



DIIS REPORT
THE CIVIL-MILITARY AGENDA



DIIS REPORT

**CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS
IN IRAQ 2003-7**
THE DANISH EXPERIENCE

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List of Abbreviations

AGEF	Association of Experts in the Field of Migration and Development Cooperation
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
CPA	Concerted Planning and Action
DANBN	Danish Battalion
DANILOG	Danish International Logistics Centre
DC	Defense Command
DCA	DanChurchAid
DDG	Danish Demining Group
DEMA	Danish Emergency Management Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
HUM	Office for Humanitarian Aid and NGOs
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee's
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IIG	Iraqi Interim Government
IMR	Danish Institute for Human Rights
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRCT	International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
JAM	Jaish al-Mahdi
LGF	Local Governance Fund
MENA	Middle East and North Africa Office
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MNF	Multinational Force
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoI	Ministry of Integration
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NPCO	National Police Commissioner's Office
OCHA	United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RCD	Red Cross Denmark
RUD	Reconstruction Unit Denmark
SCD	Save the Children Denmark
SCIRI	Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq

SCSC	Standing Civil Servants Committee
STE	Steering Unit
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

Executive Summary

This report forms part of a larger study of how the Danish government can improve its concerted civil- military planning and action, based on the Danish experience, primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan. The report is based on a desk study including interviews with Danish personnel who took part in the Iraq operation. A field-based study could not be carried out due to the security situation at the time of planning.

Denmark joined the US-led intervention in Iraq in March 2003 and contributed to the occupation force with a battalion-size ground force under British command in Basra from May 2003 to August 2007. Denmark also granted DKK 645 million for humanitarian aid and reconstruction, focusing on Basra Governorate and seeking out niches not covered by other donors. The overall coalition planning for the post-intervention phase was unimpressive and did not foresee the possibility of a rapid deterioration in security conditions caused by mounting insurgency and factional infighting. This development influenced civil-military relations greatly as international and non-governmental organizations left Iraq.

The Danish government launched the Concerted Planning and Action (CPA) Initiative in 2004 in order to increase the synergies between civil and military activities. The concept developed alongside the operation in Iraq, which became a testing ground for its relevance, possibilities and limitations. Partly it was a response to the deteriorating security situation, which was hampering civilian reconstruction on the ground. Therefore the concept contained guidelines for the Danish armed forces' facilitation of reconstruction activities, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A special training course for CIMIC troops and the deployment of a civil advisor supported the implementation of quick-impact projects worth a total of DKK 33 million, or ca. 4,5% of the total of Danish development aid to Iraq in 2003-7.

While the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative is broadly associated with these 'CPA-projects', it also aimed at increasing synergies between Danish military and civil activities at large. For this purpose, an interdepartmental Standing Civil Servant Committee was established at the strategic level, while after some delay a civilian Steering Unit was established in Basra in 2005. Danish personnel were also posted to the Coalition Provisional Authority and, from 2006, to the UK-led Provincial Reconstruction Team set up to provide support for civil and military capacity-building. The operation of both entities was severely affected by the security situation. Overall

it is the impression that planning and coordination between the different entities and levels in the Coalition never became optimal.

The report observes that the Danish armed forces' facilitation of reconstruction projects – the 'small' Concerted Planning and Action – was an unfamiliar field for the military, but that operations improved considerably over the four years of deployment. Specialized and mission-specific training courses, the long-term deployment of civil advisors, and the overlapping deployment of troops involved in reconstruction have all proved to be good practices. However, short rotations have impeded continuity, the funding mechanism across institutions has had its flaws, and the troops have required more specific strategic guidance. Due to the conditions and capacities involved, standards of needs assessment and monitoring have been (much) leaner than in normal development practice. Little is therefore known about the actual outcome of the projects in terms of their function and impact on local conflict dynamics.

Furthermore, at the height of the conflict, visits to the districts involved so many troops that the number of contacts that was possible to make in the ten districts of the Danish area of operation was severely reduced.

With regard to the 'big' Concerted Planning and Action, the strategic relationship between military and civilian activities followed the logic of post-conflict peace-building operations: the Danish armed forces were expected to contribute to the general security which would permit Danish-funded reconstruction to take place in the Basra area, while reconstruction in turn would increase support for the authorities. However, as security deteriorated, this scheme broke down and the Danish entities became embroiled in a complex conflict of which they were themselves a part. After elections in 2005, the overall Danish strategy became more focused on the capacity-building of the administration, police and army as an exit strategy. This makes much sense in a post-conflict scenario, but under the given conditions, the new state institutions tended to serve the interests of the warring factions, rather than facilitating a solution to the conflict.

In this (stabilization) scenario, the armed forces were indispensable for the close protection of Danish civilian personnel involved in reconstruction and capacity-building programs. On the ground, civilian and military activities were extensively coordinated between the Steering Unit and the Danish battalion with regard to escorts, the monitoring of projects and joint meetings with district councils. But

only limited strategic discussion or coordination took place between civilian and military entities, Danish as well as British.

At the strategic level, and with the luxury of hindsight, it seems that the Danish civil-military approach never really adjusted to the unfamiliar challenges at hand. Further development of the approach would have implied that the strategy had reflected considerations of the possible interactions and mutual impact of its different civilian and military elements. How, for example, were the agricultural and local governance programmes expected to affect the military and political dynamics of conflict? How did military search and arrest operations influence the ability to engage in reconstruction and capacity-building? And were these elements the most appropriate for facilitating a political transformation of the conflicts?

Apart from this general problem of strategic development, the report finds that the operationalization and realistic benchmarking of strategic objectives was a weak point in the civil-military approach. In the experience of Steering Unit staff, their flexibility and results under the volatile conditions would have improved if there had been a clearer strategic framework and mandate for decentralized decision-making, continuous support from headquarters, and a local grant authority. Finally, pre-mission preparation and debriefing of civilian personnel could also have been improved.

At the international level, and despite the particular circumstances of the Iraqi context, the operation points to the importance and problems of shared pre-mission civil-military planning and knowledge, as well as the extent to which, in the absence of a strategic framework, Denmark is liable to become a purely reactive player, with little or no influence over decision-making.

If the government wants to pursue a more comprehensive civil and military approach to international operations, the report recommends that

1. the government undertakes regular revisions of the strategies for gathering, analysing and sharing information with relevant partner governments and organizations with regard to evolving crisis situations.
2. the government strengthens the capacity for the development of integrated strategies that include considerations of how different (civil and military) elements of the strategy may affect each other, as well as the overall stabilization of the area of operation.

3. the ministries involved ensure clear and system-wide communication of overall strategies and put emphasis on how the general strategic goals are to be translated into realistic operational goals.
4. the government ensures clear policy frameworks and mandates for coordinating entities at the field level where local grant authority and some level of political representation will allow for flexible and timely operational decisions. Also the posting of staff from the ministries to coordinating offices is likely to improve communication between Copenhagen and the field.
5. the institutions involved further strengthen the joint training and briefing of civilian and military personnel based on realistic scenario exercises, as well as emphasising the overlapping or maybe extended deployment of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) teams and as-long-as-possible deployment of Civil Advisors.
6. the institutions involved develop common benchmarks and indicators for operations, and harmonize and centralize the management of monitoring, reporting, debriefing, evaluation and lessons learned across the participating entities.
7. the government promotes a collaborative UK/DK/Iraqi investigation in the Basra area to capture the local perspectives and possible effects of civil-military activities.

I. Introduction

This report¹ is concerned with Danish civil-military cooperation in southern Iraq from the deployment of a Danish battalion (DANBN) in Basra Province in May/June 2003 after the fall of the Ba'ath regime in April the same year until the withdrawal of the battalion in August 2007

On 20 March 2003, a US-led 'coalition of the willing' launched a military attack on Iraq that ended the regime of Saddam Hussein in three weeks.² The coalition had decided to act on the authority of UN Resolutions 687 of 3 April 1991 and 1441 of 8 November 2002, citing the fact that Iraq's government had still not lived up to the demands and conditions set out in these resolutions regarding the dismantling of its programme of Weapons of Mass Destruction.³ An occupation of Iraq by western forces, Denmark included, followed. Denmark engaged in the military intervention in Iraq by way of Parliamentary Resolution B118 of 21st March 2003, which was adopted one day after the US-led coalition started bombing Baghdad.⁴

The coalition's military victory over the Ba'ath regime was as decisive as it was quick. It soon became clear, however, that the initial success of the military campaign would not immediately translate into success in post-conflict stabilization, as the occupa-

¹ It would not have been possible to write this report without the assistance of several people. I would like express my gratitude to Peter Viggo Jacobsen, Rima Das Pradhan-Blach and Ole Therkelsen who have commented on various drafts, while bearing no responsibility for any errors or inanities that remain. Michael Jedig Jensen and Jakob Rogild Jakobsen deserve credit for helping setting up interviews and getting access to documents. I would also like to thank Jacob Bang Jeppesen and Ida Marie Vammen who assisted in transcribing interviews. Lastly, I would like to thank the people who generously offered their time for participating in interviews for the report.

² The decision in favour of military action against the Iraqi regime was taken despite deep divisions in the transatlantic community between those wishing to continue with inspections (mainly France, Germany and Russia) and those wanting immediate regime change (mainly, the United States, Britain and Spain). This division was unprecedented in its scope and intensity (Asmus 2004).

³ Although the Security Council itself had not authorized the attack (Marr 2004; Knudsen 2004), a mandate for a multinational security force – the Multi National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) – was acquired subsequently through UN Security Council resolution 1546 of 8 June 2004. This mandate has since been extended through Security Council resolutions 1637 (2005), 1723 (2006) and 1790 (2007), the last of which expires on 31 December 2008.

⁴ The decision to join Operation Enduring Freedom, as the US-led military campaign was called, was highly controversial and sparked widespread and large-scale public protests, mainly in the major population centres. Resolution B118 can be found at http://www.folketinget.dk/Samling/20021/beslutningsforslag_som_fremsat/B118.htm. The minutes of the debate concerning Parliamentary Resolution B118 and the issues discussed in the Defence Committee can be found at <http://www.folketinget.dk/doc.aspx?/Samling/20021/MENU/00768267.htm>. The continuation of the Danish involvement in Iraq was authorized through Parliament Resolutions B89 of June 2005, B63 of January 2006 and B139 of May 2006. Financial support was provided in accordance with Parliamentary Appropriations 111 (2003), 158 (2005) and 106 (2007).

tional forces found themselves faced with a persistent and well-organized insurgency, which was soon being supported and bolstered by al-Qaeda. To make matters worse, a deadly latent ethnic and sectarian conflict, mainly between Sunni and Shi'a, erupted in the faces of the occupiers.

