

# Principles and Pragmatism Civil-Military Action in Afghanistan and Liberia

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**BARTKLEM**  
RESEARCH



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## Rationale of this study

This study looks into *civil-military relations* in conflict and post-conflict countries. In recent years, the issue has invoked a heated debate, which has occasionally lacked nuance and clarity. Some guidelines have emerged, but they are hardly sufficient for adequate positioning. This study focuses on Afghanistan and Liberia and is intended to assist policymakers and practitioners in developing *adequate strategies* by answering the following questions:

What does cooperation between peacekeeping forces and aid agencies entail in practice?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of peacekeeping forces in providing civilian aid?

What are the risks and opportunities involved for NGOs when cooperating with peacekeeping forces?

What opinion do civil society organisations in the countries concerned have about cooperation with peacekeeping forces?

The study starts out by highlighting the changing nature of contemporary conflict and the concomitant changes in the humanitarian, military and development domains. It goes on to order and define key concepts used in current debates on the topic. The subsequent description of civil-military relations in the current peace missions in Afghanistan and Liberia is based on extensive field work and forms the main empirical body of the report. The final chapter draws conclusions and lessons from both cases.

## The global context

Closer interaction between military and civil actors (donors, international organisations, non-governmental organisations or NGOs) is a *logical consequence of current developments in the international arena*, such as the reform of the United Nations (UN), the emergence of integrated approaches (which combine security, political and development instruments), the changing nature of warfare and peacekeeping, and the 'war on terror'. Finally, it reflects some of the recent evolutions in humanitarian and development intervention, such as the proliferation of multi-mandate organisations and conflict-sensitive approaches. Most stakeholders can exert but *little influence* on these external and fairly autonomous processes at a global level. Moreover, it is relatively uncontested that the nature of the problems at hand requires a *combination*, if not an *integration*, of military and civil activities and expertise. We thus posit that the question is not so much *whether* to relate to those changes, but *how* to relate to them and make the best of it. *Aid agencies, donors and the military need to remain aware of these contextual developments and to reflect on the implications for themselves.*

Donor governments and military actors generally have welcomed and *encouraged closer collaboration* in the framework of their integrated policies. Important humanitarian and development actors, however, have raised concerns about compromising the *humanitarian imperative* and the associated *humanitarian principles* of impartiality, independence and neutrality. They also fear that aid will become *subordinate* to political and military objectives and logic. Finally, it has been argued that integrating military, humanitarian and development work will lead to a *blurring of distinctions* and thus *endanger the safety* of aid workers. Though the study critically reflects on these concerns, we observe that *special caution is required when peacekeepers have no UN mandate, try to enforce a victor's peace or face significant resistance from local communities.*

## Civil and military interventions in Afghanistan and Liberia

Afghanistan and Liberia are extreme cases. In Afghanistan the war on terror has reached its most mature stage. Liberia represents the most developed version of UN reform as an integrated peace support mission.

In Afghanistan, the *Provincial Reconstruction Teams* (PRTs) are a crucible of civil-military relations. They comprise the effort of the Coalition Forces and the *International Security Assistance Force* (ISAF) to help the Afghan government on its feet, create a secure environment and facilitate reconstruction efforts and the establishment of the rule of law. The PRTs consist of soldiers, but they host diplomats and development staff as well.

The *United Nations Mission In Liberia* (UNMIL) encompasses peacekeeping troops, a section for the rule of law and a section that coordinates humanitarian activities, such as those by the UN agencies. In areas where both kinds of expertise are required - e.g. with the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) of ex-combatants - UNMIL and the UN agencies collaborate.

After the demise of the Taliban and Taylor regime respectively, Afghanistan and Liberia witnessed a *tremendous influx of foreign aid and NGOs*, in addition to the few that continued to work throughout the war years. In response to the great demand for local organisations, Liberian and Afghan NGOs multiplied. The aid scene became chaotic, with a massive number of agencies and limited coordination.

## Reviewing civil-military interactions

The issue of civil-military relations is often categorised as CIMIC (the NATO term for Civil-Military Cooperation). This is a mistake, however, not just because the term harbours a limited, military logic, but also because there is a *much greater range of activities and forms of cooperation than those labelled as CIMIC*.

Looking at the evidence, there is in fact a *gradational spectrum of interventions* ranging from hearts-and-minds activities, psychological operations, rule of law activities, development programmes affiliated with the military interventions, assistance provided by governmental and inter-governmental agencies, projects run by local and international NGOs and activities implemented by contractors and companies.

In both countries, a rather extensive set of civil-military *coordination mechanisms* has emerged, though in many cases the talking does not actually lead to adjustments on the ground, participants feel. In Afghanistan, it is very common for the military to *subcontract aid agencies* - particularly local NGOs - to run small projects for them. Normally, NGOs and the military do not join hands in the actual design or execution of activities, but collaboration between diplomats and donor staff (who reside within the PRT) is intense. In Liberia, the *provision of security and logistic support* (especially transport and medical facilities) to NGOs is a common occurrence. In addition, some programmes - such as the DDRR process - are *jointly executed*.

It is hard to *categorise* all these activities as purely civil or military. There are different shades of grey. The recommended *mode of realignment* between military and civilian actors depends on the context. The study has shown that work may continue on the basis of a more or less *traditional division of labour*. In other cases, however, more *coordinated* approaches are warranted, including even fully *integrated* or *joint* exercises. In a number of cases, the military actors have encroached on civilian domains without good reasons and could better withdraw.

The case studies made it clear that many of these interventions are not yet established practice. The integrated mission is a relatively new concept, both for the people who are part of the mission and for the people who operate outside of it. Within the mission, attempts are being made to cut down on overlap and optimally integrate the efforts. NGOs, on the other hand, are not part of the mission. They are grappling with the question of how to relate to integrated missions. On the part of UN leadership, the lesson ought to be learnt that the *imposition of structures may backfire*. Unhelpful controversies could be kept to a minimum by taking a more *cautious approach* and preventing the mission from being perceived as an arrogant, UN imposition.

Both among civilian and military actors, there is a *difference* between 'party line', formal positions or textbook realities on the one hand and actual practice on the other. Often, headquarter guidelines are neither effective nor desirable, as they leave too little room for local adjustments. *We thus suggest that a more strategic understanding is reached prior to deployment and enough flexibility is permitted to those in charge of local missions*. Such multi-level thinking in advance of the mission could resolve many implementation issues arising in the field.

## Views and positions

We have roughly divided aid agencies into three archetypical positions with regard to civil-military relations. The *principled neutralists* try to stay away from the military as much as possible. Collaboration, they feel, would jeopardise humanitarian principles - humanity, independence, impartiality and neutrality - and increase security risks. The *pragmatists* acknowledge these principles and issues, but they deal with them in a more practical manner when the context allows. Finally, the third group - the *supporters* - welcome collaboration with the military in view of the urgent needs to be addressed. We found that most aid agencies take a rather *pragmatic approach*, weighing up context-specific opportunities and risks.

Both local NGOs and some of the INGO staff working at field level tend to be open to collaboration. They feel that INGO headquarters lose themselves in the 'poetry and philosophy' of academic discussions about principles and hypothetic approaches that may impede effective aid delivery. They feel that a *principled stance is a luxury that only the richer organisations can afford*. They themselves are grateful for any support, whether provided by the military or not.

Similar views resonate among the communities, particularly in north Afghanistan and Liberia. In some cases the assertion that NGOs should stay away from the military even invokes a laughing response. For many, it matters little to them who provides assistance. Strikingly, *the peacekeepers are generally more popular than NGOs*. People thank the soldiers for establishing security, disarming the combatants and for the highly visible aid they deliver. Many NGOs, on the other hand, are censured for being uncommitted, untrustworthy and ineffective.

On the part of the military, some are sceptical about aid workers and classify them as self-interested amateurs. Most of the troops, however, realise that the efforts of aid agencies are essential to the success of their mission.

## Opportunities of civil-military relations

Some comparative advantages are fairly clear and uncontested. The military are key in *establishing security* and sharing *security information*. Moreover, they have *expertise* for strengthening the local army, police, judiciary and so on, as well as in disarming former combatants. The military has a large *presence* and good *logistic facilities*, which may be of use to aid programmes. They have airlifting capacity and medical facilities, both of which may benefit aid agencies. In many cases, however, the military feel their staff and logistics are already overstretched.

To some extent, the military has better *access to dangerous areas*. Though troops can provide assistance in instable areas, they are often unable to protect the assets they provided or the people they provided them to. In south Afghanistan, Coalition Forces were able to set up schools, but some of them were subsequently burnt down and teachers were killed.

In both countries, the dictum 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary' is often not honoured, as *the military has provided assistance that could be provided by NGOs as well*. In reality, however, there are so many needs that NGO efforts are by no means sufficient.

Dialogue, mutual training and exchanging information provide opportunities for collaboration between aid agencies and peacekeepers, but some of these efforts are somewhat disappointing in practice. Diverging interests and cultures, high staff turnover and ineffective meetings *undermine* proper *coordination*. These shortcomings could be better addressed.

Finally, there are opportunities for peacekeepers and aid agencies to *pool* their expertise and jointly execute programmes. This particularly applies to processes that require both military and development inputs. The DDRR process is an example, but activities with regard to the rule of law, election support and the resettlement of displaced people could also qualify.

## Risks of civil-military relations

Aid workers run a greater security risk when they are identified with soldiers, but this risk was much more significant in south Afghanistan than in the north and in Liberia, simply because in the latter areas, security conditions were quite good. In the more dangerous parts of Afghanistan, agencies have complained that the Coalition uses assistance as a tool in the war and, therefore, the insurgency has declared aid agencies to be agents of the West and thus legitimate targets. *Attacks on aid agencies are, however, primarily a result of the general context, rather than of the blurring of lines between aid workers and the military.* Aid agencies nonetheless try to limit the public profile of collaboration. They refrain from going into the field with the military, they change the colour of their cars and they make sure the location and appearance of their office does not suggest any military links. To some extent, managing security comes down to window-dressing.

Many agencies mention the preservation of humanitarian principles as a point of concern, but it is often *difficult to apply the principles in practice*. In short, there are three issues. Firstly, the distinction between humanitarian aid (which is supposed to be neutral) and development aid (which involves social and political change and inevitably means taking sides) is no longer so clear. The bulk of assistance in both Liberia and Afghanistan is not emergency relief. Secondly, humanitarian principles are not necessarily seen as an icon of neutrality. Particularly in Afghanistan this is an issue, as one side claims 'you are either with us or against us', while the other side sees humanitarianism as a Western construct. Thirdly, there is tension between humanitarian principles and the principle of local ownership. When aid beneficiaries and local partners advocate a pragmatic approach, the question arises on whose behalf humanitarian principles are propagated.

A final concern with civil-military relations centres on the assertion that soldiers are no good at providing aid. It is hard to make a sweeping statement in this regard, because there are good and bad examples. There are some *evident restrictions*, such as the limited ability to move due to all the precautions and short timeframes. The criticism that the military is *expensive and thus inefficient* holds, but much depends on the calculation: given that both staff and resources are already in the field, you might as well use them. Military efforts in the field of reconstruction, winning hearts and minds and rule of law may be defensible. Some of these activities demonstrate that the troops are not oblivious to development principles and strategies. However, in view of the controversies of the civil-military debate and the underlying idea of an integrated mission - exploiting advantages and preventing overlap - there may be many cases where the cost-benefit analysis commands soldiers to stick to a fairly limited role of facilitation when it comes to development activities.

## Policy implications

Given that neither the opportunities nor the risks of civil-military collaboration can be taken for granted, we advocate a *context-specific, case-by-case approach*. Aid agencies, donors and the military need to closely monitor changing patterns of civil and military intervention and reflect on the implications for themselves. Given that many of these interventions cannot be understood from traditional vantage points, special efforts need to be made to *understand these new realities*. *Mutual training and exposure between aid workers and the military - not just in the field, but at home as well - would benefit future interventions. Moreover, in view of the integration of humanitarian, military, political, development and state-building interventions, policymakers and practitioners need to rethink classical humanitarian principles: whether to apply them in today's contexts, and how?*

It is unfortunate that NGO efforts to take *joint positions* have largely failed. Solitary courses make little sense. Besides, there are divisions within organisations as well. *NGOs should reconsider the costs and benefits of their divided standpoints and explore new opportunities to take a common stance. A basic and open debate between principled neutralists, humanitarian pragmatists and supporters is needed to overcome hardened standpoints, accusations and recriminations and to find a sense of direction for practice.*

Aid agencies need to attune their positioning more closely to the *perceptions among local communities* about the military and if they do not, they need to make clearer efforts to explain their positions. Given that many local communities are supportive of the military and quite critical of NGOs, *aid agencies need to make more efforts to understand local perspectives and discourses.*

So far, insufficient thought has been given to the issue of *local ownership*. Many troops and aid workers see local NGOs and local communities basically as targets or instruments. *They need to reflect on a less instrumentalist vision on local involvement.*

In a general sense, the dictum 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary' is sound, but in practice, better use could be made of the advantages on each side. Among donor governments, more efforts are required to transcend the mantra on the virtues of an integrated approach and deal with the challenges that it entails. Current experiences with the PRTs and within UNMIL should be a starting point for the design of future missions. A cross-donor evaluation of PRT and UNMIL experiences should be considered.

# List of abbreviations

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief	ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
AHDS	Afghan Health and Development Services	JIU	Joint Implementation Unit
AIMS	Afghan Information Management System	JPO	Joint Principles of Operation
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation	KAF	Kandahar Air Field
ANA	Afghan National Army	MCDAs	Military and civil defence assets
ANCB	Afghan NGOs Coordinating Bureau	Milobs	Military observers
ANP	Afghan National Police	MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Safety Office	MSG	Monitoring and Steering Group
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
CA	Civil Affairs	NPO/RRAA	Norwegian Project Office/Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
CBO	Community Based Organisation	ODA	Official Development Assistance
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Programme	OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
CF	Coalition Forces	PAKBAT	Pakistani Battalion
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
CIDSE	Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité	Psyops	Psychological Operations
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation	QIP	Quick Impact Project
Civpol	Civilian police	RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
CJCMOTF	Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force	RRR	Rehabilitation Recovery and Reconstruction
CORDAID	Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid	SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
CMR	Civil-Military Relations	SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
CRS	Catholic Relief Services	SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan	SSR	Security Sector Reform
DDR(R)	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (and Rehabilitation)	SWABAC	South West Afghanistan and Baluchistan Agency for Coordination
DFID	Department for International Development	UN-CMCoord	United Nations Civil-Military Coordination
DGIS	Directoraat-Generaal Internationale Samenwerking	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General	UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
EC	European Commission	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
ESF	Election Support Forces	VARA	Voluntary Association for Rehabilitation of Afghanistan
EU	European Union	WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
(Ex-)CAFF	Children (formerly) Associated with the Fighting Forces	WFP	World Food Programme
GCPP	Global Conflict Prevention Pool		
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit		
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Coordination		
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator		
HCS	Humanitarian Coordination Section (UN)		
HIC	Humanitarian Information Centre (UN)		
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee		
ICG	International Crisis Group		
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross		
IDEA	Integrated Development of Entrepreneurial Activities		
IDP	Internally Displaced Person		
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies		
IHL	International Humanitarian Law		
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation		
IOM	International Organisation for Migration		

# Glossary

**Aid agencies:** A generic term used in this report for both humanitarian and development agencies, as well as for agencies that combine these missions in multi-mandate operations, though often carried out by different wings or departments.

**Bonn Conference:** Conference of Afghan leaders held in Bonn, Germany in December 2001, facilitated by Special Representative of the Secretary General Lakhdar Brahimi, resulting in the Bonn Agreement which maps out a political transition of Afghanistan.

**Chapter VI and Chapter VII (UN Charter):** Chapter VI describes the UN Security Council's power to investigate and mediate disputes. Chapter VII describes the Security Council's power to authorise economic, diplomatic, and military sanctions, as well as the use of military force, to resolve disputes.

**Civil Affairs (Military Civil Defence Unit 2006):** The activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces and civil authorities, both governmental and non-governmental, and the civilian population in a friendly, neutral, or hostile area of operations in order to facilitate military operations and consolidate operational objectives. The United Nations use the term Civil Affairs as well, but in a slightly different manner from the US.

**Civil Military Cooperation, CIMIC (NATO):** The coordination and cooperation, in support of the mission, between the NATO force commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies.

**Civil Military Coordination CMCoord (Military Civil Defence Unit 2006):** The essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that are necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation.

**Civil Military Relations, CMR:** The interactions between military and non-military organisations and actors, generally in the context of a peace operation or, more rarely, in a combat operation or during an occupation. CMR covers a broad set of issues ranging from policy formulation, command and control (civilian/political control of the military instrument) to different forms of operational coordination and interaction between the military, local authorities, the population, non-governmental humanitarian, development and civil society organisations, and the wider society.

**CMR positions:** The ICRC's approach towards civil-military relations has fluctuated between three positions over the past decade: isolationism, proselytism and ecumenism. Studer (2001):

- The **isolationist** position demands strict observance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's principles and basically avoids contact with the military at the operational level;
- **Proselytism** involves efforts to rally all humanitarian actors under one banner advocating resistance to any infringement of the impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian work;
- **Ecumenism** acknowledges the widening interface between military and humanitarian actors and favours dialogue.

For the purpose of this study we have derived the following typology: principled neutralists, pragmatists and supporters:

- **Principled neutralists** are those agencies or actors who want to stay independent, do not want to collaborate with the military and avoid contact as a matter of principle;
- **Pragmatists** are those who balance their principles against more functionalist or instrumentalist considerations and decide to cooperate - more or less intensively - with the military depending on the context;
- **Supporters** are those who defend the military actions as necessary and are prepared to collaborate and provide support.

**Coalition Forces (AREU):** Coalition Forces is the general term used to describe the US-led military troops that have been in Afghanistan since late 2001. In collaboration with the Northern Alliance, they were responsible for the overthrow of the Taliban regime. In addition to ongoing military operations for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Coalition Forces are involved in

reconstruction activities and the extension of government authority through their Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). More than twenty nations have contributed troops to the Coalition for a total force numbering around 17,000.

**Code of Conduct (ICRC & RC Movement/NGOs in Disaster Relief):** The Code of Conduct of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief is a document produced in 1994, which defines the standards of the organisations working on disaster management.

**Complex political emergency (Goodhand and Hulme 1999):** conflicts which combine a number of features: they often occur within but also across state boundaries; they have political antecedents, often relating to competition for power and resources; they are protracted in duration; are embedded in and are expressions of existing social, political, economic and cultural structures and cleavages; and they are often characterized by predatory social formations.

**Conflict sensitivity:** The need to be aware of the context and of conflict-related side effects, and the aim to minimise potential negative impacts; often summarised as 'Do-no-harm'.

**Conflict transformation:** Changing unjust and inequitable societal relationships that have led to patterns of exclusion and feelings of grievance.

**Development agencies:** As compared to humanitarian agencies, development agencies generally have a more interventionist or intrusive agenda and aim at effecting qualitative changes in recipient societies by modifying unjust and inequitable relationships and power differentials.

**Embedded development:** The development activities, which are part of an integrated mission or maintain close links with the peace operation.

**Hearts-and-minds activities:** Services provided by the military to the local population to boost their own popularity. Major reasons for hearts-and-minds operations include promoting force acceptance and facilitating force protection as well as the gathering of intelligence.

**Host nation support:** Support by the local government to the military mission.

**Humanitarian action (IFRC):** The desire to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found [ ] to protect life and health and ensure respect for the human being.

**Humanitarian agencies:** Humanitarian agencies aim at addressing human suffering wherever it occurs, while trying to observe the humanitarian principles and the respective codes of conduct.

**Humanitarian imperative (IFRC):** The need, if not duty, to help those in need above all considerations. The immediacy and rightness of the act prevails over other consequences.

**Humanitarian intervention (Stuart 2001):** Humanitarian intervention is a coercive action by an outside Government or an authorized agent directed toward or within another state, in order to alleviate or avoid a mass humanitarian crisis.

**Humanitarian principles:** The most important humanitarian principles are humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

**Humanitarian space (Sida 2005):**

- Respect for the Geneva conventions in a conflict, with the consequent guarantee of minimal standards for the protection of combatants and non-combatants.
- A physical, geographical space that is protected from fighting such as may be seen in situations in which humanitarian corridors are established.

- The action space required by humanitarian organisations.

**Human security (UNDP):** Human security can be said to have two main aspects. It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life. The term, which inter-relates almost every walk of life, has flourished since it first appeared in the Human Development Report of 1994 (UNDP 1994).

**Impartiality (ICRC):** Impartiality means that humanitarian action should benefit people regardless of their origin, race, gender, faith, etc. In that sense, no one should be deprived of assistance or protection because of what he or she believes in.

**Independence (ICRC):** Independence implies that humanitarian action needs to be distinct - and be perceived as such - from political decision-making processes. The reason for this is straightforward: in any conflict, parties will tend to reject humanitarian actors they suspect of having ulterior political motives.

**Integrated multi-actor responses:** Multi-actor responses to security challenges that combine the efforts of Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, as well as civil society organisations. This approach implies, among other things, that economic and development aid policies explicitly include the issue of conflict and are mobilised to contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

**ISAF:** The International Security Assistance Force is mandated under Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 2001. In 2003 NATO assumed command over ISAF. It is a peacekeeping force, tasked to:

- Assist the Interim Administration in developing future security structures.
- Assist the Interim Administration in reconstruction.
- Identify and arrange assistance and training tasks for future Afghan security forces.

**Joint Principles of Operation (Sida 2005):** a Code of Conduct governing NGO behaviour in Liberia, first developed in 1996 and revised in 2003.

**Loya Jirga:** The Loya Jirga is a unique Afghan forum in which elders from the various regions and ethnic groups settle major national affairs. Loya Jirga is Pashto for Grand Council and it is only convened on special occasions.

**Lumpenmilitariat (Mazrui 1973):** A class of semi-organised, rugged and semi-literate soldiery.

**Military actor (IASC 2004):** military actors refer to official military forces, i.e. military forces of a state or regional/ intergovernmental organisation, that are subject to an hierarchical chain of command, be they armed or unarmed, governmental or intergovernmental. This may include a wide spectrum of actors such as the local or national military, multinational forces, UN peacekeeping troops, international military observers, foreign occupying forces, regional troops or other officially organised troops.

**Monitoring and Steering Group (Sida 2005):** the main INGO coordination body in Liberia.

**Mujahideen:** The term can refer to any fighters of a *jihad*, a Muslim holy war, but has been mostly used widely to refer specifically to Afghan freedom fighters, rebels or warlords.

**Mullah:** A male religious teacher or leader.

**Multi-mandate NGOs:** Large agencies that cover a wide range of activities and try to approach them in a holistic manner.

**Neutrality (ICRC):** Neutrality means not taking sides in hostilities or engaging at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**NGO (Military Civil Defence Unit 2006):** Non-governmental organisations, both national and international, are constituted separate from the government of the country in which they are founded. NGOs and their workers may operate under a different organisational culture to the military but like the military, they are for the most part professionals in their field.

**Official development assistance (ODA):** Grants or loans to countries and territories on Part I of the DAC List of Aid Recipients (developing countries) which are: (a) undertaken by the official sector; (b) with promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective; (c) at concessional financial terms. Grants, loans and credits for military purposes are excluded.

**Peacebuilding (UN 1992 'An Agenda for Peace'):** Peacebuilding refers to action to identify and support indigenous structures which will help to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict, although today it is increasingly also seen as a preventive measure.

**Peace enforcement (UN 1992 'An Agenda for Peace'):** Action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Peacekeeping (UN 1992 'An Agenda for Peace'):** The deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well.

**Peace (support) operations or peace missions:** A generic term used in this paper to refer to external military involvement in a region of conflict to promote stabilisation (the establishment of order and security) and durable peace.

**Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs):** Foreign teams of armed personnel in Afghanistan, typically some 200 troops including force protection, CIMIC officers, military police, intelligence units, and reservists or other specialists. Often diplomatic and development staff is seconded to the PRTs. The primary tasks of PRTs are:

- to help the government of Afghanistan extend its authority,
- to facilitate the development of a secure environment in the Afghan regions, including the establishment of relationships with local authorities,
- to support, as appropriate, security sector reform activities, within means and capabilities, to facilitate the reconstruction effort. (NATO 2003)

**PRT Executive Steering Committee:** The PRT ESC was established to provide guidance and improve coordination between PRTs. The government of Afghanistan, UNAMA, Coalition and ISAF Commanders, NATO's Senior Civilian Representative and ambassadors of the PRT lead nations have seats in this body.

**Psychological operations (psyops):** Operations to influence people's minds or break the morale of the enemy. These operations consist of the provision of selective information or misinformation through various media and are thus also known as information operations ('info-ops') or media operations ('media-ops').

**Quick Impact Projects:** QIPs were first used by UNHCR in 1991 as small-scale, low cost projects to assist reintegration of returnees and displaced persons in Nicaragua. With the Brahimi report QIPs have become an integral part of peace operations, intended to generate highly visible quick fixes for urgent problems facing local communities. The US government (particularly USAID) executes its own QIPs as well.

**Rule of law activities:** These activities concern the operation of a legitimate, democratically elected government with civilian oversight over a properly functioning security apparatus, including the armed forces, police, judiciary and penitentiary system. These rule of law activities often include a military component.

**Shura (Johnson & Leslie 2005):** village council (similar, though often not as formal in its constitution as the Jirga)

**Taliban:** The Taliban was originally organised in September 1994 in Kandahar. The principal members were all graduates of Pakistani Islamic schools (madrassas) which were controlled by the fundamentalist organisation Jamiat-i-Ulema. 'Talib' means student. Comprised primarily of Pashtuns, the Taliban was controlled from the beginning by mullah Mohammad Omar. Their primary goal was the creation of an Islamic revolution within Afghanistan to overthrow the Russian-backed government and replace it with an Islamic theocracy.

**UNMIL:** UNSC Resolution 1509 of September 2003 equipped the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) with a robust Chapter VII mandate and tasked the mission with five main activities:

- Supporting the implementation of the ceasefire agreement;
- Protecting United Nations staff, facilities and civilians;
- Support for humanitarian and human rights assistance;
- Support for security reform;
- Support for implementation of the peace process.

At a later stage, the Security Council expanded the mandate with a sixth element: to apprehend former president Taylor and bring him before the Special Court in Sierra Leone, which had indicted him (Resolution 1638).

With the changing nature of conflicts and the way international actors deal with contemporary conflict, collaboration between peacekeeping forces and aid agencies has become a centrefold of policy debate. In the Netherlands and elsewhere a heated discussion is taking place on the respective roles of military and non-military actors in areas affected by violent conflict. What is a vital window of opportunity to some amounts to the trashing of humanitarian principles to others.

This debate has been rather wide-ranging and occasionally somewhat imprecise and muddled. Various controversial issues have been merged into a disorderly discussion that at times created confusion rather than clarity. Mutual suspicion and tensions between military and NGO staff have not been conducive to a well-defined and focused debate. Moreover, there seems to have been rather limited consultation with essential stakeholders, particularly the people in the countries concerned.

## 1.1 Purpose

This study is intended to help stakeholders formulate sound policies and eventually improve performance and practical operations in situations where military and civil actors interact. The report will provide substantive input on the basis of a literature search and empirical case studies and will help aid agencies to take an informed position in ongoing debates on the issue. The study was commissioned by the Dutch development organisation Cordaid (part of the Caritas group). Though Cordaid has no principled objections against co-operation with the military, it follows a two-track approach in practice, depending on field conditions and considerations of effectiveness. The first track implies co-operation in the field of security in a humanitarian context, the second one implies keeping distance ('fire walling') when the military get involved in tasks that are deemed beyond their core competencies. This includes, for example, all types of development work and the strengthening of local democracy. Military activity in these fields is perceived to lead to confusion, the mixing of roles and conflicting interests. Cordaid, however, recognizes that there is a need for a better conceptualisation of these issues and that a more systematic inventory of practical experiences at field level is needed to arrive at a fruitful and open debate. We hope that the study will be of use not only to Cordaid, but also to a broader audience of stakeholders and other involved parties.

## 1.2 Question

Leaving aside a wide range of related issues, the study centres on four major questions:

Question 1: What does co-operation between peacekeeping forces and aid agencies entail in practice?

Question 2: What are the strengths and weaknesses of peacekeeping forces in providing civilian aid?

Question 3: What are the risks and opportunities involved for NGOs when co-operating with peacekeeping forces?

Question 4: What opinion do civil society organisations in the countries concerned have about co-operation with peacekeeping forces?

## 1.3 Methodology

The study took about one year, with four researchers being involved in different capacities and with different time investments. In addition to literature research and interviews with informants in the Netherlands, the study comprised two case studies - Afghanistan and Liberia - of about 70 person-days each. A total of over 140 interviews were conducted, apart from participant observation at meetings and project visits, and some group discussions. Interviews were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including the military, NGOs, UN agencies, local government representatives, donor officials, local communities and analysts. A more detailed overview of the field trips and persons interviewed can be found in Annex I.

# The backdrop: contemporary conflict and changing civil-military relations **2**

## 1.4 Set-up of the report

The discussion on collaboration between peacekeepers and aid agencies is not an isolated one, but reflects wider changes in the manifestation of contemporary conflict and in associated conflict policy, practice and political discourse. Chapter 2 therefore provides a backdrop to the debate and discusses these changes. It also deals with some matters of a conceptual and terminological nature. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the Afghan and Liberian case studies respectively. Finally, conclusions are drawn in Chapter 6.

## 1.5 Acknowledgements

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## 1.6 Disclaimer

This study was commissioned by Cordaid and executed by four researchers. The views and analysis put forward in this report are entirely those of the authors in their private or professional capacity and should not be attributed to Cordaid, the involved research institutions or any agencies or persons interviewed during this study.

The debate on co-operation between military and civilian actors in armed conflicts did not emerge instantaneously. It is against the backdrop of broader changes in military, humanitarian and development practice that such co-operation came to be a controversial issue. It is important to understand these changes. International responses to conflict have been highly dynamic in the past fifteen years. We have seen major new developments in peacekeeping, particularly with regard to the context of the operations and the means and mandates they received. Likewise, humanitarian action in conflict areas is confronted with dramatic challenges and has evolved in new directions. At the same time, the broader development industry has entered the field of peace and security as well, and has altered from a distant onlooker to, in recent cases, an eager partner.

These changes in military, humanitarian and developmental conduct do not stand alone. They reflect changes in the nature and manifestation of contemporary conflict. Therefore, this chapter briefly characterises present-day conflict, prior to discussing the changes in military, humanitarian and developmental conduct and the resulting interface and forms of collaboration between military and civilian actors. The chapter also defines key concepts and the terminology used in this study.

## 2.1 Contemporary conflict

Obviously, there is great diversity in the type, scale and cultures of the conflicts occurring today and it is questionable whether one can describe this melting pot of secessionist conflict, clan conflicts, urban violence, ethnic wars, social-political revolutionary movements and other forms of violence in a coherent manner. There are divergent conceptual and substantive approaches to their explanation in both the academic and the applied literature. The conceptual confusion has only been exacerbated by the current debate on terrorism and counter-terrorist approaches (Gupta 2003 and 2005). Nonetheless, we will try to distil some common denominators of contemporary conflicts.

Contemporary armed conflicts are rarely an international confrontation between two state actors with their armies as in most classical wars, but in a majority of cases comprise intrastate wars. This implies that the causes of those wars are primarily due to problems emanating from the polity or society at stake itself. The author Holsti argues that not the relations between states, but the characteristics of the state itself, underlie current conflicts (1996: 37). Misrule, identity-based state patronage, exclusion, mismanagement of scarce natural resources, underdevelopment and violations of human rights are only some of the problematic aspects of state-society relations and prevailing forms of governance in many parts of the world. Societies in conflict further display large power asymmetries and socio-economic disparities, while gender relations are often highly unequal, if not blatantly suppressive.

Whether contemporary conflicts are an altogether new phenomenon, as some authors argue (Kaldor 1999), or merely a modern manifestation of an age-old process that is relatively constant in nature, has been an issue of debate. Kaldor (1999: 2-3) states that new wars involve a blurring of the distinctions between war, organised crime and larger-scale violations of human rights, and must be understood in the context of a qualitatively new type of globalisation of the 1980s and 1990s. We believe, however, that not all factors and processes leading to current conflict are necessarily completely new and that elements of continuity are prevalent, but want to stipulate that particular factors have become more prominent and also that the total constellation of factors has undergone considerable change. Despite parallels and forms of continuity, these processes in combination have pushed into relative irrelevance some of the more traditional notions, dogmas and theories in international relations, development studies and military science. Salient differences between the earlier and current type of conflict include, for example, the nature of the parties, the causes of the conflict, its trans-boundary nature, the conduct of warfare, the protracted duration of the new wars, the involvement of civilians as victims and perpetrators, the problematic application of the Geneva conventions, the law of armed conflict and international humanitarian law and the required solutions. Below we shall briefly elaborate on those important differences.

Firstly, the conflict parties are not just state or semi-state actors, but tend to involve non-state actors as well, including rebels, secessionist movements, identity groups, warlords, economic entrepreneurs, criminal gangs and so on. It is not always easy to identify these parties, as there are frequently splits, new formations and alliances, often for opportunistic reasons.

Secondly, contemporary conflicts can hardly ever be reduced to one single factor or root cause. They can better be considered as multi-actor and multi-level processes having multiple causes and consequences. Hence, they involve a complex interplay of political, economic, social, cultural and military processes leading Goodhand and Hulme to launch the term complex political emergency (1999). Apart from the element of complexity, these authors observe that politics, i.e. the competition for power and scarce resources, is at the core of those conflicts and that they take place within and across boundaries. They also draw attention to the enduring nature of those conflicts that are based on or embedded in social cleavages and predatory social formations (1999: 16-17).

Inequality and competition between ethnic, social, clan, or geographic identity groups over economic opportunities and state power are often at the root of current conflicts, and hence identity-based approaches have great explanatory value. Yet caution has to be exercised with regard to reductionist ethnic perspectives in view of the prevailing primordialist, constructivist and instrumentalist explanations of ethnicity. We denounce purely primordialist approaches and tend to think that ethnicity nearly always has to be combined with wider political and economic issues to induce conflict (Brown 2001).

Hence, conscious state-led processes of marginalisation and underdevelopment are often at the root of a conflict, and the role of the state and group-based state patronage needs to be at centre stage in efforts to comprehend contemporary conflict. The inability or unwillingness of the state to deal with issues of social, economic or political justice may unleash a violent response, either against another group or against the state itself. In the course of the war, we may witness a partial or total breakdown of authority and law and order, creating an environment of structural insecurity. This should not only be seen as an unintended side effect of the conflict, but may also be the conscious 'organisation of chaos' and 'instrumentality of disorder' (Allen 1999 and Chabal and Daloz 1999).

Several authors have stressed that wars are a result of greed rather than grievances, whether political or otherwise, of deprived groups (Collier 2000). David Keen (1998) elaborated on the economic functions of violence and also described how protagonist parties abused humanitarian aid. Though explanations based on the political economy of violence may contribute to the understanding of conflict in such countries as Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to mention a few, they are nowadays mostly combined with other political or grievance-based approaches, as single-cause explanations are deemed too simplistic. The relative importance of greed and grievance may also vary strongly for different actors or in the course of time (Douma 2003). Similarly, the role of natural resource scarcity and the environment is subject to a nuanced debate (Gleditsch 2001).

Thirdly, it would be misleading to characterise contemporary conflicts as uniquely intra-state wars. Though they generally involve non-state actors challenging the state on the basis of domestic problems, they are rarely curtailed by state borders. Regional and global actors and processes tend to play a crucial role. Indeed, through diaspora, legal and illegal traders, mercenaries, development actors, the involvement of regional superpowers, the UN system and international civil society movements, most conflicts are inseparably linked to the global system.

Fourthly, the battlefield - or theatre, in military terms - is not normally clearly defined. Due to the diversity in actors and associated military apparatus and capacities (ranging from aircraft to machetes), the theatre may be equally diverse. A combination of conventional warfare with asymmetric warfare (terrorist strikes, hit-and-run attacks, political assassinations) may occur (Kiras 2002). Similarly, non-state actors may assume some level of territorial control, while in other areas they may not be able to establish a firm basis, but nonetheless maintain influence.

Fifthly, because a military victory is hard to achieve for the actors involved, contemporary conflicts tend to be protracted. Wars may create a self-inducing dynamic. In the seeming chaos of conflict, groups emerge with vested interests in the conflict system. Military authority, political leaders and economic entrepreneurs (frequently unified in one actor) may capture the opportunities provided by war and indulge in predatory behaviour, sometimes purely for self-enrichment (Allen 1999, Collier 2000). Tilly (2003: 34-41) discusses the functioning of political entrepreneurs and 'specialists in violence' who play essential roles in the organisation and mobilisation of violent collective action. As present wars are relatively cheap (financially, not in human costs) and may take

long to reach a 'hurting stalemate', peace processes face 'spoilers' and, by consequence, post-conflict countries often fall prey to a relapse into conflict (Touval and Zartman 2001, Stedman 2001). In sum, the road from contemporary conflict to sustainable peace is a lengthy one, full of obstacles and discursions.

Sixthly, civilians are very much part of the system in contemporary conflicts. With the prevalence of unofficial armies, a strict distinction between combatants and civilians is hard to maintain. Many people are both. Population groups are furthermore instrumental in legitimising both war and peace. Processes of identity formation, group histories and conflict discourses are at stake here (Frerks and Klem 2005a, Snyder and Ballentine 2001). It is for this reason that processes of reconciliation and attempts to overcome cultures of violence receive much attention. Meanwhile, the number of civilian casualties and fatalities by far exceeds the number of military losses, thus reinforcing the view that war is also a socio-political process rather than a purely military one. In fact, recent publications have stressed the need to understand conflicts from a viewpoint of process and how people act and talk, rather than focusing on so-called causes. The ethnographic approach of Paul Richards (2005) and discursive approach put forward by Jabri (1996) and applied to Sri Lanka by Frerks and Klem (2005a) are examples.

In policy practice and in the thinking about approaches and solutions, the characteristics of intra-state conflict have led to a broadening of the original strategic-military notion of security to a wider concept of human security (Commission on Human Security 2003, Renner 2005), whereas the tasks of Western armies have been largely redefined in terms of peace operations, often in the developing world. This has led to diplomacy, defence, development aid and humanitarian aid being simultaneously mobilised to deal with the problems at stake in current conflicts. All the above considerations about the nature of contemporary conflict and the changes in dealing with it have made present civil-military relations an even more relevant factor than it already was in classical warfare. The saying that 'winning the peace is as important as winning the war' properly denotes the significance of the population's views on external interventions in present-day conflict.

While the number of violent conflicts has gradually declined from the mid-nineties onwards, the world does not seem any less pre-occupied with security. After the events of 9/11, the US-led 'war on terror' comprises a more coercive trend in the thinking about international security. The emergence of a global sequence of anti-Western attacks and the war on terror seem to have flung the world into a security spree. Though the jihadist-islamist and war on terror discourses are evidently quite different from the analysis above, it is clear that many of the factors underlying these forms of terrorism and counter-terrorism are actually quite similar (Gupta 2003 and 2005, Ranstorp 2003, Raphaeli 2003). Contemporary intra-state conflict and the war on terror are thus closely intertwined.

We may conclude that there is a great diversity of violent conflicts. However, in all these conflicts, military and societal processes are closely related. Also conflict and development cannot be viewed in isolation and the nexus between the two concepts has become broadly accepted (Frerks 2003). This has had implications for those who deal with these conflicts, as is elaborated further in sections 2.2 to 2.4 for humanitarian actors, the military and donor governments respectively.

## 2.2 Changes in humanitarian responses

### 2.2.1 Humanitarian principles

Humanitarian action is based on the principle of humanity defined by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent as 'the desire to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found.... to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being'. This is also called the humanitarian imperative: the need, if not the duty, to help those in need above all other considerations. The immediacy and rightness of the act prevails over other consequences.

In fact, the humanitarian idea and certainly humanitarian practice have always been a compromise between idealism and realism. Weiss and Collins refer to this as embedded liberalism or liberal institutionalism (2000: 14-15). Leader says that humanitarian principles can best be seen as a compromise between military-political necessity and the dictates of conscience and humanity

(2002: 11). These principles were embedded in the law of armed conflict, international humanitarian law, the Geneva conventions and a series of other international conventions and agreements, such as those brokered within the UN system after 1945 (Weiss and Collins 2000: 18-37). Other humanitarian principles include independence (in a political, religious or other sense), impartiality (to provide aid according to need alone, 'regardless of race, creed, nationality and without adverse distinction of any kind') and neutrality (ideological neutrality or non-alignment, and non-participation in hostilities). Though there are differences of emphasis among the different humanitarian agencies, the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct (see box 1) reflects the present thinking of the humanitarian community and embodies the humanitarian principles.

**Box 1:**

**The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief**

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.

Source: [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)

Throughout the past fifteen years, there have been marked changes in the humanitarian domain. The changing nature of conflict and warfare and the ensuing disrespect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles by warring parties and states, the limitation of and intrusion upon humanitarian space, the abuse of humanitarian aid and the perceived need to protest and act against gross and systematic violations of human rights have put the classical system of humanitarian action and of the associated humanitarian principles under pressure. In the field, the key principles, namely that there are boundaries to war, non-combatant immunity, rules to follow and an accountable state and army, no longer hold. Leader (2002: 13) sums up the situation as follows: '[I]n this kind of war, calling on, or expecting the parties to respect humanitarian principles is like calling on a gang of armed muggers to fight by the rules of boxing; it is not just laughable, it is irrelevant. It confuses one type of activity with another.' Post-cold war trends and the concomitant growth of the humanitarian aid industry have pushed the aid agencies onto the political stage and are leading to a renegotiation of humanitarian principles, where the rigid distinctions between humanitarian and security actors have become less pronounced. In line with the interwoven nature of the development and security aspects of contemporary conflicts and the emergence of integrated policies, security has become part of the humanitarian scene and vice versa.

