>Small-scale and simple goodwill projects actively support military operations and are effective in winning the support of the local population, but their effect is short-lived. These projects require follow-up action in order to sustain their effect in time and space.</p> <p>The uncritical infusion of large sums of money into the local communities easily leads to inflation and distortion of the local societal structures.</p> <p>The necessity of supervising the expenditure of resources and the proper</p>

	completion of infrastructure projects requires technical guidance and oversight capabilities.
The impact of the security situation	The security situation has overarching significance for the ability to complete even limited CIMIC projects.
Transportation and mobility	Access to timely and coordinated transportation has a direct operational effect. And the lack of transport capacity increases the risk of fraudulent use of Danish funds.
Recruitment	The extensive military fitness and functional requirements that CIMIC personnel had to meet made recruitment and deployment difficult.
Training	The military skills and physical fitness requirements that have to be met for deployment can clash with the people skills and personality profile of a good CIMIC officer or non-commissioned officer (NCO). Thus the training did not sufficiently prepare the individual CIMIC officer or NCO for the reality on the ground in the mission area. Training and education in societal conditions, local culture and social conventions not only contribute to the preparation of the individual CIMIC officer and NCO for deployment but also increase the effectiveness of CIMIC operations.
Transfer and capture of lessons	The collection and retention of lessons captured did have the attention of the leadership of the Danish Armed Forces; and handover/takeover procedures were continuously developed. However, a lack of standard procedures for project management can entail that new procedures are developed by each rotation, which may impede the smooth transfer of projects from the outgoing rotation to the incoming rotation. The fact that there was no permanent, readily deployable CIMIC capability in the Danish Armed Forces until 2010 has diminished the ability to systematically collect lessons captured from operations. With the establishment of a standing CIMIC unit, the Danish Armed Forces have increased their ability to contribute to international operations.
Funding: CIMIC or Integrated Approach?	A lesson is that whenever the military units had identified a worthwhile project, resources were used pragmatically and with a view to achieving the desired result.
Cooperation between CIMIC personnel and stabilisation advisors	Good personal relations between CIMIC personnel and stabilisation advisers are important to the mutual coordination of their work.

LESSONS FROM THE DANISH INTEGRATED APPROACH IN AFGHANISTAN 2001 – 2014

At the end of 2014, the NATO-led ISAF-mission was brought to a close and the Danish combat troops withdrawn. Against this backdrop, the political parties behind the Danish engagement in Afghanistan agreed to compile experiences from the past thirteen years of Danish civil and military efforts in Afghanistan. The compilation should focus on lessons regarding the Danish integration of political, military and developmental instruments, which has taken place under very challenging security conditions.

The study consists of three parts, of which this report is part III. The three parts are:

- Part I** International Lessons from Integrated Approaches in Afghanistan, prepared by DIIS, Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Part II** Development Cooperation in Afghanistan, prepared by development consultants Landell Mills.
- Part III** Danish Lessons from Stabilisation & CIMIC Projects, prepared by The Royal Danish Defence College.