The failed policies of the coalition were a significant factor in the rapid deterioration of the situation in Iraq. Critics have pointed out that the planning and execution of the post-conflict phase – known as Phase IV – by the US military was unimpressive.⁵ According to O'Hanlon, the biggest mistake in Iraq was to go to war without a complete Phase IV plan (stabilization and reconstruction). 'Invading another country with the intention of destroying its existing government yet without a serious strategy for providing security thereafter defies logic and falls short of proper professional military standards of competence' (O'Hanlon 2004). Some early policy decisions made by the coalition had deadly long-lasting impacts. The de-Ba'athification of the country alongside the wholesale disbanding of the Iraqi army created a large pool of alienated, well-armed, politically mobilized and resourceful Iraqis, mainly Sunni Arabs. This group went on to lead the insurgency against the Coalition and the new Shi'a-dominated government.

The deterioration of the security situation in Iraq came as a surprise to the Coalition of the Willing, including Denmark. Rather than conducting reconstruction and stabilization in a post-conflict scenario à la Kosovo, as it was initially assumed it would be doing, the Phase IV effort had to be carried out while fighting an unfolding conflict in which the Danes too became embroiled.

Initially Danish policy-makers envisaged that humanitarian work and rebuilding would be carried out, whether as bilateral development projects or through NGOs or via UN organizations.⁶ However, the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003 compelled the organization to pull out of Iraq, and many coalition partners and international organizations decided to follow suit, bringing reconstruction almost to a halt.

The fact that it was becoming increasingly difficult for civilian organizations to work in Iraq prompted the Danish government to channel funding to the Danish battalion to carry out civilian reconstruction and humanitarian aid and to develop a strategy

⁵ See, for instance, Cordesman (2007), Egnell (2006), O'Hanlon (2004).

⁶ See, for instance, Parliamentary Decision no. B 1 10 October 2003.

for a more coordinated effort between civilian and military entities in Iraq, which was called the *Concerted Planning and Action Initiative*.

1.1 The Object of Analysis and Approach

The object of analysis in this study is civil-military cooperation in relation to the Danish efforts in Iraq. A key objective of the analysis is to identify 'lessons learnt' from the Danish intervention in Iraq in order to improve civil-military cooperation in future interventions in conflict situations. Inevitably assessment will tend to be affected by the benefit of hindsight, a luxury that the actors involved did not enjoy.

The difficult security situation required increased physical protection for Danish civilian personnel, which by extension required the increased involvement of the Danish armed forces in fields other than strictly military ones. The evolution of events in Basra underscored the fact that military and civilian entities would have to work together and coordinate their efforts on a hitherto unprecedented scale, and it also contributed to the Danish Government's launching of the so-called Concerted Planning and Action Initiative, 'Samtænkning af civile og militære indsatser i internationale operationer' in March 2004. The concept developed alongside the operation in Iraq, which became a testing ground for its relevance, possibilities and limitations.

It is important to underscore that investigating Danish *civil-military cooperation* in Iraq is not the same as investigating Danish civilian *and* military activities in Iraq: whereas the former relates specifically to the interaction between civilian and military counterparts, the latter covers the full range of civilian and military activities conducted in Iraq. The report focuses on the strategy and implementation of civil-military cooperation.

Hence, taking the intention to increase the coherence of the Danish intervention as its point of departure, this report considers how civil and military activities have been related at 1) the strategic level, including the development of analysis and policy, and 2) the level of implementation, including, planning, institutional set-up, the procurement of human and financial resources, operational coordination, the monitoring of function and effects, feedback mechanisms, and the capacity for adjustment and adaptation. However, the pursuit of greater coherence involves at least three different dimensions:⁷

⁷ De Coning 2007.

- 1) Coherence of the donor government's activities. In this regard, the report examines both the broad and narrow senses of civil-military interaction as set out in the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative. In the broad sense, the Danish armed forces were expected to support Danish reconstruction efforts by contributing to general security and providing logistics and protection. In the narrow sense, the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative implied that the Danish battalion was expected, if necessary, to facilitate and manage smaller projects funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).⁸
- 2) Coherence of international activities (harmonization). Seeing the Danish contribution as part of overall coalition activities, the report looks in particular at the relations between the Danish contributions on the one hand and the UK Brigade and Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Basra on the other.
- 3) The alignment of international contributions with the needs and plans of the authorities and population of the recipient society. For this dimension, the report considers how Danish and coalition activities linked up with the growth of the Iraqi authorities and political-military dynamics in Basra.

1.1.1 Method

The report is based on a desk study combined with interviews with key persons. A planned, complementary field study was abandoned due to the fact that Basra was embroiled in factional violence when the study was being planned. This implies that the present assessment of the effects of Danish civil-military cooperation in Iraq is based on second-hand knowledge and to a large extent on the perspectives of the Danish actors involved, rather than their local counterparts or the intended beneficiaries. This has had the important and unfortunate effect that it has not been possible to assess how Danish aid has been received by its beneficiaries or whether it has had the intended effects. By the same token, this makes it very difficult to establish whether or not it has had any unintended effects. The analysis will therefore concentrate on the issue of the organization of the Danish civil-military effort, rather than on the effects it had on the beneficiaries.

⁸ The report covers only the activities carried out in the period that the Danish battalion was stationed in the Basra area (April/May 2003-August 2007), meaning that the effort in Bagdad from March 2007 will not be an object of analysis here.

Data for this report have come from various sources:

- 1) Interviews conducted with personnel who have been involved in Danish civil-military cooperation in Iraq, ranging from personnel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Basra Steering Unit, civil advisers to the Danish battalion in Iraq, Reconstruction Unit Denmark (RUD) officers, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) officers, other personnel from the Danish battalion, the British division in southern Iraq, the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra, the Coalition Provisional Authority in Basra, and personnel from the Danish police.
- 2) Reports produced by the various institutions that have been involved in civil-military cooperation in Iraq (e.g. end of tour reports from the Danish battalion, the minutes of the Standing Civil Servants Committee (SCSC) and the Iraq analyses).
- 3) Secondary literature, including academic articles, newspaper articles, textbooks and consultancy reports. The secondary literature has primarily been used to set out the social, economic, political and security context within which Danish civil-military cooperation took place.

However, the available documentation is limited. In particular, the scarcity of overall programme or project documents or more systematic reporting based on such documents makes it difficult to assess civil-military cooperation. Relevant documentation on the activities implemented in Iraq has not been available.⁹

Furthermore, it has not been possible to locate and access all the relevant personnel due to a lack of manpower, time and availability. Certain findings are therefore based on a limited number of interviews, making some of the evidence anecdotal. The report does not claim to be a representative qualitative investigation.

1.2 Structure of the Report

Section 2 will provide a rough outline of the operational context in order to highlight some of the most important factors that had an impact on the Danish effort in Iraq. Sections 3 and 4 will identify and analyse Danish civil and military activities in Iraq. While Section 3 focuses on the overall development of strategy

⁹ For instance, neither Education Reports written by RUD officers at the end of their mission nor a Defence Command report on lessons learned in Iraq have been made available.

in Denmark, Section 4 describes the implementation of the strategy for civil-military cooperation. By way of conclusion, Section 5 will summarize the findings and offer recommendations.

2. Operational Context

2.1 Socio-economic Situation

Iraq has a rich resource base – the third-largest oil-reserves in the world, abundant water, and a national labour force of more than seven million people. Thirty years ago, Iraq led the Middle East and North Africa region in social development indicators, such as maternal and child mortality, nutrition, literacy, and secondary school enrolment (World Bank 2006: 1). However, the launch of Iraq's ill-fated military campaign against Iran in September 1980 was the starting point for a long and steady decline in the socio-economic conditions of the country's population at large. The aftermath of the Gulf War in 1991 was the worst period in Iraq's modern history, when UN sanctions and the regime's own policies eroded Iraq's wealth and its resources and set back its economic development. Living standards, health and education also fell dramatically, in spite of modest progress following Iraq's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 986 (oil-for-food) in 1996.¹⁰ Per capita income, once over USD 3,600, declined to below USD 1,000 by 2001/2002. GDP fell by 41% in 2003 following the coalition's invasion. The economy rebounded in 2004, growing by 46%, but annual growth slowed over the 2005-2006 period, with real GDP growth estimated at 1.5% for 2007. Per capita income was 2,108 in 2007 (World Bank 2008). In effect, about 8-10% of the Iraqi population was estimated to be living in absolute poverty, and a further 12-15% were vulnerable to falling into absolute poverty (World Bank 2006: 1).

In sum, it can be noted that there was an acute need for reconstruction in Iraq following the invasion, a need which remains significant today.

2.2 The Political Landscape in Iraq, 2003-2007

From the beginning of the Danish engagement in Iraq in March 2003 until today, the country has been governed by four distinct administrations at the central level:

¹⁰ In this period, the country's GDP rose from 15.4 billion USD in 1997 to 26.1 billion USD in 2002. Similarly, its GDP per capita rose from 725 USD in 1997 to 1.078 USD in 2002.

Box 2.1 Human development indicators in Iraq

Although there is a scarcity of reliable data, surveys indicate that there has been a downward trend in almost all human development indicators relative to a baseline of 1980. The 2004 Iraqi Living Conditions Survey documented the severe deterioration in the quality of life of Iraqis (UNDP 2004). This is currently being updated by the World Bank. The 2004 Survey shows the state of living conditions in Iraq in 2004. Some of the key findings were:

The health system has declined severely. Although there is good coverage of health clinics and hospitals, many in the population could not afford health services (27% in the South Region). 8% of the Iraqi population suffers from a chronic health problem. 23% of children suffer from malnutrition

There is widespread unemployment. In 2004 Iraq faced an unemployment level of 18.4%. However, the unemployment rates were much higher among young people (aged 15-24), reaching 33.4 %. The Brookings Institute estimates that as of June 2008 the nation-wide unemployment rate is 25-40% (Brookings Institute 2008).

Infrastructure has deteriorated significantly. Though a good proportion of the population is connected to water, electricity or sewage networks, their supply is too unstable to make a difference to their lives.

The education system has deteriorated significantly. Although 79% of children attend government schools, the literacy rate among the young (15-24 years of age) reached only 74%, which is less than that of the 25-34 age group. This indicates the deterioration in the education system (UNDP 2004).

- 1) The first one after the intervention was the Coalition Provisional Authority, a coalition-led administration vested with the executive, legislative and judicial authority to govern Iraq.¹¹
- 2) Secondly, on 22 July, the Coalition Provisional Authority appointed the members of the Iraqi Governing Council in response to criticism that the US-dominated Coalition Provisional Authority was unwilling to engage seriously either the Iraqi people or the international community.
- 3) Thirdly, on 28 June 2004, the US transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government. The IIG was perceived as a US-appointed body by many Iraqis, and opposition to it was strong.
- 4) In 2005 elections were held for a Transitional National Assembly, whose main task was to draft a new constitution for Iraq. To a large extent the Arab Sunni community, in which the deposed Ba'ath administration had its strongest representation, boycotted the elections. The Sunnis were therefore largely left out of the constitutional deliberations. Following parliamentary approval, a national referendum was held on 25 October 2005. The constitution was supported by 79% of Iraqis, but it was rejected in three Sunni-dominated provinces. National and provincial elections were held on 15 December 2005, with Sunni participation. In order to gain power, Iraqi political leaders appealed to ethnic and sectarian identity with great success, mobilizing these sentiments and organizing coalitions on this basis, and thus furthering the division of Iraq largely along ethnic and sectarian lines. A coalition of Shiites, the United Iraqi Alliance, received 46.6% of the vote, the Kurdish parties 21.1% and the Sunnis 21.1% (Marr 2007: 22), but not until May 2006, after long and difficult negotiations, was Nouri al-Maliki of the United Iraqi Alliance sworn in as prime minister, and Iraq's fourth post-invasion government was formed.