### 2.2.2 Changing views of neutrality

The principles of independence and neutrality and the overall notion of non-interference must be revisited in light of the political determinants and consequences of humanitarian action. Leader (2002: 20-21) discerns three positions with regard to neutrality, namely *neutrality elevated*, where not taking sides becomes an absolute principle that agencies impose upon themselves. This position is usually accompanied by a strong emphasis on human rights and protection. The second position is *neutrality abandoned*. As humanitarian action has such significant political consequences at the present juncture, humanitarians are obliged to articulate and contribute to political objectives. From this perspective, humanitarian action needs to be part of a political strategy to manage conflict and promote peacebuilding, including the use of conditional aid. A third approach is called *third-way humanitarianism* and tries somehow to accommodate the two earlier positions. It wants to be involved in constructive social

change without really taking sides, but of course it is clear that this nevertheless implies a level of political choice. Many donor agencies verge towards this position in their attempts to do some good, by shifting from relief to development, and by promoting conflict resolution, for example by focusing on social justice and addressing root causes of conflict. All this goes beyond the classical humanitarian mandate and moves towards a more explicit political stance.

### 2.2.3 Conflict sensitivity

Humanitarian agencies today acknowledge that they inevitably become part of the context they operate in. By consequence, their work has, intentionally or unintentionally, an impact on the conflict and the other way around. Conflict sensitivity - the need to be aware of the context and of conflict-related side-effects, and the aim to minimise potential negative impacts - has become a widely accepted principle, often labelled as 'do no harm' (Anderson 1999 and 2004, FEWER et al. 2004), but as indicated above, actions in the field may include attempts to more explicitly influence the conflict, as recognised in Goodhand's term 'working on conflict' (Goodhand 2001).

### 2.2.4 Multi-mandate organisations

Related to this, we have witnessed an integration of previously distinct agencies and activities. Humanitarian relief, development co-operation, human rights activism, pacifism and peace initiatives, environmental protection, women's emancipation and advocating social change, to mention the most prominent examples, used to be rather distinct domains with their own civil society movements. Not surprisingly in view of the complexity of the challenges involved, there seems to be an increasing number of multi-mandate NGOs: large agencies that take on a wide range of issues and try to approach them in a holistic manner.

In this paper we will use the terms humanitarian, development or more generically aid agencies interchangeably, depending on the context. As explained above, *humanitarian agencies* aim to address human suffering wherever it occurs, while trying to observe the humanitarian principles and the respective codes of conduct. *Development agencies* generally have a more interventionist or intrusive agenda and aim at effecting qualitative changes in societies by modifying unjust and inequitable relationships and power differentials. Their poverty-reduction and emancipatory agendas are explicitly political, even if they are articulated in technical or economic language.

Development aid may also be associated to the notion with *official development assistance* (ODA). The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) circumscribes precisely those forms of aid that are recognised as ODA. They must comprise a grant or subsidised loan element and may not be spent on military goods or technical support in war. We use the term *aid agencies* as a generic term for both humanitarian and development agencies, as well as for agencies that combine these missions in multi-mandate operations, though often carried out by different wings or departments. Though mandates and working styles may differ, humanitarian and developmental agencies are all considered to be civil, i.e. non-military entities, whether local or international, non-governmental or governmental, multilateral or bilateral.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2.5 Implications

With the acknowledged relations between the different spheres and the prevalence of multi-mandate organisations, the humanitarian scene seems to have become more crowded and chaotic. The word humanitarian congestion is sometimes used to refer to a multitude of humanitarian actors dealing with a natural or man-made disaster at a particular location, making coordination between them virtually impossible. The term humanitarian intrusion is used when others, mainly political or military actors, enter the humanitarian space and operate without respecting or upholding the humanitarian principles. By consequence, coordination and co-operation have become increasingly difficult. In fact, looking critically at the workings of the system

<sup>1</sup> In this paper we use the word civil as the opposite of the adjective military. When we refer to non-military actors or non-combatants we use the noun civilians. Civil and civilian derive their meaning basically from the negative fact that they are not military and, therefore, may encompass a wide variety of actors and institutions, including development, humanitarian, governmental, non-governmental etc.

nowadays, we may wonder to what extent coordination is still possible or feasible, and whether the notion of humanitarian anarchy may not better be able to describe realities in the field (Frerks and Klem 2005b). Those questions will obviously also have implications for civil-military relations and attempts to co-operate between military and civil actors.

Though most humanitarian agencies acknowledge the relevance of peace and security activities, their main focus still lies on conventional relief activities. Yet the proliferation of agencies in terms of quantity and the emergence of multi-mandate operations in the 1990s have made the need for regulation and accountability more evident than before. We have seen different codes of conduct, rules and regulations formulated of which the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct, the People in Aid Code and the Sphere Standards are some of the most prominent ones. Yet these rules are based on the idea of self-regulation of the sector and are not accompanied by sanctions in the event of non-compliance, which implies that they are not systematically implemented in practice. They also have a fairly limited relevance in terms of the overall political and security developments, trends, challenges and dilemmas sketched above. As a consequence, both NGOs and UN agencies increasingly face difficult questions regarding their motivations and interests; their efficiency and effectiveness; the sustainability of their work and their perceived lack of coordination and unwillingness to cooperate with other actors such as the military. It is important to keep in mind the paradoxical situation that the desirability of wider coordination and co-operation aimed at increasing effectiveness may be barred by the very principles NGOs hold and use to discourage co-operation, for instance with the military.

In conclusion, the nature of conflict and present integrated international policy responses to conflicts have changed the classical humanitarian landscape and affected the classical notions of independence and neutrality. There is a tendency to address the political causes of the problems, operations are increasingly contextualised and we see more multi-mandate operations and agencies. Though at the same time codes of conduct and regulations were formulated to support humanitarian agencies, these seem to have been unable so far to satisfactorily address the new challenges and implications emerging from all those changes. As a result the humanitarian field is now in flux and searching for ways to reposition itself.

## 2.3 Changes in military responses

Discussing civil-military relations, Lilly distinguishes three broad scenarios where interaction may take place: combat operations, peace enforcement and peacekeeping operations, and military assistance to humanitarian crises. These situations show a different scope and type of civil-military relations and the implications for humanitarian principles are different as well (2002: 5). The generic terms of *peace and peace support operations* or *peace missions* are used in this paper to refer to external military involvement in a region of conflict to promote stabilisation (the establishment of order and security) and durable peace. Peace missions may involve all three scenarios mentioned by Lilly, though in the present paper most emphasis will be on the first two scenarios as these are the most pertinent to the cases of Afghanistan and Liberia.

### 2.3.1 Trends in peace operations

Traditional peacekeeping came down do the stationing of armed or unarmed UN *observers*, who would monitor a pre-existing ceasefire agreement. Typically, the warring parties had decided to cease hostilities without UN military involvement and they welcomed the presence of international monitors. This is no longer so typical. There have been great changes in international attempts to establish peace, including a new emphasis on the use of force by coercive military means. Below we briefly indicate the changes in international peace operations by sketching the subsequent generations that have seen the light since the end of the cold war.

Peacekeeping missions have received a broader mandate over time. Boutros Ghali's 'Agenda for Peace' (United Nations 1992: §55) observed that: 'Peacemaking and peace-keeping operations, to be truly successful, must come to include comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people.' This paved the way for what would become known as the *second generation* of UN peacekeeping, understood

as peacekeeping with peacebuilding aspects added (Lijn 2006: 17-19). These operations encompassed a broadening of mandate not only to maintain the military status quo, but also to build durable peace. Operations started to include demobilisation and reintegration of combatants, humanitarian assistance to returning refugees, the training of police and election monitoring as well as the promotion of human rights, becoming much more civil in nature. Classical examples are the UN missions to Namibia (UNTAG), Cambodia (UNTAC), El Salvador (ONUSAL) and Mozambique (UNOMOZ). The second-generation operations were strikingly more intrusive and interventionist than the classical peacekeeping operations.

Further, peacekeepers have received the means and mandate to use more force. The first attempts were called *humanitarian interventions*, also dubbed the *third generation* peace-operations. The main objective was securing the delivery of humanitarian aid and trying to get a possible peace process back on track. In effect, this was a more limited mandate than witnessed under the second-generation missions. The consent of the parties was not always deemed a necessity and the operations can thus be characterised as lying somewhere between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Examples include the missions in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) and Somalia (UNOSOM). These operations generally have been considered failures, as the UN forces came to be seen as partial or even as an enemy and were hardly successful in maintaining their position.

Partly as a consequence of the failures of the third generation and in the wake of President Clinton's Presidential Decision Directive 25, a *fourth generation* of peace operations emerged that were based on the subcontracting of the military component. These operations aimed at peacebuilding or maintaining the status quo. Though the Security Council usually provided the military components with both a peacekeeping and peace-enforcement mandate, the military component itself was delivered by regional organisations. Examples include the NATO-led operations in Bosnia and Kosovo (IFOR, SFOR and KFOR) and ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone (UNOMIL and UNOMSIL). Fourth generation missions have shown a mixed record with regard to their success, but continue up to date, with the current International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation in Afghanistan being an example with active involvement of NATO.

Faced with the salient failures in Rwanda, Bosnia and elsewhere and widespread criticisms, the UN Secretary General installed a panel chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi to critically review the UN peace operations. Following the trail-blazing Brahimi Report (UN 2000), the UN called for more robust doctrine, realistic mandates and interventions equipped to 'project credible force'. In addition, an integrated approach was called for, including military, political, humanitarian and development aspects. These are called *fifth generation* operations, drawing on Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In certain cases, also the military and civil administration is taken over for a period of time. This type of transitional authority has, for example, occurred in Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo and Sierra Leone.

Apart from those interventions in conflict situations, there are also the more conventional tasks of supporting civil authorities in times of *natural disaster*. When civil structures are unable to deal with a natural disaster, the military generally acts as a provider of logistical support on the request of the government. Examples include the Mitch hurricane (1998), the Asian tsunami (2004) and the Pakistani earthquake (2005). In addition to these *quick-fix responses*, there have been military efforts to provide more structural support in the field of *crisis management and disaster preparedness* that are largely outside the scope of this paper, such as included under the EU's Petersberg tasks.

In reality it is too simple to state that the five generations of peace missions have simply followed upon one another chronologically. The different types overlap and may occur side by side. Yet for the purpose of our study, reference to the later, and especially fifth generation, types is suitable.

### 2.3.2 Changes in the role of the superpowers and regional actors

Concomitantly with the above trends, we have witnessed a changing position of the global superpowers. During the cold war, UN intervention in conflict areas was frequently barred by a veto in the Security Council. This changed when the Berlin wall came down. There has been a tremendous increase in UN peacekeeping missions since 1989, practically quadrupling in a few years. The number of military and civilian personnel increased correspondingly. They also became more global both in areas covered and in

terms of troop-contributing countries (Lijn, 2006:18-19). This has been paralleled by an increase in American-led interventions that often started unilaterally. Today, we may see UN peace operations, non-UN forces fighting under a UN mandate and interventions by coalitions of the able and willing side by side. To some extent, we may argue, there has been a blurring of lines between these interventions, especially in countries where more than one type of operation is present at the same time. The UN seems to have largely overcome its peacekeeping crisis of the late 1990s and is nowadays generally seen as the most legitimate and primary global actor in this field (Lijn 2006: 23). Yet the role of the UN remains highly variable, partly controversial and subject to external political influences as well as internal bureaucratic strictures.

Starting under the fourth generation as discussed above, there has been also a rise in regional actors. All global regions have to some extent united themselves, normally starting with economic and then political co-operation, but gradually moving into security issues as well. ECOWAS and the African Union are the most salient examples so far - apart from NATO, of course. The EU too has been evolving as an important regional actor with its development towards the EU battle groups and its track record in the Balkans.

These overall changes - the evolution of the mandates of peace operations, more 'teeth' and the occurrence of new actors on the scene - correlate with the characteristics of contemporary conflicts and changed views on how to deal with them most effectively. Those conflicts encompass severe developmental and humanitarian problems, abuse of civilians, a problematic state and a rather chaotic set of non-state actors, protracted violence and the emergence of actors with an interest in prolonging the war. In sum, we are witnessing not only dramatically new features of contemporary conflict, but these conflicts also require new ways of dealing with them as a consequence. The major trends and changes in present peace operations are the reliance on Chapters VI and VII from the UN Charter, enabling a combination of peacekeeping and peace-enforcement and the related projection of force, the inclusion of military and civil peacebuilding components in missions' mandates, the occurrence of peace operations for humanitarian purposes, the integrated nature of missions, the subcontracting of military operations to regional organisations or non-UN led troops, the growth in the number of missions as well as in personnel, and the more intrusive and interventionist nature of peace operations. One key issue is that the present 'multidimensional peace support operations' may encompass or even focus on tasks in the civil and humanitarian domain (Studer, 2001: 367), leading to important consequences for civil-military relations.

## 2.4 Changes in donor positions

The relative importance of military aspects and arms in the cold war rivalry has given way to an emphasis on dynamic historical, political, socio-economic and environmental factors and processes. This means that the present challenges are more volatile, complex and diffuse, less predictable and much less amenable to simple remedial action with classical military instruments. Many observers have also pointed out the mismatches and disconnections resulting from the 'gap' between relief and more structural development (Frerks 2004), which did not favour a sustainable and effective approach to current conflict situations. Thus, in recent years, the mutual links between these different processes have been increasingly emphasised. All these conditions necessitated other approaches to conflict prevention, conflict management, peacebuilding and reconciliation, with greater emphasis on more encompassing notions such as sustainable human development. The term human security, which inter-relates almost every walk of life, has flourished since it first appeared in the Human Development Report of 1994 (UNDP 1994).

Analysts and policymakers now advocate more comprehensive approaches (Fitz-Gerald 2004 and Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005) that integrate diplomatic, development, humanitarian and defence activities. The provision of such human security is consequently no longer the exclusive prerogative of policymakers, diplomats and military specialists, but is carried out by all types of agencies working in development, relief and peacebuilding, including non-traditional actors, such as local civil society organisations, women's groups and international NGOs. 'Peace also has to come from below', as the slogan says. The approaches followed often aim for what is called conflict transformation: changing unjust and inequitable societal relationships that have led to patterns of exclusion and feelings of grievance.

In official policy circles and policy documents we see this new focus reflected in attempts to formulate integrated, multi-actor responses to these comprehensive security challenges, by combining the efforts of Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, as well as civil society organisations. This approach implies that economic and development aid policies explicitly include the issue of conflict and are mobilised to contribute to conflict resolution and peace building. The author Jonathan Goodhand (2001) has called this 'working on conflict' instead of the earlier 'working around conflict'. At present this broader, if not developmentalist, understanding of security has become widely accepted, as evidenced by recent publications such as 'A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility' by the UN High Level Panel (2004), 'State of the World 2005, Redefining Global Security' by the Worldwatch Institute (2005), or the European Security Strategy (EU 2003) and Doctrine (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities 2004), to mention just a few examples.

The Worldwatch Institute Report, for example, talks about 'problems without passports', such as endemic poverty, growing inequality and unemployment, international crime and population movements, and again emphasises that a military approach to these problems alone is inadequate and probably counterproductive.

In the bilateral sphere we see this same trend in joined-up government, where departmental compartmentalisation is done away with, such as the 3-D approach of the Canadians: Development, Defence and Diplomacy. Dutch policy too - for instance, as formulated in the white paper on post-conflict reconstruction - has the ambition of an integrated approach.

The different nature of current conflict and the changing positions of military and humanitarian actors as well as donors have led to adjustments in the traditional relations between these sets of actors. Before we outline the nature of the emerging interfaces between them and the forms of collaboration they engage in, we need to specify some of the terminology that is being used in ongoing debates on the subject. It is essential to define how particular notions are being used or even redefined when realities on the ground and associated discourses are in a process of change, and misunderstanding and confusion can easily result.

## 2.5 Terminology

We find different types of terminology being used in different settings for the cooperation between peace support missions and aid agencies.

Within NATO these activities are labelled CIMIC (*civil-military co-operation*), while the Americans use the term Civil Affairs. NATO defines CIMIC as the coordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO force commander and civil populations, including national and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies.

We consider the term CIMIC somewhat misleading, as it seems to suggest a sense of mutually shared objectives of military and civilian actors, while it is in fact a purely military concept aimed at force acceptance, force protection and opportunities to collect intelligence. It is thus a one-sided notion that smacks of subordination of the civil actors to the military, and does not convey the reciprocity involved in the interface between military and civil actors involved in present-day peace operations.

In the framework of UN operations the notion of CMCoord is used: *civil-military coordination*. It is described as 'the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to co-operation'. In the UN framework the UN Humanitarian Coordinator plays a central role in the mission's civil-military coordination structure that is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and training (UN 2003: 5 and 14-15). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which is the primary interagency coordination mechanism for humanitarian assistance involving UN and non-UN agencies, phrases the UN viewpoint as follows: 'All humanitarian action, including civil-military coordination for humanitarian purposes in complex emergencies, must be in accordance with the overriding core

principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. [ ] Any civil-military coordination must serve the prime humanitarian principle of humanity - i.e. human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found.' (2004: 8).

It is clear that the UN concept has a different rationale and scope than the military notion of CIMIC, but in turn it shows a humanitarian bias. Due to the military and unidirectional connotation of the term CIMIC and the humanitarian bias of CMCoord and its limitation to UN operations, we prefer to use the generic term *civil-military relations* following the ICRC (Studer, 2001) or, when appropriate, *civil-military interface*. We define civil-military relations as the interactions between military and non-military organisations and actors, generally in the context of a peace operation or, more rarely, in a combat operation or during an occupation. It covers a broad set of issues ranging from policy formulation, command and control (civil/political control of the military instrument) to different forms of operational coordination and interaction between the military, local authorities, the population, non-governmental humanitarian, development and civil society organisations, and the wider society. Though all these aspects may be discussed in our case studies on Afghanistan and Liberia, in view of the research questions underlying this study, emphasis lies on the interface between the external military intervention or mixed peace-support operations and international and local NGOs as well as the local population.

A fundamental and indispensable matter of concern in this context is the need to distinguish between the identities, functions and roles of *civil* personnel (in many debates equated with personnel of humanitarian or, more generally, aid organisations) and *military* forces. But this is not always easy, as most definitions seem to be somewhat tautological or difficult to apply to the rather messier conditions of present-day conflict. Humanitarian actors are defined by the IASC as civilians, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, who have a commitment to humanitarian principles and are engaged in humanitarian activities. Military actors refer to official military forces, i.e. military forces of a state or intergovernmental organisation that are subject to a hierarchical chain of command, be they armed or unarmed, governmental or inter-governmental.

In the rules of *customary humanitarian law* (Henckaerts, 2005) the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants and between civil and military objects is crucial. Parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants. Attacks must not be directed against civilians (Rule 1). However, the definitions offered have a somewhat circular aspect and seem to us problematic in intra-state war with nondescript fighters and militias taking part and an increasing role of civilians both as victims and perpetrators. All members of the armed forces of a party to the conflict are defined as combatants (Rule 3). Armed forces of a party to a conflict are defined as organised armed forces, groups and units, which are under a command responsible to that party for the conduct of its subordinates (Rule 4). Civilians are simply defined as persons who are not part of the armed forces (Rule 5). They are protected against attack as long as they do not take part in the hostilities (Rule 6). Similarly, military objects are objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose partial or total destruction, capture or neutralisation offers a definite military advantage (Rule 8). Civil objects are then all objects that are not military objects (Rule 9) and are hence protected from attack (Rule 10).

Reviewing these definitions, we are aware that the labels military and civil or civilian and non-combatant at most serve to signalise and are not always easily applied in the variegated conditions of multi-dimensional, integrated peace operations, and we concede that the precise use of these terms may depend on the issues at stake and the context.

## 2.6 The changing interface between military and civil actors under the current peace operations

Military interventions have always interacted with non-military actors in their area of operation. Typically, military troops liaised with civilians and local authorities in support of their military mission. With both the features of contemporary conflict and the changing nature of peace operations in mind, it is hardly surprising that traditional military dealings with civil actors have changed. Firstly, activities in support of the military mission itself have been adapted and secondly, with the broadening of mandates a set of civil activities has emerged that is not merely supportive to the mission, but an integral part of it, up to the point of shifting the

mission in the direction of an integral, mixed or hybrid operation. Traditional forms of dealings with non-military actors may be grouped under four banners.

Firstly, military forces normally collaborate with the local authorities. During the cold war this came to be known as *host nation support* and - as the term indicates - this generally involved support by the local government to the military mission.

Secondly, military forces have an interest in winning the *hearts and minds* of local actors. They have thus traditionally provided services to local populations or key figures to boost their popularity. Major reasons for hearts-and-minds operations include promoting force acceptance and facilitating force protection as well as the gathering of intelligence.

Thirdly, peace missions have resorted to *psychological operations* (psyops) to influence people's minds or break the morale of the enemy. These operations consist of the provision of selective information or misinformation through various media and are thus also known as information operations (info-ops) or media operations (media-ops). Apart from influencing the population for ideological reasons in themselves, the objectives of psyops resemble those of hearts-and-minds operations in promoting the acceptance of peace missions among the population.

Fourthly, there is the traditional *observers'* role where the military interact with the population to monitor the development of the security situation on the ground.

All four forms of military interaction with civilians are still used today and can be observed in the case studies in this volume. However, due to the three aspects of change - changing conflict, changing humanitarian response and changing military responses - they are taking different shapes. Military interventions still collaborate with local authorities, but the direction of assistance seems to have changed. Host nation support has not vanished, but at present a military intervention typically provides assistance to the local authorities, rather than vice versa. In the wake of a peace process, governments may struggle with recovery. In some cases, the entire state needs to be practically rebuilt. Both UN peace operations and non-UN interventions tend to assist in these state-building exercises.

Peace missions seem to need hearts-and-minds activities more than ever to boost their popularity. Due to the wide range of actors involved in contemporary conflict, the key role of populations in these conflicts and the contested nature of contemporary peace enforcement, winning hearts and minds has surely gained importance for a military intervention. Hearts-and-minds activities are there to smoothen the operation; in some missions they have become highly charged symbolic gestures.

At the present juncture, however, activities have gone far beyond this and now extend to veritable development co-operation, although in the framework of a peace mission. In Afghanistan, for instance, development work became an integral part of Operation Enduring Freedom and the ISAF operation. In an attempt to show the 'benign face of the coalition' (Sedra n.d.: 5), reconstruction efforts have become totemic tools for proving the righteousness and success of the operation. From a more ideological perspective, it is sometimes argued in this connection that the Western world engages in a concerted attempt at liberal peacebuilding that entails promoting a peaceful order based on Western values and freedoms, particularly parliamentary democracy and a neo-liberal economic order.

For our purpose, we distinguish between re-establishing the *rule of law* and broader reconstruction activities. Rule of law activities concern the operation of a legitimate, democratically elected government with civilian oversight over a properly functioning security apparatus, including the armed forces, police, judiciary and penitentiary system. These rule of law activities include a military component, perhaps in the form of disarmament, demobilisation or security sector reform. The broader reconstruction activities aim at more general types of socio-economic and institutional development. Here we speak of *embedded development*, as the development activities are part of an integrated or hybrid mission or maintain close links with the peace operation.

In this paper, we assert that the above gradational spectrum comprising six identifiable forms characterises the present-day civil-military interface.

On the basis of a deeper analysis, it could be argued that there has been a fundamental change in military involvement with civil actors. Involvement with civilians used to be a means to a military end, but today we find that civil tasks have become integral to the objectives and mandates of the newer generations of peace operations. Missions are thus tasked with activities ranging from the facilitation of elections and state-building activities to international relief and rehabilitation. This has implications for the set-up of these missions. Rather than merely wanting to look good to civilians (traditional hearts-and-minds work), the forces now need to genuinely impact on civil processes. Engineering a peace process and effecting social, economic and political change is a formidable task and quite different from window-dressing with aid. With such a mandate, local conditions and attitudes become determinants of the end state (the mission's objective) and therefore, of its chances of success or failure. The role of civil actors and donor governments has thus become integral to the peace operations at stake.

We have used the notion of embedded donors to refer to the new position of development aid in these missions. As most current missions indeed have a broader mandate, including both military and non-military objectives, they have also been called hybrid missions. In practice, traditional hearts-and-minds work may take place alongside mandated activities like police training or other civil tasks, and it may not be easy (especially for the local public) to keep these activities apart. What matters is that at least some of these activities are not merely intended to boost the popularity of the force; they have become an integral part of the mandate. Examples of such hybrid operations can most clearly be discerned in second and fifth generation peace operations, though the other generations may tend to this model under certain conditions.

In conclusion, we must acknowledge that there continue to be major differences as well as overlaps between peace missions. For the purpose of this paper, it is the balance and the relationship between military and civil tasks that matters. Military involvement with the civil sphere is a common occurrence in almost any mission, and it has been that way traditionally. However, the nature of contemporary conflict and the changing forms of intervention have brought about a change in this involvement. In addition, the broadening of mandates has made certain civil tasks an elementary part of the missions' mandates. These changes have irreversibly pushed aid agencies and peacekeeping forces into each other's realm. More frequent interactions between both sets of actors are the inevitable result. Whether or not to co-operate, to what extent, under what conditions, and how, have become controversial issues and are hotly debated.

## 2.7 Practical forms of co-operation between military and aid agencies

In section 2.2 we mentioned the positions of neutralism elevated, neutralism abandoned and third-way humanitarianism when describing different positions with regard to the humanitarian principle of independence and neutrality. Other categories mentioned in the literature include classical humanitarianists and political humanitarianists. The classical humanitarianists argue that humanitarian aid should be isolated from all political processes and any contacts with the military should be avoided. The second category acknowledges the political nature of humanitarian work and the need to make choices accordingly, if not to choose sides in a conflict. Political humanitarianists can be subdivided into minimalists, maximalists and solidarists (Weiss 1999, Goodhand and Atkinson 2001).

Stoddard (2003) distinguishes a religious, Dunantist and Wilsonian or state humanitarianism. Here the relative independence from governments is an important criterion, while others situate large INGOs between the poles of independence and public service contractor on the one hand, and those of impartiality and solidarity on the other.

The ICRC's approach to civil-military relations has fluctuated between three positions over the past decade: 'isolationism', 'proselytism' and 'ecumenism' (Studer, 2001: 384-386). The isolationist position demands strict observance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's principles and basically avoids contact with the military at the operational level. Adherents of this position take a rejectionist position towards any co-operation with the military. Proselytism involves efforts to rally all humanitarian actors under a single banner, advocating resistance to any infringement of the impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian work. Ecumenism acknowledges the widening interface between military and humanitarian actors and favours dialogue. This approach can be conceptually situated somewhere between 'damage control' and 'constructive

involvement' and is largely determined by the emerging realities in the field and the recognition that the ICRC's is not the only approach. Pragmatism, tolerance and complementarity are the keywords defining this position, which seems to be the one frequently adopted by the ICRC as a matter of course (Studer, 2001: 384-386). The latter position, properly called 'principled pragmatism' by the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief's (ACBAR) Advocacy & Policy Coordinator Stapleton (2005: 2), may perhaps also be the one most frequently encountered in our case studies in general, but echoes of the other two positions reverberate in the discussions and discourses in the field.

All these typologies overlap and interrelate to a certain degree and may be useful in the present debate. For the purpose of this study we have derived the following simple typology: *principled neutralists* (those agencies or actors who want to stay independent, do not want to collaborate with the military and seek to avoid contact as a matter of principle), more or less principled *pragmatists* (those who balance their principles against more functionalist or instrumentalist considerations and decide to co-operate more or less intensively with the military depending on the context), and *supporters* (those who defend the military actions as necessary, see little objection to it on principle and are prepared to collaborate and provide support).

In these debates, it is important to keep in mind the voluntary nature of civil-military relations. In the absence of an overarching regime, both the military commander and aid agencies have independent decision power. Coordination is thus driven by mutual interests and steered by a consensus-building model. Mutual interests may be vested in the complementarity of military and non-military actors, characterised by Lilly as 'a more accurate description of the relationship than co-operation which presupposes a desire to integrate approaches to achieve a common goal' (2002: 2).

In effect, the situation on the ground may require such a complementary approach, as mono-dimensional solutions are increasingly deemed inadequate. Military actors and aid agencies have complementary knowledge, skills, expertise and resources facilitating effective action. Peace missions can avail themselves of the means to provide security, clear mines, airlift goods and staff, provide maritime resources, intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities, communication networks and the means to deal with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Aid agencies may avail themselves of local knowledge and contacts, extensive operational presence, the ability to stay for a long time, flexibility and independence from high politics. In addition, collaboration may prevent overlap and inefficiencies and in the case of the military what has been called mission creep, the tendency to carry out tasks alien to the traditional mandate that may in the end undermine the core objectives.

In short, military troops and aid workers may have something to offer each other. Depending on the circumstances and their mutual complementarity, the following forms and degrees of collaboration between military and aid agencies may be used.

*Advocacy and training.* A very limited form of co-operation is advocacy and training in humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law and human rights provided by aid agencies to the military. Especially the ICRC, but to a certain extent other agencies as well, interact with the military to disseminate their views and knowledge on those issues. However, this does not necessarily imply a preparedness to collaborate in other domains or any approval or support of the peace operations at hand.

*Information sharing.* Both soldiers and aid workers need optimal information about their surroundings. An adequate knowledge of developments in the area is essential both for the quality of their work and for their security. Sharing of observations may thus be a logical step. The IASC identifies the following types of relevant information: security information (often in the form of briefings), humanitarian locations, humanitarian activities, mine-action activities, population movements, military relief activities and post-strike information (2004: 12). However, for some humanitarian organisations, and the ICRC in particular, confidentiality and neutrality are limiting factors when it comes to information sharing with the military.

*Coordination.* Though the forces and aid agencies keep their operations strictly separate in the field, they coordinate them to avoid duplication or neglect in certain areas as well as mutually distorting effects (one activity may jeopardise another). They may also agree to take a common stance on certain issues (e.g. the way reconstruction is carried out) or towards certain actors (e.g. the local government) to make sure they do not undermine each other's position. In practice, however, there is often anxiety among the aid agencies about how coordination should be effected and whether it should be open to public view, because of

possible negative consequences. Hence, there is debate on the desired nature, transparency and popular perception of the liaison structures to be established to enable coordination (IASC 2004: 11)

*Protection or armed escorts.* The military may provide protection to or armed escorts for humanitarian organisations. The humanitarian community is divided on this issue, with some organisations accepting protection and escorts when deemed necessary, while others tend to be against it unless indispensable, as it may endanger the safety of their staff and of those they are supposed to help. In practice, however, experience on the ground rather than principles on paper seems to determine what course is taken.

*Logistical co-operation.* When the operational means of military forces and aid agencies are complementary, they may decide to join hands at a practical level. It may be important for aid agencies to use military logistical capacity (e.g. transport or mine clearance). The forces may have a stake in facilitating relief, rehabilitation or reconstruction by NGOs or UN agencies (to help the people) and in being seen with these agencies (to upgrade their image). This kind of co-operation can take place in an ad hoc fashion or in a more structured form. Humanitarian agencies have different viewpoints, ranging from reluctance to pragmatic acceptance of the use of military and civil defence assets (MCDA). The 'Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies' (UN 2003) stipulate that MCDA should only be employed as a last resort at the request of the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator and only if the operation as whole takes place under the authority and control of the humanitarian organisation. Moreover, humanitarian work should be performed by the humanitarian organisation, while the use of MCDA must be limited in time and scale and be subject to an exit strategy. Participating military should respect the UN Codes of Conduct and the humanitarian principles. As a follow-up paper to the Guidelines, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee produced a paper on 'Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies' (IASC 2004). The IASC stipulates in this paper that, once the military have become a party to a conflict, any coordination must proceed with extreme caution, while co-operation - a closer form of coordination - with belligerent forces should in principle not take place at all (2004: 6-7).

*Subcontracting.* Peace missions may subcontract the implementation of activities to civilian actors, either local or international NGOs or the private corporate sector. These activities may concern traditional hearts-and-minds activities or embedded development projects.

*Intensive co-operation or integration.* When aid agencies and peace forces consider each other complete allies in a certain field, collaboration may become even more intense. Both counterparts may do joint planning, agencies may set up their office or lodging within the military compound, and activities may be jointly implemented. Yet in general it is understood that the mutual roles and forms of expertise remain intact and are respected. The military will only directly undertake humanitarian tasks in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when there is a desperate need, when there are no alternatives and when the military acts in accordance with civil direction (Lilly, 2002: 11).

## 2.8 Issues and concerns

The dual process of peace missions undertaking a broader scope of activities and closer collaboration with aid agencies has invoked a range of concerns and criticisms. The controversy encompasses a rather extensive set of both practical and more principled issues. In summary, critics argue that co-operation with aid agencies jeopardises the humanitarian response and, moreover, that soldiers are unable to provide quality aid.

*Blurring the division between military and civil.* A major objection to multidimensional peace operations is that they blur the distinction between military and civil actors and actions. The ICRC fears that this undermines the essence of humanitarian action (Studer, 2001: 367). Whereas civil humanitarian and development tasks were rather clearly delineated from military tasks in the past, this is less true today in most current peace operations. Humanity and impartiality require unimpeded access by aid agencies to the suffering population. Humanitarian access could be jeopardised if clear distinctions between aid agencies and the military

are not maintained. Operational dependence on military logistics, for example, might have such an effect. Close association with peacekeepers would be particularly problematic if the military mission is not perceived as impartial. Blocking or targeting of aid and aid workers could be the result.

*Politicisation.* The ICRC argues that a two-pronged approach needs to be followed where humanitarian and political action are strictly separated. According to Studer (2001: 372), '[t]he ICRC saw from the start the danger of humanitarian efforts becoming integrated into a political process and thereby themselves becoming politicised. The need for political efforts aimed at conflict resolution (and the requisite military support) to be clearly separated from humanitarian action, which cannot be subordinated to the political aims of peace-keeping operations, consequently had to be reaffirmed. For that reason the ICRC began, in the early nineties, to advocate the concept of an *espace humanitaire*: i.e. scope for neutral and impartial humanitarian action in the midst of conflict.' This viewpoint of the ICRC corresponds with the neutrality elevated position mentioned earlier, and with our position of principled neutralism. Paradoxically, the international community has also been criticised for using humanitarian aid as a substitute for political action and in doing so, not so much mixing the two roles and mandates as in fact abrogating its political responsibilities. In several instances such as Rwanda and Darfur, the international community has been accused of not taking timely political action and showing negligence by merely sending some relief goods.

*Militarisation.* In addition to politicisation, it is feared that the delivery of humanitarian aid by military will lead to a militarisation of aid and to the allocation by governments of resources for relief to the military at the expense of civil channels (Studer: 375). In this connection, Lilly has pointed to the power differential between the military with their relatively powerful political masters, and aid agencies and humanitarian actors with their less clearly defined constituencies, which thus appear weaker (2002: 4). This fits with broader debates, if not fears, of the securitisation of aid or security-driven development, which would imply a paradigm shift with military forces assuming a much greater role in peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development activities, and development policy becoming increasingly integrated and subordinated to security concerns, a military logic and short-term political and military strategies (Renner, 2005: 16-17, CIDSE 2006: 13-14). Barry and Jefferys refer to Save the Children's concern that 'humanitarian aid is increasingly perceived as a means to [political and security] ends rather than an urgent and inalienable right in itself' (2002:8). These authors describe instances where the label humanitarian has been manipulated by policy-makers to explain or justify political or military actions, such as in the case of the war by the US against Nicaragua, India's invasion of East Pakistan in 1971, Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1978, the Iraq war of 1991 and NATO's bombing of Serbia in 1999. Similarly, the notion of a 'humanitarian war' and 'humanitarian bombing' used by NATO spokesmen during the Kosovo intervention was deemed by many NGOs an unacceptable manipulation of the word humanitarian (2002: 9).

*Violation of humanitarian principles.* The perceived risk of humanitarian principles being violated is at the core of the debate. The cornerstones of humanitarianism are generally considered to be humanity (human suffering must be addressed unconditionally), neutrality (non-allegiance with any of the parties), impartiality (aid must be given on the basis of need alone) and independence (from political or other viewpoints). Co-operation with the military could threaten all these principles, some people argue. Aid could become a political instrument by which to demand compliance with political conditions, and aid agencies could lose their independence. A commander might use aid as a weapon to undercut support for the enemy or to protect sensitive areas. Co-operation with aid agencies might be employed for gathering intelligence. Even if it were not actually the case, the public could perceive it as such and this would also be problematic. Studer (2001: 374) refers to the 'contagious effect' that civil humanitarian activities and workers may face when associated with military missions or when judged to be a party to the conflict.

*Institutional incompatibility.* At a more institutional level, there may be a mismatch between aid agencies and military actors, due to the inherent differences between them in terms of mandates, objectives, working methods and vocabularies. The operational approach (flexible vs. top-down planning), the duration of stay (years vs. months), organisational cultures (independent vs. hierarchical) and contacts with local actors (unarmed vs. armed) might well be so different that co-operation becomes very difficult in practice. It is sometimes argued that joint training could help prevent misunderstanding, foster predictability and spread knowledge on international humanitarian law, but other observers feel that differences are too fundamental to base them on misunderstanding only (Barry and Jefferys 2002:1-2). The ICRC, on the other hand, is prepared to take part in exchanges, conferences and training, basically to disseminate knowledge about its own activities and views and to promote international humanitarian law (Studer, 2001: 390).

Moreover, this involves attitudes and a level of trust. Bollen (2002) argues that the development of 'swift' trust is a major determinant of successful civil-military cooperation. Co-operation may otherwise be blocked by unco-operative attitudes. This may be due to competition for resources and political or media attention, but also to personal likes and dislikes and prejudices. Aid workers may consider the military arrogant or dominant and they may blame soldiers for a lack of true commitment and argue they should establish closer contact with the people rather than staying in the camp. Scandals engendered by the military - for example, involvement in illegal trade or sex slavery - reinforce such dislikes. The military, on the other hand, may blame aid workers for being an uncoordinated, self-interested group of arrogant money-spenders that drive around in expensive cars and send impressive pictures to their constituencies, without actually accomplishing much. Whether these views are correct is a different matter; the stereotypes in themselves constitute an obstacle.

*Military are poor aid workers.* Leaving aside the issue of collaboration, aid agencies have been critical of the military taking on non-military projects. Particularly, efforts to win hearts and minds (which is not considered a genuine contribution to relief or development) have been under fire. It is felt that the military tend to ignore basic lessons from fifty years of development co-operation - adjustment to local cultures, a needs-driven approach, participation and ownership, a pro-poor focus, conflict sensitivity and sustainability - as well as widely accepted standards, such as the Sphere standards. Finally, some people argue that even when aid provided by the military is suitable and effective, it is very expensive (Barry and Jefferys 2002: 13).

*Military objections.* Though concerns about civil-military collaboration have primarily been voiced by NGOs, there have also been critical remarks from the military. One problem is that the provision of humanitarian aid may sometimes be perceived as a crucial but partial act in military terms, irrespective of the humanitarian imperative involved. There is also a risk that peacekeeping forces enter into a form of mission creep by undertaking a host of civil activities, which distract them from their main objective. Moreover, it is claimed that they do not have the required skills and equipment to take on these tasks. In this connection, NATO has coined the notion of 'mission primacy', meaning that the military aspect of the mission should take precedence over the humanitarian action. Also, there is a greater risk that the forces will find themselves unable to reach the end state, because expectations are too high. Close relations with local actors can also be dangerous, because they may lead to fraternisation, thus diminishing the willingness of the troops to use violence.

In conclusion, it is a simple fact that military and aid agencies have come to operate in the same arena. It is therefore not possible to be against civil-military relations; both sets of actors are quite simply confronted with each other and will have to find a way of dealing with it. A number of policy papers and codes of conduct have emerged in the past few years. We already mentioned the ICRC code of conduct, the UN Guidelines and the paper of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. None of these codes is fundamentally against co-operation with a military actor and most actors seem to take a pragmatic position, though with varying degrees of reluctance. The catchphrase of the Dutch government seems to be the common denominator in these codes as well: 'as civilian as possible; as military as necessary.' Yet there are quite big differences in the way civil-military relations are conceptualised and implemented by the different partners. This obviously requires a careful weighing of pros and cons, while adherence to basic principles will be a crucial issue for the parties involved. At this point it is not very clear whether these codes will offer very useful guidance in the challenging conditions of today's peace operations and how collaboration will need to evolve in practical terms; this must be closely monitored in the near future.

## 2.9 Conclusions

We have seen major changes in humanitarian interventions and peace operations in areas affected by violent conflict. Aid agencies have become more aware of their impact on the conflict's context and have taken an increasingly comprehensive approach. The mandate given to peace operations has broadened to include civil aspects such as elections, police training or assistance to refugees. In short, humanitarian and development agencies have become more security oriented while peace missions have become more humanitarian and development oriented.

These changes in positioning reflect the complexity of contemporary conflict and the inter-related nature of humanitarian, developmental and military aspects in current conflict responses. Both groups of actors have difficulty grappling with contemporary conflicts. They face criticism and outright hostility from local actors and they find that important factors affecting the success of their mission are outside their sphere of influence. Both sets of actors deal with symptoms of conflict, but they increasingly realise that root causes need to be addressed to some extent before they can leave. Broader mandates, the plea for integrated approaches, and the rise of extensive involvement with setting up post-war administrations have been the result.

The discussion on civil-military relations is a natural consequence of these changes. Though military forces have always been involved with civil actors, traditional forms of involvement have been adapted to the features of contemporary conflict. Moreover, peace missions have received broader mandates with peace building and rehabilitation aid as core components of their task. As a result, aid workers and the military find themselves operating in the same arena, which creates opportunities for, as well as concerns about, increasing collaboration.

There is an emerging literature on the pros and cons of co-operation. Meanwhile a nascent policy debate is taking place, and there have been some attempts to create codes of conduct or practical guidelines. Systematic reflection has been limited, however, because civil-military relations are evolving as we speak and many experiments are too young to evaluate. Policy discussions are not always aware of actual practice on the ground. Moreover, the conceptual and contextual basis of the debate tends to be weak.

This publication is intended to help policymakers and practitioners take these hurdles by analysing experiences in Afghanistan and Liberia. Both countries provide a rather wide picture of the socio-economic and political workings of contemporary conflict, while international involvement in both cases can be classified as a cutting edge experiment. One is an integrated UN intervention in its broadest sense with the consent of the warring parties (Liberia), while the other is a combination of an American-led invasion with a NATO-led operation under a UN mandate, facing resistance from the *ancien régime* (Afghanistan).

# The case of Afghanistan 3

Afghanistan is one of the most difficult places on earth to understand. Its history is long, its culture complex. Both are shrouded in mystery and myth. The trouble with trying to tell the story of Afghanistan, now as ever, is that it is so difficult to get the story straight and to get it out. That is not merely to distribute the story, but to get the story in the first place.

Dan Rather, CBS News magazine 60 Minutes (Magnus and Naby 2002: ix)

## 3.1 Background to the conflict in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been the spectre of dramatic events since time immemorial. Already inhabited in prehistoric times, there is evidence of early agriculture and pastoralism some 10,000 years ago. As early as the sixth millennium BC, lapis lazuli was being transported to neighbouring countries (Ewans 2002: 10). With regard to more recent times, five different periods are usually distinguished to describe Afghanistan's past (Magnus and Naby 2002: 24):

- The pre-Islamic period (500 BC to 700 AD)
- The mediaeval and late mediaeval Islamic period (700-1709 AD)
- The Afghan Empire (1709-1826)
- The Great Game (European imperial period; 1826-1919)
- Independent monarchy (1919-1973)

Ewans (2002: 10) observes that 'Afghanistan has [...] over its long history been a 'highway of conquest' between west, central and southern Asia. The country has been incorporated into a series of empires, and successions of migrations and invasions have passed into and through it.' Perhaps the voyage of Alexander the Great, the silk route and the three Anglo-Afghan wars are the most well-known examples of the dynamic nature of Afghanistan's history, but they are only a few among many.

In line with its volatile history, there is a considerable ethnic, linguistic and socio-cultural diversity in Afghanistan. There are over twenty major ethnic groups and more than thirty different languages. If we count the smaller ethnic groups or the tribes and sub-tribes of the largest group, the Pashtun, the number of different identity groups is much larger still. As becomes clear on Map 1, the Pashtun live in a belt across west, south and east Afghanistan, many Hazara live in the central highlands and the Tajik, Uzbek and Kirghiz live in the north. These groups overarch state boundaries.

Map 1: Afghan population<sup>2</sup>



Iranian		Turkic		Other	
◻	Baloch	◻	Kirghiz	◻	Brahui
◻	Aimak	◻	Turkmen	◻	Nuristani
◻	Hazara	◻	Uzbek	◻	Sparsely populated or uninhabited
◻	Pashtun Durrani, Ghilzai				
◻	Qizilbash				
◻	Tajik				

<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of www.globalsecurity.org

Though there have been state formations of different kinds, Ewans (2002: 9) observes that ‘the state has never been strong enough to establish effective control throughout the countryside and has traditionally done little for it, whether in terms of educational or medical facilities, or of development more generally. [...] Despite the bonds of Islam, a sense of national unity has thus always been weak, except when an unusually strong leader has appeared or the nation has come together when threatened by an external enemy. Even then cooperation has tended to be ephemeral and has lapsed in the face of the country’s deep-rooted divisions.’ Ewans further states that ‘Afghans share a strong devotion to freedom. They will carry hospitality to embarrassing extremes, but are implacable as enemies. If there has been an overriding feature of their history, it is that it has been a history of conflict - of invasions, battles and sieges, of vendettas, assassinations and massacres, of tribal feuding, dynastic strife and civil war. Rarely have the Afghans allowed themselves, or have allowed others with whom they have come into contact, to lead out their lives in peace.’ (Ewans 2002: 9)

This history is closely related to domestic political developments, larger developments in terms of regional and imperial dynamics, development of trade and commerce, cultural and religious features, and local ethnic and tribal characteristics and tradition, such as among the Pashtuns (codes of conduct, revenge, honour, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

Recent and contemporary history can be divided into the Republican period (1973-1979), Soviet invasion and domination (1979-1988), Civil War (1989-1992), Mujahideen rule (1992-1997), Taliban rule (1997-2001), US-led invasion and Afghan Interim Authority and Afghan Transition Authority (2001-2004), and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004-present). Box 2 discusses the main features of these periods.

### Box 2: Political developments in Afghanistan since 1973<sup>4</sup>

#### *Republican period (1973-1979)*

On 17 July 1973 an earlier prime minister and member of the royal family, Daoud Khan, staged a coup and ousted king Zahir Shah, who took exile in Italy. Afghanistan was declared a republic. Daoud became president, prime minister, foreign minister and minister of defence with the help of the Parcham faction of the People’s Democratic Party (PDPA) of Afghanistan, which was in essence the communist party. Daoud’s reign was autocratic and opposition movements emerged, such as the Hezb-i-Islami and Jamiat-i-Islami set up by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Burhanuddin Rabbani respectively, and operating from Peshawar. In the Panshir Valley, Massoud opposed Daoud’s regime. Daoud’s regime became increasingly centralised and repressive after a constitutional revision provided for a one-party state and a unicameral Loya Jirga<sup>5</sup>, largely filled with nominees of the president. Daoud got himself re-elected for a six-year term. The Daoud regime, however, quickly fell out with the Russians and when Daoud tried to arrest the PDPA leadership, a military coup (Saur Revolution) by Russian-trained young officers killed Daoud, handing over power to a PDPA-controlled cabinet.

#### *Soviet invasion and domination (1979-1988)*

Within the PDPA the Khalq faction got the upper hand at the expense of the Parchamists and started to introduce all manner of revolutionary measures, thus provoking resentment among the rural population. The reforms led to a serious disruption of the agrarian production system and of rural life in general. In the meantime a treaty of friendship and co-operation was signed with Moscow. However, after much internal resistance and fighting, Moscow grew worried about the Khalq’s confrontational policies and invaded Afghanistan. Khalq leader Amin was killed and Karmal and its Parcham faction took over. International attempts to effect Soviet withdrawal failed and the US started backing and arming Mujahideen fighters operating from Pakistan. Simultaneously, humanitarian aid was provided both cross-border inside Afghanistan, and to refugees in Pakistan and other countries. Gorbachov became president of the USSR in 1985, while Najibullah succeeded Karmal in 1986. After complicated talks in Geneva and elsewhere, plans for Soviet withdrawal were agreed to. The Russians left Afghanistan in 1989.

#### *Civil War (1989-1992)*

An Afghan interim government was formed in Peshawar. In the period between 1989 and 1992 a civil war erupted between Najibullah’s government and the various Mujahideen. Not all of them were well organised, while there was also considerable factionist strife among them, some being

more Islamist and others more traditionalist, some being supported by Iran and others by Pakistan. After several military failures, the tide started to turn in 1992, when Mujahideen forces took control of Kabul, after Najibullah had agreed to step down. Despite this success, the Mujahideen remained very divided, especially when it came to dividing government positions now they had gained supremacy.

#### *Mujahideen rule (1992-1997)*

Mujahideen rule was thus characterised by deep divisions and disagreements based on ethnic, tribal, regional and religious affiliations. Moreover, Hekmatyar was personally resentful about the powerful positions of the non-Pashtun leaders Rabbani, Massoud and Dostum. The situation soon escalated with regular fights between the factions causing considerable damage and suffering for the inhabitants of Kabul.

#### *Taliban rule (1997-2001)*

Fed by a general disillusionment with the Mujahideen, a new force of religious students (talib) was reportedly organised by maulvi Mohamed Omar which started to correct and punish the wrongdoings of the Mujahideen commanders. It was clear that Pakistan was behind their moves and initial success. Starting from Kandahar, the Taliban occupied Kabul after heavy bombing and fighting, and imposed a drastic version of Islamic practice in the areas under their control. Their reign was characterised by severe human rights violations and discrimination of women. They also became heavily involved in the production and trade of opium. Yet they were unable to control the whole of the country permanently and the Northern Alliance seized control of the northern provinces several times during 2000 and 2001.

#### *US-led invasion and Afghan Interim Authority and Afghan Transition Authority (2001-2004)*

After the bombing of the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on 9/11, the US became concerned about the alleged hosting of Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden by the Taliban regime and their support to his network. The global superpower declared a war on terror, sought collaboration with the Northern Alliance and invaded Afghanistan. In the wake of swift territorial advances, a conference was held in Bonn in 2001, where Afghan representatives agreed on specific steps to be taken and were assured of international support (including a peacekeeping force) to this endeavour.

#### *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004-present)*

After a number of interim arrangements, a new constitution was agreed to by the Loya Jirga, Hamid Karzai was elected the first president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the first parliamentary elections were held in 2005. Parallel to military operations against the terrorist networks and the Taliban, a wide range of domestic and international efforts were made at rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in general.

Looking at the conflicts in Afghanistan historically, a number of observations can be made.

Firstly, not just one conflict, but a whole series of conflicts goes on at the same time. These multiple conflicts in turn are multifaceted and difficult to reduce to one single causal explanation. The following clusters have largely been a common threat in this diversity of conflict: a) imperial and domestic (dynastic) struggles for power and state control; b) ethnic, religious and regional identities and affiliations; c) patterns of feudalism, political patronage and warlordism; d) economies of violence, especially in relation to drugs; and e) interference by superpowers, regional powers, and neighbouring countries.

Secondly, looking at Afghanistan’s geographical position at the crossroads between west, south and central Asia and its strategic position in the age of colonial empire and during the cold war, it always has been subject to foreign interference. Many Afghans are keen to point out that communism, the Mujahideen, the Taliban, Al Qaeda and even the government were to some extent foreign machinations. Meanwhile, there has been an overall failure or unwillingness of the international community, including the UN, to engage in peacemaking or peacekeeping efforts, but arguably this has changed in recent years.

Thirdly, despite recent progress in the field, the Afghan polity remains strongly fragmented with state authority weak or virtually absent in large parts of the country. State formation itself has been problematic. Setting up a central authority is controversial and has failed many times in Afghanistan.

Fourthly, due to decades of warfare and state negligence, Afghanistan’s development has suffered and been seriously retarded. Its human development indicators are among the lowest in the world, as shown in box 3. Moreover, in terms of gender equality, the

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed background on the Pashtuns see Bart (1959), Caroe (1958) or Lindholm (1982).

<sup>4</sup> Most data in this section are derived from Ewans (2002).

<sup>5</sup> The Loya Jirga is a unique Afghan forum in which elders from the various regions and ethnic groups settle major national affairs. Loya Jirga is Pashto for Grand Council and it is only convened on special occasions.

position of women and girls has been seriously affected by traditional cultural practices and discriminatory policies implemented by the Taliban regime.

Box 3: Indicators		
Parameter	Value	Source
Life expectancy, 2005 estimate	43 years	CIA Factbook 2005
Adult literacy rate (above 15 years)	36 %	HDI 2003
Gross Domestic Product, 2004	US\$ 5.8 bn	World Bank 2004
GDP per capita, 2003 estimate	US\$ 800	CIA Factbook 2005
Population living below poverty line	56 %	UNDP Afghanistan 2005

Fifthly, attempts to deal with the conflict have generally failed due to opportunistic, particularistic features of the Afghan leadership and a lack of domestic preparedness to achieve peace by compromise. Similarly, the present initiatives to restore stability and to bring peace and development are highly contested among sections of the population and armed groups that continue their insurgency.

In the past few years, Afghanistan has undergone both continuity and change. The events following the collapse of the Taliban regime have brought radical change to both domestic conditions and foreign interventions. However, many of the underlying conflict structures continue to be in place and current interventions in Afghanistan do not constitute an entirely unique period in Afghanistan's history. The transformation of the above-mentioned clusters - reform of the state, conflict-related identities, warlordism, the war economy and continued foreign interference - is a process that largely lies ahead and history suggests that it will be a rocky road.

### 3.2 Military and development interventions in Afghanistan

The fall of the Taliban regime marked a radical change in international involvement in Afghanistan. Neither political-military interventions nor development agencies had ever been completely absent, but the American-led invasion cleared the way for an unprecedented deployment of international actors. Combat troops, UN mandated peacekeepers, development donors, UN agencies, NGOs and private contractors rapidly increased their presence. Efforts aimed at peace enforcement, relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and state building were set up in parallel. Largely as a result of pre-existing power structures and local allegiances, the context of these activities continued to differ strongly between different parts of the country. Whereas relative stability came to the north, the west continued to be a bit more turbulent, while the southern and eastern parts - Pashtun-dominated regions bordering Pakistan - witnessed the continuation of warfare in parallel to reconstruction efforts. This section provides a further description of the various military and non-military interventions as well as the linkages between the two.

#### 3.2.1 Military interventions in Afghanistan

The foundation for the present state of affairs in Afghanistan was laid with the US military response to the 9/11 attacks. The US launched a 'war on terror' and began to create a 'coalition of the willing' to fight terrorism across the world. Initially, Taliban-governed Afghanistan was the primary focus of the war. The invasion - titled Operation Enduring Freedom - soon brought down the regime, but continues to struggle against Taliban remnants, Al Qaeda and other opposing armed factions.

The restoration of security, law and order and state functioning were priorities in the rapidly expanding territory conquered by the Northern Alliance and the foreign troops. In view of this formidable task, a diversity of Afghan representatives met in Bonn, Germany on December 5, 2001. The UN, and Special Representative of the Secretary General Lakhdar Brahimi in particular, facilitated the conference. The delegates signed an agreement establishing an interim authority. In an annex to the agreement,

they requested 'the United Nations Security Council to consider authorizing the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force.' (Bonn Agreement 2001).

The council thus authorised the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Although ISAF has a UN mandate, it is not a UN force. Interestingly, ISAF has a peace enforcement mandate (Chapter VII of the UN Charter), but its primary task is to support the Afghan authorities in resuming their position. Initially individual nations volunteered to lead the mission, but in August 2003 NATO assumed command and control, making it NATO's first mission outside the Euro-Atlantic area.

ISAF's role is to support the government of Afghanistan in 'the maintenance of security [ ] so that the Afghan Authorities as well as the personnel of the United Nations and other international civilian personnel engaged, in particular, in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts, can operate in a secure environment, and to provide security assistance for the performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement' (UNSC 2001). ISAF and Afghan authorities agreed on the following three tasks for the peacekeepers (ISAF and Interim Administration of Afghanistan 2002):

1. Assist the Interim Administration in developing future security structures.
2. Assist the Interim Administration in reconstruction.
3. Identify and arrange assistance and training tasks for future Afghan security forces.

The first Security Council Resolution (1386), issued on 20 December 2001, arranged for a six-month deployment. Since then, the council has extended the mandate several times, bringing the current termination date to 13 October 2006. ISAF's initial mandate was confined to Kabul and surroundings, in line with the request of the Bonn conference. The US moreover resisted a proliferation of ISAF, fearing it would get in the way of their hunt for Al Qaeda (Human Rights Watch 2002). After two years, however, the Security Council authorised the expansion 'outside of Kabul and its environs' (UNSC 2003). Currently, ISAF is active in Kabul as well as northern and Western Afghanistan and it will soon replace OEF in the remaining parts of the country as well. At the time of writing, ISAF consisted of over 9000 troops, but the number of troops fluctuates.<sup>6</sup> Thirty-six countries contribute troops, of which twenty-six are NATO countries, nine partner countries and one non-NATO/non-partner country.<sup>7</sup> The top contributing countries are Germany, Italy, Canada, Spain and France.

ISAF's headquarters, the Kabul Multinational Brigade and a support unit for the airport are all located in Afghanistan's capital. Outside Kabul, ISAF basically consists of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The mission can also make use of Rapid Reaction Forces (both within and outside the country) for military back-up. ISAF deployed additional forces in 2005 to assist the national police and army in providing security during the election period.

Though ISAF's objectives are essentially of a military nature, the process it tries to reinforce is in many ways a political one. The emergence of the interim and transitional authority, the holding of the Loya Jirga, the various elections and the rebuilding of state bodies were the key ingredients to this process. In view of this, ISAF has provided support to these processes. Special assistance was given to the Loya Jirga and the elections even warranted a special deployment. An additional 2000-troop Election Support Force (ESF) was deployed to facilitate the parliamentary and provincial council elections of 18 September 2005. The troops were stationed in various parts of the country to provide a military backup. The Afghan police and army were the primary actors who would take action in case of violent escalations. Despite the controversy around the elections - some candidates were barred from the list because of their alleged involvement in war crimes - there were no major incidents. The ESF could keep to monitoring of the security situation.

#### Provincial Reconstruction Teams

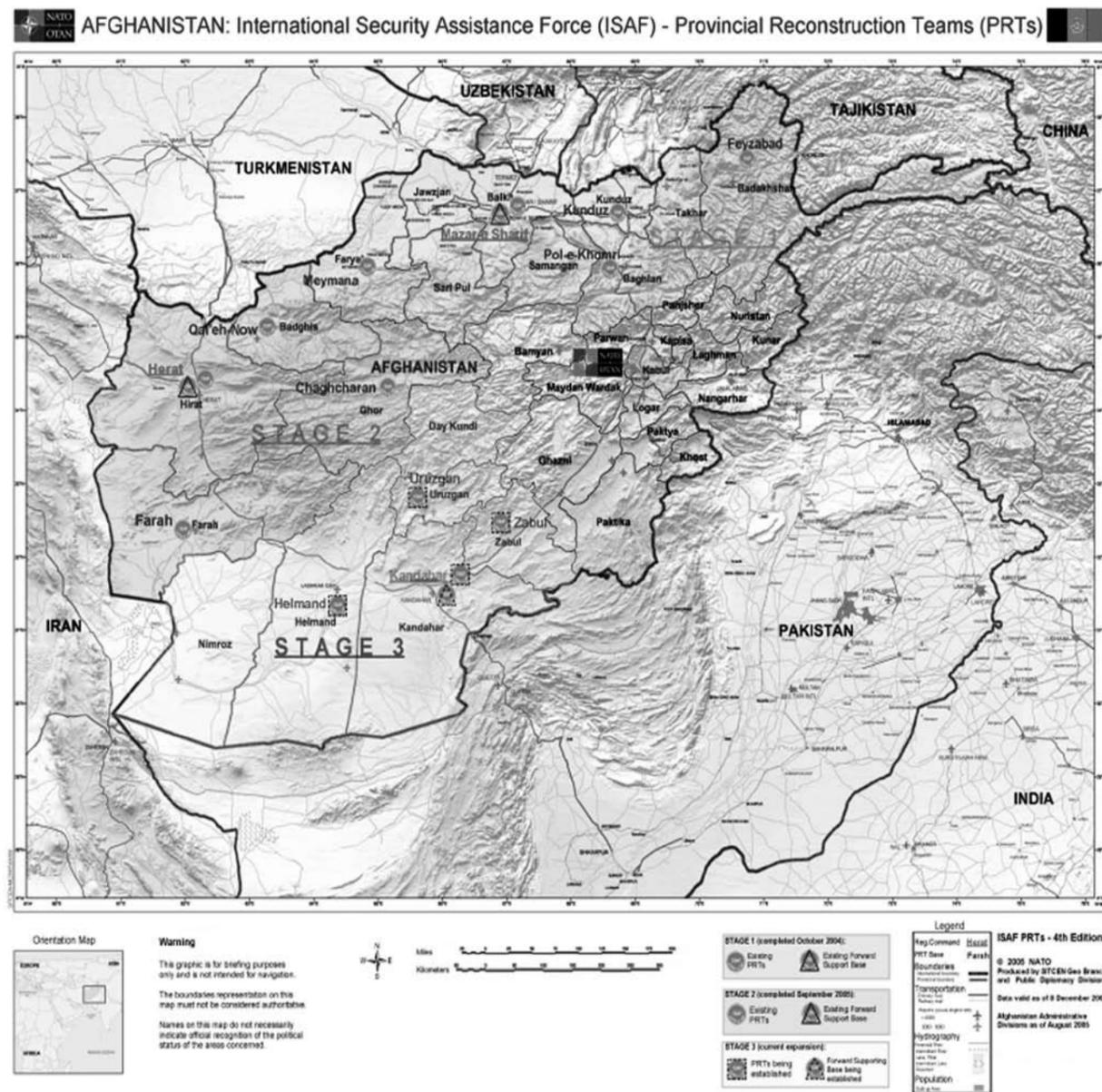
In an attempt to fill the vacuum left in the wake of the retreating Taliban administration, the US created Joint Reconstruction Teams (JRTs). These teams were intended to stabilise the local situation, prevent eruptions of violence, keep anti-Coalition

<sup>6</sup> Background information on ISAF is available at <http://www.afnorth.nato.int/ISAF>

<sup>7</sup> NATO countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. Partner countries: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Finland, Macedonia, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland. Non-NATO/non-partner country: New Zealand

Forces at bay, and initiate the reconstruction process, thus providing the nascent Afghan government with a stepping stone to spread its authority across the country (Jakobsen 2005). These JRTs became Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in November 2002 when NATO assumed command of ISAF. When ISAF troops spread across the north and west of the country they took over the PRTs in these provinces as well. The PRTs in the south and east continued to be part of OEF. As shown on Map 2 below, ISAF is making a counter-clockwise expansion in Afghanistan, gradually taking over from the Coalition. The five PRTs in the north were adopted in stage 1 (December 2001 - October 2004), the four in the west followed in stage 2 (October 2004 - September 2005) and currently, another four have been incorporated in the south (stage 3). With the exception of Kabul, ISAF has no deployment in the southeast of the country, where OEF implements nine PRTs.

Map 2: ISAF deployment<sup>8</sup>



The primary tasks of PRTs are:

- 'to help the government of Afghanistan extend its authority,
- to facilitate the development of a secure environment in the Afghan regions, including the establishment of relationships with local authorities,
- to support, as appropriate, security sector reform activities, within means and capabilities, to facilitate the reconstruction effort.' (NATO 2003)

As becomes clear from the phrasing of these tasks, PRTs were given a supportive role. They were installed to buy time for the newly emerging Afghan government to get onto its feet. Consequently, 'their success in the long run depends on the ability of the central government to establish itself as credible and legitimate in the eyes of the Afghan population.' (Jakobsen 2005: 29) Many saw the PRTs as a suboptimal approach to establishing security in Afghanistan. Former Special Representative of the Secretary General Lakhdar Brahimi referred to them as 'second best to a straightforward extension of ISAF, as we have been calling for ever since we arrived in Kabul at the end of 2001.' (UNA-USA 2004) Some argue the model 'amounted to a relatively cheap means of keeping a lid on the situation in Afghanistan, while Coalition focus and resources moved to Iraq.' (Stapleton 2003)

Though their name may be taken to suggest otherwise, PRTs exclusively consist of armed personnel, typically some 200 troops. Apart from force protection, this normally includes CIMIC officers, military police, intelligence units, and reservists or other specialists. PRTs are often described as civil-military entities since political or developmental officers of the respective governments are stationed there as well. These officers, however, are not part of the PRT as such. Their position within the PRT will be clarified in the next paragraph.

Whereas NATO is mandated by the UN and uses its PRTs to carry out this mandate, the Coalition PRTs are present on the invitation of the Afghan government. ISAF has two Regional Area Coordinators (RACs), one of which is responsible for the five PRTs in the North, while the other bears responsibility for the four PRTs in the Western region. The Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF) in Kabul commands the nine Coalition PRTs (as well as the four southern PRTs, which are in the process of transfer). The CJCMOTF is the coalition's humanitarian assistance arm, identifying, funding and facilitating quick-fix humanitarian projects that are not being accomplished by the greater humanitarian assistance community (Hunn 2002).

The teams differ significantly in size, composition and approach depending on the implementing country, the province and whether they operate under a Coalition or ISAF mandate. Moreover, the PRT concept has evolved over time. It is in fact incorrect to speak of the PRT, as this would falsely implicate homogeneity. As a result of these distinctions, engagement with other providers of aid and the extent to which development activities are undertaken differs strongly between PRTs. While this is discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections, box 4 below provides an illustration of one of the PRTs.

**Box 4: The Dutch PRT in Pul-i-Khomri**

Pul-i-Khomri is a medium-size town just north of the last foothills of the Hindu Kush. It is the capital of the Baghlan province and a fairly industrious town with a large bazaar and a few factories. The Dutch PRT is situated close to the centre of town and it becomes clear immediately that it is not in the war zone. The camp was set up just next to the riverbed, surrounded by houses and hills. It would be vulnerable either to artillery stationed in the hills adjoining the valley or to hostilities from the residential areas. However, it is as a result of this location that the PRT is close to the people and institutions in town, which illustrates the friendly nature of the intervention. If necessary, the PRT may call for assistance from the air force stationed in Kabul as well as from the Rapid Reaction Force in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Though this PRT is supposed to cover the entire province - a bumpy, daylong drive from one side to the other - the PRT consists of less than 200 troops. The camp covers only a few acres and is surrounded by a tall wall with watchtowers. Within the walls lie a car park with a service station, a section for sleeping and washing (partly in tents, partly in buildings), a gym, a canteen and a few office buildings. The three sections of the Dutch armed forces - army, navy, air force - take turns in running the PRT. In the course of these four-month shifts the camp has gradually expanded and services have improved.

<sup>8</sup> Courtesy of NATO. www.nato.int

The offices of the CIMIC unit, the psyops staff, the military police and the attach from the Dutch foreign/development ministry are all in the same building and the interaction between these officials tends to be pragmatic and informal. The officials are responsible for CIMIC projects, the dissemination of psyops material, police training and the administration of longer-term development projects respectively. In addition, the PRT accommodates a number of reservists from the private sector who are responsible for assistance to local entrepreneurs.

Many activities take place in the environs of Pul-i-Khomri, but the team undertakes trips to the outer areas of the province as well. These may last a few days as a result of the poor road conditions. Given that each person leaving the compound requires force protection, the demand for special forces (who are responsible for force protection) and cars is great. Most officers are unable to get out as often as they would like.

### ISAF and Coalition engagement with civil actors

The military intervention in Afghanistan is not confined to the military realm only. Facilitating reconstruction and the political recovery process are major ingredients of the mandate, particularly for ISAF, but for OEF as well. Alongside combat and protection, there is thus a variety of ways through which foreign military troops in Afghanistan are involved with the population, the government, development agencies and other non-military actors.

#### Hearts and minds

At the most rudimentary level, hearts-and-minds activities have come to be a standard component of all military interventions. Both ISAF and OEF troops as well as PRTs, the ESF and combat units make use of them. In military speak, these activities are referred to as CIMIC or Civil Affairs and they normally consist of the handing out of small items to the local population or limited support to fix infrastructural problems. Though it is considered important that these interventions generate positive results for the local population, the main official objective is otherwise: smoothening relations and boosting popularity to facilitate force acceptance and protection and to gather intelligence. The types of hearts-and-minds activities that are useful and feasible depend on the nature of the deployment. Box 5 provides a textbook example of what hearts-and-minds activities may look like.

#### Box 5: Hearts-and-minds activities by the Election Support Forces

The ESF were deployed for four months only and their main objective was to help ensure security during the September 2005 elections. Winning hearts and minds for a mission with such a low profile is obviously not easy. The duration of the deployment was short and they acted as a back-up for other troops.

Nonetheless, the Dutch ESF troops stationed in Mazar-i-Sharif could work with two dedicated staff members and a budget of €50,000 for CIMIC activities. With a view to sustainability, the commander did not enter into projects that required long-term involvement and maintenance. The forces therefore only provided deliveries in support of educational and sports activities for youth. The table below gives an overview.

Number	Name	Budget
1	Schoolbooks for Badakhshan province	\$ 2000
2	Patch up football and volleyball fields	\$ 1000
3	Class material for Badakhshan province	\$ 5000
4	Preparing the border police for winter	\$ 8000
5	Class material for Balkh and Sar-i-Pul province	\$ 5000
6	Patch up Mazar-i-Sharif stadium	\$ 8000
7	Sports and games artefacts for the youth	\$ 500
8	Rehabilitate orphanage in Sherbirgan	\$ 5000
9	Multimedia for the University of Balkh	\$ 6000
10	Water supply for refugee camp and airport in Meymana	\$ 1000

Source: CIMIC final report I NLD SRF BN

Through these activities, the forces hoped to boost their public image, while doing a service to the people. Meanwhile, these small gestures of goodwill provide an entry point for involvement with societal actors and to retrieve information. Both during the delivery of aid and on subsequent patrols, CIMIC projects are expected to increase people's willingness to share sensitive details.

At the Abdul Ali Mazaai school in Ali Chupan, a small Hazara village close to Mazar-i-Sharif, the forces donated 700 colourful plastic chairs and some carpets for the remaining classrooms. They also bought pens, notebooks, volleyball nets and balls. The Hazara people have long been and continue to be a repressed ethnic minority. This is one of the reasons the commander of the ESF chose to support the village. In contrast to other schools in the region, the Abdul Ali Mazaai school had not received aid from NGOs. The school was selected by university students at the request of the forces. The forces visited the school prior to this visit to determine the exact needs.

The delivery of these supplies was rather easy-going. Upon arrival, the translator (in ISAF uniform, like the others) got down first to find the school principal. Following an introduction by the commander, she invited the team into the school. Only one soldier kept his bullet-proof vest and gun, the others left theirs in the car before entering the school. The commander and the translator entered just about every classroom, explaining their purpose and chatting with the children. Meanwhile, the soldiers unloaded the truck and left the supplies in front of the entrance. As is the case on each CIMIC mission, a photographer came along to take pictures. The best picture was framed and presented to the beneficiaries. A picture posted on the wall reinforces people's memory, the forces hope.

Budgets available for these activities are normally small, though there are major differences: the Dutch PRT in Baghlan has € 500,000 for one and a half year, while the Canadian PRT in Kandahar has some € 755,000 available annually.<sup>9</sup> There are no strict guidelines with regard to the allocation of these funds, but the selected activities are normally short-term and highly visible. Decisions tend to be made in a rather pragmatic way and may be both supply and demand driven. With regard to the former, the Canadian PRT in Kandahar, for example, regularly receives containers with donated items, such as food boxes (containing a diversity of storable food) or small backpacks. The CIMIC team does not know in advance what the exact contents are and given that there is little space to store the containers, they are drip-fed into the camp. Upon arrival, the CIMIC unit just seeks a suitable target group and distributes the goods. The backpacks, for example, were handed out at a school.

In other cases, needs or opportunities encountered in the field are leading. In addition, there are concerns with regard to distribution (don't favour one group over the other), capacity (what lies within our abilities?) and security (where do we need public support most?). In many cases the activities are implemented by NGOs, while the military funds, administers and monitors the projects. In practice, it may be difficult to distinguish hearts-and-minds activities from other kinds of support. As is illustrated in box 9, hearts-and-minds funding may be used to let an NGO fix water basins. In terms of implementation and effect, such a project is very similar to development projects, though the funding and the formal objective are military.

#### Psyops

Both ISAF and OEF psyops units are tasked with target audience analysis (public opinion polling through surveys, informal conversations and observations) and influencing public opinion by handing out flyers, and through specially produced newspapers and radio broadcasts. ISAF, for example, has its own radio station called Sadia-e-Azadi, which means voice of freedom. ISAF and OEF send messages through Afghan public and private media as well. The flyers, papers and broadcasts combine factual updates and practical guidelines (how to avoid mine incidents, how to drive when a convoy is coming up) with more normative messages about the illegitimacy of the Taliban or other opposing groups and the virtues of the foreign intervention.

Unlike the US, many NATO countries find psyops a relatively new thing. It is only in the post-cold war era that these operations have become a standard component of the military. In recent years, special soldiers have been trained to master the elementary psyops skills and procedures. To some extent, Afghanistan is a test case. For many troops, it is the first time (or one of the first) they actually get around to implementation.

<sup>9</sup>The Canadian PRT commander has a contingency budget of Can \$ 1 mn (about € 755,000). The Americans have a Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP), which amounts to US\$ 30 mn countrywide.

#### Box 6: 'ISAF news'

'ISAF news' is one of the main products of the psyops teams. It is a tri-lingual (Dari, English, Pashto) newspaper that reads from back to front: the 'last page' (from a Western perspective) is page 1. By means of illustration, issue 91 (5 October 2005) covers the following themes.

Ballot counting: 'The guiding principle is transparency' describes the elections and the independent monitoring by the Joint Election Management Body.

More female police officers needed describes a Norwegian/German police training project and quotes one of the female participants: 'We are very pleased that our foreign friends help us train a new generation of policemen and -women, and I'd like to ask our honourable Afghan parents to encourage their daughters to join the police.'

Security Forces Activities describes a recent suicide attack, the opening of a new ANA garrison, raids carried out against illegal drug trade and the successful capture of a batch of weapons.

Kabul carpet company employs 450 describes the production and labour created by a carpet company in Kabul that was set up after the Taliban period.

Narcotics cause of physical, mental decay covers UN findings with regard to adverse effects of drug consumption.

In What do you want the Wolesi Jirga to do? four 'normal' Afghans are interviewed about their expectations of the newly elected parliament.

The Editorial emphasizes the importance of the elections and argues that 'opposing militia forces that tried to disrupt the election process throughout Afghanistan failed due to continued lack of support from the people who realised the power that arises from a freely elected parliament'.

Weapons handed to Samagan police and ISAF makes arms, ammo donation in Sar-e Pol discuss ISAF support to Afghan police units.

The contents of Team wins soccer trophy and School gets gift from PRT are self-evident and PRT tours Mazar describes discussions of the military with local police and the governor. All three articles are accompanied by full colour pictures.

The last page is entirely dedicated to pictures of an ISAF-guarded football match of the Afghan national team.

#### Rule of law

Both psyops and hearts-and-minds activities are to a large extent supplementary efforts intended to support the overall military mission. The military effort with regard to restoring the Afghan rule of law, however, is a major constituent of ISAF's mandate in itself. Enabling the nascent Afghan administration to maintain security and to assume its monopoly of violence is considered a prerequisite for sustainable stability and thus for the eventual withdrawal of NATO troops. Most of these activities are formally development activities: funding qualifies as Official Development Assistance (DAC 2001).

Activities in the five sectors - strengthening the Afghan army, the police, the DDR process, justice reform and counter-narcotics - take place both at central (Kabul) and decentralised (PRT) level. In an effort to assure coordination and to tackle nation-wide problems, lead nations were identified for each sector.<sup>10</sup> Activities at the provincial level are supposed to be a reflection of nationwide policies and priorities, but in many cases PRTs act as largely independent bodies. For the Canadian and Dutch PRTs, capacity building in the Afghan police force is an important activity. A concrete example of police training is given in the box below.

#### Box 7: Police training

The military police of the Dutch PRT in Pul-i-Khomri is involved in SSR training of the Afghan police force. Recruitment of cadets is hampered by the fact that people have to pay for their own travel expenses. This proves to be a hindrance to come to the training. Having said that, fourteen people are now in training, among them a former colonel and a major who both served in the Afghan National Army. The training is given by two Dutch military police officers with the assistance of an interpreter.

The duration of the course is two weeks and takes place in the morning, five days a week. One of the trainers explained: 'We train the cadets in basic policing skills and attitudes. We teach them some rudimentary elements of human rights and how to control violence.' Human rights must not be taken too broadly, the police officer stated. 'We try to impart a sense of respect for other people, especially for the assaulter.' The course consists of a theoretical and a practical part. In the practical part there is room for simulations of real life situations. According to one of the trainers, the level of the course is fairly low. The trainers demonstrate exercises with much humour and enthusiasm, but during a rehearsal the cadets reveal that some of them have learnt little in the past two weeks. Although this is a disappointment for the trainers, it is not a reason to give up on the recruits. They keep on demonstrating, explaining and rehearsing the exercises. The atmosphere at the training site is relaxed and friendly. The trainers are occasionally strict for the cadets, but their humorous approach avoids tension.

Neither trainer has any illusions about the effects of the course. When they become police officers, the cadets will earn around US\$ 30 a month, which is the absolute minimum according to the trainers. So there is a fair chance that the freshly trained police officers will fall prey to corruption. The only items the Dutch PRT can offer the cadets are a baton and a course certificate.

Moreover, there are serious doubts about the extent to which a brief course like this one contributes to an effective police force in Afghanistan. Within NATO, there is much disagreement on the course to be charted, particularly between Germany (formally in the lead) and the US (with many activities and resources). In the absence of adequate overall strategy and guidance, individual PRTs end up setting out their own isolated course. This way they hope they can at least do something useful with the limited means they have.

#### Embedded development programmes

In addition to these interventions by the military, NATO governments have seconded diplomatic and development staff to the PRTs. These non-military officials execute the foreign and development policies of their governments. Though these people are not formally a part of the PRT, they reside within the camp boundaries and they attempt to integrate their work with the military effort. Uninformed observers - including most of the Afghans - are not clear about the exact institutional set-up and the distinction between the PRT and political attachés or bilateral development staff. All are simply referred to as 'the PRT'. These officers act as a liaison with the PRT, they advise the commander on issues related to their field and they administer development budgets allocated to the province. The development funds may have a longer-term scope. This does not primarily involve winning Afghan support for the military mission in a narrow sense, but the generation of a peace dividend. Apart from the inherent need to address Afghanistan's poor conditions, improved welfare is believed to nurture support for peace, for a democratic government and for a free, united Afghanistan. Although these activities do not strictly qualify as military hearts-and-minds projects, they are intended to influence the views of the population and to garner support for the regime.

The American government has initiated Quick Impact Projects (QIP). Generally, QIPs are small infrastructure projects such as the construction of courthouses, schools, clinics and bridges, road rehabilitation and community irrigation. Their primary purpose is 'to extend the reach and influence of government throughout the provinces and create a climate of improved freedom and economic activity.' (USAID 2006) This objective is obviously closely related to the mission of PRTs. QIPs are funded and administered by USAID and are thus not part of the military apparatus. However, USAID seeks proximity to the PRTs by stationing Field Program Officers (FPOs) in almost every PRT in the country. In consultation with local authorities and the military at PRTs, the FPO selects appropriate projects. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) - one of USAID's implementing partners - is responsible for selecting and directing local contractors or NGOs for the implementation of the projects. Though formally not part of the PRT, the USAID representatives are usually very closely associated with the military due to the intensive collaboration and their residence inside the camp boundaries. With some US\$ 140 mn spent between 2003 and 2005, the QIPs have a substantial volume.

<sup>10</sup> The division of labour is as follows: strengthening the Afghan army (US), the police (Germany), the DDR process (Japan), justice reform (Italy) and counter-narcotics (UK).

Other ISAF countries, such as the Canadians (CIDA), Germany (GTZ), the Netherlands (DGIS, stability fund) and the UK (DFID, GCPP) have also sought integration between their developmental and military intervention.<sup>11</sup> There are differences, however, in the extent to which funds are channelled through the PRT. Unlike the Americans, the Dutch have decided to channel only a portion of their funds through their officer at the PRT. The Dutch government allocates the bulk of its funding to the central government. Alongside the main flows, the Dutch Minister for Development decided to release € 4,500,000 for a one and a half year period to be administered by her officer stationed at the Dutch PRT in Pul-i-Khomri. This officer - a political advisor assigned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs - identifies and monitors project proposals in consultation with the PRT commander. The projects are implemented by local NGOs and the local government.

#### Different models

Military units other than the PRTs tend to confine themselves to limited hearts-and-minds operations alongside their security tasks. PRTs, however, undertake all of the above-discussed activities - psyops, hearts and minds, rule of law, development programmes - in one way or another, but this may take rather divergent forms.

To illustrate, the British PRT in Mazar-i-Sharif refrains from carrying out hearts-and-minds activities. As the northern part of the country is relatively stable, working on force protection and force acceptance is not considered necessary. Though the context in neighbouring Baghlan is hardly different, the Dutch PRT does undertake this kind of work. Moreover, the budgets available for the various initiatives may vary significantly and the same goes for implementation modalities: self-implementation or funding of NGOs, government or contractors. DFID, for example, aims for a clear separation between PRT and NGO activities and therefore abstains from funding the military for projects which could better be carried out by NGOs.

There are also differences in institutional set-up. The Anglo-Saxon governments - Canada, UK and US - have embedded staff from their development and foreign ministries in their PRTs. The Canadian PRT in Kandahar, for example, has the services of a CIDA, a DFID and a USAID representative as well as a diplomat from Foreign Affairs Canada. There are thus multiple development channels that intersect within the PRT. They are not part of the PRT, but they are operated from the PRT compound and there is close interaction. The Dutch PRT in Baghlan, by comparison, has only one representative on behalf of both the development and the foreign minister of the Netherlands. Quite like the British, the Dutch deliberately chose to channel most of their development funds through the central government.