2.2.1 A Change of Power

While the fall of the Ba'ath regime certainly pluralized and liberalized political life in Iraq as a whole, it also stimulated and solidified ethnic and sectarian politics (International Crisis Group 2004a). In the earliest days of the Coalition Provisional Authority, a number of policy decisions were made which had long-lasting effects. First, the Coalition Provisional Authority disbanded the 400,000-man Iraqi army. Secondly, it promulgated a de-Ba'athification law, which banned Ba'ath Party members above a certain rank from being employed in the country's public sector. Even at the time, these decisions were strongly criticized on account of the fact that the

¹¹ Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1.

dissolution of the army and the de-Ba'athification of the public sphere would create a large pool of disenfranchised Iraqis, mainly Sunni Arabs, who had lost their positions as a result of the transitional process. This exacerbated sectarian divisions, and it was precisely this group that would go on to lead and organize the insurgency in Iraq (International Crisis Group 2003, Jabar 2004, Marr 2006).

While de-Ba'athification led to the virtual collapse of Iraq's governing structures, political transition led to a sectarian reversal of power in Iraq, as the post-invasion Iraqi governments were composed mainly of Shi'a Muslims and to a lesser extent Kurds rather than Sunni Arabs, as had been the case during Ba'ath Party rule.¹²

2.2.2 *The Insurgency*

Hopes that the coalition's quick military victory would serve as the launch pad for a new and prosperous era in Iraq were quickly dampened as an insurgency organized mainly by former Ba'athists emerged. To make matters worse, the insurgency was soon bolstered by al-Qaeda (International Crisis Group 2003; Washington Institute for Near East Policy 2003).¹³ In the Shi'a regions, dissatisfaction with the occupation also escalated, especially among the urban poor. Many young men without jobs or other prospects became drawn to Shi'a sectarian political movements, especially of the brand advocated by the cleric Moqtada al-Sadr (Schmidt 2008; Knights and Williams 2007: 17-22). Meanwhile the Sunni insurgency continued to gather momentum and fell more and more under the influence of al-Qaeda (Hashim 2006; White 2006).¹⁴ In order to destabilize the various political processes and to challenge the authority of the new Iraqi government, the insurgents began a major offensive against civilian targets across Iraq, killing thousands.

Sectarian violence increased at the beginning of 2006. The trigger was the bombing of the Al Askari mosque in Samarra, an object of special reverence for the Shi'a majority, by Sunni insurgents. This prompted death squads, largely from Sadr's Jaish al-Mahdi (JAM) militia, to roam the streets of Baghdad and other major cities attacking Sunni mosques, killing Sunni civilians and clerics, and causing a spiral of

¹² The political leaders who rose to prominence on the national scene following the fall of the Ba'ath regime represent a stark contrast to the Ba'ath, for whereas about 61% of Ba'ath Party members were Sunni Arabs, and Sunni dominance was overwhelming in the decision-making positions, roughly 45% of leaders since Coalition of the Willing intervention are of Shi'a origin, 20% Kurdish, and only 20% Sunni. Most of the Ba'ath regime's inner circle originated from the so-called 'Sunni triangle'.

¹³ For a thorough analysis of the insurgency in Iraq, see Hashim, S. H. 2006, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*, London: Hurst & Company.

¹⁴ Al-Qaeda in Iraq was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

violence that threatened to take the country into a full-scale civil war (International Crisis Group 2006).

2.2.3 *The 'Surge' and its Impact*

There has been a reduction in violence in Iraq since January 2006 (Cordesman 2008). Some key policy decisions that are said to have contributed to the reduction of violence include first the 'new way forward' announced by President Bush on 10 January 2007, which essentially consisted in an increase of US troops in Baghdad.¹⁵ The majority of these troops were to support Iraqi forces to clear and secure neighbourhoods and to serve as advisors embedded in Iraqi Army units. As part of the 'surge' strategy, an additional 4,000 United States marines were deployed in Anbar Province, where al-Qaeda had a stronghold. These efforts are being replicated in other provinces. The second element in this process was the 'Sons of Iraq' strategy, which was based on the recruitment of an estimated 103,000 Iraqi auxiliary forces, some of them former insurgents, to fight al-Qaeda and to provide neighbourhood security.¹⁶ As of June 2008, the US had spent a total of USD 216 million on this controversial program.

However, recent critical reports have noted that a political settlement aimed at addressing the fundamental political differences between Iraqis is a *sine qua non* if the gains from the 'Surge' are to be translated into sustainable progress in the areas of reconstruction and security. According to the International Crisis Group, any political compromise would at the very least need to address the principal questions of the structure of the state (federalism/regionalization and the degree of devolution of power), the ownership, management and distribution of oil and gas wealth (a hydrocarbons law), and mechanisms for settling relations between post-Saddam 'winners' and 'losers' (International Crisis Group 2008).

2.3 The Coalition and Shiite Political Factions in Basra

The so-called 'Southern Sector' was under British military protection, assisted by a Danish military contingent from April/May 2003. The Southern Sector, later called Basra Province, which by and large became the Basra Governorate, was governed from Basra city, but was under the overall authority of the Coalition Provisional

¹⁵ Bush ordered the deployment of more than 20,000 soldiers or five additional brigades to Iraq and sent the majority of them into Baghdad.

¹⁶ As of 31 May 2008, 17,000 'Sons of Iraq' had transferred to full-time employment with the Iraqi Security Forces (US Department of Defence 2008).

Authority in Baghdad. Basra is the second largest city in Iraq, and the Governorate is economically very important due to its rich oil reserves and its important harbours on the Persian Gulf.

Immediately after the occupation of Iraq by the coalition, Basra was relatively peaceful, and UK and Danish forces were able to undertake policing using little protection. However, it did not take long for Basra to become engulfed in a vicious spiral of political violence, and significant resistance to the coalition emerged (Knights and Williams 2007). Basra was transformed into a bastion of Islamist groups, mainly the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the Sadrists and their associated militias, the Badr Brigades and Jaish al-Mahdi respectively. The Supreme Council and Sadrist political movements have been the two dominant political actors and main antagonists in the intra-Shi'a scramble for power in Basra province.

Given that the Danish effort was concentrated in southern Iraq in the British sector, it was heavily influenced by the overall strategy of the British and its implementation.

According to Knights and Williams (2007), the British government entered into a complex and factional environment in southern Iraq with a very simple plan and failed to develop an integrated Phase IV plan covering stabilization, reconstruction and the transition to self-rule. Post-war planning took place in an insular unit of the Cabinet Office and only gradually involved the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.¹⁷

British forces were unprepared for the collapse of law and order that followed the military victory. In addition, British forces were too thin on the ground to have any serious effect on the level of security of the population, and Basra city began 'suffering from an orgy of looting'.¹⁸ As a consequence, trust in the coalition's ability to provide security and relief was eroded.

Alongside reconstruction and security, the core task of the coalition was to prepare for a transition to Iraqi self-rule. For this purpose, the coalition was handicapped by the fact that in the southern sector, as elsewhere in Iraq, it was starting from a

¹⁷ See House of Commons uncorrected transcript of oral evidence to HC 1241-I, minutes of evidence taken before the Defence Committee, 'UK Operations in Iraq,' June 20, 2006. Available online: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmdfence/uc1241-i/uc124102.htm>.

¹⁸ The ratio of British troops to Iraqi civilians in Basra was approximately 1:370, in sharp contrast to the ratio of 1:50 in Kosovo, and even in even sharper contrast to the 1:40 ratio in Saddam's Basra (Knights and Williams 2007).

knowledge-base of zero (Knights and Williams 2007, International Crisis Group 2004b).¹⁹ As a speedy withdrawal was expected, the immediate priority of military leaders on the ground was to identify and appoint Iraqi administrative leaders, but the appointments were haphazard and not part of an overriding plan. As a consequence they were met with violent protests, and opposition to the coalition mounted.

The January 2005 provincial and district elections for parliament and district councils,²⁰ far from opening up the political field, formalized the domination of the Islamist parties, notably the Sadrist al-Fadhila (a Sadrist spin-off founded in 2003), the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), and the SCIRI-related Thar'Allah, an exclusively local party. The Basra governorship fell to al-Fadhila.

The result of these political arrangements was that local institutions came under the control of a plethora of factions, all intent on promoting their immediate interests. Parties fought most intensely over the three most valuable assets: oil-trafficking, control over the security forces, and access to public services and resources. Experts have shown that local parties have been massively engaged in oil-trafficking (International Crisis Group 2007, Knights and Williams 2007).²¹

The transition to Iraqi rule placed Iraqi politics off limits to the British military. Nevertheless, the security-sector reform mission gave the coalition a remit to monitor and ensure the reliability of the security forces. It became clear that the security forces were themselves becoming an element in the rising insecurity in Basra Province. In response, the coalition targeted militia cells inside the police force and municipal institutions for arrest. This provoked the local factions. From September 2005 onwards, the Governor arranged rallies against the coalition's presence. The provincial council suspended cooperation with the British and the Danes from October 2005 to May 2006,²² and security for the coalition forces and civilian representatives deteriorated further.

¹⁹ In the weeks that followed the fall of Basra, Britain's intelligence community contributed little to the military's initial understanding of the political landscape. The priority for coalition intelligence-gatherers remained the location of the former regime's leaders and the search for weapons of mass destruction.

²⁰ Some district councils were elected, while others were appointed through caucus meetings.

²¹ Governor Waeli's Fadhila controlled the Oil Protection Force and the local ministry spending contracts and awards. Waeli turned a blind eye to the massive diversion of crude oil products to both lucrative external markets and for internal resale (Knights and Williams 2007: 23).

²² It is often thought that the boycott of the Danish institutions, i.e. the Danish Battalion and Steering Unit, were solely due to the cartoon controversy that blew up in February 2006, but this was not the only factor, as the general boycott of the coalition preceded it.

An indication of the change in the security situation is the casualties which the coalition forces suffered in the province. In a five-year period, the figures were as follows:²³

Table 2.1 Multi-National Division South East casualties in Iraq 2003-8

Year	Number of Casualties
2003	30 (1 Dane*)
2004	16 (0)
2005	18 (1)
2006	33 (4)
2007	43 (1)
2008	2 (0)

* By friendly fire.