The German PRT in Kunduz (the first PRT under ISAF command) does not host any non-military personnel. The German government works with separate military and development/diplomatic structures, which have separate compounds and leadership. Outside of the PRT, the government has deployed political advisors and experts from respectively the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The PRT is tasked with supporting ANA training, providing medical and logistical support, networking with local authorities and securing its own infrastructure. Development and diplomatic staff is responsible for the reconstruction of the police force, support to SSR and DDR processes and support to governmental and non-governmental organisations in their reconstruction efforts in the region (Auswartiges Amt 2004 and Jakobsen 2005).

<b>Box 8: Different PRT models</b> <sup>12</sup>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Institutional set-up</b>	<b>Financial aspects and scope of activities (annual)</b> <sup>13</sup>	<b>Interaction with non-military organisations</b>
Canada (Kandahar)	- CIMIC, Can. Diplomats, Psyops, USAID, DFID and CIDA all in one building - Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Military Police	€ 755,000 commander's contingency fund.	Self-implementation. Work through local NGOs and government.
		USAID and CIDA have substantial funds.	Through contractors and NGOs.
Netherlands (Baghlan)	- CIMIC, political attaché. - IDEA (reservists from the private sector) - Military Police - Psyops	€ 500,000 hearts and minds per shift (one and a half year).	Self-implemented or through NGOs. Assistance to local entrepreneurs (implemented by IDEA reservists)
		€ 4,500,000 DGIS (bulk of total ODA to Afghanistan channelled through central government)	Small NGO projects. Funds increasingly channelled through local Afghan government.
United Kingdom (Mazar-I-Sharif)	- DFID and USAID officers - Diplomatic attachés (British FCO <sup>14</sup> and US State Dept) - Afghan Government representation - Psyops	US\$ 2 mn DFID funding for the PRT (mainly for government ministries, the police and judiciary)	Through government and contractors
		Quick Impact Projects by USAID (US\$ 9 mn annually for Mazar by USAID)	International agencies, local NGOs and contractors.
United States (Herat)	- Reservists with civil expertise - USAID staff and consultants - Political advisor State Dept	Commander's Emergency Relief Programme (CERP) US\$ 30 mn for the entire country	Contractors or other agencies.
		USAID funding	International agencies, local NGOs and contractors.

In view of the differences between PRTs, an Executive Steering Committee was created. It is supposed to provide the necessary guidance and oversight of all existing and future PRTs. The Afghan government, Coalition and ISAF Commanders, UNAMA, NATO's Senior Civilian Representative and ambassadors of the PRT lead nations take part in the Steering Committee. Despite these efforts, significant differences prevail between the PRTs and complaints about lack of coordination continue.

Likewise, the coordination of humanitarian assistance provided by military forces continues to differ. As previously discussed, the Coalition PRTs fall under the command of the CJCMOTF. This body coordinates the Coalition's hearts-and-minds projects. These units drew attention when implementing projects in civilian clothes. NATO has its own Information Operations Cell (IOC), which includes a CIMIC, psyops and media operations centre. Though much alike in terms of their objectives, their activities are coordinated from a different hub.

<sup>11</sup> Abbreviations: CIDA is the Canadian International Development Agency. GTZ is the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (the implementing development arm of the German government). DGIS is the Departement Generaal voor Internationale Samenwerking (Dutch Development Ministry), while the stability fund is a combined ODA/non-ODA facility. DFID is the British Department for International Development, while the GCPP is the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (also a combined ODA/non-ODA facility).

<sup>12</sup> This box draws largely from empirical observations. Some details were taken from the respective agencies as well as from Save the Children (2004).

<sup>13</sup> This column only includes hearts and minds and affiliated development programmes, not psyops and rule of law activities.

<sup>14</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

### 3.2.2 Development interventions

The UN had a leading role in the political process in Afghanistan. The organisation facilitated the Bonn conference and remained closely involved in subsequent developments. Resolution 1401 (28 March 2002) created a special body, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), to meet the request made in the Bonn Agreement: supporting the Transitional Administration.<sup>15</sup> Facilitating the creation of the administration, the holding of a Loya Jirga, the drafting of a new constitution and the electoral process were key responsibilities for the UN. On a more independent note, UNAMA was tasked to monitor human rights and support the peacebuilding process.

UNAMA has assumed a task in the realm of rule of law as well. The activities in this field - strengthening the Afghan army, the police, the DDR process, justice reform and counter-narcotics - obviously constitute an overlap of the political and the security process. The UN (particularly UNDP) collaborates with NATO in these fields. UNAMA is also responsible for the coordination of all relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts by UN agencies. Altogether, there are nineteen UN agencies working in Afghanistan, of which UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP are some of the most conspicuous. These and other agencies have benefited from the sharp rise in development funds available for Afghanistan. At high profile bi-annual pledging conferences<sup>16</sup>, bilateral and multilateral donors have offered substantial amounts.

Parallel to the UN intervention, Afghanistan witnessed a remarkable proliferation of NGOs. Afghanistan does not have a track record of vibrant NGOs. Many agencies operating in the country were foreign funded or foreign initiated, though some of them ended up resembling a local NGO. International aid agencies, such as the ICRC and a number of foreign funded NGOs, had continued their aid activities under the Taliban regime. Despite limitations of various kinds, these agencies had run substantive programmes, often filling the gaps left by the ruling administration. 'The Taliban regarded us as neutral', an international aid agency representative said. 'Currently, we work on the assumption that the Taliban still supports us.' Other agencies, however, refer to the attacks on aid agencies and argue that the Taliban has turned against them.

Developments in the last months of 2001 made for some dramatic changes. Large numbers of aid agencies, many of which had been operating from Peshawar until the Bonn Agreement, set foot in the country and NGOs already present upgraded their programmes and spread across the country. The initiation of large-scale reconstruction efforts and the massive influx of foreign funding created a significant demand for local development organisations. Consequently, a massive number of new NGOs emerged on the scene. Many of these agencies were pocket NGOs, however. Lacking a clear constituency and a sensible mandate, they were in fact contractors. The lines between local companies and NGOs came to be blurred. Many international NGOs that have made it a habit to work through local partners elsewhere in the world decided to become implementing agencies in view of the limited number of local agencies that were perceived to be capable enough.

As a result of these dynamics, the number of operational agencies on the ground skyrocketed. Keeping track of activities, let alone coordination, became a near illusion, also because many agencies were in fact competing and had a limited interest in collaboration. NGO umbrella organisations such as the ACBAR, the Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB), the South West Afghanistan and Baluchistan Agency for Coordination (SWABAC) and the Islamic Coordination Council (ICC) - leaped in to deal with these problems. Both ACBAR and the ANCB (Afghanistan's largest NGO coordination bodies) hold meetings at regional and provincial level.

NGOs and UN agencies cover pretty much all sectors. There are projects in the fields of education, livelihoods (animal husbandry, agriculture, vocational training, micro-credit programmes, irrigation), reconstruction (schools, housing, roads), health, water and sanitation, nutrition, community development, women's development and human rights.

The geography of NGO and UN intervention in Afghanistan resembles that of the state. Kabul has become the cosmopolitan aid capital with a large proliferation of NGOs, contractors and international organisations. The typical four-wheel drive vehicles make their way through the frantic traffic to get expats and Afghans from one appointment to the other. As a result of security restrictions, foreigners are normally confined to their house, hotel, office, restaurant or car. Regional hubs, such as Mazar or Kandahar, are much smaller than Kabul. The number of aid agencies is in the neighbourhood of twenty or so and the aid workers form a rather small community. Despite the great turnover, people tend to know each other well. Coordination meetings (daytime) as well as parties (night-time) have an impact in that regard. Outside these provincial capitals, NGO presence is far less conspicuous. Though programmes are being operated in rather desolate parts of the country as well, poor road conditions and security threats make for low profile operations. In the war-ridden south, even Afghan NGOs prefer to delegate projects to the village councils (Shuras), so as to minimise their presence in a village.

### 3.2.3 Civil-military interaction

Civil-military interactions are inherent in the nature of the military intervention in Afghanistan and the PRT concept in particular. As a result of the mandate and the approach, it is in the interests of both ISAF and OEF to generate as much buy-in as possible from the development community. Aid agencies have given mixed receptions to military overtures towards them. With the organisations that were willing to work together, roughly two kinds of collaboration have emerged: aid agencies implementing projects for ISAF or the Coalition and coordination between aid agencies and the military. Other agencies have tried to keep their distance for principled or more pragmatic reasons.

#### Aid agencies implementing for the military

Though PRTs have occasionally engaged in direct project implementation, activities are typically executed by other agencies. 'If there is a need, we try to take it to the government first', a CIMIC officer at a PRT said. 'If they can't do it, we see what we can do ourselves and if there are no options there, we will see if we can find an NGO.' The latter, he added is 'quite common'. Both hearts-and-minds activities and the more sizable projects funded by NATO governments (USAID, CIDA and the like) are often implemented by NGOs and private contractors. As a result of its relatively large budget, USAID funded projects are particularly common and well known. NGO projects implemented for the PRTs and their attach cover a broad range, including road reconstruction, electricity, irrigation, animal husbandry, education and so on.

As becomes clear in box 9, below, the military often has difficulty finding suitable implementing agencies for their projects. Local NGOs are generally more open to collaboration with the military, but their capacity and integrity are not always highly esteemed. Funds are also channelled through international agencies, such as IOM, UNOPS and some of the INGOs.

#### Box 9: Nawar rehabilitation

Dutch special forces operating in the deep south of Kandahar Province observed that the traditional water basins (nawars) were defunct in many villages. During the rainy season, the nawars are supposed to fill up, thus providing the community and their cattle with drinking water in the drier periods of the year. Defunct nawars are therefore considered a severe impediment to the people's welfare and livelihood. Although the basins have traditionally been constructed by the local population using very basic means, but now the people leave them in poor condition.

It does not lie within the abilities of the forces to go into each of these villages and fix up the nawars, but the CIMIC budget enables them to get something done anyhow. On the basis of Shura meetings, a limited number of villages was approved for assistance. A contractor was sought to take on the reconstruction work. Finding a suitable candidate is difficult, according to the responsible officer. It is hard to rule out that an agency is incapable or simply corrupt. Effective communication with the counterparts is tricky as well. Eventually an Afghan NGO was selected to do the project. Much of the work was obviously done by the villagers themselves.

<sup>15</sup> More specifically, the Bonn Agreement requested the UN to assist in the establishment of:

- a Constitutional Commission (to assist the Constitutional Loya Jirga in preparing the proposed Constitution),
- a Judicial Commission to rebuild the domestic justice system,
- a Central Bank of Afghanistan,
- an independent Civil Service Commission,
- and an independent Human Rights Commission.

<sup>16</sup> These conferences took place in Tokyo (21-22 January 2002) in Berlin (31 March and 1 April 2004) and London (31 January and 1 February 2006).

Implementation of the project proved to be equally complex. Despite assurances that the job would be done, patrols in the field noticed that little or no progress was made. The contractor was summoned to the compound at Kandahar Air Field and told to improve his monitoring. A penalty clause was included in the contract to make ensure progress. Patrolling field units later went by the villages and observed that the nawars were eventually put in place.

*Coordination between aid agencies and the military*

Agencies that implement projects for ISAF or the Coalition normally have contact with the military on a more or less regular basis. Often, these discussions go beyond project implementation only and move into a more general dialogue on the local situation. Some agencies are provided with a questionnaire about the local circumstances in a village - number of people, their tribe, name of the village leader and so on - and are requested to fill it out and report back to the PRT.

Given that the aid community in provincial capitals is quite small, people - the expatriate community in particular - tend to know each other personally. In some cases, dialogue between the various actors is quite open and informal, even though policies are stricter at an organisational level. The NGO community gets together informally and in some cases PRT personnel join these social events. At the provincial level, there are coordination meetings, in some cases referred to as synchronisation (sync) meetings. These meetings may be hosted by the PRT, the local government or the UN. Because some agencies shy away from a military appearance, some soldiers (e.g. the Canadians) lower their profile when they attend the meeting, by leaving guns outside and wearing their pistols under their clothing. Bad experiences due to duplication or contradictory aid efforts have strengthened the general conviction that coordination is needed, but few participants are satisfied with the way these meetings actually work. Secrecy, staff turnover and inefficiency are some of the common complaints. Also, some of them doubt that all the talking at coordination meetings really leads to any changes in activities in the field.

At a national level, the UN has set up the Afghan Information Management System (AIMS). This is a joint UN effort to collect and disseminate information about development needs and efforts. AIMS's history - it is a merger of several coordination bodies created by different UN agencies - is illustrative of the difficulties involved with coordination. AIMS's main objective is to support humanitarian decision-making and coordination. It provides coordination tools such as a database, showing which NGO does what and where, analytical and planning products such as maps, and technical assistance such as training in database management. The military, international organisations and NGOs share their information with AIMS. Sensitive data such as budgets (for NGOs) and security details (for the military) are normally withheld, however, and the actual sharing of information fluctuates with staff rotations. AIMS has a network of five regional offices, covering the country from north to south. However, in 2003 the objectives of the regional offices shifted from facilitating information sharing to government capacity building. This might explain why many NGO representatives know little of AIMS's role or services or even of its presence (Sida and Szpak 2004).

The Afghan NGO Safety Office (ANSO) provides information concerning security issues. Many NGOs base their safety policies on the information and advice provided by ANSO. The military are obviously an important source of information for ANSO and its safety advisors in the field liaise with the PRTs in their area. ANSO then disseminates its security reports to the NGO community by email.

Furthermore, there are two important coordination bodies in Kabul. Both the *NGO Civil-Military Working Group* and the *PRT Working Group* hold bi-monthly meetings. The schedules of these meetings are adjusted to enable people to attend both. The mission of the *NGO Civil-Military Working Group* is to facilitate communication among NGOs, international military forces and the Afghan government on security operations and aid coordination with the objective of addressing NGO concerns and maximizing the effectiveness of all parties (NGO Civil-Military Working Group 2004). In practice, however, these meetings come down to damage control and are not well attended. Several international NGOs in collaboration with ACBAR are working on a formula to improve the meeting's efficiency and effectiveness.

The *PRT Working Group*, on the other hand, does not include aid agencies. It serves as a central interface between the PRTs and the Afghan government to recommend solutions to problems and challenges as directed by the PRT Executive Steering Committee. It is to provide a forum for discussion and coordination of civil-military interaction at the PRT level, collect data on lessons learned and share the information with all interested organisations (PRT Working Group 2005).

The various coordination mechanisms described above might give the impression that NGOs and international military forces in Afghanistan are well coordinated. The general feeling is, however, that this is not the case. In some provinces there are hardly any meetings and in many cases the quality is low. At higher levels (in Kabul) there are many platforms and discussions, but the impact on the ground often seems to be limited.

**3.2.4 A disaggregate picture**

The civil-military arena in Afghanistan thus comprises a variety of military and non-military actors. By consequence, the civil-military interface takes a differentiated shape. As is illustrated by figure 1 below, it is impossible to make a clear dichotomy with armed military dealing with security issues on one hand and unarmed civil actors doing development on the other. What we have at hand is a complicated spectrum that defies uniform classification. There are various shades of grey, different kinds of overlap and multiple linkages between different kinds of actors.

**Figure 1: Categorizing the civil-military arena of international intervention in Afghanistan**

Categorisations		Actors
developmental	Non- NATO governments (and partners governments)	<b>Combat and peacekeeping troops</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISAF combat/Force Protection troops</li> <li>OEF combat/Force Protection troops</li> </ul>
	Within military camps	<b>Psyops</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within ISAF and within the Coalition</li> </ul>
Developmental realm	Partly embedded	<b>Facilitating Rule of Law Strengthening:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afghan army</li> <li>Afghan police</li> <li>Judiciary</li> <li>DDR</li> <li>Counter-narcotics</li> </ul>
		<b>Military outreach to civil actors and civilians</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CIMIC</li> <li>Rehabilitation by military</li> <li>Country specific agencies (e.g. IDEA)</li> </ul>
	Inter-governmental	<b>Foreign affairs and development agencies of donor governments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political advisors</li> <li>Development e.g. USAID, CIDA, DFID DGIS</li> </ul>
	Non-governmental	<b>International organisations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNAMA and other UN agencies</li> <li>IOM and other UN affiliated agencies</li> </ul>
	Outside military camps	<b>Civil society</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International NGOs</li> <li>Afghan NGOs</li> <li>CBOs, Shuras etc.</li> <li>Other Civil society</li> </ul>
		<b>Private sector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local contractors</li> <li>International contractors</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Diverging views

The PRT concept and the civil-military interface in the Afghan context at large were a new experience for all the actors concerned. Local actors had witnessed earlier military struggles - including numerous efforts to establish law and order and to win people's hearts and minds - but the current manifestation of these efforts and the cast involved was new to Afghanistan. OEF and ISAF troops have been coming to grips with their role and aid agencies have been searching for their position in relation to it. As a result, there has been a spirited debate on civil-military relations and it has not resulted in consensus. Perceptions and policy positions continue to differ.

#### 3.3.1 NGO perspectives

The NGO community is known for its diversity of views and its heterogeneity. Unsurprisingly, there is little convergence in terms of their position on the PRT concept and NGO collaboration with the military. However, there is relative agreement on the concerns underlying these issues. Arguments against working with the military refer to security (the blurring of lines and collaboration with the military may increase staff insecurity), humanitarian principles (humanity, independence, impartiality and neutrality) and practical objections (the military are no good at development work and there are problems in collaborating with them). Arguments in favour of collaboration refer to the people's needs (we should refrain from petty policy debates in view of their suffering), the resources available (any help is welcome) and the legitimate and to some extent successful nature of the military interventions (their flaws are no greater than those of NGOs).

NGO representatives usually refer to most of these concerns, but the relative weight attached to each of them differs. Policy positions are therefore radically divergent. Depending on the context (the north is safer than the south), the type of agency (mandate; local/international; available resources) and the person within the agency (fieldworkers vs. headquarters; pragmatic vs. more principled persons), positions may vary from strict neutrality to extensive collaboration with the military. Divisions within agencies are not uncommon. In the rural areas, many aid workers are critical of 'Kabul positions'. Party line and personal conviction may be miles apart.

The *principled neutralist* position emphasizes the need to disengage from the military. 'The tendency towards integrated approaches and hearts-and-minds activities - increasingly so by NATO - are a clear fact and key donors support these trends', one expatriate said. 'The PRT is an attempt to give a humanitarian face to a military effort. We have to stay out of these tendencies, particularly in the Muslim context. It is very important, but also very difficult to defend humanitarian space today. The radical Islam has put a tag 'Westerner' on our forehead. On both sides, we see polarisation. Grey tones are no longer accepted. One side sees us as Western agents and the other says if you're not with us, you're against us.'

Many people sympathise with elements of a neutralist position, but are struggling with how to put it into practice. Some agencies distinguish between the Coalition and ISAF. 'We feel the direct involvement of foreign countries - particularly the US and Pakistan - in Afghanistan is a problem', a representative of an INGO said. And so 'we don't co-operate with American forces. We would only meet them on neutral ground, such as the governor's office. The involvement of agencies invited by the government is different. 'We are positive about ISAF. We meet with ISAF, as long as they don't carry guns into our offices.'

Calibrating the concept of neutrality within the local context is difficult, some people argue. The military 'is not encroaching [on] humanitarian space', according to an aid worker of an international NGO, 'because they don't do humanitarian work and as a matter of fact, neither do we.' However, even in more structural forms of assistance that both military and NGOs undertake, the blurring of lines is an issue - particularly in view of armed attacks against aid agencies - but how to deal with it? What does impartiality mean when an agency does development work in a context of continued violence? 'Good question', according to a Kabul-based expatriate.

Irrespective of whether an agency does humanitarian or development work, security incidents are of great concern. The initial hope was that the deployment of PRTs would enhance security and in part of the country (particularly the north) and this has been the case. In the south, safety conditions seem to have deteriorated and even elsewhere, incidents continue to occur. Targeting of aid agencies, because they are perceived to be agents of the Western military, is an issue of concern. For one agency - MSF - the growing security risk was a reason for total withdrawal from Afghanistan. As is further discussed in the box below, this decision was controversial. Though people generally acknowledge that being affiliated with the military increases the risk, they feel one should not attribute all security incidents to the blurring of lines.

#### Box 10: MSF's contested principled exit

Following an ambush of one of its vehicles, in which five of its staff members were assassinated, MSF announced the closure of all medical programmes in Afghanistan on 28 July 2004.

In a press statement, the organisation elucidated that 'a Taliban spokesperson claimed responsibility for the murders and stated later that organisations like MSF work for American interests, are therefore targets and would be at risk of further attacks.' MSF rebuked this 'false accusation' arguing that it 'honours the separation of aid from political motives as a founding principle.'

The statement goes on to cast strong criticism of the Coalition Forces. 'The violence directed against humanitarian aid workers has come in a context in which the US backed coalition has consistently sought to use humanitarian aid to build support for its military and political ambitions. MSF denounces the coalition's attempts to co-opt humanitarian aid and use it to 'win hearts and minds'. By doing so, providing aid is no longer seen as an impartial and neutral act, endangering the lives of humanitarian volunteers and jeopardising the aid to people in need. Only recently, on May 12th 2004, MSF publicly condemned the distribution of leaflets by the Coalition Forces in southern Afghanistan in which the population was informed that providing information about the Taliban and Al Qaeda was necessary if they wanted the delivery of aid to continue.'

MSF's pullout has invoked a critical response, not only from the military (whom MSF had charged with some of the responsibility for the death of aid workers), but also from aid agencies. Many people argued that the killing of aid personnel is a tragic, but integral part of the Afghan context and does not automatically warrant pointing a finger at the Coalition or ISAF. The incident did not seem to have a geo-political background and the blurring of lines did not seem to be its main cause, one person said. Others were harsher in their criticism. MSF's decision was 'an abrogation of their responsibility for a selfish political cause', a donor representative said. It was purely a political statement against the coalition and did not support the objective of helping the people.

Most INGOs take a *pragmatic* position. Humanitarian principles are important to them, but they include practical and contextual considerations in the equation. In many cases, the end result is the same (little interaction) because the opportunities are perceived to be limited, while practical objections abound. 'The main problem is: the military is not good at development work', according to another interviewee. PRTs are first of all not perceived to be efficient. 'They need a full convoy just to go and check on something. They have a lot of other things on their back, rather than just a project.'

Moreover, PRTs are not effective, it is argued. 'They are a major player in putting up empty buildings', one INGO representative said. 'Their 'specialists' are civil engineers experiencing the third world.' In one case, a PRT opened a free mobile clinic next to the clinic set up by an INGO. Not only was this a duplication of efforts, the agency felt, but the PRT clinic was not set up properly: 'patients, when consulted, expressed disappointment with the level of care that had been provided. Some infants were given children's doses of drugs; patient consultations were minimal; and the behaviour of the military health personnel was described as being culturally inappropriate, particularly amongst women.' (Save the Children 2004: 27) It was a one-off activity. Unlike the military, the NGO worked on the issue of sustainability together with the Ministry of Public Health. Initially, the PRT maintained that the clinic was a successful hearts-and-minds activity, but eventually the PRT apologised for its intervention.

Finally, staff turnover within the military is perceived to be a problem. Institutional memory is meagre, relationship building goes back to square one with every rotation and there is periodic swaying of policy positions. In this respect, the local NGO platform ACBAR makes two recommendations in a seminar report (ACBAR 2005): outgoing troops should institutionalise lessons learned and PRT commanders should be stationed for a longer period. PRTs do not take a longer-term perspective. Afghanistan's

underlying problems can hardly be addressed in four-month shifts and the military need for quick and visible successes does not align with concerns about sustainability and structural reforms.

Many agencies are positive about some of the accomplishments of ISAF and the Coalition. 'By principle, it is strange that foreign troops come to build a state. But practically, it's a way to make it work', according to one expatriate. 'Without the military, murder and pillage would start all over again', another added. However, in view of the criticism discussed above, they argue that the military should stick to its area of expertise: providing security and support to Afghan security structures. Aid agencies, meanwhile, should provide assistance to needy people. INGOs are critical of the PRT concept and in many cases respondents argued that PRTs are not capable of taking on both security and reconstruction tasks. In their view, PRTs lack the resources to address both security and reconstruction requirements. As one senior aid worker remarked, their 'interest to have ISAF here is not for reconstruction.'

Having a policy dialogue, exchanging information and coordination when needs be, is not considered a problem, but close collaboration with the military is a problem, many respondents felt. Their approach is too different. '[Our] development and [their] quick impact just doesn't match.' Additional criticism circles around the perception that the military see NGOs as instruments rather than partners. One respondent: 'the military does not want to *co-operate*, but *operate* NGOs. They see NGOs as their implementing partners, which they are not. They have a totally different agenda.' Many agencies are reluctant to be used for military goals. NGOs are not eager to share information with the military, because they fear that this information will be used for intelligence purposes, that is, to further political and military goals.

Holding on to principles of neutrality and impartiality might not be that realistic but, as one respondent told us, 'NGOs can work on their own image, that is at least something within your own control.' Another NGO representative: 'Having a meeting at the PRT is not a problem, but I prefer not to have them in our office.' This kind of pragmatism is characteristic of many NGOs, and of the field staff in particular. Because NGOs weigh the pros and cons on a case basis, there are great geographic differences. Security threats and keeping distance from the military are an everyday reality in the south. But north of the Hindu Kush, a rigid, principled stance on neutrality is often perceived to be artificial, unnecessary and obstructive.

Finally, a large number of agencies take a *supportive* position towards the PRTs. Though they share some of the above concerns - particularly those with regard to security - they work closely with the military. They accept funding, they implement projects and communicate quite closely. Most local NGOs belong to this collaborative group, but there are international NGOs that take a similar position. Many of the Afghan agencies are driven to some extent by the available resources, but this should not be taken as a sign that they have sold out their principles. Their viewpoints and values with regard to the military are substantively different. In fact, they are quite critical of INGO principled objections against working with military actors.

'INGOs are themselves implementing projects and see competition', an Afghan NGO representative observed. 'They want to be the boss. The thing is we must coordinate. Neutrality and impartiality is the best, but we cannot all be the ICRC. When INGOs stick to these principles then this is just politics. We must help people. We must ask questions such as where is the need? Who needs help?' PRTs target even the remotest villages with their projects, some respondents argued. It is an often-heard complaint of Afghan NGOs that most INGOs are based in Kabul and do not go into the most dangerous areas, but meanwhile they criticise organisations that work with PRTs in these areas. 'INGOs are not capable of doing assessments in high-risk areas', one of them said. 'They do not know what the needs are of the people in those areas. They are not allowed to go into insecure areas and let local organisations do this job.' The impartiality claimed by INGOs is perceived as hypocritical, because they receive funding from their governments anyway, most of which are NATO governments. 'If you really want to be impartial you must refuse the money from your government and stop reporting to your embassy', one person stated.

Many Afghan NGOs consider the debate on civil-military relations and its effects on humanitarian space a Western-humanitarian issue. In Mazar-i-Sharif, for example, INGOs were concerned about being identified with the PRT, which might lead to security issues. Afghan NGOs did not share this concern and simply considered the PRT as one of the donors. Objections with regard to humanitarian principles and the risk of being targeted were not a major concern to them. Humanitarian means helping people in need, irrespective of with whom you collaborate, one person argued:

'In the villages people think the government and NGOs are doing nothing. They rely on the PRTs because they are there. We must think humanitarian. INGOs are in Kabul and think poetry and philosophy. Their ideas come from books. We should not mix politics with humanitarianism. If PRTs, supported by local NGOs, can help then that is humanitarian.'

In the south, however, Afghan NGOs have real concerns with regard to security. Ambushing of staff, intimidating letters and attacks on schools and other project assets are relatively common throughout provinces such as Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan. These incidents are not necessarily a response to NGO collaboration with the Coalition Forces. Many attacks occur in the absence of such collaborative ties. 'The Taliban just want to stop progress', one respondent said. 'They even attack purely civilian projects that have nothing to do with the military. They burn down schools. They just want to keep people away from the government.' Aid agencies are primarily targeted because of the work they do and because they support the overall post-Taliban transition and the government in particular. However, it is widely acknowledged that it is extra dangerous to be affiliated with the foreign troops. ANSO advises aid agencies to stay away from military compounds and convoys.

'When foreigners show up in a place, that place becomes a target for the enemy', according to one Afghan NGO. 'Each time the military visits one of our projects, something happens to that place a few days later.' Aid agencies are always at risk, another respondent said, 'but if they are associated with the military, they will be killed without warning.'

This is no reason for Afghan NGOs to stop working with the military altogether; they just lower the public profile. An Afghan aid worker: 'It's best to meet in the city. We don't go into the field with them. We'd be targeted the next day.' Many Afghan respondents - including those employed by PRTs - explain that they prefer to drive a local car, rather than a white four-wheel drive, let alone an armoured car. Keeping a low profile is a more effective safety measure than armed protection.

Some INGOs take a similar position. 'We accept PRT funding', according to one agency. 'Yet we are to remain neutral and clearly the military are not neutral. We are happy with their funding but we don't want to be seen with them.' This resulted in a rather detailed agreement with regard to visits from the PRT. The following is an excerpt from the memorandum of understanding:

'The PRT will visit each project site not more than once a month. All visits must be carried out with at least one day's prior notice and agreement by the organisation [...] Close association between a military body and a development agency may result in increased risks to the organisation, staff and infrastructure. Therefore the PRT agrees to limit the number of military personnel at project sites during both monitoring visits and inaugural ceremonies. Further, the PRT agrees to closely monitor the security situation in and around project sites and alert the organisation to any potential risks and threats.'

Relations between NGOs and the military in the northern provinces do not pose any problems, according to Afghan agencies. The population will welcome the assistance they get, no matter what its source, one person argued. But '[w]hat people do fear is soldiers going into the field with their guns. In the south people have been shot by the Coalition Forces. The US army has shot children who were playing with plastic guns. This information also reaches the people in Mazar.'

Despite the overall positive attitude of Afghan NGOs regarding their relations with the foreign military, there is criticism as well. At one meeting, they expressed concerns about the lack of coordination among the PRTs and a lack of coordination between PRTs and NGOs. A shared view was that PRTs all have their own ways and that their mandate is not clear at all to Afghan NGOs. As one NGO representative put it:

'The name 'Provincial Reconstruction Team' gives the impression that their main occupation is reconstruction. However, in some regions they rehabilitate the police, which is directly linked to security. Their mandate is still not clear to Afghan NGOs. They should come out with a clear stance. If one day, they will reconstruct a school and people will know that the project was financed by the PRT, then the next day they capture somebody who they believe to be Al Qaeda. This is very confusing to the population. This is also difficult for the implementing NGOs. It is absolutely not clear to them who belongs to the peace mission and who to the Coalition Forces.'

Moreover, there are practical problems with regard to collaboration with the PRTs. The following complaints communicated by various NGOs are illustrative. Firstly, PRTs forget about their old partners. Because they work with a bidding process, the new NGOs have just as big a chance of being chosen to implement a project as the ones that have existed for quite some years. In the bidding process, everyone is treated the same, with no regard to their reputation. Secondly, the PRT has no coordination with the ANCB (an NGO platform). The ANCB knows about the capacity and quality of NGOs that are registered with them, so they could give recommendations. The ANCB was the first organisation to arrange a meeting with PRTs. After that, they were busy with their own things and there has not been a meeting since. And finally, PRTs do not accept proposals from NGOs. They have their own agenda, make their own assessments and write their own proposals. As they select during a bidding process, they often choose the cheapest proposal. Sometimes this results in work of poor quality.

### 3.3.2 Perspectives from inter-governmental organisations and donors

Inter-governmental organisations - and the UN in particular - are more closely related to the military intervention. Some of their political bosses - the member states - are the ones that deploy their troops in Afghanistan. The UN mandated ISAF, they facilitated the Bonn conference and they have closely allied themselves with the post-Taliban state. It is unlikely that many opposing militias would consider them to be neutral, no matter how they relate to the military intervention.

Some international agencies - such as IOM and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) - do direct implementation for the PRT or the USAID programmes, which are operated from PRT compounds. The available resources seem to be a determining factor for these agencies. 'For various reasons, we may try to stay away from the PRT, but they are the ones with the money', one representative said.

PRTs request these agencies to share information with them. 'Anti-government forces look at us as spies', according to the officer concerned. 'Many people have blamed us for being the eyes and ears of the military. Especially if you go and talk to the people in a village without delivering results, they will get suspicious. They'll think you came for the information only.'

Though PRT funding is gratefully accepted, these agencies do not necessarily consider the current set-up to be ideal. 'Actually, it is true that the military are not good at development work.' Implementation by the military is an expensive option, because they overpay their contractors. 'It would make a lot of sense for donors to channel money directly through the implementing agencies, rather than through the PRTs first.'

UN agencies receive protection from government forces - the Afghan army - rather than from ISAF or Coalition troops. Access to insecure areas is a problem for these agencies. ISAF and the Coalition are better able to do development work in these parts of the country, but in the end this comparative advantage has many caveats. In some areas people are quite critical of and even hostile to the military and they will not simply 'turn around and accept the military if they build a school', a UN employee said. 'Moreover, the school may be bombed by the militants, because it was built by the military.' This is why it is usually better if such projects are implemented by UN agencies or NGOs. There are areas where people say 'they can't accept the project from the military, but with the UN there's no problem.'

At a policy level, donors and UN representatives do not seem to have any problems of principle with the PRTs. Criticism focuses on the way PRTs have been operationalised. The heterogeneous nature of PRTs and the lack of coordination between them are particular concerns, respondents observe. PRTs 'must become a success', an officer in Kabul said. There is no plan B for 'reconstruction in the provinces'. The fact that different countries implement their PRT in different ways is unhelpful, however. Stronger centralised leadership, a larger civilian component and more emphasis on strengthening the government would be useful, some people argue. Otherwise, PRTs become isolated islands of excellence without a broader, long-term vision.

The PRT Steering Committee - which is supposed to provide coordinated guidance to the PRTs - is a logical initiative in this connection, but some of the people involved argue that it is hardly effective in overcoming differences in national interests and in assuring a coherent approach. The problem is that PRTs are led by national governments, one person said, and the Steering

Committee also consists of representatives that follow their national interests. The UN would have been the agency of choice to provide central guidance, but UNAMA's mandate was watered down to a merely advisory and supportive role, this person explained. The 'footprint' approach came too early. From the very start, the UN should have had a firmer mandate, he said.

Donors differ of opinion on how best to use the PRT for channelling aid funds. USAID has embedded field officers within the PRTs and considers this an effective way of making a difference at a provincial level. The PRT is an enabling environment for these officers to run programmes that can contribute to these regions (rather than getting bogged down in Kabul). Other donors, such as the Dutch and British governments, prefer to channel their funds through the state. Initially, Dutch aid in Pul-i-Khomri was channelled through NGOs, but this came to be considered odd given the PRT objective to provide the provincial government with capacity and legitimacy. In view of the limited capacities of the state bureaucracy, funding NGOs can be an effective strategy, but it could undercut the overall objective. 'There is an enormous tension between quick and visible impact on the one hand and sustainable quality on the other', according to a Dutch official.

Many donors and UN representatives cast fierce criticism at the NGO community. The enormous number of agencies, the perceived lack of transparency and problems with regard to coordination often give rise to donor frustration. NGO criticism towards the military intervention and their unwillingness to deal with PRTs under the guise of humanitarian principles is subject to disapproval as well. 'Humanitarian principles do not work in this country', one person said. 'I am a humanitarian myself', according to a donor officer. 'But I'm not neutral.' The PRT concept is not intended to replace humanitarian efforts, but to enable work in an environment where no aid would otherwise have been able to go, she argues. This is not about a congestion of humanitarian space. It is about effectively dealing with needs and issues. It is not in the interests of their target populations if NGOs start conjuring up humanitarian objections. Rather, they should join ranks and help these people as best they can, this person felt.

### 3.3.3 Military perspectives

Though there are clearly differences along the lines of mandate (OEF vs. ISAF), the type of unit (combat vs. non-combat), the part of the country and personality, the military are generally positive about hearts-and-minds activities and collaboration with aid agencies.

Troops are aware of their limitations. Their staff and resources are quite limited. 'We don't want to duplicate what the UN does', according to a reservist. 'We shouldn't want to be an NGO', another officer added. 'In fact, it's not going to work without INGOs and IOs. Once we leave, the job will not be done yet.' Especially on a short mission (as was the case with the Election Support Forces) projects are low-cost and short-term. Projects which would not be completed within the four months of deployment were felt to be of no use. 'We do not have any goals for the longer term such as fighting poverty.' Though this is indeed the formal position, many soldiers are motivated to help the communities they encounter. In fact, many of the hearts-and-minds projects seem to be geared towards making a difference for the people. Meanwhile, the official objective - boosting force acceptance - seems to move to the background as the projects are implemented by NGOs and the military is hardly even present on the project site. However, in the end any activity that improves local conditions contributes to people's support to peace, to the government and thus to the military mission. Many soldiers are therefore happy with embedded donors, such as CIDA or USAID, which do avail themselves of opportunities to fund bigger and longer-term projects.

Their limited resources occasionally cause frustration among the troops. People's expectations are high. Whether they are in the camp or on patrol, the troops receive many requests for assistance. Because they know that they could do more and that the costs would not be great, some of the troops are disappointed. This is particularly so when people complain that other PRTs do a much better job. For example, compared to the German PRT in Kunduz province, the Dutch PRT has only a small budget available for reconstruction activities. The local population criticises the Dutch PRT for not doing as much to help the Afghan people. They often refer to Kunduz where reconstruction activities are much more visible than in Baghlan province. For example, the Germans finance the vehicles for the traffic police and throughout Afghanistan one can see shiny new police cars bearing German logos.

In view of frequent popular demands, their mandate to facilitate reconstruction and their limited resources, PRTs are eager to have an overview of the activities undertaken by aid agencies. This would be helpful to direct people's requests and to prevent duplication. Many officers find, however, that NGOs are reluctant to share their information. One CIMIC officer mentioned the example of a bridge construction project, which is implemented by an NGO. The organisation refuses to tell PRT staff where the bridge will be built and they do not allow PRT staff at the project site, because they do not want to be publicly associated with the forces. In another case, a PRT and an NGO ended up digging wells in the same area without knowing it. In yet another case, schoolbooks were probably paid for twice because of lack of coordination. These incidents cause irritation.

Despite these critical viewpoints, many soldiers understand that NGOs do not want to be seen with the military. 'I would do the same thing', one of the foreign troops said. 'The military is the primary target, so you don't necessarily want them around.' For others, however, obstructionist NGO positions feed existing negative perceptions. Some of the troops perceive NGOs as self-interested expats who run from one disaster to the other. They are better at marketing than at providing assistance and they tend to pass judgment using their sophisticated principles without properly doing their homework. Many soldiers feel that contrary to NGOs, the military has a can-do attitude and they can implement projects fast. As one commander put it: 'We do things that are actually being carried out within a few weeks so that people clearly see the effect. NGOs need much more time for everything.' Moreover, the troops have access to places where NGOs cannot work.

There is substantial debate within the military on what kinds of projects the military should undertake. 'The military leadership is learning what CIMIC can do', one officer said. 'In the early stages of the operation, commanders usually felt we were in their way, rather than of any assistance.' But now the emphasis has shifted from combat to stabilisation and reconstruction and 'we are in front of the room.'

How PRTs should take on their development role, however, is an issue of debate. One of the lessons from Bosnia was that CIMIC should not do projects. At the time, 'people felt all CIMIC was doing was building schools and it was not clear how that helped the commander.' The projects are back in fashion, but respondents argue that, although the direct link to the overall mission is of stricter concern, the practical application is still challenging. From a force acceptance point of view, areas of resistance are primary targets of assistance. 'The risk is of course that you're punishing people for being kind' one CIMIC officer observed. 'If you don't reward success, village leaders may start asking critical questions. They're loyal supporters, but don't get anything.' These issues of conflict sensitivity and effective targeting of CIMIC funds are tricky calls. 'It's almost the wisdom of Solomon.'

### 3.3.4 Perspectives from the Afghan population<sup>17</sup>

People's perceptions matter. In fact, the civil-military debate circles to a large extent around local views and interpretations. For the military, it is key to win hearts and minds, while some aid agencies fear that close association with the military will undercut their legitimacy and feed popular distrust. The question thus arises how the Afghans really look at the military intervention and the efforts of aid agencies.

Foreign attempts to influence Afghan affairs are by no means new to the people. They continuously refer to British, American, Russian, Pakistani and Arabic efforts to have things their way in Afghanistan. Invasions, military struggle and the creation or support of subaltern movements - such as the Mujahideen, the Taliban and Al Qaeda - for their own geopolitical interests have been common occurrences. On a somewhat dramatic note, some Afghans argue that their country is the battlefield of the world, the plot of land that superpowers have chosen to settle their geo-political contests and to fight their wars. For many, current interventions by NATO, the UN and other international agencies are a continuation of this trend.

'The culture here is not very conducive to this foreign intervention', a southern informant said. People are not generally favourable to outside interference and it is easy for local leaders to capitalise on that. They de-legitimise Western efforts by

calling them non-Islamic and self-interested. With reference to long past and recent history, some people argue that combat will not bring a solution any closer. 'You will not succeed without creating understanding among the people', another person said. 'You can't impose a solution on them from outside.'

Ongoing efforts to transform Afghanistan are in many ways a reflection of the past, people observe. 'It's a pendulum swinging', one Kandahari argued. 'We were happy with the Taliban, because they brought an end to the pillage and killing of the Mujahideen. But then the Talibs came to use the same strategies. Now, the pendulum has swung back to the Mujahideen side. They're all in the government.'