September 2006 saw the start of ‘Operation Sinbad’, a joint operation between the coalition forces and the Iraqi security forces. This was an attempt to crack down on local militias and hand over security to the newly vetted Iraqi security forces while kick-starting economic reconstruction.²⁴ The start of the operation was followed by a rise in attacks on coalition bases in Basra.

A key lesson derived from the context in Basra is the vital importance of a rapid stabilization of the post-war environment. Commentators have argued that the downward slide of the south began during the initial four-day period of looting

²³ Based on <http://icasualties.org/oif/Province.aspx>

²⁴ ‘Operation Sinbad’ was a joint coalition-Iraqi military effort to rehabilitate the police services, which later broadened into a general campaign to regain control of Basra. ‘Sinbad’ was a reconstruction-led CIMIC operation, closely coupled with police reform (assessment and training), and often undertaken alongside detention operations. Under the plan, each of Basra’s eighteen districts would sequentially be subjected to a two- to three-day ‘pulse operation’, cordon and search operations by Iraqi and coalition forces aimed at reducing the militia presence, seizing arms caches and making tangible improvements to local living conditions through ‘quick impact projects’. After each pulse, a further twenty-eight days of increased patrolling and continuing reconstruction then took place in the area (Knight and Williams 2007).

and self-liberation that took place across the region in early April 2004. Part of the reason for this was that the coalition was not present in sufficient numbers, nor were its forces geographically positioned or legally prepared to establish law and order quickly.

3. Danish Civil-military Cooperation in Iraq – The Strategic Level

In the early phase of the Danish engagement in Iraq, there was no explicit strategy for civil-military cooperation. However, steps in this direction were taken in September 2003 when guidelines on carrying out humanitarian and reconstruction work were developed for the Danish battalion's CIMIC units as the battalion became more involved with these activities as a consequence of the withdrawal of the civilian experts. The transfer of these tasks to the battalion, therefore, happened out of necessity rather than as part of a preconceived strategy for civil-military cooperation. The experience contributed to the decision to develop the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative, which in March 2004 became one part of the broader strategy for Iraq.

3.1 The Broad Strategy for Iraq

It is important to note that, to our knowledge, there exists no single document which can be said to describe the Danish strategy for civil-military cooperation in Iraq. Instead this strategy has to be extrapolated from three different types of document: Motions for Parliamentary Decisions,²⁵ Financial Appropriations,²⁶ and the Iraq analyses.²⁷

In B 118 of 21 March 2003, it is noted that Denmark has been engaged with its allies in the planning of a military intervention in Iraq since November 2002.²⁸ In the comments to B 118, the rationale behind the Danish engagement in the military intervention in Iraq is defined as contributing to 'the removal of the threat to international peace and security in the region'. However, in B 118 it is also noted that the military intervention must be accompanied by a 'substantial' Danish *humanitarian contribution*, as well as an 'effort' for the *reconstruction* of Iraq. In addition, B 118 emphasizes that an interim

²⁵ B 118, 21 March 2003; B 165, 15 May 2003; B 1, 10 October 2003; B 56, 2 December 2003; B 213, 2 June 2004; B 42, 25 November 2004; B 89, 31 May 2005; B 63, 26 January 2006; B 139, 30 May 2006, and B 162, 10 May 2007.

²⁶ Parliamentary Appropriation no. 111, 9 April 2003; Parliamentary Appropriation no. 158, 1 June 2005; Parliamentary Appropriation no. 66, 29 November 2005; Parliamentary Appropriations no. 105 and no. 106, 10 April 2007.

²⁷ Irak-analyse, April 2005; Irak-analyse, May 2006; Danmarks engagement i Irak, May 2007.

²⁸ B 118 does not mention that Denmark and its coalition partners planned the post-war phase together. Moreover, it has not been possible for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate an interview with personnel who were involved in the collaboration between Denmark and the rest of the coalition before the intervention.

administration, 'for instance, under the UN', must be established to ensure the 'conditions'. That the Danish government envisaged that the UN would be the authority following the removal of the Ba'ath regime is noteworthy, as in reality it was the Coalition Provisional Authority under the US Department of Defense which became the country's sovereign authority after the invasion. This suggests that the Danish government was not included in the planning of the post-war stabilization phase.²⁹

Danish humanitarian and reconstruction activities were guaranteed funding for the period 2003-2004 through Parliamentary Appropriation 111 of 9 April 2003, which granted DKK 180 million for humanitarian assistance and DKK 170 million for reconstruction activities.

In B 165 of 15 May 2003 – the Parliamentary Decision that authorized the deployment of a Danish battalion to Iraq (ca. 380 soldiers) – the 'overall objective' of the Danish engagement in Iraq is to bring about 'peace and stability in the country'. It is stated that, in order to reach this objective, the tasks ahead consist of 'distributing emergency aid, enforcing law and order, including the protection of Iraq's cultural heritage, and securing the conditions for the reconstruction of the country and the political transition process.'

Denmark decided to concentrate its effort on a 'humanitarian aid, reconstruction, police and military contribution' in southern Iraq during a 'transitional period'³⁰ in order to achieve the 'maximum effect' of its engagement. The strategy to achieve this was relatively straightforward: while international NGOs and International Organizations were to concentrate on reconstruction and humanitarian activities, the military was to concentrate on 'contributing to securing the conditions for reconstruction and relief, as well as the political transition process in the country'.³¹ Thus, from early on, the Danish effort in Iraq was underpinned by the rationale that civil and military engagement and humanitarian/reconstruction assistance are mutually dependent, with the military having a facilitating role.

The general assumption in the coalition was that the military operations would be over quickly. However, this assumption was soon challenged by the deteriorating security

²⁹ This is further strengthened by the minutes of a meeting of the Humanitarian Contact Group in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it is noted that 'the US and UK coupled their humanitarian and military efforts, making them confidential', Minutes, meeting in the Humanitarian Contact Group, 21 February 2003.

³⁰ B 165, 15 May 2003.

³¹ Parliamentary Resolution B 165, 15 May 2003.

conditions in Iraq.³² This impression can also be gleaned from the Danish Defense Intelligence Service (DIS), which assessed the threat level to the Danish forces in the south to be only ‘medium’³³ in May 2003.³⁴ One year later, the threat level was assessed to be ‘high’.³⁵ After the bombing of the UN headquarters in August 2003, most NGOs and International Organizations left Iraq. This had two major effects on Danish strategy in Iraq:

- 1) In the absence of a multilateral framework, Denmark placed a stronger emphasis on bilateral programmes.
- 2) Since international NGOs had left Iraq, it was decided to task the Danish Armed Forces with facilitating small-scale reconstruction and humanitarian work.

As the engagement in Iraq evolved and the security situation deteriorated, the need to intensify cooperation between civilian and military counterparts became more apparent. Hence, in B 213 of 2 June 2004, the need for a ‘strengthened harmonization of the civil and military efforts’ is noted. Due to the difficult security situation, it was also considered necessary that the Danish armed forces facilitate reconstruction and humanitarian work.

3.2 The Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid

In collaboration with the Coalition Provisional Authority-South leadership, Danish fact-finding missions identified a set of projects that were not already covered by the much larger US, UK and EU programmes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs November 2003). In addition, it was decided to create an on-site steering unit in Basra to coordinate and support the Danish reconstruction and humanitarian effort. Over the course of Denmark’s involvement in Basra, Danish civilian aid was spread out over six main fields. Box 3.1 shows an outline of Danish reconstruction and humanitarian activities carried out in Iraq in 2003-7, although some of them are still ongoing:

³² Interview, Middle East Office, 27 August 2008.

³³ A ‘medium’ threat level implies that ‘There is a general threat. There is capacity and/or intent and possible planning. Attack/injurious activity is not likely.’ <http://fe-ddis.dk/Presserum/Definition%20af%20trusselsniveauer/Pages/default.aspx>

³⁴ B 165, 15 May 2003.

³⁵ A ‘high’ threat level implies that: ‘There is a recognized threat. There is capacity, intent and planning. Attack/injurious activity is likely.’ <http://fe-ddis.dk/Presserum/Definition%20af%20trusselsniveauer/Pages/default.aspx> B 213, 19 May 2003.

Box 3.1 Outline of Danish reconstruction and humanitarian activities in Iraq 2003-7

1. Human rights and reform in the judicial sector, including police training

- Improvements in children's conditions in Basra province, UNICEF (DKK 10 million, ongoing).
- Women rights, UNIFEM (DKK 3.18 million, ongoing).
- Police training (DKK 3.54 million; the contribution of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has now ended, and police training is now financed from the fund under the Finance Act for police international operations).
- EU Just Lex (DKK 2.74 million, ended; new grant in 2007).
- Danish Institute for Human Rights (IMR) (DKK 7.50 million, ongoing).
- International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) (DKK 6.78 million, ongoing).

2. Democratization

- Support for preparations for elections (DKK 51.21 million, ended).
- International Media Support (DKK 3.03 million, ongoing).

3. Infrastructure

- Delivery of jetting and suction trucks to Basra (DKK 6.23 million, ended).
- Renovation of buoy vessel "NISR" (DKK 26.5 million, ended)
- Courthouse in Basra (DKK 0.85 million, ended).
- Delivery of blood gas analysers for hospitals (DKK 4 million, ended).
- UNDP's development fund for Iraq (DKK 20 million).
- Reconstruction projects facilitated by the DANBN in Basra as part of the CPA* initiative (approximately DKK 18.5 million being spent, ongoing).
- Construction of a transport corridor from the Persian Gulf to Bagdad (DKK 16.86 million, ongoing).

Box 3.1 (continued)**4. Agriculture**

- Agricultural programme, irrigation project and technical assistance (total grant DKK 30.5 million, ongoing).

5. Region of Origin Strategy initiatives

- Local Governance Fund (LGF) (total grant DKK 10 million).
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (DKK 35 million in all, ongoing).
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC) (DKK 45 million in all, ongoing).
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Association of Experts in the Field of Migration and Development Cooperation, (AGEF) (DKK 8 million, ongoing).

6. Humanitarian aid

- DanChurchAid (DCA) (DKK 14.3 million, ended).
- Danish Demining Group (DDG) (DKK 35 million, ongoing)
- United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) (DKK 20 million, ended).
- Caritas Denmark (8.6 million, ended).
- Red Cross Denmark (RCD) (10 million, ended).
- Save the Children Denmark (SCD) (DKK 10 million, ended).
- UNICEF (DKK 12 million, ended).
- United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (DKK 3 million, ended).
- Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) (DKK 1 million, ended).

As shown by the list, reconstruction and humanitarian aid has been substantial and has touched a broad range of areas in Iraq. As far as possible, Danish preparation and implementation of projects in Iraq followed development standards by focusing on capacity-building and participatory development,³⁶ in line with Danish development guidelines and policy. One noticeable difference is that Danish bilateral projects in Basra were stand-alone projects rather than part of a sector programme. This is due to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeking to find niches in southern Iraq which were not already being covered by the US, UK and the EU. Following the constitutional and general elections in late 2005, Denmark placed a more concerted focus on building up the capacity of the new Iraqi administration. To this end, in the spring of 2006 Denmark moved three advisers to the British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra, a coalition civil-military organization created with the purpose of advising the Iraqi administration. Denmark seconded expert personnel to the Coalition Provisional Authority-South government.