Whether the current historic period really is but a swing of the pendulum or a more structural breaking point and the beginning of peace is too early to determine. In any case, there is a widespread sense of despondency about the war: most people long for an end to it. Almost every Afghan town and village bears testimony to the wreckage of war. All of them have their own history of battle and bargaining, death and displacement, defeat and victory. Regained hopes were lost time and again. Most people want peace and for many it matters little who provides it.

As a result, there is widespread popular support for the new government, the Coalition Forces and ISAF. In the north, people are very grateful to have regained security and to be liberated from the Taliban regime, which many perceived to be an oppressive Pashtun regime with ruthless regulations. By and large, people support ISAF and if NATO were to leave, they fear 'the whole country would be in the hands of the Taliban tomorrow.' In their view the PRTs can leave the country only after the Afghan police and army have sufficient strength to carry out their tasks. A mullah in the north stressed that after the fall of the Taliban, people wanted peace and security. For them it was perhaps a bit hard to take that Americans provided security, but all other nations were welcome.

#### Box 11: Some villages in Baghlan province

The inhabitants of an Uzbek village close to Pul-i-Khomri found themselves on the frontline where a mullah and a warlord were fighting a fierce battle. The warlord eventually won, but afterwards the Taliban came and controlled the village. This was a hard period. The villagers were forced to visit the mosque very frequently and families were obliged to provide new recruits. The biggest problem was the drought. Under the Taliban, the Pashtun were better off. Even today, the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazaras are under-represented, the villagers feel.

Dostum liberated the valley from the Taliban and they are grateful for it. The valley is safe now, people can move freely to Pul-i-Khomri and children go to school. The village people are also grateful to the PRT in their province. They want the PRT to stay because they still fear a return of the Taliban.

Elsewhere in the province lies a small village, primarily inhabited by Pashtun, through there are a few Tajik as well. Some of the villagers cultivate their land, but the majority herd goats, sheep or cows. The plots around the village look very dry and dusty, but there are grazing grounds in the mountains surrounding the village.

The village was completely abandoned during the struggle against the Russians. Just a few months after the Russian invasion, the people in the area fled to Iran, Pakistan and other parts of Afghanistan. At a later stage, people who were displaced from Kunduz came to live on their lands. It was during the rule of the Taliban that the villagers returned and the squatters were willing to vacate their village. During the Taliban period, they were also displaced, but only for short periods of time. Life under the Taliban was tough. There was drought and displacement. With regard to the regime itself, education was a problem. They allowed people no other schooling than the Madrassas, religious schools.

Since ISAF, there have been a lot of changes in the village. 'We are taking on our development' the village leader says. ISAF has brought security and they have freed them from the Taliban interference with the community. They do not feel it is a problem that ISAF is a Christian army, since they work closely with the Afghan army. Another elder takes the floor and argues passionately that the people want security. It does not matter who provides it. The people are positive about ISAF. Though ISAF did not bring anything to our village itself, the radio tells the villagers that ISAF is a crucial actor in development.

<sup>17</sup> A methodological note of caution is required here. Due to security and time constraints, the research team was able to conduct only a limited number of interviews with the Afghan population. Capturing the richness and diversity of Afghan viewpoints in a balanced and accurate manner is not possible on the basis of the limited data. Drawing from informant interviews and the small sample of village interviews, some general observations and educated guesses can be made.

The south is different.<sup>18</sup> The coalition continues to face resistance and the opposing militias commonly receive popular support. The grounds for this resistance (ideological, ethnic, religious, anti-Western, feudal or otherwise) are ambiguous; there is hardly any reliable evidence about popular views in these tribal areas. According to Taliban leader mullah Mohammed Omar, however, popular support for his opposing militia is an undeniable fact. In a recent statement, a Taliban spokesman warned of 'unimaginable violence' this summer. Omar vowed a fierce offensive against the Coalition Forces with the help of young Afghans who are volunteering for suicide missions against the US and their allies. 'Afghans [are] thronging centres of Mujahideen in groups to enlist their name for suicide attacks and other operations of Taliban resistance', the statement said. The Taliban leader also called on those who had not joined the 'Taliban resistance [...] to consider this resistance against the crusader enemy as a part of their faith.' (ANDKI 2006)

Leaving aside the armed opposition, the general public has been critical as well. Though not opposed to the intervention on principle, the polls are unfavourable, even though they go up and down and there are important local differences. Ahmad Wali Karzai, the Afghan President's half-brother, recently said that the Americans had not delivered on their promises after the collapse of the Taliban regime. 'What was promised to Afghans with the collapse of the Taliban was a new life of hope and change. But what was delivered? Nothing', he told a news agency (Hindu 2006). President Karzai blamed NGOs 'for squandering the precious resources that Afghanistan received in aid from the international community.' (Donini et al 2005: 11)

Views such as these may contribute to the critical attitude among the general public. Military analysis shared in interviews reveals that people are disappointed about the ability of the coalition to maintain security, the coalition's commitment to the Afghan cause and the legitimacy of the Afghan government. Looking at the facts, these views make sense. Security probably was greater during the Taliban era and has continued to deteriorate since the Coalition took control. Meanwhile, many people observe the government is fraught with tribalism and corruption. Former warlords have received important positions in the government and if they are replaced because of their misconduct, they are simply transferred to a different place.

The Western and Christian nature of the current intervention does not seem to be a major stumbling block for most people. Reference is made to the fact that it is at request of a Muslim entity - the Afghan government - that the intervention took place. Moreover, the hostilities are not about religion, many people say. One mullah observed: 'The fight between the Taliban and the foreign forces is not of a religious nature. It is a fight against the Taliban. I want the Taliban out of the country, even with the support of the Americans. I support the US, because I support peace.' Another person concurred: 'It's not about religion and it never was. People use religion as a rope around your neck to pull or push you one way or the other. People gave in to the Taliban, because the Mujahideen had cornered them. But then, the Taliban did not allow dissonant voices. It's about power and money. Not about religion.' As long as ISAF and the Coalition Forces do not oppose Islam, their religious background is not considered to be an issue of concern. Obviously, opposing militias and their constituencies may well think otherwise.

People have great needs (and expectations) with regard to relief and reconstruction. The ability of the military, the government and aid agencies to meet these expectations has been limited. References to unmet promises are common and requests for more help an everyday reality. Troops, aid agencies or researchers that pay a visit to ask questions without actually delivering concrete results may be subjected to criticism. Local organisations and government structures cast similar criticism towards foreign providers of aid. One mayor stated: 'Foreigners are helping a province of Afghanistan each. The Germans are helping Kunduz where much is happening in the areas of infrastructure and reconstruction of schools and houses. The people of this province know this and ask me what the PRT does for them. We treat the PRT as guests, but they don't do anything in return.'

The popular verdict on NGOs is often no better. Existing disgruntlements with regard to aid agencies were compounded by government denunciation of NGO malpractices. Many NGOs were in fact private companies, the government observed, and regulations were tightened. An NGO perception assessment done in 2004 confirms these findings: only a small minority expressed a positive view of NGOs while the vast majority expressed negative comments (Saraya<sup>19</sup> 2004). NGOs have an image problem. A recent study among Kabul inhabitants summarised the situation as follows: 'There is little open resentment vis- -vis the foreign military presence - most Kabulis are thankful for it. Not so vis- -vis the assistance community: resentment is growing [...].' (Donini et al 2005: 11)

The data suggest that ISAF may well be more popular than NGOs in major parts of the country. The question arises to what extent the masses distinguish between the different foreign actors: between aid agencies and the military; between Coalition Forces and ISAF; between different NATO countries and between one aid agency (UN, ICRC, NGO or otherwise) and the other. Contrary to the assumption of some expatriates that 'they are all Westerners to the people', it becomes clear that many people do know the difference between the various actors. Even relatively uneducated people often know that the Coalition and ISAF are not the same. They know about the PRTs and they have heard that there are differences between the provincial teams. Nor do differences between armed and unarmed actors go unnoticed. The names of individual aid agencies are not so widely known, though. In some villages, the inhabitants did not know who had implemented a noteworthy project or who had come by to visit them.

There is discussion of people's perception of the American troops versus other NATO countries. Some troop-contributing countries like to think that they have a different, less offensive style, that they are more open to the people and thus more able to establish relationships. Moreover, the American reputation is closely associated with the invasion of Iraq, the weapons of mass destruction that were never found and the malpractices of Abu Graib and Guantanamo Bay. 'The Americans always fight', an Afghan working for ISAF said. 'Afghan people are suspicious of the Americans. ISAF is different. They are here for reconstruction and they are friendly to us.' Others downplay these differences. People who support the intervention welcome the Americans as well, it was argued. 'And for those who don't, it's all the same.' The Taliban denounces anyone - foreigner or Afghan - who collaborates. 'In their view, they're all kafirs and infidels.'

Even when people have a proper understanding of the wide spectrum of international players, it is questionable whether they care much about who provides them with assistance. Most people are surprised to find out that there is a fierce debate on the division of labour between the military and aid agencies and about the fact that some NGOs object to the military engaging in relief and reconstruction. In the north, ISAF is popular and people tend to think they do too little rather than too much. As one person put it: 'It is nothing new to the Afghans that the military provide help. People are used to military engineers and doctors. This is very common to them. They are used to military presence.' In fact, it takes a gun to be respected, one expatriate argued. Especially in Pashtun land, you need a show of force to establish yourself.

Others argue that people are fed up with people who carry guns. 'It's only the people who have guns that respect people with guns', an Afghan NGO worker said. 'Most people will respect you much more if you come unarmed. Respect is not for you, it's for the gun and it's fear, rather than respect. The warlords were not popular, but people obliged out of fear. People respect those who faced hardship, yet come without guns. The respect for the warlords was not real.' A weapon is in fact an obstacle if you want to relate to people, some interviewees said. 'You can never relate to the people if you come in with guns. You will never see eye to eye. You're always above the people, never their equal. The people have become so tired of fighting that they take it as a bad omen when they see people with guns coming into their place. People just don't like armed people and that includes the various Western countries that intervene here. As long as people see the guns, boots and tanks they don't take kindly to it. It works much better if you go in as a civilian.'

### 3.4 Analysis

Afghanistan is an extreme case in terms of civil-military relations. It is the place where global policy trends with regard to an integrated security-development policy first converged with the war on terror. In many ways, recent foreign intervention in the country has been an atypical experiment and by consequence some of the controversies have come forward quite strongly. However, an adequate assessment of the controversies requires many nuances. Viewpoints on civil-military relations differ. On many policy issues, the jury still seems to be out. There are major differences between regions in the country, one of which is the fact that the north is quite secure, whereas combat continues in the south.

<sup>18</sup> The situation in the western and eastern parts of the Pashtun belt were not included in the field research, but there may well be similarities.

<sup>19</sup> Sayara is an Afghan polling bureau. The assessment includes 8 focus groups with 67 persons from different areas, age groups, levels of education and gender.

One must be cautious in attributing loopholes and problems to the new nature of the current intervention. Many contemporary challenges are actually a continuation of Afghanistan's historic track record. Continued instability and violence, warlordism, resistance to centralised governance, a well-established war economy and tribalism are common threads of the past few decades. Afghanistan's long, complex and war-ridden history does not bode well for the future or the success of the current intervention, but current setbacks do not necessarily warrant a disqualification of today's approaches.

### 3.4.1 A gradational spectrum of interventions

With the US-led invasion and the collapse of the Taliban regime, there was a major influx of foreign agencies in Afghanistan. NATO and the UN assumed a major role, donors opened their purses and NGO programmes proliferated. In line with contemporary international thinking, attempts were made to link the various initiatives and take an integrated approach. The most salient manifestation of this approach was the PRTs, which were tasked with the triple role of helping the government extend its authority, facilitating a secure environment and supporting efforts aimed at reconstruction and rule of law. Some people have argued the PRTs were an attempt to patch up a security issue with reconstruction cure. The PRTs came instead of a full-blown deployment of ISAF across the country.

Overseeing international intervention in Afghanistan, it is difficult to divide the civil-military arena into two clearly defined blocks: the military and the civilian camp. This is not to say that everything is vague - combat units are purely military actors and most NGOs simply and solely provide aid - but there is a gradational spectrum of interventions. Depending on the way we look at it (the goal, the kind of activity, the actor implementing it, whether that actor is situated on a military camp and so on), very different categorisations emerge. CIMIC teams are military units, but they provide assistance, and in some cases the way they do this is very similar to how field stationed donors operate. Most bilateral donors are part of NATO and they may reside within a PRT, but they are not military. The UN has mandated ISAF and has closely allied itself with the government that the Coalition Forces put in place, yet most UN agencies deal with development issues only. Some NGOs work closely with the military. Others abstain from doing that, but they are often funded by the same governments, although through different channels. There is not necessarily a blurring of lines because many of the above actors are clear about their position. However, with the ambition of integrated approaches, divisions between actors are deliberately shifted to the background. This is particularly so among NATO governments and within PRTs. Also for the population, the distinctions may not always be so clear-cut, irrespective of whether this confusion is based on fact, perception or both.

As was observed earlier, there is a global tendency towards the integration of military, political and development interventions. This is not just a matter of peacekeepers behaving differently. Rather, it is an overall change of international governance consisting, among other things, of UN reform, a broadening role for the military, joined-up approaches and new partnerships. The current transition in Afghanistan features salient international involvement and is a manifestation of these global processes of reorientation and integration. The findings of this case study show that this has very real consequences on the ground. The overlap, linkage and integration of political, military and development intervention is simply a fact and given that it is a contextual shift resulting from deliberate international policies, it can hardly be ignored. Many of the more isolationist discussions on the topic of civil-military relations therefore seem to be something of a rear-guard action, especially as in practice pragmatic forms of collaboration are being tried.

### 3.4.2 Military involvement with civil actors

'Ah, CIMIC', is the typical military response to an introduction about relations between the military and development actors. But it is erroneous to take such a narrow approach. Both ISAF and the Coalition have a much wider range of activities that enter the civil realm. Apart from the traditional hearts-and-minds activities, salient examples are psyops, efforts to strengthen Afghan rule of law capacities and the facilitation of longer-term development.

Though they tend to be presented as crystal-clear concepts, many of these activities are in flux. They are either relatively new activities (e.g. psyops or rule of law activities for some NATO countries) or they are being adjusted to new contexts and mandates. Many of these activities were conceived as additional tools in support of the mission. Now that the main objective has shifted from just peacekeeping to a mandate that includes state building as a major component, supporting the mission has become a somewhat different ballgame.

CIMIC itself is an excellent example. Firstly, the military mantra dictates that CIMIC is nothing but a tool at the service of the commander to boost force acceptance and thus their security. Looking at the PRT mandate, it seems that CIMIC is much more than that. Along with other non-combat activities, it is really what 'the PRT is really all about', according to a CIMIC officer. Breeding direct support for the military intervention (force acceptance), indirectly contributing to the mission (by generating a peace dividend and strengthening the government) and contributing to Afghan's future peace and prosperity are rather different goals, but they are part of a continuum. CIMIC still seems to be searching for its spot on that continuum. Secondly, a common military argument is that 'CIMIC does not do projects', and that it is merely a mechanism to facilitate liaison with aid agencies. In reality, however, project funding, administration and implementation is a major part of what CIMIC units do in Afghanistan. In fact, CIMIC activities may closely resemble other development interventions in terms of implementation and impact, particularly when funds are channelled through local NGOs. Thirdly, there is tension between the rationale of boosting the image of the troops on the one hand and the mandate - supporting the government - on the other hand. The latter commands ISAF or the Coalition to 'stay in the shade' while putting Afghan faces on any success story, so as to uplift the government's profile. However, winning hearts and minds for the foreign troops requires the credit to go to the troops themselves.

This is not to say that CIMIC is in a state of crisis. In fact, there are many hearts-and-minds activities which are crystal clear in terms of their objective and implementation. The support of the ESF in Mazar-i-Sharif to schools and sports facilities is a textbook example of CIMIC. In other cases, however, the situation is not so clear.

This particularly applies to PRTs. Activities in the field of psyops, the rule of law and longer-term development are close to the core of their mandate. Each of these activities has a different background and a different *modus operandi*. Though they have developed rather autonomously, they are in fact closely related. For example, the goals of CIMIC and psyops are strikingly similar: situational awareness and winning hearts and minds. Yet these units seem to operate largely independently. Likewise, CIMIC and projects funded by USAID, CIDA or other governmental donors may have a lot to do with each other, but the search for seamless connections and mutually reinforcing approaches is still in full swing.

The way PRTs have dealt with these issues differs per country. The American, British, Canadian, Dutch and German PRTs have all adopted a slightly different institutional set-up. Strategies and available budgets also differ. Though the PRT Steering Group is supposed to facilitate coordination, many people feel that divergent approaches cause problems. This diversity seems to be a logical consequence of the novelty of the PRT concept. Whether one model will eventually prevail and which one it will be clearly remains to be seen.

Taking the various activities together, ISAF and Coalition Forces have a rather extensive toolbox. However, in face of the objectives and the vast and protracted nature of the problems it hopes to solve, the question rises whether the toolbox is up to the task. Military interviewees resolutely reject the assertion that a mission creep may be lurking, but this risk does not seem to be completely imaginary. Though some donors have made substantial funding available, both financial resources and staffing seem to be relatively limited in relation to the ambitions. The available means are moreover restricted by tight security regulations and rather elaborate support structures. With a 755,000 contingency budget and a handful of staff, the Canadian PRT in Kandahar, for example, is in a way comparable to the regional office of an average-size INGO. Their expenditure on protection, lodging and subsistence is obviously much greater. In view of the wide range of activities, there is a risk that a PRT does a little bit of everything instead of tackling a more limited number of issues with a coherent and feasible plan. This brings us back to the goals of these endeavours. From a hearts-and-minds perspective, a bit of everything may not be a problem, but from the perspective of their primary tasks, it probably is. It is laudable that individual troops make tireless efforts to fix a school or set up police training, but it may not be sufficient towards helping the government assume responsibility, nurturing the rule of law or facilitating the reconstruction effort.

There is a great willingness among military staff to take on pressing local problems and meet requests of local actors. The limited means available to them occasionally engenders modesty and disappointment: 'We could've done much more, had we been given the means'. They emphasize that they have no intention of replacing the efforts of aid agencies and they consider NGOs and international organisations of great complementary value to their own work. Contrary to some of the aid agencies, both ISAF and Coalition troops are quite eager to collaborate to have a greater and more sustainable impact on the Afghan situation.

Some of the PRT troops feel that insufficient funds are channelled through the teams. Though the political attaché at the Dutch PRT in Baghlan, for example, was given -4,500,000, this is only a small part of the total Dutch spending in Afghanistan. To some extent, the debate on civil-military relations does not focus on the kind of aid that is provided, but on how it is channelled. The bulk of aid comes from the development ministries of NATO governments and it is all supposed to benefit the Afghan people. The big question is how to get from A to B? Through the government? Through an INGO and then a local NGO? Just through an INGO? Through the PRT and then a local NGO? Through a donor official stationed at the PRT and then a local NGO? All routes have their merits and drawbacks. The main policy question seems to be which trajectory makes most sense and with what objective in mind.

### 3.4.3 Opportunities for collaboration

The Afghan case shows that there are various opportunities for collaboration between aid agencies and the military. Most archetypical forms of collaboration occur: a mere dialogue (e.g. ICRC), security briefings (e.g. through ANSO) information-sharing (e.g. some of the INGOs), more intensive attempts at coordination (e.g. UNAMA or UNDP), and aid agencies implementing projects for the military (e.g. IOM, UNOPS and many local NGOs). Logistical military support to aid agencies seems to be less common. Nor was training of military troops by civil actors a very frequent occurrence.<sup>20</sup>

For an NGO that wants to work *with* the military, rather than implement *for* them, opportunities seem to be a bit more limited. NGOs that do not act as sub-contractors stick to information sharing and mutual dialogue. In-field collaboration and military logistical support to aid agencies are quite rare in the Afghan case. One challenge for the PRTs is that they are tasked with facilitating reconstruction, while their means to do this are quite limited. In fact few NGOs are desirous of facilitation. Moreover, PRTs have trouble finding out which agencies are operating in their province and what they are doing.

Though there are undoubtedly positive examples as well, most informants feel that coordination meetings are impeded by limited institutional memory, an overdose of information and lots of debate (with few tangible outcomes), inter-agency competition and secrecy. Many of these shortcomings resemble the common flaws in more traditional development cooperation. To some extent they may thus be considered inherent in the dynamic anarchy that international development efforts often tend to be. However, there are also factors related to the civil-military nature of these attempts at collaboration. Mutual distrust and differences in culture and approach are prime examples. In the south, security threats and related considerations are an issue as well.

### 3.4.4 The rift in NGO positioning

Though some of the bigger aid agencies have united themselves in the NGO Civil-Military Working Group, they have not altogether succeeded in taking joint positions. Especially between local NGOs and international agencies, a rift has emerged. Typically, international agencies - and their headquarters in particular - have some reservations with regard to the military: 'stay away from the military, unless'. They have either stuck to principled neutralism or a more pragmatic stance, where principles and risks are weighed against the benefits on a case-by-case basis. Formal guidelines and positions tend to be quite strict, but field workers tend to take a more flexible approach.

The Afghan agencies, on the other hand, tend to take a more collaborative position. They are quite happy to work with the military, but they limit the public profile when the context requires it (particularly because of security risks): 'work with the

military, unless...'. Some of the local agencies denounce the principled stance of INGOs as a self-pleasing discourse about sophisticated concepts, while ignoring the massive needs on the ground. The limited evidence gathered among the populace suggests that such views are widely shared. Most communities long for security and are eager to receive assistance. Humanitarian principles and the maintenance of distinctions between military and development interventions are not at the top of people's list.

Some of the international NGOs are critical of the military for delivering poor quality work in the realm of development and they fear it would undermine their image if they were to be associated with ISAF or the Coalition. The fact of the matter is, however, that the military is quite popular in major parts of the country. Meanwhile NGOs are far from problem-free in the public perception. Complaints about ineffective, inefficient, unreliable and self-interested aid agencies are quite common. Whether this is a completely fair judgement that applies to all agencies is a different issue. All actors (the military, donors, the UN, NGOs, contractors, the government) grapple with an image problem to some extent. Their legitimacy is not taken for granted. It needs to be earned.

While the military engage in hearts-and-minds campaigns, NGOs have a vested interest in promoting themselves as well. One aid agency admitted to keeping some of its health programmes running to maintain its position. Though its mandate did not really command the continuation of these efforts, it strengthened the agency's basis to interact with the people and the powers that be. It was a useful buffer against potential criticism that the agency was doing too little. The country director: 'We are also guilty of wanting to look good.'

### 3.4.5 Assessing risks

The debate on civil-military relations cannot be set aside as a non-issue. It is a controversial topic in Afghanistan and the fierce debates it gave rise to have not come to conclusion, let alone consensus. Of the issues and concerns discussed in the conceptual chapter, there are three that feature most saliently in the Afghan context: humanitarian principles, security threats as a result of the blurring of lines and concerns about the military's ability to do development work. None of these concerns are very straightforward. They have some validity, but practical application leaves much space for interpretation.

#### Humanitarian space and impartiality

Though they are not necessarily against the military intervention in Afghanistan altogether, many agencies feel there is an issue of principle at stake with regard to keeping their distance from the intervention. Particularly among some of the INGOs, the preservation of humanitarian space and the need to remain impartial are cited as the cornerstones of their policy. They fear that humanitarian aid is in danger of being used for political and military purposes or in fact being completely subordinated to a military logic (securitisation). Though these principles are thought to have a universal relevance, applying them to the Afghan context can be tricky.

Firstly, the bulk of aid activities in Afghanistan hardly fits under the banner of humanitarian aid. Large parts of the country may nearly be considered post-conflict areas and even in the remaining parts of the country, it is not relief, but rehabilitation, reconstruction and more structural forms of development cooperation that prevail. Reconstruction, rehabilitation and longer-term development activities are generally considered more normative than relief aid and more geared towards local ownership, self-reliance and other matters of a political nature. For example, a sustainable approach to many of the issues at hand requires collaboration with the Afghan government, which is by no means a neutral actor, according to the insurgency. Given that the Afghan government and a large number of societal institutions side with ISAF and the Coalition, it is debatable whether one can really take one's distance to the Coalition, ISAF and their affiliates (among which are all NATO governments, the UN and the Afghan government). Under such conditions, it becomes problematic to apply the notions of independence, neutrality and impartiality.

Secondly, the twosome of radical Islamism and the war on terror generate global pressure on these principles. Neither side accepts grey tones and more importantly, one side considers universal values (such as the Geneva conventions and humanitarian principles) to be hostile, Western constructs. White UN cars used to be an icon of independence and inviolability, but they have

<sup>20</sup> This may have taken place outside of Afghanistan prior to troop deployment.

come to be symbolic of an invasion and thus deliberate targets. Advocating humanitarian principles in order to maintain neutrality and thus unimpeded access seems folly when one of the parties considers the very principles a sign of partiality.

Thirdly, there is a great tension between humanitarian principles on the one hand and local ownership and accountability on the other. Beneficiary populations do not seem to consider the blurring of lines a pressing policy issue. People have gone through terrible experiences and still have dire needs. Many of them appreciate the military intervention and they request assistance. Questions with regard to who provides the assistance and how providers co-operate are hardly relevant to them. Without asserting that humanitarian principles should be abandoned altogether, the question on whose behalf these principles are honoured begs answering.

#### **Blurring of lines and security threats**

Whereas only some agencies have principled objections to involvement with the military, concerns with regard to practical security threats as a result of the blurring of lines are widespread. In the north, ISAF is popular - in some cases more popular than NGOs - and security risks are limited. In the war-racked south of Afghanistan, however, the danger of attacks is an everyday reality for aid agencies. Without exception, they are worried about adverse security effects of collaboration, but their assessments differ greatly as to which approach is ideal.

It is the nature of the war and the nature of the current transition that lies at the root of NGO security risks. The protracted war context in the south, the prevalence of warlordism, the kind of intervention and the nature of the resistance are determinants of the dangers faced by aid agencies. The criticism of MSF's withdrawal is illustrative in this regard: the ambush they were caught in was considered a risk inherent to the Afghan context rather than the inevitable implication of the blurring of lines. Even before the military intervention, agencies were targeted, and even agencies that make tireless efforts to remain impartial (such as the ICRC) incur losses. Though armed units continue to be primary targets, some of the opposing militias have stated they consider all Westerners to be unwanted infidels.

Meanwhile, all agencies in the south acknowledge that being associated with the military raises the risk profile. Afghan 'traitors' are intimidated and attacked. Aid agencies or communities that publicly affiliate themselves with the forces run a greater risk. It is for this reason that local NGOs prefer not to spread the word on their collaboration with the Coalition. Dialogue and joint efforts are no problem in the offices in town, but joint field trips are risky and thus generally avoided.

So we must keep in mind the relative importance of the civil-military debate. Collaboration with the military is not the main factor in staff security, but it does increase the risk. For many, the debate boils down to managing the public image. The kind of car, the location and look of the office and the people you hang out with are the dominant issues at ground level. For agencies that take a collaborative approach, the primary concern is to keep up appearances. These seemingly trivial issues matter in terms of security, and the agency's position in the local context at large.

#### **Military capacities for effective aid**

The last consideration is of a more pragmatic nature: the military are just not good at providing aid. Criticism includes the short-term perspective, their limited knowledge of and sensitivity to the local context, their inflexibility as a result of security considerations, the negative side effects of their armoured approach, the limited resources, the inefficiency and the misleading nature of their own security regime: they work with people, but are often unable to protect them. It is understood that many of these alleged shortcomings are not unique to the military. Most of these flaws are in fact relatively common in the development industry and may thus not be a sound basis for assessing the military role in development processes. On the other hand, comparative advantages of the military include its access to insecure areas, its logistic capacity, its swift and reliable implementation and its expertise in certain development fields, such as police training.

In assessing criticism about the limited ability of the military to provide assistance, we must keep in mind that in many cases their objective is not a developmental one. It would be unfair to evaluate a typical hearts-and-minds project on standard development criteria. The assistance provided by the ESF in Mazar-i-Sharif is an example of a project that probably boosted the image of the troops. It was good quality in the sense that the recipients were happy with the assistance and the military relationship with these

people probably improved. Many hearts-and-minds projects have probably been successful in terms of force acceptance, though it should be remarked that the forces are primarily popular (particularly in the north) because of their ability to oust the Taliban and provide security, not because of their CIMIC projects.

The activities in support of the rule of law are in principle relatively uncontested. It is a logical part of the ISAF and OEF mission in an area where expertise from the police and the armed forces is required. There are nonetheless concerns about the quality and uncoordinated nature of these activities, but it is beyond the scope of this report to make evaluative remarks in that regard.

The PRTs were not mandated to engage in development. Rather, they were tasked to facilitate the reconstruction effort. Apart from the provision of a generally secure environment and security information, the PRTs can offer little facilitation. Their means are limited and some of the main actors involved in reconstruction do not need their operational services. Many of the local NGOs are grateful for the funds made available to them, but it would probably make little difference for them had these funds been channelled directly from the donor to them.

In practice, the PRTs do involve themselves in development, though it may not be labelled as such. They fund NGOs to dig wells and construct bridges, they set up clinics and they build offices for government bodies, such as the police. It is difficult to give a balanced assessment of these efforts. There are examples of poorly executed projects, but in other cases the quality seems to be quite similar to projects without military involvement. The claim made by the military that they implement much more quickly than NGOs was difficult to counter, because they do hardly any self-implementation. Criticisms of the inefficient, expensive nature of military assistance make sense, but much depends on how calculations are made. When we take the extensive military presence as a given, it seems like a waste not to use their capacities. Finally, staff turnover and short-term perspectives probably lower the quality of military assistance.

One key issue with regard to military capacities is access. In line with the dictum 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary', soldiers tend to argue that they only provide aid when no other agency is able to. This seems to be a sensible rule of thumb, but what about its practical application? In the south, there are indeed areas where aid agencies have great trouble operating primarily as a result of security risks. In many cases, the Coalition is able to access these lands and provide assistance. However, they are unable to provide protection once they pull out. Ironically, they are capable of establishing contact with the local community and providing them with a school. But when the community is subsequently targeted by the insurgency for collaborating with the foreign enemy, the Coalition is often unable to prevent the intimidation or killing of the teachers and the burning down of the school. Possibly as a result, the Coalition and ISAF have focused some of their efforts on areas where other aid agencies are also active. In the north, access is hardly an issue, because security risks are much smaller. Nonetheless, there are many areas where neither NGOs nor international organisations run projects. Confronted by popular requests for assistance, ISAF troops have decided to initiate some activities, which could essentially have been carried out by NGOs. In sum, the rule of thumb may be apt, but it is not always helpful in making decisions at field level.

Most development activities attributed to PRTs are not actually a part of it. They are run by donor agencies, which reside within camp boundaries and collaborate with the troops. Assessing this approach is an entirely different matter. Though some of the risks and opportunities discussed above apply here as well, the leading questions point to different issues, such as the wisdom of a joined-up government approach and the costs and benefits of working at a provincial level alongside the central government. Much has been said and written about these issues and this is not the place to conclude the debate. This does not imply that the present study has no relevance to emerging integrated policies. Many of the facts, views and arguments presented in this study fill some of the gaps so far observed in these discussions.

# The case of Liberia 4

## 4.1 Background to the conflict in Liberia

War in Liberia cannot be attributed to a simple set of factors. One should therefore be cautious about typifying the conflict as an ethnic war, a failed state or a war economy through which greedy predatory groups enrich themselves. Box 12 provides a brief chronology of the conflict.

### Box 12: A chronology of conflict in Liberia<sup>21</sup>

Founded in 1847, Liberia is Africa's oldest Republic. Its 110,000 sq. km. of territory was carved out of the West African coast for African slaves returning to their continent from the United States. This Americo-Liberian elite has subsequently ruled the country and maintained close ties with the US. Their True Whig party has ruled without interruption since 1871 and took to a kind of domestic colonialism, suppressing the numerous indigenous ethnic groups. Twentieth century presidents William Tubman (1944-1971) and William Tolbert (1971-1980) initiated reforms, but discrimination persisted and inequality continued to be rampant.

In 1979 - 'the year of ferment' (Abedajo 2002: 22-24) - this culminated into 'rice riots' and emerging popular protest. Though hesitant, Tolbert's attempts to curb these disturbances seemed successful until Samuel K. Doe - a young indigenous army sergeant - staged a coup on 12 April 1980, killing president Tolbert and his cabinet. Doe initially attempted to establish a broad support base by entering into a marriage of convenience with parts of the *ancien régime* as well as leaders from the 1979 riots. He was paranoid about a counter-coup, however, and his *Lumpenmilitariat*<sup>22</sup> soon adopted a brutal and oppressive rule. The state apparatus became a patronalistic cash cow, protests were crushed and elections rigged. Ethnic politics entered a new era, as the establishment favoured Doe's own people, the Krahn, while marginalising others like the Gio and Mano. Doe gradually recovered from his international pariah status. Driven by economic concerns and cold war politics, the US extended its hand to the dubious West-African proxy insurgent.

Disturbances continued to rise and eventually climaxed when Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Liberation Front (NPLF) entered the country from Ivory Coast in December 1989. His miniature rebellion capitalised on resentments among oppressed population groups. It was from this moment onwards that Liberia witnessed a large number of newly emerging, realigning, splitting and disappearing armed factions, often oriented along ethnic lines. ECOWAS and other foreign actors tried to curtail the escalation of violence, but failed time and again. The Liberian state imploded and a devastating war ravaged across the country.

Already prior to the implosion of Doe's regime, Prince Yormie Johnson broke away from the NPLF to form the Independent NPLF (INPLF). Following a brief alliance with Doe, the INPLF killed the president, but fighting continued. ECOWAS brokered a fragile ceasefire and its Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) tried to enforce a neutral zone in the capital of Monrovia. Meanwhile Taylor's NPLF controlled much of the rest of the country. A peace agreement was reached in Yamoussoukro, but in the meantime new factions emerged. One of these factions was the United Liberation Movement of Liberians for Democracy (ULIMO), which denounced the accord and attacked from Sierra Leone. Taylor refused to disarm and ECOMOG was drawn into the fighting.

A sequence of ceasefires, attempts at disarmament and continued fighting followed. ULIMO meanwhile fell apart into two factions - ULIMO-K (after their leader Kromah) and ULIMO-J (led by Johnson) - and new rebel groups such as the Liberian Peace Council (a Krahn faction taking revenge on the NPLF), the Lofa Defence Force (which retaliated against ULIMO) and the Central Revolutionary Council (a breakaway from the NPLF) emerged. These groups formed shifting alliances, while searching for dominance in a sequence of battles and negotiations. Driven by ethnic cleansing, rape, destruction and recruitment, even of children, many people were displaced both within the country and to the neighbouring states. ECOMOG and the deployed UN Observers Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) maintained their presence, but failed to induce stability.

Following the ceasefire of December 1995, another attempt was made at setting up a transitional government and holding elections. A Council of State was created in which all main factions were incorporated. Wilton Sankawulo, a non-aligned academic, was inaugurated as chairman, despite Taylor's demands for the leadership. This league of warlords, chaired by a professor, soon fell prey to renewed fighting. A new ceasefire was signed, Sankawulo was replaced and elections were scheduled for 1997. Taylor emerged victorious with over 75% of the votes, with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf - a descendant of the traditional Americo-Liberian elite - as his closest competitor.

Taylor's rule did not bring peace to Liberia. Rather than becoming a broader based government, his regime continued to act as the victorious faction. Oppressive rule and frequent skirmishes continued. He challenged the ECOMOG presence and supported rebel activities in neighbouring Sierra Leone. Opposing groups resorted to arms once more. The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), representing elements of ULIMO-K and ULIMO-J, emerged as the dominant challengers. A ceasefire was signed, but subsequently broken and the rebels drove Taylor's forces back to inner Monrovia. The president agreed to resign on the condition that peacekeepers were deployed to prevent 'chaos and anarchy'. Eventually, international troops (initially ECOWAS, followed by UN) were deployed and Taylor moved to exile in Nigeria.

Finally a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra, Ghana in 2003. This paved the way for a 2-year transitional government, chaired by a businessman, Gyude Bryant. Both factions were accommodated in the government and subsequently dissolved and disarmed. The transitional period resulted in relative stability. Reconstruction and rehabilitation commenced. Elections were held in September 2005, through which 'Iron Lady' Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (59.4%) defeated international football star George Weah (40.6%). Sirleaf took on the massive task of rebuilding the Liberian state. Former president Taylor was meanwhile brought to Freetown, Sierra Leone to stand trial.

As was discussed in chapter 2, military and societal processes are closely intertwined in contemporary conflicts. Liberia is a case in point. At the risk of over-simplification, we wish to make a few analytical points regarding the nature of the conflict in Liberia and the nature of the current transition.

Firstly, there is no single cause of the conflict. Common ingredients of contemporary war - such as the failure of state formation, centre-periphery contrasts, ethnicised politics, adverse influences from neighbouring states, competition for resources and easy access to small arms - feature in Liberia as well. These factors interacted and eventually led to a massive humanitarian disaster.

Secondly, what produces war is different from what reproduces war. The conflict itself generates socio-economic, political and military processes that complicate and often reinforce the war. Looking at the run-up to the conflict, it seems that political grievances and problematic state rule were determining factors. The dynamics of conflict added a new set of factors, such as a war economy and warlordism. A resolution of conflict must address both the root causal factors and the dynamic factors. For example, it requires a functioning and legitimate state (to address the underlying political issues), while it also needs to accommodate warlords and reintegrate ex-combatants (determining dynamic factors). Clearly, these strategies can be contradictory.

Thirdly, war in Liberia cannot be viewed in isolation from the regional context. Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast are essentially part of the same ferment of inter-related conflicts. Ethno-political tensions, rebel groups and refugees easily seep through the porous national borders in West Africa. Failure to appreciate this will preclude sustainable solutions in any of these countries. In addition, the broader region and its colonial (Francophone versus Anglophone) and post-colonial history (mutual interference and ECOWAS politics) are of importance. The aspiring hegemonist Nigeria and smaller powers such as Senegal and Libya have been prominent players in and around Liberia.

Fourthly, Liberia distinguishes itself from some other countries at war with regard to the extensive involvement of large parts of the population in the conflict. It was a true civil war in the sense that almost all ethnic groups, almost all regions, possibly almost all families were somehow involved with a rebel group. The large number of child soldiers must be mentioned here. It was a truly uncivil war in the sense that Liberia outdid many other wars in terms of the massive atrocities against its population. The war has been characterised as one of the bloodiest in modern history.

Fifthly, there is no linear path from war to peace. Policymakers tend to speak of war to peace transitions, but we must bear in mind that West Africa has often seen a war-peace cycle rather than a transition. Liberian ceasefire or peace agreements were signed places such as in Yamoussoukro (October 1991), Cotonou (July 1993), Akosombo (September 1994), Accra (December 1994) and Abuja (August 1995). Most of these were followed by attempts at disarmament, the creation of a transitional government and elections. In most cases, the agreements did not hold; fighting resumed almost immediately. This underlines once more that there are no clear lines between war and peace. Transitions towards peace are thus misleading and we should take care not to rule out another period of war.

Sixthly, the state has always been part of the problem in Liberia. Following a century of domestic ethno-colonialism, Liberia experienced the gradual decay and criminalisation of the state. Both Taylor's and Doe's regimes were more like an oppressive

<sup>21</sup> Much of the information in this box is derived from (1998) Africa South of the Sahara 1999, Adebajo (2002a) and Adebajo (2002b).

<sup>22</sup> Non-elite (*lumpen-militariat*), a class of semi-organised, rugged and semi-literate soldiery (Mazrui 1973).

faction than a modern state. This implosion of the state has had far-reaching consequences for the country and it severely complicates international involvement.

Seventhly, peacekeeping troops have no formal enemy as such. Liberia is essentially a post-conflict scenario, though the risk of resumed violence is imminent. Rather than facing a coherent party that needs to be held to its promises, peacekeepers face an extensive set of rebels. Many of them are formally disarmed, while regrouping themselves in practice. They may continue their activities in the neighbouring states, while some of them have influence in government structures. As was shown in the chronology above, Liberian rebel groups have a track record of quickly shifting alliances and agendas. There have been numerous breakaway groups and newly emerging or re-emerging factions.

Finally, the situation in Liberia is not homogeneous: there are major differences between regions, particularly between the capital and the rest of the country. Contrary to Monrovia, which has rapidly become a hub of UN soldiers, international aid workers, diplomats, well-to-do members of the Diaspora and inventive local business and NGOs, the rural parts of the country have barely witnessed the restoration of normalcy. Though security has improved, there is hardly a functioning government in the regions, socio-economic opportunities are rather limited and lawlessness is rampant.

Map 3: Liberia and its counties



## 4.2 International interventions in Liberia

International involvement with Liberia has undergone remarkable changes in the past three decades. Bilateral ties with the US had traditionally been cordial. However, once Doe had ousted the Americo-Liberian elite, there was less reason to maintain close relations. Even so, with a large number of American citizens in the country, vested economic interests in Liberia's natural resources and a strong determination to prevent Doe from joining the Russian camp, the Americans decided to maintain their support, despite the grave human rights violations. Until today, the US continues to be the determining bilateral partner, though they have declined Liberian requests for military intervention, with the exception of an offshore naval presence.