3.3 The Danish Armed Force's Strategy in Iraq³⁷

The Danish battalion formed part of a British-led brigade, which itself was part of the Multinational Division (South East). The battalion was subject to the directives given by their superiors in the British Division, but the overall strategy and rules of engagement were set out in the mandate provided by the Parliamentary Decisions. The rules of engagement did not allow offensive warfare and the battalion could not, for instance, engage in combat operations.³⁸ Before 28 June 2004, when the battalion was still an occupational force, it focused primarily on the task of providing physical security for the civilian population and the international community by participating in 'search and arrest' missions, patrolling, guarding important locations and carrying out border control. The battalion also carried out civilian reconstruction and humanitarian work, mainly with the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds³⁹ and regular CIMIC funds. Moreover, much of the work of providing security consisted of fighting crime. A key-element in the Danish battalion's approach – the so-called 'Danish model' – to

³⁶ Interview, Middle East Office, August 2008.

³⁷ There are a couple of interviews still pending for this part of the assignment, and crucial information is thus missing in this version.

³⁸ Group Interview, former Danish Battalion Commander Team 3 and Team 9.

³⁹ In May 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) formalized the Commander's Emergency Response Programme (CERP) in Iraq, authorizing coalition field commanders to use available funds to respond to urgent humanitarian, relief and reconstruction requirements within a commander's area of responsibility by executing programmes that immediately assist the Iraqis (SIGIR-08-006). From 7 January to 7 July 2007, a Danish general was in charge of the British division's CIMIC unit, and he channelled CERP funding to the Reconstruction Unit Denmark and CIMIC units.

providing security was to have as much contact and negotiation with local power-holders as practically possible in the Danish 'area of operation', and meetings were held with local sheiks and the district councils on a daily basis in order to settle possible disagreements and exchange information, so that the Danish battalion became involved in political stabilization as well.⁴⁰ Multinational Division South East (MND SE) called its approach to defeating Jaish al-Mahdi and other insurgents 'counter-insurgency', though this was not used as a fixed doctrine.⁴¹ Furthermore, in B 89 of 11 May 2005, it is noted that the 'Danish military effort will increasingly focus on the training and education of the Iraqi security forces to enable them to become responsible for the security of the country as quickly as possible,'⁴² this being part of a coalition-wide strategy.

From team 3 onwards, which began its tour of duty in February 2004, the Danish battalion was given the task of facilitating reconstruction and humanitarian activities as a consequence of the withdrawal of international NGOs and other international organizations. The Danish battalion's involvement in these civilian activities became a testing ground for the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative, which was launched in March 2004. However, the funding channelled through Concerted Planning and Action projects represents only a small part of overall funding. The concept in itself was nonetheless launched with a broader scope, namely to highlight the need to integrate civilian and military activities to a greater extent.

In sum, it can be said that the Danish Battalion's role expanded during the operation in Iraq, going from being part of an overall security umbrella to having a more active role in the capacity-building of the Iraqi security forces and reconstruction and humanitarian activities.

3.4 The Concerted Planning and Action Initiative

The Concerted Planning and Action Initiative was developed from 2003 to 2005, spurred on by 1) an evaluation of the Danish contribution to the intervention in Kosovo 1999-2003 that encouraged the Danish government to develop a strategy on civil-military cooperation, and 2) by the new challenges related to Denmark's engagement in Faizabad, Afghanistan, and later in Basra, Iraq. The Danish Government launched the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative in March 2004, and a policy

⁴⁰ Group Interview, former Danish Battalion Commander Team 3 and Team 9.

⁴¹ Group Interview, former Danish Battalion Commander Team 3 and Team 9.

⁴² Irak analyse, April 2005.

paper, 'Concerted planning and action of civilian and military efforts in international operations', was issued jointly by the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs outlining the vision and objectives of Concerted Planning and Action.⁴³ Moreover, two documents were produced providing the technical framework for civil-military cooperation in the field: 'Guidelines for military-humanitarian co-operation efforts financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' from September 2003, and 'Guidelines for military-civilian co-operation on humanitarian and reconstruction efforts financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' from September 2005.⁴⁴

The three documents emphasize that Concerted Planning and Action is intended to increase coordination between the civilian and military entities in order to contribute to the overall 'stabilization and normalization'⁴⁵ of a given conflict area. Moreover, the Concerted Planning and Action documents emphasize that only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when the security situation prohibits civilian actors from carrying out these activities, should the military engage in humanitarian and reconstruction activities. The 2003 and 2005 guidelines are similar, and both sets of guidelines set out several conditions for project selection that are in line with standard development principles. There are, however, some noticeable differences reflecting the lessons derived from the first two years of Concerted Planning and Action and the changing operational environment.

The 2003 guidelines refer mainly to humanitarian activities. For example, efforts should include 'reconstruction of infrastructure with a view to securing access for humanitarian assistance'. In the 2005 guidelines, the emphasis shifted towards reconstruction-oriented activities rather than humanitarian aid. The 2005 guidelines also have a rule-of-law aspect, have a stronger emphasis on the co-ordination and approval of projects by local authorities, specify that projects should be vetted by a civilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs adviser, and provide that projects should be carried out in accordance with international guidelines.⁴⁶

⁴³ It was the Head of the Office for International Operations in the Ministry of Defense and the Head of the Office for Humanitarian Aid and NGOs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that were responsible for the CPA initiative.

⁴⁴ According to the 2005 guidelines, revised guidelines were supposed to be made following a revision of activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, but this never happened.

⁴⁵ Concerted Planning and Action of Civilian and Military Efforts in International Operations, March 2004.

⁴⁶ According to the 2005 guidelines, projects must be carried out in accordance with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) international standards and the humanitarian *Code of Conduct for NGOs in Disaster Relief*. IASC was established in June 1992 as an inter-agency forum for co-ordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners.

Reflecting this change of focus, the 2005 guidelines stipulate that the aims of the Concerted Planning and Action projects are to:

- Meet elementary humanitarian needs
- Assist vulnerable and excluded groups
- Create immediate results in the form of material assistance to the local population
- Aid the (re-) building of the local administration
- Promote the legal security of individuals and groups

One of the innovations which came out of the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative was the establishment of a Standing Civil Servants Committee in April 2004, intended to create a forum for the coordination and collaboration of civil-military activities at the national level in Copenhagen.⁴⁷

In sum, the Danish strategy as it evolved in Iraq started out as a humanitarian and reconstruction-driven effort, which was supported by the military in an enabling role. But due to the increasingly difficult security situation in Iraq, the military itself was tasked with limited humanitarian and reconstruction tasks. Following the elections in 2005, the focus of both the military and civilian efforts shifted towards capacity-building, while maintaining a strong focus on civil-military cooperation.

⁴⁷ The Standing Committee was chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and included personnel from the Ministry of Defence, DC, DEMA, Danish National Police Commissioner's Office (NPCO), and DIS. Other stakeholders were invited when deemed relevant. The Standing Committee met on an ad hoc basis.

4. Implementation of the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative

This section describes and analyses how the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative was implemented in Iraq in the period from May/June 2003 to August 2007. The section describes the organization of civil-military cooperation, the financial framework, and the selection and pre-mission training of personnel. Lastly, civil-military cooperation in the field in Basra Province is analysed. It is important to keep in mind that the level of insecurity for Danish personnel in southern Iraq was unprecedented, and that this was the first mission in a largely Arab Moslem country by the Danish armed forces since the Suez crisis in 1956. Moreover, the Danish armed forces did not have any prior experience of acting as stand-ins for professional development experts, as they were asked to do in Iraq. Hence, at every step in the operation, the Danish actors were faced with new challenges.

4.1 Organization

4.1.1 In Denmark

At the highest strategic level in Copenhagen, civil-military cooperation was organized into different working groups. The Standing Civil Servants Committee was the formal focal point for cross-institutional civil-military cooperation. Significantly, the terms of reference for the Standing Committee state that no members are superior to any others in terms of institutional authority. The main tasks of the Committee were to:

- ‘Ensure, as far as possible, that a concerted Danish stabilization effort takes place in the area of responsibility where Danish military force is deployed, and plan relevant exit strategies for civilian crisis efforts.
- Work to ensure that as far as possible it is the civilian aid organizations, including private Danish ones, which carry out the stabilization efforts financed by Danish funding. As far as possible, the Danish stabilization effort should be coordinated with other actors’ stabilization efforts in the area of deployment.
- Discuss, plan and coordinate civilian stabilization activities in order to establish the basis for decision-making regarding the dimensions of the military security force in order to achieve the greatest possible effectiveness. The planning should, as far as possible, take place within an international coordinated framework.

- Discuss proposals for further civilian activities in relation to the concrete crisis-management effort.
- Exchange information about other Danish activities of relevance to the effort in the military area of operation.
- Make sure that the activities in the Danish area of operation are continuously evaluated with a view to gathering experience and potentially amending the concept [i.e. Concerted Planning and Action], including cost-efficiency.⁴⁸

While the Standing Committee was an important forum for discussion of the Concerted Planning and Action Initiative, a subgroup was formed to handle the implementation of civil-military cooperation in Iraq, including the creation of a joint strategy. In a summary from the Standing Committee, for instance, it is noted that: 'A strategy for the reconstruction effort in Iraq is being developed by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation. It was agreed that it was useful to keep the Standing Committee informed about the development of the strategy continuously – for instance, by e-mail.'⁴⁹ The overarching strategy for achieving these objectives was generated as a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Integration (MoI) in Copenhagen. While the Middle East and North Africa office (MENA) was in charge on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs side, the office for Planning and Operations, also known as the 1st Office, and the office for Security Cooperation and International Law, known also as the 8th Office, were in charge at the Ministry of Defence.⁵⁰ The Middle East Office drew upon different capacities on Iraq in the administration and had them deliver the necessary background information, which the office put together for the decision-makers in the Danish Parliament. The Middle East Office had on average four and in peak periods up to seven people working on Iraq plus a few student assistants. The day-to-day coordination of the operation on the ministerial level took the form of close collaboration between the Middle East Office and the Office for Security Policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Planning and Operations Office and Security Cooperation and International Law Office in the Ministry of Defence. In practice this governance network functioned not unlike the Afghanistan Task Force.

⁴⁸ Terms of Reference for the Standing Committee, April 2004.

⁴⁹ Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Committee, 8 March 2005.

⁵⁰ According to personnel in the Middle East Office, other actors that were consulted were the DIS, the Danish Police Intelligence Service (PIS), the Prime Minister's Department (PMD), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and the NPCO.