For ECOWAS and its mightiest member state Nigeria, Liberia has been a testing ground for regional efforts in the pursuit of peace. Both on the political and the military front, ECOWAS has been very active from the early phases of the war. With the demise of the cold war and the subsequent perceived decline of Western interests, a paradigm emerged that advocated African solutions to African problems. When compared to the limited progress elsewhere on the continent, ECOWAS's intervention in Liberia seems to be a showcase of African international ambitions to preserve peace. The reality on the ground, however, does not allow for much optimism. The regional organisation was unable to effectively preserve peace and to make matters worse, it was sucked into the war. Member states aligned themselves with Liberian factions and ECOMOG troops became active participants in the war. Abuses, sex scandals and indirect involvement in the illicit trade of diamonds and other natural resources further undermined their reputation. Nigerian ambitions to prove its regional hegemonic status seem to have stranded in Liberia.

With a great demand for UN peacekeeping operations, particularly in Africa, ECOWAS's ambitions came in handy for the United Nations. Until recently, UN involvement was limited in Liberia. UNOMIL, a rather small observer's mission in support of ECOMOG, was deployed from 1993 to 1997. It was replaced by the UN Peace-building Support Office in Liberia (UNOL), the first UN body to assist in post-conflict peace consolidation. But supporting Taylor's warlord government to consolidate peace proved to be a paradoxical endeavour.

When Taylor's misconduct and the LURD/MODEL rebellion brought war to Liberia once more, the UN decided to intervene on a much greater scale. Initial monitoring was done by a 3500 troop vanguard force of ECOWAS (ECOMIL), but after only six weeks (1 October 2003), the UN assumed command. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) 'rehabbed' troops from ECOWAS member states and expanded into a full-blown UN mission. The UN mission is an integrated intervention that encompasses both military (peacekeeping) and non-military (rule of law, support to elections, rehabilitation) components. As a result, it is not easy to make a clear-cut distinction between military and civil actors: the divide lies within the UN structure.

In addition to the state actors discussed above, foreign involvement by non-state actors should be mentioned. The private sector has had a notorious presence throughout Liberia's darkest hours. The warring factions exported diamonds, timber and other features of Liberia's natural wealth. The globalised economy has been a key enabling factor for the pursuit of war. The Liberian Diaspora, particularly in the US, has been another influential foreign power, both in the pursuit of war and the pursuit of peace. Finally, the interventions of international aid agencies such as NGOs and the ICRC are relevant to this study.

The sections below will first discuss the main characteristics of the UN mission, then look at the NGO arena and finally map out what this means in terms of civil-military relations.

### 4.2.1 The UN intervention in Liberia

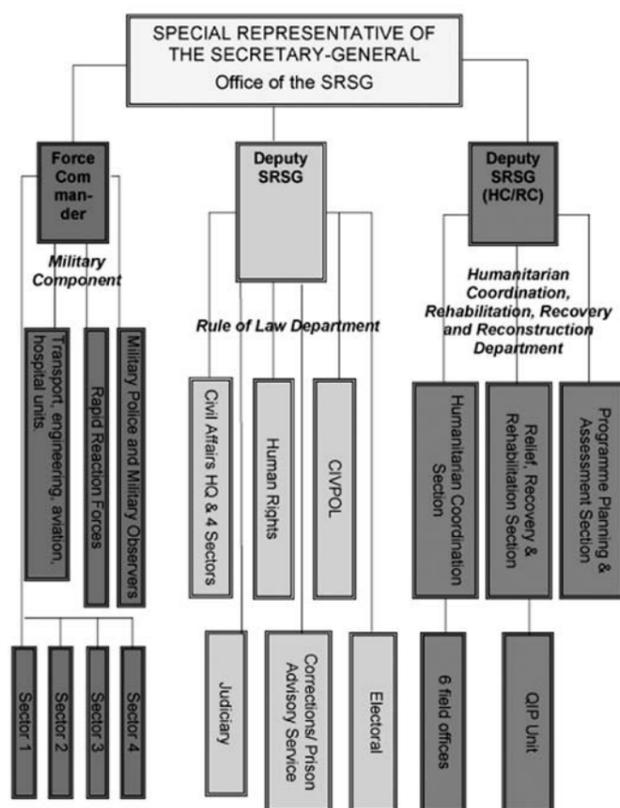
The UN intervention in Liberia is very much a reflection of the ongoing efforts to reform the UN. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the inter-linkages between security and development and the need for an integrated approach are the hallmarks of these reform efforts. Drawing from the Brahimi report, structural changes are being made to peace operations. This is work in progress. UN efforts to consolidate peace in Liberia represent the state-of-the-art of UN policy and practice (Fiawosime 2005).

### The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

Resolution 1509 of the UN Security Council equipped the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) with a robust chapter VII mandate and tasked the mission with five main activities: support for implementation of the ceasefire agreement, protection of United Nations staff, facilities and civilians, support for humanitarian and human rights assistance, support for security sector reform and support for implementation of the peace process. At a later stage, the Security Council expanded the mandate with a sixth element: to apprehend former president Taylor and bring him before the Special Court in Sierra Leone, which had indicted him (Resolution 1638). The initial resolution (1509) was passed on 19 September 2003 and arranged for a one-year deployment. The council subsequently extended the mandate by a year (resolution 1561) and another half a year (resolution 1626). The most recent resolution (1667) prolonged UNMIL's mandate until 30 September 2006.

The mission has been tasked to manage the comprehensive transition from war to peace, rather than merely keeping peace. This state building exercise has a strong military component as well as non-military units. As can be viewed in figure 2 below, UNMIL is headed by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG). The figure further shows that the organisation can roughly be divided into three: the force commander, a Deputy SRSG who is tasked with the restoration of the rule of law and a Deputy SRSG who acts as the Humanitarian Coordinator. We will discuss these three components below.

Figure 2: Schematic overview of the United Nations Mission in Liberia



### The military component

Together with MONUC (the UN mission in the DRC), UNMIL is the biggest peacekeeping mission the UN has ever deployed. Liberia hosts almost 16,000 foreign UNMIL staff from 61 contributing states from all six continents. UNMIL has divided Liberia into four sectors, which are commanded by different countries. Though part of a single hierarchical structure, there are differences in style and approach between contributing states.

The military component is by and large the biggest one with a little under 15,000 troops as of January 2006. The remainder of UNMIL consists of unarmed units.<sup>23</sup> On the ground, it may be difficult to distinguish between these components, because armed and unarmed units reside in the same compounds and use the same vehicles.

Apart from the regular peacekeeping tasks of curbing escalations of violence and ensuring compliance by the parties with the peace agreement, UNMIL troops take the lead in the disarmament process. This has proven to be a massive endeavour. Initial estimates counted on some 38,000 ex-combatants being enrolled in the programme. In the end, however, over 100,000 showed up. As a result of this misjudgement, the Reintegration and Rehabilitation (RR) process suffers from financial shortages.

In addition to the armed troops and CIMIC officers, there are military observers (Milobs). These officers are stationed in all parts of the country. Their task is confined to assessing the local situation and informing the force commander about the latest developments. Box 13 below provides an illustration.

#### Box 13: Milobs, the 'eyes and ears' of UNMIL

As their name suggests, UNMIL's military observers (generally abbreviated to Milobs or UNMOs) are tasked to assess the security situation on the ground. They conduct community assessments and list activities of NGOs, UN agencies and UNMIL in their area of operation. Their findings are reported daily on Patrol Report Forms to the Milobs HQ in Monrovia, from where they are sent to the Force Commander and the SRSG. Military Observers are the 'eyes and ears' of the SRSG and the force commander, an information officer at the Milobs headquarters stated.

After deployment to Liberia in 2003, the number of observers quickly grew to 205. Currently, 13 teams are operating throughout the country, consisting of observers from 38 different countries. Each team includes officers of various nationalities. At times this causes clashes, as the officers previously held different positions with different responsibilities in their respective armies, while they are now forced to operate as equals.

Every day each team sends out two or three patrols. For security reasons they go on patrol with two cars at a time. The observers wear military uniforms, but are unarmed. As they are not allowed to spend the night in one of the villages, only those areas that are within half a day's drive receive attention. If the security situation deteriorates, the observers might be sent to specific villages to assess the situation. They try to visit each area on a regular basis.

When entering a village, the observers normally start out by speaking to the town chief. After introducing themselves and explaining the purpose of their visit, they go through a standard list of questions. This list is designed to assess the living conditions and needs of the community, the aid received so far, possible security threats, and so on.

The observers often find themselves having to turn down requests for aid. As their job is just to observe and report, this needs to be emphasized during every visit in order to avoid unrealistic expectations. One observer stated: 'You want to help the people, but your job is to observe and report. Sometimes, however, it is enough that you come by and listen to them.' Possibly, assistance could be provided if the information gathered by Milobs were shared with aid agencies. But this is not the case. The reports go straight to Milobs headquarters in Monrovia and it does not seem that the information is disseminated.

UNMIL troops have also assumed responsibility for the infrastructural backbone of the UN mission. The peacekeepers run military hospitals in various parts of the country and UNMIL's Engineering Section undertakes road repairs and maintenance.

<sup>21</sup> 16,065 total uniformed personnel, including 14,832 troops and 205 military observers; 1,028 police supported by 549 international civilian personnel, 844 local staff and 242 United Nations Volunteers

In collaboration with military engineers from the Chinese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi contingents, the section upgrades Liberia's devastated road network. Most of the country's major roads have become passable. The condition of the remaining parts of the network continues to be deplorable, in particular during the rainy season. Finally, the military enables flight services across the country, used by soldiers as well as aid workers.

#### Rule of law

'Peacekeepers can stop the fighting, but not undo the underlying causes of war', an UNMIL staff member observed. This is why the UN pays special attention to the political process and the restoration of governance. The conflict left Liberia in a state of rampant lawlessness and chaos. UNMIL tries to redress this by rebuilding key functions of the state. One of the Deputy SRSGs has been designated to restore the rule of law. As shown in the chart above, this task consists of the following elements:

1. the resumption of activities of the civil service (carried out by Civil Affairs);
2. the rehabilitation of the police (carried out by Civpol);
3. the promotion of human rights (Human Rights Protection Section)
4. the restoration of the judiciary (Judiciary Division);
5. the rehabilitation of prisons (Prison Advisory Service);
6. and organisation of the elections (Electoral Division)

Remarkably, training of the army is not part of UNMIL's mandate. This responsibility has been assumed by the US, which has hired DynCorp International, a privately-owned security company, to train a new 4,000-troop Liberian army (Dyncorp 2006).

UNMIL's armed forces and its rule of law department do not operate in isolation. From the very start, Civil Affairs units were embedded with UNMIL's combat troops. Their tasks were threefold: to act as a liaison to other actors in the field, to settle disputes between people in the initial or prolonged absence of police and judiciary and to help the government bureaucracy resume its activities across the country. The first two tasks were particularly important in the early stages of the mission. Soon, however, the latter task came to be the most prominent one. Contrary to CIMIC units (which aim to win hearts and minds), Civil Affairs thus has the task of filling in for and rebuilding state services.<sup>24</sup>

One of the respondents aptly explained the importance of these activities for the success of UNMIL's mission.

'Peacekeeping is not going in with guns and enforcing peace with arms. We have the means and we have a strong mandate, but the first thing you do is talk to the people. The state was gone and rebels were exploiting self-claimed state privileges. Civil servants ran away and the rebels filled the vacuum, particularly the government tasks that generate money. If you rush in with guns, it'll explode in your face. You have to persuade them and keep your guns as a last resort. Dialogue is the only way of winning them over. Negotiation with non-state actors is a crucial skill that a peacekeeping mission should have.'

In line with this view, UNMIL combined pressure with inducements in assuming control. Food and toiletries were handed out to rebels. 'You are not going to shoot us while we are cooking for you', was the argument troops used to curb hostilities, one officer explained.

Increasingly, UNMIL tries to strengthen the government rather than replace it. This is clearly a very challenging endeavour. The activities of Civpol are illustrative in this regard. In all parts of the country, Civpol units are stationed to help the Liberian police get back on its feet. These units have no executive responsibility: any case they run into has to be handed over to the Liberian authorities. Their assistance consists of training, logistical support and reconstruction of infrastructure. Though seemingly marginal, it is safe to argue the Liberian police would pretty much collapse without their backup.

Co-operation between the various rule of law units and UNMIL's armed forces continues to be quite intense. For example, military support was instrumental for the organisation of the elections. This major logistical operation was greatly inconvenienced by poor road conditions and great time pressure. UNMIL's helicopters and security were indispensable for the distribution of ballot forms and the construction of election offices.

#### Humanitarian coordination and RRR

UNMIL encompasses a humanitarian and development component as well. In addition to the peacekeeping troops and the bodies under the first Deputy SRSG (Rule of Law), there is a second Deputy SRSG, who is responsible for humanitarian coordination, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction (RRR). The offices vested under him focus on relief and rehabilitation activities, but do very little implementation. The RRR section makes assessments and does monitoring and it provides advice and assistance to other UN agencies. Moreover, the section is tasked with supporting the Liberian government in assuming responsibility in the field of RRR.

Though his primary role is not an executive one, the DSRSG can employ a Quick Impact Unit that implements small-scale reconstruction activities. The origin of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) is unrelated to peacekeeping. They were first used by UNHCR in 1991 as small-scale, low-cost projects to assist reintegration of returnees and displaced persons in Nicaragua. During the 1990s, QIPs evolved from one-shot, community-based infrastructure interventions to more elaborate (e.g. income-generating) sets of activities (UNHCR 2004). With the Brahimi report, however, QIPs were connected to peacekeeping efforts. The report recommends using QIPs in peace operations 'to help establish the credibility of the mission.' (Panel on United Nations Peace Operations 2000: action 4, 119). They thus include a hearts-and-minds element. Brahimi's recommendation was implemented in Liberia. However, in view of UNMIL's comprehensive nature, the QIPs resort under the humanitarian DSRSG, rather than under the force commander

QIPs are intended to generate highly visible quick fixes for urgent problems that local communities are facing. As will be discussed later on, there is quite some controversy around the objective, the rationale, the implementation and the success of QIPs in Liberia. Box 14 below provides an illustrative introduction.

#### Box 14: Quick Impact Projects

Quick Impact Projects or QIPs are small-scale projects that require a modest investment and are meant to produce rapid results. An implementation period of six weeks is the maximum. QIPs may include (UNMIL 2003):

- Relief activities mainly focused on the areas of public sanitation - garbage removal/disposal
- Acquisition of basic medical equipment and supplies
- Repairs of hospitals/medical facilities
- Support to the national vaccination days
- Transport assistance to reunite families
- Repair of basic community infrastructure
- Restoration of electricity supply in critical areas
- Enhancement of water services and water purification facilities
- Rehabilitation of school buildings and provision of basic school furniture and materials

In 2004 almost all the QIPs were implemented in Monrovia. Currently most QIPs target the rehabilitation of schools throughout Liberia. It was SRSG Klein who decided to implement projects outside the capital and to focus on building and rebuilding schools. As mentioned, QIPs must be highly visible, thereby contributing to the visibility of UNMIL. Projects that have a positive impact on the mandate objectives are given priority. Thus the rationale behind QIPs is twofold: hearts and minds and reaching the mandate's core objective: stabilisation.

The civil side of UNMIL is tasked with QIPs, but the money (roughly US\$ 1 mn a year) is channelled through DPKO. A QIP Trust Fund Unit (better known as the QIP Unit) manages the QIP Trust Fund, together with the Projects Review Committee, which is appointed under the authority of the SRSG. The QIP unit is based in Monrovia and consists of only a handful of staff. The unit falls under the RRR section, which is responsible for assessments and monitoring of QIPs. This section also advises implementing NGOs and helps them to write QIP proposals. Most QIPs are implemented by local NGOs. Their participation is encouraged by the Projects Review Committee.

Though a rather limited amount of money is being spent on QIPs, they have been the subject of quite some controversy. Critics have argued that implementation is slow, that impact is limited and that the motivation 'good PR for the mission' does not tally with humanitarian principles.

<sup>24</sup> See also: <http://www.unmil.org/content.asp?cat=civilaffairs>

### A QIP school near Zwedru

To provide a more detailed illustration, the following section describes a QIP project in the very east of the country. This QIP aims to construct a school situated at a thirty-minute bumpy drive from Zwedru, Grand Gedeh. Two tiny settlements, hardly visible through the dense vegetation, were the only signs of human life.

Early in October 2004, the NGO started construction and now, two months later, they were still working on the foundation. The usual sign showing the financing and implementing agencies was absent. The regional coordinator of the NGO explained that there had been some delay because of the rainy season. The supply of materials was very difficult since the roads were not passable. Keeping in mind the trip through the jungle, it was easy to imagine that roads are indeed the biggest problem here, and not only in the rainy season. The regional coordinator, staring at the meagre results, said: 'Indeed not very quick.'

Various agencies share responsibility for this specific project. UNICEF will distribute the schoolbooks, WFP will supply food to the children and a local NGO is responsible for the implementation. The assessment had been in the hands of the implementing NGO, while the government body LRRRC (Liberian Refugees Rehabilitation and Reintegration Commission) and the RRR section will take responsibility for the monitoring. According to the regional coordinator, the QIP Unit will visit the project site as well, for monitoring purposes.

QIPs are allowed to cost a maximum of US\$ 15,000. This specific project had a price tag of US\$ 30,000, the costs of which the QIP Unit and UNDP are likely to split. In conclusion, the project does not seem to meet the requirements; its visibility is limited, the implementation is slow and the impact on UNMIL's public image is questionable.

Coordination between UN actors has traditionally been an issue of concern. To address this challenge, the functions of Humanitarian Coordinator (to coordinate humanitarian efforts) and Resident Coordinator (to coordinate development efforts) were created. These hats were usually assigned to the leading UN staff member of one of the agencies operating in the country and it was not exceptional for both functions to be vested in one person. In countries with a UN military presence, these coordination structures used to stand alongside peacekeeping structures: the force commander (military leadership) and the HC/RC (humanitarian and developmental leadership) would operate independently.

Only in 2000 did UN Secretary General Kofi Annan decide to integrate the two lines of command (UNSG 2000). UNMIL's set-up is the result of this decision: there is one overall UN leader in Liberia (the SRSG) and both the HC/RC (a DSRSG) and the force commander are his subordinates.

Integrating humanitarian coordination and peacekeeping into one structure has been a sensitive affair. Whereas relief is supposed to be an impartial effort, establishing security, supporting the government and disarming factions is considered partial. As a result of this tension, there has been some controversy around the exact structure of UNMIL. Initially, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) - a standalone UN agency - coordinated all humanitarian activities in Liberia. In July 2004, however, it was decided to incorporate the task of coordination into UNMIL. OCHA was thus replaced by a newly created body: the Humanitarian Coordination Section (HCS). The official rationale for this decision was to strengthen humanitarian coordination (UNSG 2004). Interviews suggest, however, that poor performance on the part of OCHA, clashes of personality between OCHA and UNMIL staff and the personal preference of the then SRSG were the driving forces. Many NGO representatives were unhappy with the decision. They feel that humanitarian coordination has been sucked into UNMIL - which is largely a military structure - and that this is an obstacle to the required independent functioning. Many NGOs do not consider the Humanitarian Coordination Section to be neutral.

The HCS is supposed to act as an interface for UN agencies, local and international NGOs and the departments of the Liberian government. It has a central structure in Monrovia as well as six field offices in the various regions of the country. The section's Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) provides aid workers with services (such as internet facilities) and data (overview of aid work, maps, a database of contact details and so on). Finally, the HCS has a powerful role in the relationship to donors, because it handles the humanitarian appeals of UN agencies in Liberia. Though UN agencies collect their own funds as well, this is particularly sensitive, given that some agencies feel Liberia may soon suffer from donor fatigue.

Relations between HCS and the other units of UNMIL are intensive. Since Liberia is now considered to be in the recovery phase, the HIC, in collaboration with UN Civil Affairs and RRR, is developing a new system called County Recovery Information System (CORE-SYS). 'It is to be a de-centralised national information management system to help those active in the rehabilitation and development sector to work more efficiently and target the neediest regions', a HIC information officer said.

The units vested under this DSRSG are thus subjected to some scrutiny. Both the QIPs and the positioning of the HCS have invoked controversy in Liberia. This is not entirely surprising, given that this DSRSG finds himself at the centre of the civil-military debate. In many ways, he is the link between the military (force commander) and the political leadership (SRSG) on the one hand and humanitarian and development agencies (both UN and NGOs) on the other.

### UNMIL radio

It should be mentioned that, although not included in the structure as a separate UNMIL department, the UN mission actively propagates its views and experiences in newspapers, on the radio and by other means. From the first day on, UNMIL had its own radio station. UNMIL Radio broadcasts 24 hours a day throughout the country. The station is intended to be a 'voice of reason for the mission in times of crisis and also a voice for peaceful discourse.' It is also argued that it is 'an effective tool to correct misconceptions among the local population' and to dispel 'rumour and tension.' (UNMIL 2006) Incidents with potentially negative consequences - such as rape by UNMIL soldiers - are quickly diluted with positive messages. In a way, one could argue that UNMIL radio is the psyop of the UN mission. Contrary to regular psyops, the radio station does not merely serve to support the military mission, but is a tool for the integrated mission at large.

### Black and blue: UNMIL and the UN agencies

With the HC and the HCS absorbed into the UNMIL structure, all UN agencies operating in Liberia are effectively united under one leadership: the SRSG, who directs UNMIL. At the time of writing, fourteen UN agencies were operating in Liberia: FAO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDSS, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, UNODC, UNPF, WFP and WHO. At field level, the presence of some of these agencies, such as UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, is obviously more conspicuous than others.

UNMIL and UN agencies are part of the same system and it is difficult to tell them apart on the face of it. Especially the unarmed sections of UNMIL may be hard to distinguish as their offices and vehicles may be very similar to those of the UN agencies. However, the colour of the UN logos makes for a subtle distinction. The lettering on UNMIL vehicles and licence plates is black while that of UN agencies is blue. This has led to the distinction into 'blue' and 'black UN'. While many believe that most Liberians do not distinguish between blue and black, the distinction matters to international aid workers. To many of them, black UN is basically military and political, while blue UN consists of humanitarian and development agencies.

Though some of the UN agencies were operational before UNMIL was deployed, many of them rely to some extent on the military. WFP, for example, initially did not have sufficient logistic capacity. They relied on the military for vehicles, aircraft and assessments. They still use military assets in Liberia. Moreover, they rely on UNMIL for protection of the compound and escorts. As a result of poor infrastructure and occasional insecurity, access is a challenge to all agencies. The delivery of aid in some of the border areas (e.g. the very north of Lofa County) or along the coast (e.g. Greenville) is hampered. Typically, aid agencies cluster in the regional capitals, such as Gbarnga, Voinjama or Zwedru. Some activities are jointly implemented by UNMIL troops and UN agencies. A cross-cutting endeavour such as the DDRR process is a case in point. These, and more limited forms of collaboration, are discussed in more detail below.

One UN officer explained that agencies are hesitant to use military support when it is not needed. They also want to avoid sending the wrong signal to returnees: 'If we need to be escorted by peacekeepers, Liberia is not safe. People are still afraid.' However, the agency will provide the responsible military officer with the necessary information when there is an influx of refugees, resulting in an increase of out-of-sight military patrols. UN agencies still call upon the military whenever they have mechanical problems as well, as the military is obliged to provide assistance and shelter to UN agencies when necessary.

Furthermore, if the security situation deteriorates, UN staff is not allowed to travel without military escort. Finally, UNMIL provides regular security briefings, attended by most, if not all, major agencies.

#### **An evolving structure**

The integrated mission concept is very much in flux. In fact, there are no clear definitions or structures, a recent study observed, and apart from the very top level, few people have a clear and accurate idea of what constitutes an integrated mission (Eide, Kaspersen, Kent and Von Hippel 2005). Similarly, UNMIL is in many ways an experiment for the organisation. Many of the actors involved - both within UNMIL and in the broader UN structure - are in the process of adjusting themselves to the integrated mission concept. As was evidenced, for example, by the replacement of OCHA by the HCS, institutional set-ups and modalities are subject to change. The personalities of key figures matter in this regard. Many aid workers feel there is great difference between the former SRSG Jacques Klein and the current one, Alan Doss. The former had a military background, while Doss is a civilian.

At lower levels in the structure, there is room for personal discretion as well. 'Agencies are still coming to terms on how to operate', one of UNMIL's military commanders said. With the UN Charter in his hand, he argued, much of the work UNMIL is doing, such as building roads and medical care, is not in the blue booklet. But peacekeeping cannot be done from a book. The peacekeeper operates within the boundaries that DPKO allows him. The guidelines, however, are subject to change and when operating in the field, a commander cannot confine himself to the purely military activities. Effective peacekeeping demands that you react to the challenges on the ground, he concluded.

Phasing out will be one of the main challenges that lie ahead for the UN's integrated mission in Liberia. Facilitating the emergence of a government that is strong enough to assume all responsibilities and assure a sustainable peace will be hard. Currently, UNMIL's budget far exceeds the government's national budget. Decentralised government structures exist largely in name and suffer from many weaknesses. Government representatives are frustrated with their marginal position. The bulk of aid and security activities bypasses them.

#### **4.2.2 Development interventions**

Following the signing of the peace agreement and the deployment of peacekeepers, donors upgraded their aid to Liberia. At the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia on 5 and 6 February 2004 at UN headquarters in New York, multilateral and bilateral donors pledged US\$ 520 mn to address Liberia's humanitarian and reconstruction needs. Effective aid delivery was essential to the pursuit of peace in Liberia, donors realised. 'Let us seize this opportunity to end a long-running nightmare that has disgraced humankind', Secretary General Kofi Annan said in his opening statement. 'Let us consolidate the peace, and make the peace process irreversible.' (UN 2004)

In contrast to the Afghan case study, we will give relatively little attention to donors, because they do not play as great a role in the field (contrary to the PRTs). NGOs, however, are conspicuously present at field level. The improved security situation heralded an upsurge of NGO activity in Liberia. The country does not have a very long track record of aid agencies and the war did not leave much space for them. For example, in 1993 only eleven NGOs ran programmes in Liberia and the scale of these was limited.<sup>25</sup> This is not to say that Liberia has no civil society. From the 1970s onwards, societal groups emerged in the country's socio-political arena. Throughout the turbulent three decades that followed, social, political and religious organisations managed to sustain themselves. The war, however, had a polarising effect and civil society came to mirror the divisions of the warring factions (Toure 2002). Nonetheless, some movements continued to advocate peace, disarmament and human rights and they continue to do so today. On the current aid scene, however, these organisations seem to have been crowded out to some extent by the flurry of NGO activity that followed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Within two years after the peace accord, Liberia - and Monrovia in particular - became a hub for aid workers. Likewise, NGOs and UN agencies have become a major source of employment for Liberians (Sida 2005). Most well-known international aid

agencies set foot in Liberia and the local NGO scene boomed. In fact, it is hard to give an accurate overview of the agencies operating in Liberia and the scope of their work. The sheer number of organisations, the volatility of their activities and the limited transparency of some of the work make it difficult to give a reliable assessment. The HIC database contains over 110 international NGOs and over 400 local agencies (NGOs and CBOs) (HIC 2006). There may be many more organisations. Meanwhile it is possible that some of the organisations in the database are sleeping NGOs or no longer exist.

In spite of these figures, quite a number of international agencies feel there is a scarcity of suitable local partners. Many of the local NGOs are basically project contractors, rather than civil society movements with a meaningful constituency. 'Pocket NGOs' and profit-oriented entities in an NGO veneer are not considered suitable partners. Some international agencies seem to have generated their own implementing NGOs. A local NGO director who had been approached by a UN agency to set up an NGO and become their partner stated: 'The NGO thing has now become a business. It is no longer voluntary. People are talking about targets and business plans.' Meanwhile, some international aid agencies that normally abstain from self-implementation have started to execute projects themselves.

While international NGOs complain about the lack of capacity of local organisations, many local agencies complain about the arrogant and exclusive attitude of foreign aid workers. They feel INGOs are taking a disproportionate piece of the aid pie and failing to respect local ownership. Rather than supporting or strengthening Liberian agencies, foreign agencies take over and marginalise them. There are reciprocal accusations of corruption. In sum, there is a significant rift between international NGOs and local agencies. This is also reflected in coordination efforts and in the way agencies position themselves towards the UN.

International NGOs have set up a Monitoring and Steering Group (MSG) in Liberia. Set off by a number of security incidents in 1996, the MSG is meant to encourage collective advocacy and the exchange of ideas and information. Membership is free, but confined to international agencies. At the time of writing some forty INGOs took part in the forum. Meetings are held twice a month. Coordinated positioning towards other actors - local NGOs, the UN, the government, donors and so on - is the *raison d'être* for the MSG. With the cessation of hostilities and the deployment of UNMIL, the MSG's emphasis has shifted from direct security threats, and civil-military relations have become a prominent topic. However, as will be discussed below, attempts to adopt joint principles became bogged down in disagreements.

#### **4.2.3 Forms of co-operation between aid workers and peacekeepers**

As has become clear in the sections above, it is difficult to make a rigid distinction between humanitarian/developmental and military interventions in Liberia. There is in fact a spectrum of actors with various forms of involvement with the armed peacekeepers. Some of these actors are part of UNMIL, but engage in non-military activities (e.g. the rule of law department). Some are not part of UNMIL, but are formally coordinated by it (UN agencies). Some are not part of the UN structure, yet work with the UN at various levels of intensity (e.g. the ICRC and NGOs). This gradational spectrum is illustrated in the chart below.

<sup>25</sup> Nine of these were international (ACF, CRS, Care, ICRC, LWS, MSF, Oxfam, SCF-UK and World Relief) and two Liberian (Special Emergency Life Fund and Liberians United to Save Humanity). (Maresko 2004)

Figure 3: Categorising the civil-military arena in Liberia

Categorisations				Actors
Military realm	Non-governmental	Armed	Non-UN	<b>Private military companies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DynCorp</li> </ul>
			Black UN (UNMIL)	<b>Armed component of UNMIL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UN Peacekeepers</li> <li>Rapid Reaction Forces</li> </ul>
	Inter-governmental	Unarmed	Blue UN	Black UN (UNMIL)
Black UN (UNMIL)				<b>Rule of Law dept of UNMIL (DSRSG I)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civilian Police</li> <li>Civil Affairs</li> <li>Legal and Judicial Corrections</li> <li>Human Rights</li> <li>Gender Office</li> <li>Electoral office</li> </ul>
Blue UN				<b>Humanitarian Coordination component of UNMIL (DSRSG II)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HCS</li> <li>Relief, Recovery &amp; Rehabilitation</li> <li>Programme planning &amp; assessment</li> <li>QIP Unit</li> </ul>
Blue UN				<b>UN agencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNDP</li> <li>UNHCR</li> <li>Etc</li> </ul>
Developmental realm	Governmental	Non-UN	Blue UN	<b>International organisations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICRC</li> <li>IOM</li> <li>Etc</li> </ul>
			Non-UN	<b>Foreign affairs and development agencies of donor governments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bilateral donors agencies and diplomats</li> </ul>
	Non-governmental		Non-UN	<b>Civil society</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International NGOs</li> <li>Liberian NGOs</li> <li>Other civil society</li> </ul>
				<b>Private sector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local contractors</li> <li>International contractors</li> </ul>

Both local and international NGOs relate to the UN at large, to UNMIL and to peacekeeping troops. We discuss these interactions under the following three headings.

### Training, information sharing and coordination

There are numerous attempts at information sharing and coordination. In fact, there are so many meetings, particularly in Monrovia, that some aid workers complain there is little time left to work. There are weekly security briefings (by UNMIL), Humanitarian Aid Coordination (HAC) meetings, meetings for each sector (both in the capital and in each of the fifteen counties) and general coordination meetings. Each of these meetings brings together UNMIL (HCS, military observers, Civpol and Civil Affairs), UN agencies and local and international NGOs. Government representatives may be involved as well. UNMIL - and the HCS in particular - has a central role in the coordination efforts. The HCS and its field offices are primary conveners of the sectoral meetings and the general coordination meetings.

The overall picture that the field is more pragmatic than Monrovia is reflected in these meetings as well. In the capital, military troops are invited to brief the meeting on the security situation or any other relevant issues, but they are requested to leave immediately afterwards, so that the various aid agencies can hold their discussions in the absence of the military. In contrast, military presence throughout meetings at county level has not caused any protest from the other attendants. For example, in Voinjama (the capital of Lofa county in the north of Liberia), the liaison officer of the Pakistani battalion attends meetings regularly. What is more, every morning the Pakistanis hold a security briefing at their compound where NGOs and UN agencies are welcomed.

An UNMIL representative in Voinjama explained: 'In Monrovia everything is more political. The field is more practical. We have a small community here and can easily get in touch with each other. We are all in the same situation and we help each other.' One of her colleagues in Zwedru (in the very east) expressed something similar: 'Zwedru is such a small place that everyone socialises. We cannot not be friends. We know each other's first names, we meet each other at home and in bars and we have a meeting every Thursday where all NGOs, UNMIL and specialised UN agencies are invited. Everybody knows who is doing what where.'

The fact that meetings are held does not necessarily imply that actual coordination or an exchange of information takes place. In fact, there is a stark contrast between quantity and quality. The stories of international aid workers attending these meetings are illustrative: 'We have coordination meetings at all levels, sectors and regions, but people talk too much and they don't know what they're talking about. That's why we arrange things bilaterally through personal contacts', one interviewee remarked. Another aid worker: 'The information shared is boring. Sensitive or useful information is held back. People, for example, share information on the amount of returnees or disarmed ex-combatants, things you can also find in reports.' The overabundance of information has adverse effects, it was argued: 'Nobody reads reports anymore.' Many expats are particularly critical of local NGO representatives, who are perceived to deliver lengthy speeches that do not lead to any kind of coordination. Moreover, there is a tendency to use the meetings for one's own fundraising purposes. All in all, information sharing often comes down to information dumping. Many agencies have a fortress mentality, one aid worker observed. Meetings tend to be hectic and often unproductive. Particularistic interests, propagandistic speeches, even mutual accusations may preclude a constructive dialogue.

Some agencies, such as UNICEF, provide training to UNMIL troops upon their arrival in Monrovia. These trainings are intended to sensitise the soldiers to specific development issues and increase the required knowledge and skills.

### Protection and logistical support

Military support to NGOs is common in Liberia. UNMIL is a vital actor in the construction of roads and other infrastructure. The air services provided by the UN (both UNMIL and WFP) are popular among most of the agencies. Due to the poor road conditions, there is plenty of demand for UNMIL's planes and helicopters and - when using their own cars - UNMIL's trucks to pull them out of the mud. Very few agencies turn down these opportunities. One NGO even requested its international head office to change the policy on military transport, so they could make use of it in Liberia. Otherwise, they would either have to spend a fortune on their own transport or close down their activities.

UNMIL also provides assistance in medical emergency cases. When someone in a remote village requires immediate transport to a hospital, UNMIL will go and collect the patient. Or when a patient needs swift treatment in Monrovia, UNMIL will arrange a flight. Likewise, UNMIL transports medical drugs across the country in an attempt to assist NGOs and their beneficiaries. In Zwedru, medical INGOs occasionally bring patients to the Chinese military clinic or to the clinic at UNMIL HQ, most often to make use of the X-ray machine, which their own hospital lacks. UNMIL helps one of these agencies by flying in drugs to Harper. The agency would not be able to maintain its health services without this assistance, according to a staff member. Other aid assets are airlifted as well.

Likewise, UNMIL's capacity to protect is normally highly esteemed. All agencies acknowledge that UNMIL's deployment has improved conditions in Liberia and that they could not do their work the way they do without UNMIL. Some agencies operated before the deployment of peacekeepers and most continue to work without explicit UNMIL protection. Many of them, however, relied heavily on military logistics and protection during the turbulent months just after Taylor's departure (2003-2004). The troops gradually cleared the country and aid agencies followed in their wake (Fiawosime 2005: 175). Some agencies placed their containers with aid items within military compounds, and valuable convoys were provided with escorts. In one case, an aid convoy was attacked. While aid assets were being looted, UNMIL troops came to the help of the assaulted agencies (Fiawosime 2005: 174). There is less reliance now, because the situation is relatively stable.

#### Joint execution of programmes

Subcontracting of NGOs by the military is not very common in Liberia. As was discussed before, however, the larger UNMIL structure makes use of a QIP fund. With these finances, the unarmed section of UNMIL subcontracts NGOs to take on these quick impact initiatives.

The most far-reaching form of civil-military collaboration is the joint execution of programmes. This has been a common occurrence in refugee return programmes, in road construction and in programmes for ex-combatants. The latter provides an excellent illustration of the shape this collaboration can take. The successful disarmament and demobilisation of former fighters, their reintegration into society and rehabilitation of their lives is widely perceived as a precondition for sustainable peace in Liberia and the wider region. This multi-dimensional process cuts across the mandate of most of the salient actors operating in Liberia. Efforts were made to maintain close linkages between the components of the DDRR process. Past experiences in Liberia and elsewhere have shown that disconnections can have adverse, destabilising and dangerous effects. In this process, there has been intensive co-operation between soldiers and aid workers.

UNMIL assumed responsibility for the registration of ex-combatants and the collection of weapons (demobilisation and disarmament). This not only involved the armed peacekeepers, but other units - such as military observers and civil affairs - as well. The reintegration and rehabilitation of demobilised warriors is a long-term development activity that requires the expertise of agencies such as UNDP (e.g. administration), WFP (providing food to ex-combatants) and UNICEF (dealing with children associated with fighting forces, Ex-CAFF). The implementation of these programmes was a collaborative effort of national and international NGOs, the government and a range of UN agencies. A special Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) was set up, which united the UN, the government and bilateral donors. Operating from one building, these actors managed the process at a macro level. Most projects, however, were implemented by NGOs, as has been the case in other countries. Even in the field, UNMIL, UN agencies and NGOs collaborated to deal with the daily management in the camps for ex-combatants as well as with much of the training and assistance in the rehabilitation process. Especially in the initial stages (DD), working together with the military was key. At the time of writing (RR), this is not quite as necessary, respondents argue. Box 15 below provides an illustration of civil-military cooperation in the DDRR process.

#### Box 15: Joint efforts to deal with child soldiers

The efforts of UNICEF, its implementing partner Child Protection Agency (CPA) and UNMIL are illustrative of the intense co-operation between the various actors in the DDRR process. UNICEF and its NGO partners were closely involved in the design, the preparation and the execution of the DDRR in an attempt to meet the specific needs and requirements of children.

The definition of a child soldier was an issue of debate in Liberia. UNICEF argued against a narrow definition and made a plea for all children associated with fighting forces (Ex-CAFF) to be entitled to assistance. In addition to the children involved in actual combat, all people under 18 who served as sex slaves, porters, checkpoint guards and so on were entitled to register. The DDRR programme itself was adjusted to children as well. Special time slots were allotted for Ex-CAFF to enrol. Contrary to adults who would get their US\$ 300 demobilisation fee in cash, children were required to bring a parent or guardian who would sign for receipt. Ex-CAFF for whom no parent or guardian turned up were accommodated in special centres until a parent or guardian was traced. Many children nevertheless spent their money on sunglasses, jeans or other gadgets. Often, a significant part of it flowed back to the commanders as well. After receiving their reward, children were given special guidance, and social workers entered into discussion with parents and family.

Screening DDRR candidates is a complex affair. The \$300 reward attracts numerous non-combatants to get a weapon and try their luck. 'Because the weapon was the determining criterion for qualification, people were simply added to guns, bombs or whatever. Knowing about the benefits involved with demobilisation, a commander would put half his family on the list. Meanwhile, other people were left out', one UN staff member commented. Commanders distributed weapons among their family and loyalists on the condition that they would get part of the treat. Weapons were even allegedly imported from outside Liberia to meet the demand.

Screening of children requires a special approach, UNICEF argues. Determining whether a person is below 18 (many children pretended they were older to get direct access to their cash) and whether he or she qualifies as Ex-CAFF calls for specific skills. UNICEF thus provided training to the troops involved in the DDRR programme. Moreover, CPA was present at the demobilisation sites and did its own screening along with UNMIL. An applicant's knowledge of weapons and the ability to handle them was a key component of UNMIL's selection procedure. Many children who had not actually fought were unable to assemble a gun. Due to language problems, many soldiers were unable to communicate effectively with the children. According to the staff present at the time, the involvement of CPA and UNICEF prevented many Ex-CAFF from being erroneously rejected.

Despite the close collaboration and mutual consultation, there continued to be disagreements between UNMIL on one hand and UNICEF and its partners on the other. 'One thing with the military is: when they say that's it, that's it. If we argued a child was Ex-CAFF, a major could simply put his foot down and cross it out', an aid worker said. Furthermore, the military has a strong preference for measurable accomplishments, this person added. 'At coordination meetings, they would disseminate their figures. We would try to raise child protection issues, but as far as they were concerned the job was done.' Overall, the communication and collaboration were good, however. There was intensive co-operation and a lot of progress: almost 12,000 Ex-CAFF were demobilised.

### 4.3 Diverging views

Perceptions and opinions about the international intervention in Liberia are heterogeneous. Likewise, civil-military relations have led to some controversy and it continues to be an issue of debate. In view of the diversity of views, one must be cautious with generalisations.<sup>26</sup> However, some general observations can be made.

#### 4.3.1 Views from UNMIL

Overall, UNMIL representatives seem to be relatively supportive of the integrated approach taken in Liberia. They appreciate that the restoration of security, socio-economic development and rehabilitation of the state are mutually dependent. Failure

<sup>26</sup> Particularly with regard to the perspective of local communities (section 4.3.4), a note of caution is required in view of the sensitivities and diversities involved.

in any of these realms could endanger the consolidation of peace. In view of the massive scale of the needs, many respondents felt co-operation with NGOs was important. In fact, 'peacekeeping cannot possibly work without coordination with NGOs, UN agencies and other actors in the field', according to an UNMIL soldier. 'The UN does not implement', another UNMIL staff member added. 'NGOs are driving the country and maintaining it. They provide all of the basic services.'