The Standing Civil Servants Committee was kept informed, serving as the coordinator on an ad hoc basis and as a clearing house for Concerted Planning and Action project expenses. Although not a formalized task force, the Middle East Office and its network of partners nevertheless took over strategy development for Iraq, as well as civil-military coordination functions and the day-to-day oversight of operations, and provided the 'reach-back' capacity for the Steering Unit and advisors on the ground in Basra. The Technical Assistance Service also played an important role by carrying out project identification. Later TAS became a sparring partner for Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel on the ground, but not in a systematic manner.⁵¹ The Humanitarian Office (HUM) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs served as the chair of the Standing Committee, was the point of contact for the civilian adviser to the Danish Battalion and, since it provided the bulk of the funding for the Concerted Planning and Action projects carried out by the Danish battalion, was responsible for the financial aspect of these projects.⁵²

In general, the staff involved with coordination and collaboration in the Standing Committee considered that coordination and collaboration between the different entities worked well.

4.1.2 In the Field

In 2003, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducted fact-finding missions in Iraq which provided the basis for the identification of bilateral reconstruction projects. An important finding from late October 2003 was that, due to the difficult operational environment, it would be necessary to strengthen the Danish representation in Basra by establishing a Steering Unit in Basra. This was formally established in February 2004 but did not become fully operational until 2005 (NIRAS 2007).⁵³ The Steering Unit was initially stationed at Basra Palace along with other coalition partners' representations and international donors, including the UN, but it was moved to Camp Danevang in September 2006 for security reasons.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Personal communication, TAS employee, 14 October 2008.

⁵² Interview in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 August 2008.

⁵³ Apart from normal representations such as embassies, consulates and offices, in certain situations the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established temporary offices with particular tasks in relation to difficult operations and scenarios. The primary task of these offices is to support, control and coordinate the Danish effort within a given but limited geographical area. A typical example is the Steering Unit in Pristina, which was established just after NATO intervened in Kosovo in June 1999. This was closed down when the Danish bilateral effort in Kosovo ended in 2003. The Embassy in Kabul also started out as an office for technical cooperation.

⁵⁴ When the Danish battalion moved to Camp Einherjer, the Steering Unit moved with it.

The task of the Steering Unit was two-fold: to facilitate the Danish reconstruction effort in southern Iraq, and to advise local authorities and partners.⁵⁵ Apart from the Local Governance Fund's (LGF) projects and facilitation of the advisors' activities, the Steering Unit did not have any overall responsibility for individual projects, as this was the Middle East Office's responsibility. An important rationale behind the creation of the Steering Unit was to de-centralize the day-to-day administration of the Danish reconstruction effort by having Ministry of Foreign Affairs contract personnel on the ground. The Steering Unit did not have an official representative status, but the Director of the Steering Unit negotiated with local authorities and harmonized political positions with coalition partners such as the UK and US, as well as with the French consul and the military headquarters in Basra. However, when the Steering Unit was forced to move to the Danish battalion camp in September 2006, this work was disrupted.⁵⁶

A small detachment of ten specially educated soldiers – *Protection Team Basra* – was deployed by the Danish armed forces to protect the Steering Unit staff in Basra. In effect, this small detachment functioned as a point of contact between the Middle East Office and the Danish battalion, and therefore by extension the entire military set-up in southern Iraq. In addition to its role as a physical protection unit, the Protection Team Basra therefore also functioned as a crucial point of communication between the Danish civilian entities and the military. It must be noted, though, that the frequent change of Protection Team Basra personnel, who were deployed on six-week tours, disrupted the work of the civilian personnel, since the different teams would have very different rules for movement in the Area of Operation, making long-term planning difficult.

However, the developing organization of coalition civil-military operations interfered with Danish organizational arrangements in Basra. In April 2006, the British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra was created.⁵⁷ This formed part of the coalition's exit strategy and was created in order to facilitate capacity-building among the Iraqi authorities and to support the Provincial and National Development Strategies (PRT Basra 2006). Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra was a civil-military multinational

⁵⁵ Irak-analyse, Danmarks engagement i Irak, May 2006.

⁵⁶ Interview, former Director of Steering Unit, July 18, 2008.

⁵⁷ The Provincial Reconstruction Team Program for Iraq is a US-led, civil-military effort to help Iraq's provincial and local governments govern effectively and deliver essential services. The Program provides integrated and multidisciplinary teams of coalition civilian and military personnel to teach and mentor provincial and local government officials in the core competencies of governance and economic development (SIGIR-07-015).

team, with members from the UK, US, Australia, Denmark and Canada.⁵⁸ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs transferred three advisers from the Steering Unit to the Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra in order to support the multilateral side of the reconstruction effort in Iraq and strengthen the capacity-building effort.⁵⁹ The team was originally located in Basra Palace, but increased rocket and mortar fire forced it to relocate a small number of staff members to Basra Air Station in November 2006 after six months of operation, while the rest were moved temporarily to a satellite office in Kuwait.

The Danish battalion facilitated the implementation of Concerted Planning and Action reconstruction projects. In February 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deployed a civilian adviser to the battalion to provide advice at all levels regarding the implementation of Concerted Planning and Action projects in the field. This arrangement lasted throughout the Danish battalion's deployment in Basra.⁶⁰ Furthermore, following Parliamentary Decision B 89 of 31 May 2005, it was decided that a new type of unit, *Reconstruction Unit Denmark*, should be established in order to support the Danish reconstruction effort for the benefit of the civilian population in the ten districts in Basra that were under Danish military control. The Reconstruction Unit Denmark was an institutional innovation because it was created with the primary task of producing civilian rather than military impacts.

The Reconstruction Unit Denmark first saw action with team 6 in August 2005. The Battalion had ten to twelve personnel specifically assigned to the Unit.⁶¹ On teams 3, 4 and 5, it was CIMIC units that carried out the Concerted Planning and Action reconstruction projects. Although CIMIC units ceased to facilitate Concerted Planning and Action-funded projects, they remained involved with reconstruction activities, now framed exclusively as support for the military operation.⁶²

⁵⁸ British Ministry of Defence: <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/SecurityAndReconstructionBuildingBasrasFuture.htm>

⁵⁹ Interview, former staff member, Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra, 23 July 2008.

⁶⁰ The Danish battalion's locations were: June 2003-October 2004: Camp Eden, 9 km. north-west of Al-Qurnah; September 2004- January 2007: Camp Danevang, located on the Shaiba Logistics Base, about 15 km. west of Basra; January 2007-August 2007: Camp Einherjer, located on the British Basra Air Station, west of Basra.

⁶¹ In the military command structure, the RUD unit was an independent unit in the Danish battalion that formally answered only to the battalion commander. The RUD unit, however, collaborated closely with the deputy chief of staff, who reported the content of the CPA coordination meetings to Army Operational Command (Army Operational Command) as well as S9. With the adoption of Parliamentary Decision B 63, the number of personnel dedicated to supporting the reconstruction and humanitarian effort was increased to about 45.

⁶² After the establishment of the RUD unit, it was the head of the CIMIC section (S9) which became the financial controller for CPA activities in Iraq, being involved in the formulation of a strategy for the implementation of CPA activities. S9 also functioned as a link between the military command structure and the RUD unit carrying out the CPA work (interview with former CIMIC officers, 28 May 2008, 4 June 2008).

4.1.3 Financial Framework

The financial framework for humanitarian and reconstruction work in Iraq is covered by Parliamentary Appropriations 111 for the period 2003-2004, which granted DKK 180 million for humanitarian assistance and DKK 170 million for reconstruction activities; Parliamentary Appropriation 158 for the period 2005-2008, granting a further DKK 250 million for humanitarian and reconstruction activities; Parliamentary Appropriation 105, granting DKK 100 million for internally displaced people and refugees in Iraq and neighbouring countries; and finally Parliamentary Appropriation 106, adding a further DKK 90 million to the reconstruction effort for the period 2007-2008 as the focus shifted from Basra to Baghdad.

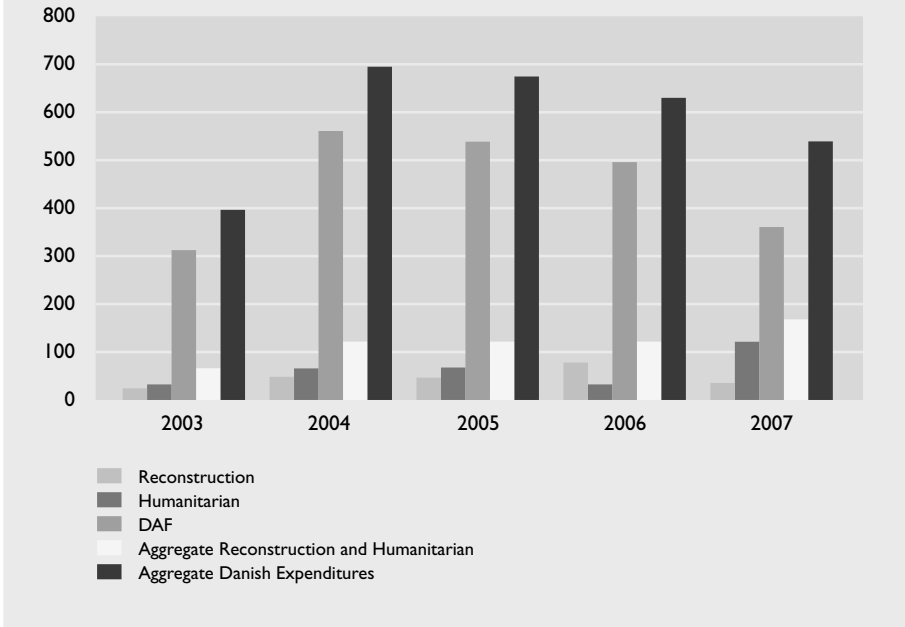
The costs of the Danish armed forces in Iraq have been funded by the annual 1 billion DKK allocation for international operations made available under the 2005-9 Defence agreement, while the Concerted Planning and Action projects have been funded by a special fund of 15 million DKK/year, which was added on top of the humanitarian budget. The aggregate expenditure (DKK million) from 2003 through 2007 for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Danish armed forces is shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1 Danish aggregate expenditure in Iraq 2003-78

Year	DAF	MFA
2003	327	76
2004	572	133
2005	547	130
2006	506	132
2007	371	174
Aggregate	2,323*	645

* An additional DKK 44 million has been spent on military advisers and aircraft in support of the UN mission in Iraq.

Table 4.2 Reconstruction, humanitarian and military expenditures in Iraq 2003-7



From its deployment in mid-2003 to its withdrawal in August 2007, the Danish battalion initiated 862 reconstruction and humanitarian projects. Of these, 188 were CIMIC projects funded by the Danish Armed Forces and 674 were projects funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since 49 of these projects were cancelled, in total 813 projects were implemented. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded projects to a total value of DKK 33,379,442, while the Danish armed forces funded CIMIC projects for DKK 1,747,590, for a total of DKK 35,129,603.⁶³ Thus, of the aggregate of ca. DKK 645 million spent on humanitarian and reconstruction activities, ca. 4.45 % was spent by the Danish armed forces. The overall ratio of expenditure for civil and military activities respectively was ca. 1:3.6.