Meanwhile, there is quite a bit of scepticism with regard to the NGO community. Some observers felt that many organisations were in fact self-interested businesses. 'Aid workers have competitive salaries and they are primarily after the money', an UNMIL representative argued. 'They're tourists', another UNMIL representative said. Some criticised the Hollywood culture of NGOs. In their view NGOs are particularly good at posting beautiful billboards about their accomplishments. 'They are constantly competing and don't always keep their promises', one soldier said. 'By its very nature, the military has a suspicious attitude. There are many NGOs that can't be taken at face value. Particularly the local agencies cannot always be relied on', he added. Other officers confirm that UNMIL tends to prefer working with INGOs.

UNMIL staff was particularly critical of the fact that some NGOs prefer to dissociate from the peacekeeping force. In their view, this is hypocritical. 'These NGOs preach a principled stance but they use UNMIL when it suits them. When there's violence they want protection, when it's quiet, they don't want to be seen with the peacekeepers. These NGOs, moreover, fail to appreciate how important the UN is in Liberia', an UNMIL representative argued. 'The country experienced a failure of the political dialogue, then violence broke out and then we had victims', one UNMIL representative said. 'NGOs can address only the last issue. But only UNMIL can address the first two. Catering for the refugees will never make up for political failure. Both activities are necessary and that's why we should co-operate.' Some NGOs do not want to associate themselves with UNMIL because they want to remain neutral, this person added, but they have a distorted view of what neutrality is. 'They put us down as rebels, but we are a legal force. We've been sanctioned by the highest international authority, the UN Security Council. We are not just like any other militia.' Another officer added, 'it's impossible to maintain your neutrality in an environment where everybody is armed. If you get abducted, you will need the military to get you out.'

Many UNMIL officers rebuke criticism that soldiers should not engage in aid activities, particularly because NGOs cannot address all needs and they do not have easy access to all parts of the country. 'We have money for QIPs', a person from UNMIL's rule of law department said. 'NGOs are still short of funds and there's so much work to do. If only the military is there, who is going to fix the well in that area? If you are confronted with suffering, you can't just sit and wait there for MSF to come. That's not entering humanitarian space; that's addressing issues you can't ignore.' On the other hand, some informants observed that the military makes mistakes in these activities as well. Particularly the decision of the Pakistani Battalion to help construct a mosque in Voinjama County - which is largely Christian - was not considered to be thoughtful or conflict sensitive.

Some officers were sympathetic towards the distance that NGOs try to maintain. 'UNMIL came in with a major logistical capacity and assets. People that had been here for years, doing the heavy lifting, were set aside. They had useful institutional memories, but they were not taken into account. This, of course, created back turning', an UNMIL officer observed. She summarised the position of the previous UNMIL leadership towards NGOs as follows. 'We respect your principles and your mandate. We understand that you need to operate within a certain frame and following your code, but so does the UN. If we come off with a big footprint, well the first principle of the UN is safety.' The officer herself added: 'However, the first principle of NGOs is *no arms*. Some NGOs do understand these dynamics they have to work in.'

Although many are in favour of the integrated approach, there is criticism of the mission's command as well, both from lower and high ranking UNMIL soldiers. As explained earlier in this chapter, UNMIL has one overall UN leader (the SRSG) to which both DSRSGs and the force commander are subordinate, placing the entire mission under civil leadership. Some of the troops feel the civil leadership impedes their mission. 'These civilians from Monrovia' are not aware of the situation in the field and they don't understand how the military works. Soldiers are thus confronted with rules and approaches that are hardly compatible with the way the military works and this causes frustration. One of the rules prohibits UN staff from having UN facilities in their accommodation. One of the consequences is that military observers have no communication devices in their houses. They feel this is quite contradictory, as they must sign for the responsibility for their radio, but are not allowed to take it home. To some, being commanded by the civilian leadership prevents them from carrying out their job. If UN staff is caught driving past

curfew, they are forced to hand in their license. Unfortunately, on some occasions the car was confiscated as well. 'They don't see that we all just have one vehicle together!' one of the troops said in exasperation. It is felt that the disarmament process has also suffered under civilian command, as serious miscalculations were made regarding the number of combatants who had to be disarmed and inadequate decisions were made in selecting people entitled to the programme. Consequently there was not enough money left for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration process. The same member of UN staff clarified: 'They gave money for weapons. People came with different parts of the same rocket launcher and received a lot of money each for handing in a weapon.'

#### 4.3.2 Views from the NGO community

There are few issues that all NGOs would agree on and this is particularly so in the debate on civil-military relations. In 2003, the INGO forum MSG started the process of revitalizing the Joint Principles of Operation (JPO) for NGOs, which had been developed in 1996, recognizing the advantages of drawing a common line on some of the main issues. These principles were initially intended to reduce the potentially harmful effects of humanitarian assistance and were now revised in a reaction to the increased complexity caused by the UN presence (Sida 2005). Principles and practical issues (no arms on NGO compounds, joint convoys, coordination and so on) were laid down in a final version of the JPO in 2004. Differences of opinion proved to be greater than the desire to take a joint position, however, and the MSG members never agreed on a final document. The fact that this attempt was confined to the international agencies is indicative of the rift between local and foreign NGOs. Typically, the foreign agencies are more concerned about civil-military relations than the local ones.

Some agencies felt the UN were imposing themselves on the aid community. A few INGOs and the ICRC had been working in various parts of the country long before UNMIL came in. 'The UN has trod on some of the NGOs with their huge standoff', one agency said. And they tried to become the sector leads. WHO, for example, tried to be in charge of the health sector, while some of the NGOs have direct links to the Ministry of Health. Most UN agencies do little implementation themselves, but they do want to coordinate the rest. 'The international community had the integrated mission forced upon them.' The UN is 'bossy', another person added. Coordination with UNMIL is also considered to be difficult. Some agencies complained that UNMIL was secretive about their knowledge. Moreover, 'they send people to meetings who don't know what they're talking about', an expat said. 'Field level and head office are far apart for them.'

Humanitarian coordination has been a touchy topic. The replacement of OCHA (an independent UN unit) by HCS (part of UNMIL) invoked some controversy. 'HCS is not neutral. They're black UN', a member of the MSG said. Maintaining a difference between blue and black UN looked like a clever way out of the dilemma for some NGOs, but when humanitarian coordination was sucked into UNMIL, the distinction was no longer so clear. The HCS leadership downplays the difference. It is a matter of improving quality through a minor institutional shift, but NGOs are sensitive about it, the HCS admits. Officers in the field allow for more criticism. Humanitarian principles, like neutrality, must be respected, an UNMIL officer said. And 'being part of the mission, the HCS is losing its neutrality.' Nonetheless, he points out, it is good to share information and coordinate activities in support of humanitarian work. In the field, both the UN and NGOs find practical ways to deal with these issues of principle.

The QIPs have been an issue of debate and puzzlement. 'I am confused about QIPs', an INGO staff member said. 'In itself it is good that they use their military capacity to do useful things, but in practice it does not work.' Like many others, this particular person is indeed confused, because QIPs do not normally involve military capacities. They are administered by the unarmed part of UNMIL and usually implemented by NGOs. His point that QIPs don't work in practice widely resonates in the aid community, however. Hardly anyone raised principled objections about UNMIL providing quick impact assistance, but criticism of the way they operated are rife. QIPs are a 'disaster', according to one NGO. They are not needs driven, a UN representative argued. They are inefficient, another person felt, and most importantly, they are not speedy. 'Anyone arguing that QIPs are quick is pulling your leg', an UNMIL staff member said. An aid agency added that the QIP management is too centralised and effectively, the budget is very small. Ironically, this is also an advantage. 'Only one million US dollars are spent on QIPs a year. I wouldn't take it too seriously as competition for INGOs', an INGO director said. Some agencies were more positive. If the money and means are available, you might as well use it to help some people, they felt.

These agencies feel that overcrowding of humanitarian space is not a major problem, because there is so much to do. People are in need of more assistance. Moreover, the traditional security argument - blurring of lines endangers aid workers - is not of great concern, some agencies feel. UNMIL is quite popular among the people and there are very few security incidents. Others, however, are more cautious. These agencies acknowledge that the risks involved are currently limited, because the situation is relatively stable and UNMIL is rather popular. However, they stick to the safe side, because the situation may escalate and in their view, affiliation with UNMIL will be a problem when the peacekeepers end up fighting any of the factions.

Though all NGOs in Liberia are confronted with the above issues in one way or another, they assess them in very different ways. It is erroneous to assume that all agencies can be categorised into homogeneous clusters, but for reasons of brevity, we divide NGOs into the three archetypical positions discussed in Chapter 2.

The *principled neutralists* feel that any association with UNMIL constitutes a threat to humanitarian principles as well as to their future security. They therefore refrain from accepting UNMIL support, using their transport services or coordinating aid efforts with them. 'I ask myself, who will notice if I drop in the UNMIL office', one of these agencies said. 'Do people really distinguish us from all the rest?' Moreover, being associated with UNMIL is not a problem as long as the peacekeepers are popular. The real question, according to these agencies, is what will happen if UNMIL meets resistance and has to enforce its position. In that case, aid agencies associated with the peace enforcers will suffer the consequences. 'We've seen this happen in the DRC. MONUC [the UN peacekeepers there] was just sitting around, but when they showed their teeth we were happy to be independent of them. Unlike other agencies, we continued to have access.' The principled isolationists steer clear of the UN altogether, without distinguishing between blue and black or armed and unarmed UN. It is not just the militarisation of humanitarian aid (armed UNMIL), but also the politicisation (UN as a whole) that is the problem. They feel that the UN agencies use humanitarian aid for political goals. For example, refugees were encouraged to return to Liberia before the elections in the course of 2005. From a humanitarian perspective, people should have been going in the dry season to enable them to harvest and plant new seeds.<sup>27</sup> MSF and the ICRC are the most prominent examples of this archetype. The ICRC is obviously a special case in view of their mandate. They are not an NGO and the Geneva Conventions put them in a special position. Whilst keeping a distance they provide training to UNMIL on issues related to the convention. Moreover, they emphasize that it is fine for UNMIL to provide aid. In some cases, this is in fact an obligation under the convention, as long as they make it very clear that they are military actors.

The *pragmatists* share these concerns on principle, but feel that a principled stance is unnecessary and moreover unfeasible in Liberia's current context. If the fighting were to resume, these NGOs would probably retake their distance with regard to UNMIL. Being perceived as a partner of a peacekeeping force may indeed threaten humanitarian space, but for now the benefits outweigh the costs. It would be rather artificial to avoid UNMIL throughout the country, these agencies feel, because the mission is so omnipresent. 'You find UNMIL in almost every aspect of our work', one agency said. The country director of another INGO: 'It's quite difficult to be totally independent from UNMIL here.' Moreover, even if you tried, who would remember which NGO did or did not work with the peacekeeping force? Would anyone really care if one of your staff attends a military security briefing? Meanwhile, the costs of dissociation are high. Not taking UNMIL flights and not using their protection drives up the costs of an NGO programme. Processes will take more time and it will not have a motivating effect on most of the staff. Many international NGOs, such as ZOA, Oxfam, Save the Children and MERLIN belong to the pragmatists. Some of these agencies maintain the distinction between blue and black UN - and they are more open to the former than the latter - but that distinction has become increasingly problematic. However, in the public sphere, they try not to exhibit their relations with UNMIL. Some agencies painted their cars (white pick-ups are no longer an icon of inviolability). Another agency got confronted with a dilemma when UNICEF moved their office into the same compound. Non-association with the UN became illusionary with the huge UNICEF logo on their gate. The agency decided to stay, but they painted their part of the compound grey instead of blue and they posted a more visible sign with their name at the street.

The *supporters* don't see UNMIL as a threat to humanitarian principles. Their beneficiaries simply want assistance and they care little whether it is granted with support from UNMIL or without it. Some agencies simply don't have the financial and logistic resources to run their programmes without UNMIL's support. They don't mind other agencies taking a more principled course; it

merely improves their chances of getting what they want. Many of the local NGOs adhere to this archetypical position, but some of the international agencies do too. It would be a mistake to portray these agencies as unprincipled or money-driven. Though this may be true of some, there are many others who are very conscientious and principled, but it is a different set of principles that counts for them. The debate on civil-military relations is not a big issue to them, especially in view of their commitment to helping their constituencies. In fact, they would argue that dwelling on an artificial debate in the face of massive human needs is not very principled at all.

We could also distinguish the sub-category of *principled supporters*. From this perspective, the UN intervention is one of the best things that recently happened to Liberia and it deserves all the support it can get. Peace NGOs (such as WANEP) and possibly some of the human rights organisations belong to this group. Rather than preserving humanitarian space, their aim is to contain armed factions, support the establishment of a proper state system and bring the war criminals to justice. Allying with 'the international community' (that is, UNMIL) does not put them at additional risk. They would be in danger anyway without UNMIL's protection and some of them would simply leave if UNMIL were to withdraw.

The latter group is somewhat beyond the scope of this study as it concerns agencies with a rather different mandate and mission. With regard to the first three archetypical positions, there are some interesting correlations. This is shown in the box below.

**Box 16: Typology of NGO positions with regard to civil-military relations<sup>28</sup>**

Archetype	Position	Type of NGO	Available resources	Geographical	Within the agency	Mandate
<b>Principled neutralists</b>	Association with UNMIL threatens humanitarian principles and NGO security.	Often INGOs	Often plenty	Monrovia	Headquarters	Strict and mostly relief
<b>Pragmatists</b>	Benefits of associating with UNMIL outweigh the costs, as long as the situation remains stable.					
<b>Supporters</b>	Dealing with people's needs is the priority. Whether or not to work with UNMIL is a non-issue.	Often Liberian	Often few	The counties	Field staff	More diffuse and mostly development

<sup>27</sup> See also: Sida 2005: 11-12.

<sup>28</sup> Source: interviews and observations.

<sup>29</sup> She observes that the available funds attracted many Liberian NGOs to the DRR process.

As is shown in box 16, objections to involvement with UNMIL are more common among wealthy agencies than among poorer ones. From this perspective, a neutralist position is a luxury that only a few agencies can afford. Unsurprisingly, the principled neutralists and the pragmatists are by and large international agencies. They attach greater value to maintaining independence and they can afford to do so. Most of the Liberian NGOs are collaborative with regard to UNMIL (supporters). As was also pointed by Sida (2005: 13), there are financial considerations at stake for some of them.<sup>29</sup> The civil-military debate thus reinforces the rift between local and international NGOs.

INGOs care primarily about statistics, one person explained. Liberian organisations work more closely with the people. They care about the actual impact and much less about statistics or timeframes. This creates a mismatch. Other agencies feel INGOs are exploiting the local ones. 'They call you when they need to pick your brain', a Liberian NGO leader said, 'or when they need a showcase local to show that they collaborate with us'. Similar criticism is cast towards Western donors and the UN. Donor requirements, their formats and deadlines and the unsolicited advice from their well-paid consultants cause frustration. Likewise, UNMIL staff is not perceived to really understand the local situation. Their incorrect assessment of the DDDR process is a clear example. Unlike Liberian agencies, they don't see the signs when violence is brewing and preventative action is required.

Though the local-international divide is salient, NGO positions are not as clear-cut as the above-described archetypes would suggest. Positions change with time and there are differences of opinion within organisations. Some agencies are gradually moving from relief to structural development issues. Humanitarianism and the military may not match well, they explain, but development is different. Such interventions are never neutral and they require different partnerships. This commands a different positioning towards UNMIL and the Liberian government as well.

Moreover, formal policy can differ significantly from actual practice. A director of an international relief agency based in Monrovia stated: 'We reject collaboration with UNMIL, though we work with relevant UN agencies: WHO, UNICEF and WFP. We have nothing against UNMIL, we're not against their mission, but we don't want to work under them. [...] We don't use UNMIL helicopters and we don't travel with UNMIL vehicles on the road.' He did attend security briefings held by an unarmed military spokesperson. In the field, a sister agency of this NGO takes a very different stance. For the medical programme in the eastern county Grand Gedeh, the organisation uses the X-ray machine at the military clinic on the Chinese UNMIL compound. Also, the agency relies on UNMIL for medical evacuations by helicopter. These differences seem to be quite common. Policy and practice tend to diverge. Moreover, aid workers working at field level usually see less reason to stay away from UNMIL than their head offices in Monrovia (see the table above).

There is also a personal touch involved. Private experiences or staff turnover can have a major impact on the position of an NGO. The account of one of the respondents - an expat working for an international NGO - is illustrative:

'My former country director was a lady that felt very strong about dealing with the military. She was against blurring the lines. We painted the hoods of the car to distinguish ourselves. We did use WFP flights, but not UNMIL flights. Also, we made efforts to explain the people we are not part of UNMIL. We didn't accept UNMIL funds and we would not take any of their equipment in our cars. We made visits to UNMIL compounds, but they were very restricted.

Then, however, she fell in love with an UNMIL major and suddenly there was no problem anymore. 'The new country director is a former military man and he's very pragmatic. He thinks the military do some things better than NGOs. We may use UNMIL assets if the need is there and would even implement QIPs. If there's a convergence of interests, we would do it, but we would not go out of our way.'

#### 4.3.3 Views from UN agencies

Overall, UN agencies are positive about the integrated mission. They support the idea that working for a common goal requires that they work together with UNMIL peacekeepers. One representative stated: 'It would be a misuse of resources if everyone was doing his own thing. With the integrated mission, we can have a common agenda.' The agencies acknowledge that they need

peace and security for refugees to return and to help them resume their lives. Inevitably, there is a great deal of overlap between UN agencies, and the integrated mission concept is the best way to deal with that, one expat explained. Both formally and in the public perception, it is an illusion to think that you can stay outside the integration process. 'It is not UNMIL and us, but it's UN', one officer said. She refers to the upheaval in response to the raping of a girl by an UNMIL soldier to substantiate her point. 'When you see something in the newspaper like that, every UN agency is affected.'

The UN agencies are aware of the downsides of the integrated mission as well. 'Being associated with UNMIL so closely - both through local partners and through our own presence - could indeed be dangerous', one staff member acknowledged. 'We were in the field discussing with commanders.' Many agencies seem to have circumvented UNMIL's assumption of a coordinating role. 'The agencies continue to work to their mandates, fundraise largely independently and in private refuse to accept the legitimacy of the competence of UNMIL to determine programme priorities', a recent report observed (Sida 2005: 19). There seems to be a fear that integration will boil down to integration into DPKO. (Sida 2005: 23)

For most UN staff, the advantages of an integrated approach seem to outweigh these negative side effects. UNICEF applauds the accomplishments of jointly disarming child soldiers and WFP appreciates the protection and logistic support. Moreover, a WFP officer argued, the Liberian population understands that you need an armed escort, so there is little reason not to get one. Both the peacekeeping task and the developmental and humanitarian activities are more effective as a result of collaboration, most respondents argued, and these improvements are worth the risks of being associated with the integrated mission. 'Sometimes you need to compromise your independence a bit', a UN officer said.

Though they support the principle of an integrated mission, many UN staff are sceptical when it comes to the actual implementation. They argue that there are too many people involved and that they all have their own agenda. In addition, every UN agency reports to its own hierarchy, but not to one another. Information and decision-making power thus accumulate in Monrovia, which is exactly where the barriers between agencies are greatest. Elements of independence and pride prevent the mission from being truly integrated. The term 'UN family' is hardly appropriate, one person said. 'The UN has so many contradictions, it's the most inharmonious agency in the world.' Another person added that 'even the HCS does not feel like a child of the UN, but a stepchild.' The latter comment seems to be legitimate. At field level, UNMIL tends to view HCS as part of the NGO community rather than of UNMIL.

While support for the integrated mission seems to be a commonality, there are differences at an operational level. Contrary to WFP, UNHCR does not use military escorts. Much also depends on differences within the military. The Pakistani in Voinjama are considered to be open and easy to work with. Likewise, the Senegalese in Harper are good partners, but dealing with the Ethiopians in Zwedru is much more difficult. This has to do with language barriers as well as differences in military style and approach.

To some extent, UN agencies form the bridge between UNMIL and NGOs. Possibly as a result of this, their views resonate both the concerns of NGOs and those of the military. Quite like the military, blue UN officers argue that the pride of NGOs gets in the way of effective collaboration. 'NGOs feel that the military is gradually infiltrating into their world, intruding into their humanitarian space', a UN staff member said. NGOs feel that development activities such as health or water and sanitation are none of UNMIL's business. They expect the military to 'just deal with security and shut up.' These views are felt to be unhelpful. Some would even say NGOs are hypocritical, because they want the security offered by UNMIL, but they do not want to be seen with them. Some agencies, for example, are eager to join a convoy, but do not want it to be obvious. They use the military, meanwhile viewing them as 'lepers', one staff member said.

Moreover, there are problems because NGOs have limited knowledge of how to liaise with the military and because organisational cultures differ. UN agencies generally understand these difficulties, because they have gone through the process of getting to know the military themselves. 'UN agencies have had their experience, discussed the situations and have found compromises. The organisational culture of the military is such that they take orders. They have information and no one has given them the order to share it, so they will only direct people to the commander. It's the hierarchical nature of their work. You have to talk to somebody to talk to somebody to get to the final destination. It takes about four stages before you get to the

commander. And it is frustrating. The person at the gate does not know what the second person is doing, so all he can tell you is to wait', an analyst said.

#### 4.3.4 Views from the population

UNMIL puts much effort into propagating its views and finding out people's perceptions of the mission. Most arguments NGOs posit against collaboration with the military centre on the assumption that it would not be good if people perceived aid to be part of the military project. The rationale behind an integrated approach to development and security is that the people would eventually be helped in a more effective manner. This is why it is particularly important to discuss the views of the people. Do these debates resonate among the population and what positions do they take?

An accurate assessment of people's perception with regard to UNMIL, NGOs and the civil-military debate is hard to come by, however. People evidently have widely divergent views and often do not speak their mind, because some issues are controversial or strategically important to them. On the basis of the interviews and field visits, we nevertheless can make a number of relevant observations.

First of all, it is important to take people's general background into account. Their views and attitudes are closely related to their own experiences. Most Liberians have spent their lives in small towns or jungle villages. People and their ancestors have lived under harsh conditions for centuries. Many tribes have survived hunger, disease, tribal war or displacement in the past. Old people recall the arrival of the first tokens of modernity. Recent history has been marked in all respects by a decade and a half of war. People have faced incredible cruelty and many losses. To some, survival has become a daily challenge. It is in this phase that foreign assistance first entered into most people's lives. Box 17 provides an illustration of just one village in Grand Gedeh county. As becomes clear from this narrative, people know the names of the agencies that help them, but they are not aware of the various aid modalities and policy debates surrounding them. They are concerned with their survival and welcome any assistance that helps them meet the daily challenges.

#### Box 17: A village in the jungle<sup>30</sup>

Our ancestors were known as Petrocon. They came from the interior, an area called Dopeh, close by the river. It would now be part of Côte d'Ivoire. Back then there was no border. A long time ago - long before my grandfather was born - tribal war came to their area. The people ran away. They followed the river downstream and came in this direction. They settled on a hill we called Tumecon. Another tribe had come there as well. They spoke a different language. Eventually, they moved to the coast and we stayed here.

We didn't have agricultural tools at the time and no salt or medicine. We made our lives from the things we found in the jungle: wood, clay, leaves. We used wood to make slippers; we pounded materials to make them flexible, so we could clothe ourselves. For some things, we had to walk all the way to the coast. There were no roads then. There was no such thing as a government.

At some point, soldiers came to the village to spread messages from the government. During Charles DB Kings's rule,<sup>31</sup> they called a meeting in Zwedru that all had to attend. The white man came around that time as well. They were missionaries and opened a church here. They started a school and preached the gospel. All the people in the village are Christian. Later they moved the mission further down to Zwedru. The road was built when William Tubman was president. Cars first came to the village.

Then the war came. On August 28, 1990, they entered the village with cars and gunned down the people. They burned the houses. We started running away. We didn't carry anything with us. Some of us ran naked. Those who survived went to Côte d'Ivoire. The village was completely abandoned. The war came so suddenly. We had heard some rumours about what was happening before, but we couldn't understand what war exactly was.

Some time after our arrival in Côte d'Ivoire, the UN came. They gave us shelter and food. That was the first time an outsider gave us assistance. We returned in 1995. Some people stayed in Côte d'Ivoire, some are still returning. When we came here, the UN and the Red Cross provided us with blankets, buckets and plastic sheeting. We were constantly afraid war would come again and life was hard. We didn't have food. Cultivation was still to start.

War came again in 1996 and everything that we had put together was lost once more. We ran into the bushes this time. We ate cabbage and other things you can find in the jungle. Later, we returned to the village. But war came yet again in 2003. And again, we went into the bushes and returned to the village. We didn't want to go to Côte d'Ivoire this time. Even there, there was war.

After 2003, we got food and clothing from the Red Cross, WFP and UNICEF. The food consisted of oil, beans, sugar and wheat. This is not our staple food, but we ate it, because it was the only thing that was available. The assistance lasted for six months. No one is helping us anymore now. We don't know why. We wonder why they left us.

People are almost unanimously positive about UNMIL's deployment. The cruelties of war and the lawlessness that prevailed are fresh in their minds. 'Factions would tell women on the street to undress and we had no option but to obey. They did terrible things', one person said. Some ex-combatants defend their involvement in the war with the same argument. 'The situation demanded it', villagers explain. 'We could not wear slippers. These people would take them from us. We could hardly even cook food. They would simply take it from us. They would take everything. We had to do something about that.'

People are grateful that UNMIL put an end to the war. One Liberian NGO officer said, 'UNMIL's arrival was to the people like the return of Christ to the Christians.' People know that UNMIL brought security and disarmed the militias. 'They clap their hands when they come. Nobody is against UNMIL', one villager summarised the general opinion. Other than providing security, the peacekeepers have not done much, most respondents feel. 'UNMIL doesn't come here much', one person said. 'They only pass by this place and do some monitoring. They give cookies to the children and leave.' The people made it clear though, that they don't want the foreign troops to leave. 'It's true that the disarmament process has been successful, but UNMIL can't leave', one villager argued. 'If you bring up a child and you teach it how to walk, can you simply abandon it? Will the child live? If they leave now, the same thing would happen again.'

Interestingly, most people are a lot more critical with regard to NGOs. Although they are grateful for some of the assistance they got, almost everywhere people complain about malpractices by aid agencies. In some villages, the inhabitants were asked to put in labour to prepare for a project (e.g. a well), but the NGO never turned up again. The labourers worked for nothing and the NGO disappeared with the construction materials, the people in an eastern village complained. 'Some of the NGOs just make a profit out of us', they felt. 'They're corrupt. They just want to have the money and sell the materials. And they abuse us to do it.' People acknowledged that some agencies do good work, but complaints such as the above are very common.

A recent survey revealed that many people are both uninformed and suspicious about UN and NGO interventions. People think the UN is in charge of NGOs and that the UN works for the US (Sida 2005: 17). Many people, however, know the difference between UNMIL soldiers and aid agencies. Asked which of the two makes a more important contribution to their lives, almost all respondents feel neither one can be missed. 'If you are not protected you worry a lot, but without food life is also difficult', they say. 'A hungry man is an angry man.' Another person added: 'The youth prefer UNMIL, because they promised training to them. The elderly prefer NGOs, because they help them.'

None of the respondents saw any problems with regard to collaboration between NGOs and the peacekeeping troops. Some in fact laughed loudly at the assertion that some NGOs prefer to stay away from UNMIL, because they want to remain neutral. 'If there's no protection, no work will be done', this person said. 'How will you do your work if you're not protected?'

In terms of security and power politics, the views of rebels and warlords are of crucial importance and they may well be very different from the perceptions discussed above. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to come by an accurate assessment in this regard. In the past, they have attacked and looted aid agencies, but they have co-operated with them as well. Taylor, for example,

<sup>30</sup> This is an edited (and streamlined) version of what various people said during a one-day visit to the village. Names are spelled phonetically and may therefore not be accurate.

<sup>31</sup> 1920-1930.

'tried to use the food aid programme to maintain its hold on the population, claiming its successes for his own.' (Sida 2005: 17)  
Whether civil-military relations are currently an issue to the rebels who are still about is a rather speculative affair.

#### 4.4 Analysis

Eyes are focused on Liberia as the country struggles with the aftermath of its lengthy war. The West African state is a testing ground for UN ambitions on the doorstep of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Along with a few other UN interventions, UNMIL is the first integrated peacekeeping operation. At the core of the integrated mission concept lies a holistic approach to security, state building and socio-economic recovery. Success or failure in Liberia is a litmus test for this approach.

At first sight, major advances have been made. Only a few years ago, Liberia was a nearly hopeless case of atrocities and chaos. Right now, the country is relatively stable: violent incidents are rare, former president Taylor has been brought to court, elections were held successfully, many rebels have been disarmed and the most pressing human needs have been met. Caution is required against premature optimism, though. Liberia continues to be prone to a relapse into war: the state is weak, developmental conditions deplorable, poverty rampant and there are plenty of potential rebels. Moreover, Liberia's borders are permeable and tensions as well as spoilers may easily pour in from neighbouring countries. The way ahead is long and difficult. Liberia is at great risk of getting stuck, but for the moment, it is largely stuck in peace. Overall, however, we must say that remarkable progress has been made in view of the massive nature of the problem Liberia is struggling with. Remarkable also in view of the disastrous failure of previous attempts to bring the conflict to an end.

##### 4.4.1 A gradational spectrum of interventions

With an integrated mission like UNMIL, civil-military relations come to be a different ballgame. UNMIL is a civil-military arena in itself; the civil-military divide lies within the mission. The intervention encompasses purely military tasks (peacekeeping) on the one hand and developmental tasks on the other (humanitarian coordination and relief, recovery and rehabilitation). In between we find activities in the field of rule of law, with activities such as police training. In terms of staff, UNMIL's emphasis lies on the military component. Nonetheless, UNMIL's deployment serves both military and developmental goals. The various activities are implemented by different units and different troop contributing countries, but they are all part of UNMIL and fall under the same command: the SRSR.

Largely as a result of this, it is not possible to define clearly delineated civil and military spheres. Interventions in Liberia form a gradational spectrum of UNMIL, UN agencies, NGOs and other actors. Between these actors different patterns of collaboration have emerged. As was shown in figure 3, this spectrum of interventions can be categorised, but depending on the criteria - military/developmental, armed/unarmed, UN/non-UN, governmental/non-governmental - very different clusters come to the fore. As a result of these gradational differences, it is difficult to draw firm lines in an attempt to preserve a neutral, humanitarian position. Politicisation and militarisation come in bits and pieces. The whole idea behind an integrated approach is to overcome the divisions between military, political and developmental interventions. It is a deliberate attempt to transcend dividing lines. This is not the same as blurring lines - most actors still have a fairly clear and distinct mandate - but it does imply that maintaining the traditional autonomies is quite difficult.

##### 4.4.2 An optimal division of labour?

Regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the military, it is clear that the provision of security is the biggest asset of peacekeepers in Liberia. UNMIL's ability to curb the rampant violence, disarm the militias and restore some kind of incipient law and order is greatly valued, both by the local population and by aid agencies. In addition to these core activities, UNMIL has also ventured to take on development work on its own. The military has constructed roads and provided medical facilities. The unarmed part of UNMIL facilitated the restoration of the rule of law. Neither of these has invoked much controversy.

Objections rise with regard to office of the second DSRSG, more specifically humanitarian coordination and the administration of QIPs. Both the HCS and the QIPs seem to have an element of top-down decision-making, without weighing the case-specific costs and benefits. Integrating the HCS into the political and military structure of UNMIL invoked critical responses and it is questionable that the benefits outweigh the problems it has generated. 'One of the striking facts about the integration of OCHA into the UN mission is that it does not appear to have brought any tangible benefits, and instead has resulted in a deterioration of humanitarian coordination', a recent report argued (Sida 2005: 18). One may remonstrate that any reform invokes resistance and takes time to bear fruits, but at the current juncture, many aid workers seem to subscribe to this view.

With regard to the QIPs, there is the question of added value. Drawing from earlier UNHCR experiences and the need to establish the credibility of the mission, the recommendation of the Brahimi report to incorporate QIPs into an integrated peace operation may have been apt. Equipping UNMIL with a QIP facility would make sense if the mission were the first agency to arrive on the scene. That, however, was not the case and as a result the QIPs are operated parallel to other UN and NGO programmes. The QIPs are effectively dwarfed by these rather massive interventions. In view of the large number of agencies already present, a separate implementing aid channel - moreover, one that is operated from the capital - does not seem to add much fundamental value to the mission. Given that the integrated mission concept aims to optimally exploit the comparative advantages of the various agencies and cut down on duplication, the QIPs are a source of puzzlement. What is more, there is significant criticism of their implementation: most people feel they are not quick, not needs-driven, not integrated and not efficient. The development impact is said to be small and there does not seem to be much of a credibility gain (hearts and minds) either. Some would argue that some good work is being done and this is probably true, but it can hardly be taken as legitimation for the concept and the institutional set-up.

This does not imply, however, that QIPs are never worthwhile. Much depends on the context and the nature of military and non-military interventions. With reference to the dictum 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary', the need for the military to take on non-combat tasks is largely defined by the inability of other agencies to provide assistance. Some aid agencies were operational in Liberia long before UNMIL existed. The stereotypical picture that the military comes in first, then the relief agencies and then development actors does not apply. In many areas it is questionable whether UNMIL has better access and whether its military nature entails comparative advantages with regard to development work. At some point, UNMIL was being criticised for handing out food in Tubmanburg. These efforts were a duplication of what aid agencies were doing. Moreover, it was argued that these efforts meant little in terms of winning hearts and minds, because UNMIL's efforts in providing security, roads and support to the government were perceived to be much more impressive (Sida 2005: 21).

From a more pragmatic point of view, it is simply a fact that UNMIL is all over Liberia and they have quite some means at their disposal. Moving beyond ideal considerations, it makes sense to make optimal use of the available means. Peacekeepers may not be the most logical road builders and air lifters, but given that their resources are present on the ground, it would be a waste not to make use of them. Though this may create a level of dependency in the long run, in some cases it would be unnecessarily obstructive to ignore such opportunities. The following anecdote described by Fiwosime is illustrative in this regard.

'Children normally congregate around troops either out of curiosity or for favours, and Liberian children are no exception. These children hung around the cookhouses of the peacekeepers, who, being parents themselves, at times fed the children from food that was left over. The children, after the meals, wash up the dishes and clean the kitchen compound. This phenomenon, which was associated with ECOMOG and ECOMIL peacekeepers, was termed child abuse by a child protection agency. Their impression was that the children were working for food. Typical of the military, the children were instantly banned from all their premises and the leftover food became waste, while the hungry children hung around the perimeter fences.' (Fiwosime 2005: 185)

##### 4.4.3 Opportunities for collaboration

UNMIL's massive presence on the ground makes it very difficult for NGOs to take real distance from the intervention. Completely ignoring UNMIL's role in the security realm, their logistical capacity, and their elaborate links with UN agencies and

the Liberian government would effectively relegate them to a hermit's life. Given that no agency wants to put itself in complete quarantine, many NGOs tried to draw a line between the military, the political (black) and the developmental (blue) parts of the UN, but that proved to be difficult in view of the integrated nature of the mission.

As a result, most agencies take a pragmatic position with regard to UNMIL. There are various forms of collaboration, ranging from information sharing and dialogue to support with logistics or security. In some cases, UNMIL, UN agencies and NGOs have actually worked together quite closely in the implementation of programmes. Often as a result of formal guidelines issued by their headquarters, some agencies are keeping up the appearance of complete independence. This has resulted in the painting of cars and offices. A few agencies, however, have stuck to a principled neutralist position.

Much of the resistance towards collaboration, however, has little to do with the civil-military issue in itself. Rather, it is driven by more ordinary dynamics of coordination and competition in international assistance. Some agencies had been working in Liberia long before UNMIL was deployed. When the UN came in with a big footprint and the unilateral ambition to play a central coordinating role, many agencies were reluctant. Ineffective or inefficient coordination meetings were another main source of frustration. Organisational cultures played their role as well, as some aid workers became annoyed by the rigidity and hierarchy of the military, while some of the soldiers perceived NGOs as self-interested tourists. Although none of these obstacles formed a fundamental obstacle to civil-military collaboration, in some cases the costs seemed to outweigh the benefits.

Many aid agencies, however, were happy to collaborate with UNMIL. This was felt to be logical in view of the integrated nature of the problem at hand (e.g. the DRR process). From another perspective, it was an attempt to make optimal use of the available resources. With armed escorts, airlifting of key goods and people, the provision of medicines and the construction of roads, it is fair to say that UNMIL has played an important facilitating role in the aid efforts at large. Refusal of aid agencies to make use of this would have impeded the effectiveness, efficiency, scale and swiftness of assistance.

Most of the INGOs, however, are well able to carry out their programmes without much support from UNMIL. In fact, many of them feel it is the lack of local capacities and qualified NGOs that inhibits their work, rather than a lack of hardware, logistical capacity and security (which are the things that UNMIL could provide). This relative luxury accentuates the already existing rift between local and international NGOs. Many of the Liberian organisations cannot afford a solitary course. However, this should not necessarily be taken as proof that these NGOs are non-principled or money driven. Many of them just consider the above objections to be of lesser importance in view of the major tasks they are facing: helping the numerous communities in dire need.

These views resonate among the population. Most people are in fact very positive about UNMIL. They attach great value to the UN's accomplishments in establishing security, disarming the militias and helping the government get back on its feet. Strikingly, they are quite a bit more critical of NGOs. Villagers complain about malpractices, promises not kept, inadequate aid. In the end, however, they need both aid and security to survive and they are grateful for the help they receive. The desire of some NGOs to keep their distance from UNMIL made little sense to the people interviewed in this study.

#### 4.4.4 Assessing the risks

We may thus conclude that there are some useful opportunities for collaboration and that it is quite difficult to keep one's distance from UNMIL. The question then arises to what extent it is necessary to keep distance. What remains of the traditional objections, such as humanitarian principles and security threats?

All agencies agree that the security risks of being associated with UNMIL are very minor, if not completely absent, in Liberia. Firstly, there are hardly any security incidents and secondly, UNMIL seems to be very popular throughout the country. Being associated with UNMIL would probably improve an agency's position rather than put it at risk. Liberia's history shows us, however, that this may change. In the early 1990s, NGOs worked closely with ECOMOG. When these peacekeepers slid into the conflict and ended up fighting Taylor's NPLF, 'aid agencies that used ECOMOG escorts for protection were not always welcome in NPLF areas, which were the places aid was needed the most.' (Maresko 2004: 11) Whether it would have made a difference if

agencies had shunned collaboration with ECOMOG and whether these experiences can be translated to UNMIL is up for debate. It is clear, however, that security risks associated with civil-military relations are not illusionary.

Meanwhile, it is doubtful whether current NGO positioning is a very viable alternative. NGOs have a major image problem in Liberia. The population, the government and the UN are critical of their conduct. Instead of initiating joint efforts to tackle these problems and boost the sector's public image, NGOs have in fact become more divided. Many agencies have chosen to steer a relatively solitary course and they often contest each other's legitimacy. Consequently, they have failed to adopt a common policy towards UNMIL. Due to their failure to take a common stance, it is probable that all agencies are affected if collaboration with UNMIL has a negative impact.

Apart from security risks, there are principled considerations. In themselves, humanitarian principles are quite clear-cut and they are supposed to be universally applicable. Some of the respondents pointed out that the distinction between humanitarian and development practice may be hard to decipher. The former is supposed to be impartial and purely needs driven; the latter is never a neutral endeavour as it enters into the spheres of governance, nation building and social change. In Liberia, however, many agencies have combined both activities and current emphasis lies on development work. What this implies for a principled position in the current civil-military debate is unclear to most people.

What is clear, however, is that there is much tension between humanitarian and development principles. Many aid beneficiaries are enthusiastic about UNMIL. For them, their daily survival is at the top of the list. The principle of local ownership seems to clash with a neutralist position with regard to UNMIL.

# Conclusions and implications 5

## 5.1 Conclusions

As became clear in Chapter 2, the debate on civil-military relations is not merely a matter of optimising comparative advantages of peacekeepers and aid workers. Rather, it is a resonation of some of the most topical developments in the international arena, such as the reform of the UN and the emergence of integrated approaches, through which security, political and development instruments are employed in unison. It is also an outcome of the changing nature of warfare and adjustments that have been made to global military interventions and it is implicated by the war on terror. Finally, it is closely related to some of the changes in humanitarian and development intervention that we have witnessed in the past decade and a half.

All these trends are associated with the nature of contemporary conflict. Contrary to traditional warfare, civilians and non-state actors play a salient role in today's conflicts. The distinction between armed and unarmed actors has become more diffuse. The role of the state and a crisis in governance often contribute to the collapse of security. Looking at these characteristics and the way international responses to conflicts have changed, the debate of civil-military relations is a logical outcome. The realisation that security, state functioning and socio-economic issues are closely related is imperative to the integration of military, political and development interventions.

Though in slightly different ways, the two case studies discussed in this paper strongly confirm these observations. Both Afghanistan and Liberia are quite dramatic manifestations of these trends. Liberia is pretty much the state of the art of UN reform. Afghanistan represents the NATO's rebirth as a peacekeeping force, rather than simply a territorial defence structure. Moreover, Afghanistan is the most developed theatre of the war on terror, in which development instruments are employed to foster homeland security. Both Liberia and Afghanistan are test cases for the UN and NATO respectively. They are illustrative of current changes in civil-military relations in a conflict and post-conflict context. Moreover, they reveal the close linkages between civil-military relations on the ground and the broader policy context. The question is not whether, but how, to redefine and attune military and development responses to conflict situations. Contemporary integrated approaches are a vivid reality and future policy and practice will have to be tuned in with these broader international developments.

### 5.1.1 Comparing contexts

Both Liberia and Afghanistan are still hanging in the balance. Neither can safely be assumed to be a post-conflict country. Both UNMIL and ISAF are geared towards a positive outcome, but the history of both countries is fraught with regression and resumption of hostilities. Rather than war-to-peace transitions, they have experienced cycles of war and peace, and it may well be that the current period is no exception.

The nature of the conflict and the nature of the war-to-peace transition have great impact on the interventions in a country. In turn, the character of military and other interventions determines the civil-military relations and the risks and opportunities involved. Strikingly, there is a fair number of similarities between Liberia and Afghanistan when we look at the types of activities, the prominent challenges that have surfaced and the civil-military relations that have come about. There are also important differences that we must take into account.

First of all, the Liberian peace agreement and the subsequent transition in Liberia were largely indigenous. Though there were obviously major international dimensions at stake, UNMIL came after the parties had ceased fighting and it was deployed at the request of these parties. Afghanistan's Bonn Agreement, on the other hand, was a victor's peace. It was the outcome of a US-led invasion and represented the triumph of some factions over others.

This has, secondly, had far-reaching consequences for subsequent interventions in both countries. Though UNMIL is formally mandated to enforce peace, it hardly needs to do so, as it meets little resistance. The Coalition Forces and ISAF, however, are in continued combat in parts of the country parallel to their stabilisation efforts. Moreover, the insurgency forces in Afghanistan resist not just the military intervention, but the interference of the international community at large, and the West in particular.

By consequence, aid agencies are pulled into the picture and they face real and targeted security threats in parts of Afghanistan. Though not entirely safe, Liberia is different. Finally, the Coalition and ISAF feel a strong need to win population's hearts and minds, especially in areas where they meet resistance. UNMIL, on the other hand, is already very popular. In parts of Afghanistan - particularly the north - security conditions are similar to those in Liberia and in these areas ISAF is equally popular.

Thirdly, UNMIL is a truly integrated mission, with military, political and development interventions united under a single command structure. Though there are various forms of integration in Afghanistan as well, there is no one structure of this kind. Though UNMIL is a third generation operation, while ISAF belongs to the fourth, both interventions are characterised by an integrated approach aimed at ensuring that the state is equal to its task. Although not formally mandated to do so, in some respects both missions come close to resembling a fifth generation intervention: taking over the administration.

In view of the significant contextual differences in the two countries, some of the similarities are remarkable as well. Both countries underwent a peace rush, with an extensive peacekeeping mission and a massive proliferation of aid agencies. In both countries, the NGO sector has been booming. Many international agencies set foot in Liberia and Afghanistan after the demise of Taylor and the Taliban regimes respectively. Agencies with an existing programme stepped up their activities. There was a great demand for local capacities and implementing agencies and in response Afghan and Liberian organisations have mushroomed. Many of these agencies were in fact contractors or pocket NGOs. All in all, the aid response came off in a rather uncoordinated and opaque manner. Despite the significant changes that were effected in both countries, this has resulted in frustration, suspicion and occasionally dissatisfaction among local communities.

### 5.1.2 Gradational spectrums of civilian and military interventions

With the influx of peacekeepers, UN agencies, donors, international organisations and NGOs, both Afghanistan and Liberia have witnessed an almost all-encompassing international intervention. Within this disorder of activities, it is difficult to distil a civil and a military realm. Combat and peacekeeping activities can naturally be labelled as military, while NGO activities are civilian or developmental. In between, however, divisions are gradational. Depending on the criterion that we use - armed or not; NATO/UN or not; (inter)governmental or not; in one structure with the military or not; contributing to development or not - actors may be clustered in very different ways. For example, a USAID officer in Kandahar (Afghanistan) is unarmed and non-military, but he or she resides in a military camp and is part of a NATO government. Likewise, a Civpol officer in Zwedru (Liberia) is unarmed and his or her work is considered development, but he or she is part of UNMIL. UN agencies in Liberia are unarmed and developmental (even humanitarian), but they are coordinated by the same authorities as the military. The list goes on. It is inherent to the currently so topical approach to use policy instruments in an integrated manner and transcend previously existing divisions. Traditional lines between peacekeepers, diplomats, donors and aid workers still exist and the gradual differences between them continue to be fairly clear in both countries. In that sense, one can hardly speak of a deliberate attempt to blur lines. There is, however, a conscious effort to reach out across those lines and downgrade their importance.

In relation to this, we have observed that the military assumes a rather diverse set of non-combat tasks. The case studies made it clear that it is erroneous to confine the debate to CIMIC. The military works with military observers and psyops officers. Secondly, some peacekeeping engage in hearts-and-minds projects (e.g. handing out items or fixing schools). Thirdly, there is a vast number activities aimed restoring the rule of law (e.g. police training and DRR processes). Fourthly, there are regular, more structural development activities, which are embedded with the military (e.g. USAID within the PRTs or the HCS and UN agencies in relation to UNMIL). Again, depending on the criterion - the formal objective, the nature of the activity or the agency implementing it - these activities may be classified as more or less military, and more or less developmental.

While some of these non-combat activities are old (e.g. winning hearts and minds) and others relatively new (embedded development programmes), all of them have undergone changes in the past few years. In fact, only few of them represent an established practice; most are work in progress. Adjustments are still being made in the course of time. The evolution of the PRT concept and the fact that there are still different models around is a case in point. The UN decision to integrate OCHA into UNMIL and rename it the HCS is a Liberian example.

Moreover, some of these activities seem to have evolved relatively autonomously, even though there are many linkages. CIMIC officers, military observers and psyops officers are all supposed to generate situational awareness and advise the commander, but they largely operate in isolation. So we may continue to see a redefinition of roles and mutual adjustments between units within the military realm. Another consequence of these evolving practices is that there is space for a personal touch. Officers often have some room to manoeuvre in the way they shape their activities and how they relate to other actors.

Likewise, the agencies outside the integrated peace mission - particularly the NGOs - are jockeying for position. They are confronted with a new set of risks and opportunities, and traditional guidelines and positions are no longer so clear-cut. Although many agencies have adopted formal positions, in the field these prove to be of little use. Field staff frequently consider the formal policies to be unhelpful and dogmatic and they take a more flexible approach. Unsurprisingly, the NGO community itself is far from homogeneous. There tends to be a rift, particularly between the local and international NGOs. Attempts at coordination are numerous, but they often fail at effectively curbing the chaos. NGO interventions are therefore not problem-free and certainly not so in the public mind. In fact, criticism of malpractices, lack of transparency, promises not kept and a lack of commitment are quite common from within the NGO community, from governmental and intergovernmental actors and from the population. Without turning a blind eye to all the accomplishments and successes, we must thus conclude that NGOs do not have *carte blanche*. As is the case with other actors, their legitimacy and performance are contested. As a result, NGOs also need to win hearts and minds, though not necessarily in the same way as the military.

### 5.1.3 A division of labour in the integrated mission concept

At the core of contemporary integrated approaches lies the logic that military and development objectives converge. Development requires security and vice versa. Military interventions rely on the success of development efforts for accomplishing their mission. Development interventions rely on the success of the military in maintaining a secure environment. Though there is a lot of truth in this logic, we must recognise that there is also tension between military and development objectives and approaches. Rather than the assumption that 'all good things come together', the recognition of these tensions must guide underlie further fine-tuning and optimising of integrated approaches.

Unsurprisingly, peacekeepers' ability to provide security and maintain logistic networks is fairly robust. As a result of their extensive presence, the military is in a relatively good position to oversee the entire country and to provide medical, logistics and protective support to other agencies. Unlike aid agencies, they can enforce their position. Though not always successfully, they can secure access to dangerous areas. They can depend on reliable transport modalities and (in some cases) the means to undertake large-scale infrastructural projects. This applies to some of the aid agencies as well, but they are more dependent on an enabling climate. Resisting pressure, let alone force, is more difficult for them.

All this does not automatically imply that peacekeepers are more secure or that they have better access. The stereotypical image that aid agencies come in after the military has secured the area is inaccurate, if not wholly inadequate. Many NGOs and international organisations were operational both in Liberia and in Afghanistan before the peacekeepers were deployed. In fact, in the south of Afghanistan, the security of aid agencies has deteriorated since the Coalition arrived on the scene. Though they faced restrictions during the civil war and under the Taliban regime, some respondents indicated that life in Kandahar is more dangerous today than a few years ago. It is a fact that Coalition Forces can provide assistance in dangerous areas, but they are unable to protect these assets durably. NGOs execute similar projects, which are not associated with the military and though these are also subject to intimidation and assault, the threat seems to be smaller. The issue of access is thus rather mixed.

On a different note, peacekeepers evidently have some thematic expertise that aid agencies generally do not. Especially if we include Civpol, military police and related officers, it seems clear that the restoration of the rule of law lies within the capacity of ISAF, the Coalition and UNMIL. Security expertise is indispensable when it comes to processes of demobilisation and disarmament of combatants and training of army and police. Civil-military collaboration has been largely absent in this field. There may be opportunities to capture experiences and expertise from NGOs in this endeavour.

An advantage that some may find a bit more surprising is the military's popularity among the people. Especially in the more stable areas (most of Liberia, north Afghanistan), peacekeepers are highly esteemed. Local communities appreciate the tangible improvements that came with the military intervention. Contrary to the stereotype, the public profile of the military may thus be an asset rather than a hindrance.

Despite the proliferation of the above-discussed activities of the military, one must keep their relative significance in perspective. Owing to the extensive attention paid to these developments, the impression could be aroused that these activities are the name of the game at field level. But this does not seem to be the case. Though the integrated mission concept as such seems to have great impact, many of the actual activities are in fact quite marginal on the broader development scene. For example, the QIP fund in Liberia is dwarfed by the programmes of UN agencies. Likewise, the volume of CIMIC activities administered by the Dutch PRT in Baghlan (Afghanistan) is comparable to that of a medium-size NGO.

The fact that the military is able to do something does not necessarily mean they should do it. The past has shown that over-ambitious agendas can backfire. Looking at the vast range of issues that both UNMIL and ISAF are tasked with, it seems that the risk of a mission creep is not imaginary. The key issue in their mandate is that they are supposed to support the national government in resuming its responsibilities. In a failed state context, that is hardly reassuring. Experiences with externally instigated state building are mixed at best. It has become abundantly clear that elections are not the endpoint, but merely the prologue to the process. The danger of a relapse into chaos and war continues to wait in the wings for years. Moreover, there is a risk that the broad mandate causes peacekeepers to do a little bit of everything, instead of developing a coherent and prioritised approach.

The dictum 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary' makes a lot of sense, but is difficult to put into practice. In northern Afghanistan, the military tries to win hearts and minds whereas they are already quite popular. Meanwhile they use CIMIC funds to finance NGOs, which receive direct funding from donors and INGOs as well. The QIPs in Liberia are implemented alongside the already so numerous UN agencies and NGOs. Their basic added value seems to be limited. Meanwhile, UNMIL builds roads, although it does not require special military expertise in a context of relative security. The underlying logic seems to be that initiatives are undertaken once a policy decision is made (there will be a QIP unit), the funds are made available (there is a CIMIC fund) or the means are present on the ground (we have the staff and the vehicles anyway). This way, the catchphrase may ironically come down to 'military if the political leadership happens to provide the means, civilian if they don't'.

Though problematic at a strategic policy level, such an approach may be quite logical from a field perspective. In a context that is not ideal anyway, field workers tend to make the best of the means that are available to them. In view of the local needs, it would be folly not to use the funds and capacities that are just waiting to be used. More thinking and strategising is thus required for an optimal definition of the military role.

In areas where the military has certain advantages, such as the rule of law, some lessons from the development sector may be of use. These lessons would help many of these efforts to move beyond isolated training and handing over of assets. A more systematic reflection on sustainable impacts would probably be useful. This would require military expertise to be oriented to the needs of the recipient government. It would also encompass a transformation of the military from acting as an executor to an enabling capacity builder.

### 5.1.4 Opportunities for civil military collaboration

The impression may transpire from debates on complementarity and integrated approaches that military and non-military actors need to start coordinating on all kinds of issues all over the place. This seems to be an overstatement. There are many activities that can be implemented in relative autonomy, and cases where direct collaboration is required are not that widespread. However, there are opportunities for collaboration and it is important to seize them.

In both case studies, we witnessed various forms of interaction between the peacekeepers and the aid community. They included: 1) advocacy towards the military (only few agencies); 2) receiving security briefings (almost all of them); 3) information sharing (attempts are quite common); 4) coordination of activities (idem); 5) operational military support to aid agencies (extensively for some agencies, much less for the rest); 6) joint implementation (only in a few areas); and 7) NGOs implementing for the military (especially the local NGOs, but some international agencies as well).

Looking at the more intensive forms of collaboration - the last three forms - it is striking that military support and joint implementation are quite common in Liberia, while NGOs rarely implement for the military side of UNMIL. In Afghanistan, it is the other way around: subcontracting NGOs seems to be the most common form. This is probably a logical consequence of the fact that ISAF and Coalition troops have their own hearts-and-minds budget. This is much less so in Liberia, where the peacekeepers are integrated into the wider UNMIL structure. From a military perspective, subcontracting NGOs to implement goodwill projects would make good sense. From a development perspective, the advantages seem to be more limited. Especially when donor officials are stationed in the field, these arrangements basically form a parallel flow of funds.

There are a few processes that require both military and developmental expertise. DDRR processes are an obvious example. Disarming and demobilising combatants requires peacekeepers. Their successful reintegration in society and rehabilitation of their socio-economic position depends on development inputs, which may be provided by UN agencies and NGOs. Though it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the DDRR process in Liberia, close collaboration between UNMIL, UN agencies and local and international NGOs seems to be very sensible.

Opportunities for information sharing seem to be much more common. Preventing duplication and poor distribution should be a standard part of development practice. Regular dialogue may prevent missed opportunities. Many aid workers seem to have limited knowledge and plenty of stereotypes about peacekeepers and the same applies vice versa. Greater mutual awareness of mandates, abilities and limitations would help mitigate frustrations and avoid suboptimal interventions. More importantly, in areas where hostilities are still going on, security briefings and a basic knowledge of the scope and location of aid activities may secure aid from violent targeting.

Presumably, military activities in development-related issues are here to stay. Given that soldiers do have some weak points when it comes to development expertise, NGOs might consider thinking along with them. Optimising aid provided by the military would be beneficial both from a military and from a development perspective. There may well be opportunities to build upon existing experiences of aid agencies, that provide training to peacekeepers.

Finally, some NGOs are grappling with a shortage of money and constrained logistic capacity. Especially for the local NGOs, funds, vehicles and other support provided by the military are of great value.

### 5.1.5 NGO positions and local perceptions

Both in Liberia and in Afghanistan, the military was largely positive about the integrated mission concept, though there were some irritations with regard to the civilian leadership within UNMIL. More importantly for this study, the military had no fundamental objections to involvement with aid agencies. In fact, many respondents were fairly eager to collaborate. They are aware they cannot address all the issues at stake and they feel aid interventions are essential for the eventual success of their mission. In sum, they have more to gain than to lose by co-operation.

Among NGOs, the civil-military debate has invoked a fair bit of controversy and discussion, but this has been rather inconclusive. In both case studies, NGO positions can be clustered into three types. The principled neutralists try to stay away from the military, to preserve their humanitarian principles and to prevent adverse security effects. They also fear politicisation of aid and subordination to a military logic. The pragmatists agree with them on these two issues, but assess them differently. They weigh the pros and cons of co-operation and when the context allows, they take a more flexible stance. This is particularly the case in Liberia and in northern Afghanistan. Finally, the supporters consider the civil-military debate a secondary matter. They feel the

needs of the people should be the overriding priority. Dwelling on sophisticated principles and artificial concepts of neutrality does not contribute to effective aid delivery. Moreover, it is a luxury that only the well-to-do organisations can afford.

The rift between local and international agencies is manifest in these positions. Most international agencies belong to the first two categories, while the Afghan and Liberian organisations by and large fit under the latter heading. This does not warrant the conclusion, however, that international agencies represent the moral high ground, while local NGOs are unprincipled and money-driven. Firstly, the INGO position is not just a principled one, but also a material one: they can afford to keep their distance from the military and function in relative autonomy. Secondly, many local agencies are not unprincipled, but differently principled. Unlike INGOs, which they see as 'thinking poetry and philosophy', they feel humanitarianism is primarily about helping people as much as you can. Similar views can be found among some of the field workers of international agencies. In these cases there is generally a divide between the field and the headquarters of these organisations.

Strikingly, their views resonate among the population. In many cases (though not all) the people in need care little about who provides them with aid. They tend to be pleased with the military because they provide security. NGO attempts to stay away from the military meet with astonishment rather than appreciation. Collaboration with peacekeepers and armed protection are considered normal and defensible. Southern Afghanistan, however, differs from both Liberia and northern Afghanistan, because the war continues. It is in this region that more people are resentful towards the military intervention. It is also in this area that targeted security threats to NGOs are an everyday reality. The Islamic insurgency does not accept neutral positions. Whereas many organisations in Liberia and northern Afghanistan tend to downplay the problems related to civil-military collaboration, security threats are an everyday reality in Afghanistan's pockets of war. Even here, however, we see a rift between local and international agencies. And even here, we see many agencies that take a pragmatic approach. They feel that security threats and other problems are an inherent aspect of the war context, rather than just a consequence of the blurring of lines.

With regard to the principled neutralists, the question arises what it means in practice to keep one's distance from the military. Cutting all ties with the peacekeeping mission will be very difficult because the military are so omnipresent. Their logistics and security structure form the backbone of the national government and the international intervention in both countries. Moreover, the soldiers are closely integrated with the UN and donor governments. Staying out of all that seems to come down to a hermit's life. Maintaining some kind of demarcation often seems to be largely a matter of public presentation. Though there are programmatic issues as well, it is to a large extent about the colour of the car, the location and appearance of the office and the people you consort with. Without downplaying the importance of managing public perceptions, we must conclude that civil-military policies involve a lot of window-dressing.

### 5.1.6 Assessing risks

There is a tendency to overstate both the opportunities and the risks of civil-military co-operation. Yet three kinds of objections associated with civil-military co-operation came to the fore in the case studies: concerns of principle, security risks and allegations about the poor quality of assistance provided by the military. Regarding humanitarian principles, it is a fact that the lines between civilian and military responses are not as pronounced as they may have been in the past. It is increasingly difficult for NGOs to remain entirely independent. In an environment where political, military and development interests are consciously integrated, there is a risk that aid is no longer provided on the basis of need alone. Access may be limited and aid flows may be affected by the broader interventions of the military and (inter)governmental actors. It is questionable, though, whether aid was ever free from such distortions. Moreover, there are so many needs that the intrusion or congestion of humanitarian space may not be the most pressing concern. Finally, most agencies provide development rather than humanitarian aid and so the debate is about what exactly constitutes neutrality, independence and impartiality under such conditions.

On the second issue, we observe that security threats are real, but very context dependent. Both in Liberia and in northern Afghanistan, there are no major security related reasons to stay away from UNMIL or ISAF respectively. Some agencies quite rightly point out, however, that the situation may change. If the peacekeepers have to resort to large-scale violence to enforce their position, it may not be so desirable to be associated with them. The question then is: how determining for staff safety is

affiliation with the military? On the basis of the limited data included in this study, the answer is: not very much so, although it makes a difference in some cases. It is doubtful that Liberian rebels manage to keep an accurate record of agencies that do collaborate with UNMIL and agencies that do not. In southern Afghanistan, where security issues are an everyday reality, NGOs are subject to attack. The main reasons agencies are insecure, however, are the war context itself, the fact that parts of the insurgency oppose the international community at large and the fact that some people see ISAF and the Coalition as an invasion. The blurring of lines does not seem to be the overriding factor. Yet many respondents point out that it does increase your risk profile if you are associated with the forces. Agencies and villages that co-operate with the coalition run a special risk and it is for this reason that even the Afghan NGOs that collaborate with the Coalition prefer to keep their profile low when they go into the tribal areas.

The third issue - military are no good at aid - is mixed. As was discussed above, the military has a number of advantages. Clearly, they have weak points as well. Firstly, they operate in relatively short time frames. Many of the problems at hand require a commitment of decades. The mandate given to peacekeepers is usually extended on an annual basis or for similar periods. Because of this, turnover among soldiers is high. As a result, it is difficult to build relations with other actors, institutional memory is limited and the overall performance may suffer. Though there are significant national differences, rotations tend to occur once, twice or even thrice a year. This occurs among UN agencies and NGOs as well, but it is not quite as endemic. Another allegation is that the military is not efficient. An actual assessment of the ratio between inputs and outputs very much depends on the underlying assumptions. Which costs - just the project implementation, the entire operation, the complete defence budget - are included in the calculation? However, we can move a bit beyond Mark Twain's observation that there are 'lies, damned lies and statistics.' Hearts-and-minds budgets tend to be small. Both the QIPs (for all of Liberia) and some of the PRTs (for an Afghan province) had up to US\$ 1 mn available. Meanwhile, the officers in Afghanistan required extensive force protection and transport facilities to move around. This means it is unlikely that these activities score high marks in terms of efficiency. Finally, some people suggest that soldiers are not good at relating to local communities in a culturally sensitive way, designing projects in a needs-driven way and ensuring some level of ownership and thus sustainability. Our findings are more nuanced. Some of the troops were quite aware of the loopholes involved and they adopted a sensible approach. Poorly implemented projects have adverse effects on the mission as well, they stress. Changes in the training and experience of the military seem to have had an impact, lessons learned in Cambodia or Bosnia are being used, and the participation of regional troops (particularly in UNMIL) adds to the adequacy of the mission. The study also ran into bad practices, such as input-driven projects, conflict insensitive activities or activities that missed opportunities to include the local community. But then again, similar malpractices were found among some of the NGOs.

## 5.2 Lessons for a way forward

Discussions about role models and approaches are interesting within the academic ivory tower, but policymakers and practitioners are confronted with the reality at hand. We thus reiterate the point made at the beginning of this chapter: the germane question is not so much whether to relate to changing military and development responses, but how to relate to them and make the best of it. The case studies revealed that most INGOs take a pragmatic approach to civil-military relations. Given that neither the opportunities nor the risks of civil-military collaboration can be taken for granted, such a context-specific, case-by-case approach makes sense, particularly for agencies with a broad mandate. Integrated missions have such a large impact on the aid scene that simply ignoring it is hardly an option.

In an attempt to weigh costs and benefits, NGOs suffer from a collective action problem. Possible adverse effects of civil-military involvement - blurring of lines, security threats - are often determined by the behaviour of the aid community as a whole. Attempts by individual agencies, such as MSF, to take a more cautious stance may be defensible, but there is a good chance that they are implicated after all when negative side effects occur. Careful attempts have been made to seek joint positions, but in both cases relatively little progress seems to have been made.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to come up with an operational checklist or general do's and don'ts, but in an attempt to initiate a way forward, we first map out some stereotypes about civil and military interventions that this study has debunked. Secondly, we present some lessons that have emerged from this study and that could guide the further fine-tuning of both policy formulation and practical implementation.

### 5.2.1 Common misconceptions

The debate on civil-military relations has occasionally been hampered by prejudices and incorrect assumptions. Some of these came to the fore in the case studies. Adequate policy and practice requires a more nuanced approach. The box below therefore states some conceptions about civil and military interventions which are entirely or partially false.

#### Box 18: False assumptions about civil-military relations

##### In general

1. Civil military relations are all about CIMIC.
2. One can clearly categorise foreign interventions into civil and military clusters.
3. Contemporary integrated approaches at peacekeeping were born of the fact that the military were expanding into the development realm.
4. Integrated missions are the flavour of the day at policy level; this can simply be ignored in the field.
5. Civil-military co-operation always implies a considerable risk for civil society actors.
6. The blurring of lines is a primary cause of insecurity of aid agencies.

##### On aid agencies

7. In a war-to-peace transition, the military come in first; aid agencies follow when there is some basic stability and security.
8. Stability is a precondition for development; development activities only start when the conflict has died down.
9. Local communities are sympathetic to aid agencies, while they are suspicious about the military.
10. NGOs tend to take only a principled position with regard to civil-military relations.

##### On the military

11. The military have better access when providing assistance to insecure areas.
12. Soldiers don't know anything about development and they don't think about quality, sustainability or local needs.
13. Peacekeepers undertake a large number of development activities and the opportunities for civil-military collaboration are vast in practice.
14. The military provide assistance only to win hearts and minds, while this is of no concern to aid agencies.
15. The principle 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary' is always honoured in practice.

### 5.2.2 Key considerations for policy and practice

An adequate, pragmatic approach cannot be achieved by setting out firm general guidelines. Rather, it requires asking the right questions and fine-tuning the answers to the differentiated contexts in which operations take place. It also means that the divergent positions, interests and discourses of the various stakeholders need to be considered and taken into account, as shown in the conclusions of this study. Below we spell out some lessons that can be derived from this study.

1. For many stakeholders the evolution of civil-military relations are a given. External factors including UN reform, the changing nature of conflict and warfare and the ongoing war on terror are the major determinants of such developments, on which stakeholders can exert very little influence. Moreover, it is relatively uncontested that the nature of the problems at hand requires a combination, if not an integration, of military and civil activities and expertise. **Aid agencies, donors and the military thus need to remain aware of these contextual developments and to reflect on the implications for themselves.**
2. The study revealed a gradational spectre of civil and military interventions. Traditional distinctions and categorisations, let alone stereotypical approaches, therefore no longer apply. Both military and humanitarian actors may miss the point of these

new developments when looking at them from traditional vantage points. **Special efforts should therefore be undertaken to understand these new realities, to disseminate and discuss these findings as to their implications.** The resistance of aid agencies to the incorporation of OCHA into the UNMIL structure reveals a number of lessons. Keeping UN humanitarian coordination outside of the integrated approach is rearguard action. NGOs should come to grips with integrated UN missions. On the side of the UN leadership, the lesson ought to be learnt that a mere imposition of structures may backfire. Unhelpful controversies could be kept to a minimum by taking a more cautious approach and avoiding the perception of an arrogant UN imposition.

3. In view of the integration of humanitarian, military, political, development and state-building interventions, policymakers and practitioners need to rethink classical humanitarian principles: whether and how to apply them in current contexts. **A basic and open debate between principled neutralists, humanitarian pragmatists and supporters is needed to overcome hardened standpoints, accusations and recriminations and to find a sense of direction for practice.**
4. A solitary course makes little sense when it comes to civil-military positioning. Adverse effects on staff security and the preservation of humanitarian principles affect the entire aid scene. It is unlikely that insurgents make much distinction between aid agencies that do or do not attend a coordination meeting with the military. Aid agencies have tried to take joint positions, but both in Liberia and in Afghanistan they have largely failed. **They should reconsider the costs and benefits of their divided standpoints and explore new opportunities to take a common stance.**
5. The recommended mode of realignment between military and civilian actors depends on the context. The study has shown that work may continue on the basis of a more or less traditional division of labour. In other cases, however, more coordinated approaches are warranted, including even fully integrated or joint exercises. In a number of cases, the military actors have encroached on civilian domains without good reasons and could better withdraw. Both among civilian and military actors, there is a difference between 'party line', formal positions or textbook realities on the one hand and actual practice on the ground on the other. Often headquarter guidelines are neither effective nor desirable, as they leave too little room for local adjustments. **We therefore suggest that a more strategic understanding be reached prior to deployment, one that permits enough flexibility to those in charge of local missions.** Such multi-level thinking in advance of the mission could resolve many implementation issues that arise in the field.
6. The nature of the military intervention affects civil-military relations. In their strategic positioning, aid agencies should consider the mission's general aims and legitimacy, the type of peace it pursues and the level of local acceptability of the mission. The Afghanistan case shows that even when all these issues are subject to some level of controversy, collaboration may be warranted, **but caution is required when peacekeepers have no UN mandate, try to enforce a victor's peace or face significant resistance from local communities.**
7. Many aid agencies take a rather **pragmatic approach, weighing up context-specific opportunities and risks.** We support this course of action, but it needs to be further developed and policy and practice need to be harmonised. Most actors feel that principled approaches are unhelpful and in fact a luxury of the happy few, mostly at international or headquarters level. Having said that, there is obviously a serious risk that important principles are entirely abandoned if they are seen to be negotiable.
8. The divide between international actors and local NGOs in terms of their positioning in the civil-military debate draws our attention to the issue of local ownership. We recommend that this principle be taken seriously and advise international aid agencies to enter into dialogue with their local partners and beneficiaries. **Aid agencies need to attune their positioning more closely to the perceptions among local communities about the military and if they do not, they need to make clearer efforts to explain their divergent position.** What is more, there is a risk that troops and aid workers see local NGOs and local communities basically as targets or instruments. They need to reflect on a less instrumentalist vision of local involvement.
9. The study highlights the salient opinions of the local population. Apart from the south of Afghanistan, popular support of the peace operation is fairly widespread, to the degree that the military was often more popular than local or international NGOs. Local discourses teach the clear lesson that NGOs have to improve their performance and to work on their image. The implication is that **it is worthwhile and enlightening to invest time and attention to studying and understanding local perspectives and discourses.**
10. Security risks vary. Even in the most difficult contexts - such as the south of Afghanistan - the affiliation of aid agencies with the military is just one of many factors that affect their staff safety. The nature of the context would seem to be a greater determinant than civil-military positioning. Aid agencies reduce their risk profile by window-dressing measures, which are

probably effective. We recommend that aid agencies expand upon these measures as a pragmatic course of action. Moreover, **we suggest they abstain from excessive use of the security argument to legitimise isolationist stances in the civil-military debate.**

11. Overall, the dictum 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary' is sound and exceptions need to be well-argued. However, it provides little operational guidance. In practice, integrated approaches have not reached an optimum. **There continues to be overlap, and advantages on one side could be better exploited.** UNMIL's QIPs are an example of a legacy that was overtaken by broader contextual events. It makes little sense to have a separate, modest QIP fund to boost the credibility of the mission across Liberia when there is a whole set of specialised UN agencies around which are much better equipped to deliver a peace dividend. Likewise, some of the CIMIC projects in Afghanistan are very similar to the activities funded by development funds. Such overlap is illogical, inefficient and inadequate.
12. The civil-military arena is in flux and there is still room for optimisation. Confronted with a variety of development contexts, the military needs to further strengthen knowledge and skills. Better use could be made of the expertise of aid agencies in preparing for deployment and generally strengthening the capacities required for broad mandate missions. Likewise, aid workers need to overcome their stereotypes and increase their awareness of the military. **We therefore encourage mutual training and exposure, not just in the field, but at home as well.**
13. There is a striking dichotomy between the glossy level of policy and the dusty level of implementation. Many donor governments have adopted an integrated policy doctrine. The hard nuts of this seemingly harmonious approach are cracked at field level. Donors need to move beyond their general policy principles and to become acquainted with the challenges at field level. The stationing of personnel in PRTs is laudable from this perspective. **More efforts are required to transcend the mantra on the virtues of an integrated approach and deal with the challenges that it entails.**
14. Both ISAF and UNMIL were experiments for the UN and NATO respectively, but experiments have little value without adequate records. **Current experiences with the PRTs and within UNMIL should be a starting point for the design of future missions.** The PRTs were inserted as a second-best option, they were burdened with high expectations and they developed in a rather incoherent manner. Though this was understandable in the chain of events, future interventions would benefit from a better thought-through design, a mandate that was better communicated and a more coherent and coordinated approach to implementation. A careful cross-donor evaluation of PRT experiences would be useful. Likewise, experiences with UNMIL - which was planned in a more conscious manner - should be used for future UN missions.

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# Annex I List of Interviewees

## The Netherlands

1. Lieutenant-Colonel Jan van der Woerd. Dutch Ministry of Defence
2. Lieutenant G.J. Van Dorssen. Dutch Ministry of Defence
3. Dr. Myriame Bollen. Royal Military Academy
4. Dr. Willem Vogelsang. University of Leiden
5. Pyt Douma. Consultant. Network Foundation
6. Adriaan van Apeldoorn. Consultant. Network Foundation
7. Matthijs Toot. Development Advisor. PRT Kandahar
8. Ehsan Turabaz. Honorary Consul of Afghanistan in The Hague

## Afghanistan

### Kabul

9. Candace Karp. Advocacy and Policy Advisor. Oxfam
10. Anja de Beer. Director. ACBAR
11. Paul Barker. Country Director. CARE
12. Scott Braunschweig. Advocacy Coordinator. CARE
13. Mark Zellenrath. First Secretary. Dutch Embassy
14. Major Pedro Linares. CIMIC Centre ISAF HQ
15. Chris Willach. Operations Coordinator. ANSO
16. Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi. Chairman. ANCB
17. Joanna Nathan. Senior Analyst Afghanistan. ICG
18. Diego F. Osorio. Civil Military Affairs Officer. UNAMA
19. Barbara J. Stapleton. Advocacy & Policy Coordinator. ACBAR
20. Paul Fishstein. Director. AREU
21. Hamish Nixon. Researcher. AREU
22. David Labrador. QIP/PRT Program Support Officer. IOM
23. Carolina Rothe. QIP/PRT Jr. Programme Officer. IOM
24. Jamila Ibrohim. Head of Delegation. IFRC
25. Reto Stocker. Head of Delegation. ICRC

### Baghlan

26. Piet Groot. Head of CIMIC Section. PRT Baghlan
27. Otto Wijers. Project Manager Baghlan. DCA
28. Christer Persson. Regional Director. SCA
29. Tom Speth. Deputy commander. PRT Baghlan
30. Michael van Winden. Political Advisor. PRT Baghlan
31. Jacoub Sidiqi. Program Officer. Child Fund Afghanistan
32. Deputy Director. Pul-i-Khomri Cement Factory
33. Hans Oosterkamp. Irrigation Specialist. EC
34. Mullah. 'Textile Mosque'. Pul-i-Khomri
35. Poanmal Hasan Shah Raaimi. Rector. Baghlan University
36. Abdul Bari. Mayor. Pul-i-Khomri
37. Alida Meghji. Regional Grants and Donor Officer. Aga Khan Foundation
38. Jan Groen. Psyops. PRT Baghlan
39. Frans Kroon. Psyops. PRT Baghlan
40. De Waal. Functional Specialist. PRT Baghlan
41. Laarman. Functional Specialist. PRT Baghlan
42. Whole IDEA team. PRT Baghlan

### Mazar-i-Sharif

43. Christopher Finuncane. Regional Safety Office. ANSO
44. Miriam Simonds. Field Program Officer. USAID
45. Abdul-Rauf Qaderi. Regional Manager. ACBAR
46. Mr. Zikrullah. Regional Manager. AREA
47. Laura Wilkinson. Head of Office. IOM
48. Dr. Abdul Sattar Sayeed. North Regional Manager. NPO/RRAA
49. Dr. Raymond Briscoe. Regional Programme Director. DCA
50. Mohammed Akbar Qati. Project Manager. SC-UK
51. Mohammed Rafi Aziz. Assistant Programme Manager. SC-UK
52. Mullah of the Hazat-e-Ali Mosque
53. Lieutenant Martin Fink. Naval Staff, Legal. Election Support Forces (ESF)
54. Lieutenant Martijn van Keulen. CIMIC. ESF
55. Lieutenant-Colonel R.G. Oppelaar. Royal Netherlands Marine Corps. ESF
56. Wim van der Lely. Royal Netherlands Marine Corps. ESF
57. Christian Rouffaer. Head of Sub Delegation. ICRC

## Kandahar

58. Christian Dennys. Policy and Advocacy Advisor. Oxfam UK
59. Captain Alex Donswijk. CIMIC Officer. Dutch Special Forces. KAF
60. Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis Edwards. Chief US Civil Affairs. KAF
61. Captain Arjan Wiering. Regional Command South. KAF
62. Mwalim Amin. Interpreter, teacher and resource person
63. Major Ron Locke. Head CIMIC Section. PRT Kandahar
64. Officers Petrelli and Glynn. CIMIC Section. PRT Kandahar
65. Ashley Abbott. Field Program Officer USAID. PRT Kandahar
66. Lieutenant Ryan Palmer. PsyOps Officer. PRT Kandahar
67. Doucette. Commander. PRT Kandahar
68. Superintendent Wayne Martin. Head RCMP. PRT Kandahar
69. Shafiula Afghan. Assistant Foreign Affairs Canada. PRT Kandahar
70. Mr. Fazal. Director DoRR
71. Shafi Khan. Regional Manager. AIMS
72. Mr. Karim. Head of Office. IOM Kandahar
73. Mr. Fahim. Program Coordinator. Oxfam UK
74. Mr. Rachman. Director. AHDS
75. Najmuddin Mojadedi. Executive Director. VARA
76. Mr. Said. Assistant Manager. SC UK
77. Ismael Khan. Engineer. UNDP

## Liberia

### Monrovia

78. Anthony R. Difilippo. Country Representative. CRS
79. Jean-Yves Bonzi. QIP Unit. UNMIL
80. Olivier Bousquet. Chief of Mission. IOM
81. Bob Hedley. Country Director. ZOA
82. Dieneke van der Wijk. Programme Director. SC-UK
83. Joanna Nathan. Senior Analyst Afghanistan. International Crisis Group
84. Douglas Jones. Field Information Officer. Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC)
85. Annette Rehl. Public Information Officer. UNHCR
86. Peter Kamei. National General Secretary. YMCA Liberia

- 87. Comfort Ero. Political Policy and Planning Officer. UNMIL
- 88. Charles Achodo. DDDR Program and Policy Advisor. JIU-UNDP
- 89. S. Tornolah Varpilah. Head of Office. WANEP Liberia
- 90. Al Hassan Conteh. President. University of Liberia
- 91. Dennis Johnson. Chief. HCS
- 92. Etweda A. Cooper. Secretary General. Liberian Women Initiative
- 93. Sebastian Weber. Head of Mission. MSF-H
- 94. Faith Harding. Senior RRR Officer. UNMIL
- 95. Beth Eggleston. INGO Liaison Officer. MSG
- 96. Tyrone Stephen. Logistics and administration manager. Oxfam
- 97. Peter Tingwa. Chief Civil Affairs. UNMIL
- 98. Bestman Charpy. Executive Director. INHRC
- 99. Derk Frank. Deputy Director. German Agro Action
- 100. Nick Sanders. Landmine Action
- 101. Tobias Epprecht. Head of Delegation. ICRC
- 102. Albert Fiawosime. CIMIC officer. WFP

*Zwedru*

- 103. Dusco Bodrozic. Senior Naval Captain. Milobs
- 104. Ronny Calitto. Area Coordinator. HCS Sub-office
- 105. Tsegaye Hailu. CIMIC Officer. UNMIL
- 106. Peter Nga. Civil Affairs Officer. UNMIL
- 107. Mr. Moses. Program Officer. Caritas
- 108. Joe Mchindo. Head Administrative Affairs. UNMIL
- 109. Dan Ledger. Program Coordinator. MERLIN
- 110. Dr. Abiy. MERLIN
- 111. Ernest Solomon. Nurse at hospital. MSF-B
- 112. Robert Niamey. RRR Section. UNMIL
- 113. Washington Zeal. Acting Field Manager. SC-UK
- 114. Godfrey Bondo. Admin/Fin. Assistant. SC-UK
- 115. David Gonuroe. Social worker. SC-UK
- 116. Gianni Volpin. Head of office. ICRC
- 117. Jason Acimovic. Administrator. MSF-B
- 118. Katrien. Protection Officer. UNHCR
- 119. Flomo V. Golanyon. Head of Sub-office. WANEP
- 120. Wilfred Tokpah. Officer in Command. WFP
- 121. Ophelia Gladys. Mayor of Zwedru
- 122. Edwin Dorbor. Assistant Project Officer. UNICEF
- 123. Mr. Galarpe. Civpol Officer. UNMIL
- 124. Major E. Flah Doe. CID Commander. Grand Gedeh County
- 125. Sabastine Wawood. Regional Coordinator. NAFAPD

*Voinjama*

- 126. Rafaël Richetti. Junior Field Officer. HCS-UNMIL
- 127. Monica Anderson. Senior Field Officer. HCS-UNMIL
- 128. Aminu Shittu. Civil Affairs. UNMIL
- 129. Naomi Robinson. Reintegration Coordinator. GTZ
- 130. Johansson. National Ex-combatants Peace building Initiative
- 131. Gary Nelson. Civpol. UNMIL
- 132. Bilal Abbas. CIMIC liaison officer. PakBatt-4

- 133. Andrew Jeejuah. Head of Field Office. FIND
- 134. Chester Clark. Reintegration Section. UNHCR
- 135. Mohammed Conte. Field Coordinator. IRC
- 136. Syed Wajid Raza. Commander. Pakbatt-4
- 137. Kathia Lorenz. Head of Office. ICRC
- 138. Mr. Perez. Head of Office. Jesuit Refugee Service
- 139. Shadrach Young. JIU. UNMIL
- 140. Joseph Yengbe. Development Superintendent. Lofa County
- 141. Ervin Yango. Lofa County Coordinator. LRRRC
- 142. Nelson Sayon. Supervisor Voinjama District. LRRRC
- 143. Kormassa Crusoe. VOWODA
- 144. George Duwana. Regional Officer. PMU-Liberia