⁶³ Unofficial list of the Danish battalion projects, Danish Defence Command.

4.2 Selection and Pre-mission Training of Personnel

4.2.1 *Military Personnel*

The Danish Army Operational Command claims that there was an attempt to draw Reconstruction Unit Denmark staff from people with CIMIC and previous mission experience, as well as volunteers (COWI 2006). This, however, is at odds with Dalgaard-Nielsen's observations. She writes: 'The vast majority of the RUD/CIMIC personnel interviewed for this study had no prior experience with project work or civil-military liaison' (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2007). The interviews conducted for this study confirm that the selection of Reconstruction Unit Denmark/CIMIC personnel was somewhat random.

The pre-mission training package generally lasted about three months and was informed by experiences gained from the mission area, as well as previous training. According to the Army Operational Command, pre-mission training for Reconstruction Unit Denmark and CIMIC personnel was identical, since it was assumed that many of the basic skills required were similar (COWI 2006). Training developed considerably over the years of deployment in Iraq. In the beginning, CIMIC and Reconstruction Unit Denmark personnel attended a two-week CIMIC course at NATO's CIMIC Centre of Excellence in the Netherlands. Although the course was very theoretical, personnel had an opportunity to practice CIMIC skills during training in Denmark just prior to deployment in Iraq.⁶⁴ One Reconstruction Unit Denmark officer commented that the pre-mission briefing and training were entirely inadequate and had very little to do with actual Concerted Planning and Action work in Iraq.⁶⁵ Instead the Unit's team received brief on-the-job training once in Iraq.⁶⁶ As of 2007, a new course was developed in cooperation between the Army Operational Command, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danish NGOs, and team 9 personnel were given an intensive three-week course that specifically targeted the mission.⁶⁷

In contrast to previous teams, a Reconstruction Unit Denmark officer from team 9 commented that he thought he was well-prepared for the mission, although more

⁶⁴ Interviews with former RUD and CIMIC officers.

⁶⁵ The minutes of a meeting of the Standing Committee held in Copenhagen on 10 January 2006 (i.e. towards the end of team 6's tour of duty) indicate a recognition that the RUD unit had been insufficiently briefed on their mission-specific tasks.

⁶⁶ Interview, former RUD officer, 29 May 2008, the Danish Battalion Iraq, Hold 7, 096.305, Appendix 8, RUD End of tour report.

⁶⁷ This course included introductions to such issues as cultural awareness, anti-corruption, project management, personality assessment and media relations. Personal communication, RUD officer, 19 August 2008.

emphasis on the particular practicalities of the Concerted Planning and Action specific task was requested. The team 9 unit arrived in Iraq before the rest of team 9, where they enjoyed a two-week handover with team 8, which was deemed to be valuable time spent.⁶⁸ Personnel from the Steering Unit confirmed that team 9 Reconstruction Unit Denmark personnel seemed significantly better prepared to perform Concerted Planning and Action-related tasks.⁶⁹

4.2.2 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Personnel

According to the offices involved, a great deal of effort was put into finding the right personnel for the service in Iraq.⁷⁰ In general, the Humanitarian and the Middle East Offices were looking for people with a proven track record of having operated in conflict-ridden contexts and with a background in international development.

Training and briefing for personnel contracted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was virtually non-existent in the beginning, but it improved considerably during the engagement in Iraq. For instance, no security course was offered until 2005, two years after the beginning of the engagement.⁷¹ There were still complaints of a lack of training for practical tasks. It is understandable that it was difficult to prepare the personnel for service in Iraq since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no prior experience of setting up a mission under the given conditions of insecurity. According to the Middle East Office, one serious problem was that the personnel in Iraq had worked on standard DANIDA contracts, which were not created for conflict environments.⁷²

4.2.3 Police Personnel

It seems that the pre-mission training of the Danish police deployed in Iraq was more comprehensive compared to that for the Danish armed forces and Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff, as police personnel are required to undergo a three-week preparation course. Furthermore, it appears that the selection of personnel was quite thorough. Selection criteria include at least five years of service in the police, a high level of English-language competence and a comprehensive health check. Moreover, to be deployed, police personnel had to be recommended by their

⁶⁸ Interview, former RUD officer, 16 June 2008.

⁶⁹ Interview, former Director of Steering Unit, 18 July 2008.

⁷⁰ Interview in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 August 2008; Interview with the former Head of the Office for Humanitarian Aid and NGOs, 29 August 2008.

⁷¹ Interview, former Director of Steering Unit, 18 July 2008.

⁷² Interview, Middle East Office, 27 August 2008. The office in question has changed its contracts.

superiors in their police districts, who were asked to assess the capability of the applicant to work effectively in a mission characterized by a high level of stress and insecurity.⁷³

4.3 Civil-military Cooperation in Basra Governorate

This sub-section provides a description and analysis of the Danish civil-military cooperation that took place in the Basra Governorate in order to assess the challenges involved and to provide realistic recommendations.

4.3.1 The Danish Police in Basra

Danish police started working in Basra in the second half of 2003 with the establishment of a police academy in Az Zubaya with Ministry of Foreign Affairs funding. Prior to that, three experienced Danish police officers were seconded to the Coalition Provisional Authority-South, where they assisted the coalition's effort to restore order. In August 2003 the academy was attacked by a car bomb, and several local police officers were killed. Shortly thereafter the Danish police officers left. The project was restarted, and by February 2004 Danish police officers were again working as instructors in Az Zubaya.⁷⁴ The Danish officers taught Iraqi police officers in the academy and acted as advisers for its management together with British police officers. Later the Danish police's efforts concentrated on the education of police officers at the Joint Training College at Shaiba Logistic Base. The school was taken over by the Iraqi police 31 December 2006. Apart from training the Iraqi police, Danish police officers have conducted monitoring, mentoring and training of Iraqi police officers in police stations and at sector headquarters in Basra Rural North.⁷⁵ In addition, they participated in the capacity-building seminars held for the district councils in Basra.⁷⁶ When the Danish battalion withdrew from the Basra Governorate in August 2007, the Danish police's mission in Basra also ended.

Throughout Denmark's involvement in the Basra governorate, the Danish battalion has worked closely with the Danish police. According to all informants, this collaboration worked very well. The battalion escorted Danish police officers while they moved about the Danish zone. In addition, Danish military police assisted the Danish police officers with their work.

⁷³ Interview, Police HQ, 5 September 2008.

⁷⁴ Interview, police officer formerly deployed in Basra, 4 September 2008.

⁷⁵ Notice, 'Dansk politis indsats i Irak', NCPO, June 2008.

⁷⁶ Interview, former Director of the Steering Unit, 18 July 2008.

One of the greatest problems with the rehabilitation of the police force in the south was the fact that most of the existing police force from the Ba'ath era had been disbanded. The coalition was therefore faced with the huge task of setting up a new force. As a consequence, the senior executives in Baghdad chose to solve this problem by quickly filling the ranks of the police with ordinary citizens with a focus on quantity rather than quality.⁷⁷ As shown in the contextual section, the police force was infiltrated by local militias, partly because of the policy of boosting the numbers of recruits to reach a certain number of police officers. This also had a concrete detrimental effect on the Danish effort in Iraq. When the Danish battalion moved to Basra Airport along with the Steering Unit, the outer perimeter was guarded by Iraqi police in the form of road blocks. This was a deterrent factor for local partners, who were reluctant to meet Danish personnel in their compound because it was commonly known that the police officers guarding the compound might be affiliated with the militias, and being seen collaborating with the coalition represented a security threat.⁷⁸

The Danish police officers were mostly involved in the training of leaders. They were not deployed as an operational unit doing investigations and thus had no means of detecting whether Iraqi police officers were abusing their position. According to the sources interviewed for this report, the police were dependent on the protection of the Danish battalion. In addition, the Danish armed forces supported the police mission with logistics, while the military police deployed with the battalion assisted with monitoring tasks.

4.3.2 The Reconstruction and Humanitarian Efforts Facilitated by the Danish Armed Forces

The reconstruction and humanitarian activities that the Danish Armed Forces has facilitated can be separated into four distinct categories, as shown in the table below:

⁷⁷ Interview, police officer formerly deployed in Basra, 4 September 2008; Interview, Police HQ, 5 September 2008.

⁷⁸ Interview, former civilian adviser to the Danish battalion, May 2008; Interview, former RUD officer.

Table 4.3 Reconstruction and humanitarian projects facilitated by the Danish Armed Forces

Type	DAF involvement	Responsible	Funding source
Civilian reconstruction projects	Assistance: - Data collection - Logistics	MFA/MENA	MFA/ODA
Local Governance Fund Projects	Assistance: - Monitoring - Project identification - Escort of project manager	STE, Basra	MFA/ODA (ROI) (< 100,000 USD)
CPA* projects under RUD	Project management: - Identification - Tendering - Implementation - Monitoring - Quality control	DANBN	MFA/(HUM) (< 25,000 USD) from team 8 (< 50,000 USD)
CERP projects under Brigade	Project management: - Identification - Tendering - Implementation - Monitoring - Quality control	British Brigade	US DOD

4.3.3 Civilian Reconstruction Projects

Activities under the heading of civilian reconstruction projects include the police training programme mentioned above and the agricultural programme. Since 2003, Denmark has supported the agricultural sector in the Basra Governorate. The long-term objective of Danish support to the agricultural sector is ‘to improve the livelihood of the people living in the southern region by creating rural employment opportunities and raising income’ (Skadkjaer Consult 2008). The Danish battalion gathered data for the projects (for instance, measuring water depths for the agricultural adviser).⁷⁹ Given the security situation, it is unlikely that these activities could have been carried out without the assistance of the Danish armed forces.

⁷⁹ Interview, former Local Governance Fund adviser, 20 June 2008.

4.3.4 Local Governance Fund

Since December 2004, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has financed local projects through the Local Governance Fund, funded through the Regions of Origin initiative. The overall purpose of the fund is to strengthen the local authorities' capacity and internal communications by rehabilitating infrastructure and making improvements in public services.⁸⁰ The Local Governance Fund was intended to provide technical and financial support to the district councils within the Basra Governorate and Basra City. The Fund primarily supported small-scale 'quick-impact projects', typically costing less than USD 100,000, in sectors such as water, power, health, education, roads and sanitation, much like the Reconstruction Unit Denmark projects. Projects were mainly implemented within infrastructure, rehabilitation and public service delivery. The Local Governance Fund's activities were very closely coordinated with the Danish armed forces. The Fund's projects were identified and implemented through the district councils – the same channel through which the Reconstruction Unit Denmark identified and implemented its projects.⁸¹ By working through the district councils, the Local Governance Fund programme also served a capacity-building purpose. Due to the difficult security

Table 4.4 Local Governance Fund projects by sector

	Projects (#)	% of Total
Education	7	39%
- training	2	28%
- schools/pre-school	5	11%
Roads	7	39%
Health	3	17%
Water	1	6%
Power	0	0%
Sanitation	0	0%
Total	18	100%

⁸⁰ Interview, former Local Governance Fund adviser, 20 June 2008.

⁸¹ Some RUD projects that were too comprehensive to carry out by Danish Armed Forces were transferred to the Local Governance Fund.

situation in the Area of Operation, the Steering Unit's Protection Team Basra was often not able to provide adequate security for the Steering Unit's personnel. The activities connected to the Local Governance Fund were therefore dependent on the physical protection provided by the Danish battalion. Moreover, the battalion monitored the Local Governance Fund's projects for the LGF adviser. Table 4.4 shows the actual distribution of projects by sector.

The design of the Local Governance Fund projects attempted to promote participatory and transparent processes to enhance the capacity and legitimacy of the local councils, but it is not clear if this was the actual result (Skadkjaer 2008). In practice, consultation primarily involved local council members who were supposed to represent adequately the broader community as they were elected. However, according to a former director of the Steering Unit, some of the councils were in effect self-appointed.⁸²

4.3.5 Projects carried out by Reconstruction Unit Denmark (RUD)

The Reconstruction Unit Denmark was the military unit tasked with carrying out humanitarian and reconstruction activities with Ministry of Foreign Affairs funding in the absence of civilian entities to carry out the work. It was permitted to identify projects costing under USD 25,000. In October 2006 this amount was increased to USD 50,000, in part as a response to a steep rise in prices on the market for foreign reconstruction, and in part to facilitate greater flexibility in the identification of projects. These were facilitated by the Danish battalion with the support of the civilian adviser. The mandate, as outlined in the 2005 Concerted Planning and Action guidelines, was made very broad in order to facilitate the decentralization of crucial decisions and to ensure operational flexibility. This, however, also meant that an incoming Danish battalion team could have very different priorities from the one preceding it.⁸³ While this no doubt allowed for more flexibility, it made the effort discontinuous on the ground. The project cycle of the Concerted Planning and Action projects under the 2005 guidelines is illustrated in the table below.

The bulk of the Reconstruction Unit Denmark projects carried out under the 2003 Concerted Planning and Action guidelines were small-scale infrastructural projects, with an emphasis on water, electricity and schools. Under the 2003 guidelines, most

⁸² Interview, former Director of Steering Unit, 18 July 2008.

⁸³ Interview, former civilian adviser to the Danish battalion, 5 May 2008.

Table 4.5 The project cycle of Concerted Planning and Action projects

Activity	Responsible authority
Project identification	- District councils - Soldiers
Project estimate is drawn up	- Locally hired engineer
Project description	- RUD team with assistance of civilian adviser
Financial control	- S9
DANBN and MFA approval	- Battalion Commander - Civilian adviser
Provincial Council approval	- District council
Tendering process	- RUD with district council participation
Construction	- Contractor
Monitoring	- RUD
Payments to contractor	- RUD

projects were in the range of USD 500-4,000. Under the 2005 Concerted Planning and Action guidelines, implemented in September 2005,⁸⁴ the emphasis shifted to educational projects, mainly the rehabilitation of schools. The average value of projects implemented increased from USD 3,300 to USD 17,450 from the introduction of the 2005 Concerted Planning and Action guidelines to the withdrawal of the Danish battalion.⁸⁵ The increased average cost of projects reflects a significant inflation in local process, the raising of the financial cap for Concerted Planning and Action projects from USD 25,000 to USD 50,000, and lastly a more systematized way of identifying projects, as shown in Table 4.6.:

⁸⁴ E-mail communication from Army Operational Command.

⁸⁵ Unofficial list of Danish battalion projects, DCDC.

Table 4.6 The identification process of Concerted Planning and Action projects

RUD projects undertaken under the 2003 Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 248 water projects* • 15 education projects • 19 health projects • 83 electricity projects • 106 miscellaneous projects • 28 disbanded projects 	475 projects initiated (Average of 3,300 USD/project)
RUD projects undertaken under the 2005 Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 water projects • 119 education projects • 7 health projects • 4 electricity projects • 56 miscellaneous projects • 18 disbanded 	238 projects initiated (Average of 17,450 USD)

* The categories used here are those used by DC.

Before the deployment of the first civilian adviser in February 2005, the whole process was still unstructured, and the CIMIC officers received almost no instructions about how to implement funds apart from the directives of the Danish battalion commander, and there was no coordination with the Steering Unit in Basra.⁸⁶ The rather random identification of the Reconstruction Unit Denmark projects continued until team 6 (Aug. 2005-Feb.2006) through either regular Danish battalion patrols or following direct requests from district councils.⁸⁷ From team 6 onwards, there was much more focus on the use of district councils as the entry point for project identification. This is not surprising, since the deployment of team 6 coincided with the launching of the 2005 Concerted Planning and Action guidelines and the election of district councils. Initial identification was undertaken randomly, the nature of the projects varying from the supply of tyres to minor repairs of small-scale infrastruc-

⁸⁶ Interview, former CIMIC officer team 4, 20 June 2008.

⁸⁷ The lack of instructions was probably one reason why certain projects are difficult to connect with reconstruction aid and seem more like CIMIC-type consent-winning projects: 'tyres for the police chief's vehicle'; 'tents for the deputy chair's bodyguards'; 'sports equipment'; 'T-Shirts admission examination Iraqi police', etc.

ture, partly as a consequence of the minimal guidance available to the battalion.⁸⁸ This changed after the arrival of the first civilian adviser. In order to introduce some sort of capacity-building and local ownership, the planning, budgeting, tendering and implementation processes were transferred to the district councils under the guidance of the civilian adviser.⁸⁹

Some attempts were made by different Reconstruction Unit Denmark units to coordinate their efforts with the rest of the Danish reconstruction effort. Team 7, for instance, planned to connect its Concerted Planning and Action projects with the rest of Danish reconstruction aid by prioritizing 50% of their projects to be in support of Ministry of Foreign Affairs projects, in particular the Local Governance Fund projects. Another 25% was for capacity-building, while the remaining 25% was for basic needs. In reality this plan did not work for team 7, mainly because of the Iraqi boycott of Danish representations at the provincial level in Basra from February 2006 to May 2006.⁹⁰

Team 8 decided to prioritize in accordance with the newly produced Provincial Development Strategy for Basra approved by the provincial council.⁹¹ It did so by focusing on three pillars that were part of Provincial Development Strategy, namely:

- Local Administration
- Health
- Education

Team 9 opted to continue with this strategy,⁹² thereby linking up with the overall Danish strategy for Iraq and the provincial development plan, as well as ensuring a modicum of continuity between teams 8 and 9.

Information gathered for this report indicates that few local partners were involved apart from the local district councils and contractors. The intention was to work

⁸⁸ Still, a few projects that again seem more like CIMIC-type projects were carried out after the 2005 CPA guidelines were issued, such as 'Establishment of a sports club in Talha'; 'Establishment of football fields for the sports club in Talha'; 'Establishment of volleyball and basketball fields for the sports club in Talha'; 'The establishment of four football fields in Al Qurnah', etc.

⁸⁹ Interviews, former civilian advisers, 5 and 6 May 2008.

⁹⁰ Interview, S9 Team 8; End of tour Report Team 8, Appendix 8, RUD End of Tour Report.

⁹¹ See Provincial Development Strategy Basra Province 2007-2009. The Provincial Development Strategy was created in collaboration with the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra.

⁹² Interview, Deputy Chief of Staff Team 9; Interview RUD Team 9.

through and support the new democratic structures, thereby increasing their capacity, mainly in terms of project management. However, Danish personnel who were involved on the ground concede that other actors, such as clan leaders and militias, often applied pressure on the councils or were part of them. Indeed, in some cases the district councils were not democratically elected at all, but were rather appointed by powerful political actors. It is therefore unclear whether or not the councils were legitimate representatives of the population,⁹³ and some of them may well have marginalized vulnerable groups such as the Marsh Arabs.⁹⁴

It has been noted by Reconstruction Unit Denmark and civilian personnel working in Basra Province that the civilian reconstruction effort was given a low priority in terms of patrols. This corresponds well with Dalgaard-Nielsen's findings: 'Reconstruction Unit Denmark /CIMIC had, at times, difficulty in asserting its need for escorts. In Iraq ... some RUD teams experienced periods where they were largely confined to camp' (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2007). In addition, the Danish battalion was reduced by 80 soldiers with the deployment of Team 8, and in August 2008 the military personnel available for escort for reconstruction activities were further reduced.⁹⁵ Some CIMIC/RUD personnel were highly critical of what was seen as an exaggerated focus in the Danish battalion's leadership on 'catching bandits', especially at the expense of carrying out reconstruction work.

In fact, it seems that striking a balance between providing the necessary security for the deployed personnel and achieving the objectives of the mission presented the battalion with some tough dilemmas. One indication of this is the application of what was known as the 'pulse concept'. During the tour of duty of team 8, the security environment deteriorated to a point at which it was estimated that it was not longer safe to travel in the Area of Operation with less than a company (ca. 100 soldiers) as a protection force. The solution was to make larger expeditions into the Area of Operation where Danish entities – civilian and military – could carry out their different activities. This sort of large operation was referred to the 'pulse concept'. While it was intended to deter potential enemies from attacking, it seems to have had a negative effect on the relationship between the Danish entities and the local Iraqis. In the Danish battalion's team 9's End of tour Report it is noted that:

⁹³ Interviews, CIMIC and RUD officers.

⁹⁴ Interview, former RUD officer.

⁹⁵ Interview, former Head of Steering Unit in Basra.

The Danish battalion has throughout the deployment period experienced a more aggressive attitude and determined attitude from the militant part of the Iraqi population in large parts of the area. The reason for this change of attitude in the population should primarily be sought in the general development in Iraq and secondarily in a more robust use of the pulse concept. The need for force protection and thereby the application of a more robust version of the pulse concept has influenced 'Situational Awareness' of the BTN in the area negatively, because the robust presence has reduced the contact to the civilian population.⁹⁶

A former civilian adviser to the battalion has made another point with respect to the manifestation of military power:

It was not just the 'bandits' who were offended, but also women and children and other civilians without bad intentions. Their displeasure, however, just constituted yet another threat, which forced the battalion to further tighten its security precautions. Action begets action. In such an environment of mutual hostility, it is almost impossible to carry out real rebuilding work.⁹⁷

The Danish battalion personnel were critical of the procedures for acquiring finances to carry out Reconstruction Unit Denmark projects. Each team had a certain amount of start-up funding that they could use to finance projects, but when the funding ran out, the Unit had to request additional funding. The Reconstruction Unit Denmark had to inform S9 that they had run out of funding, and S9 then requested more funding from the Army Operational Command. The Army Operational Command in turn had to make a request to the Defence Command, which then requested the Ministry of Defence, which finally made a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It appears that this process created several bottlenecks that put projects on hold and in some cases even led to their cancellation. According to one Reconstruction Unit Denmark officer, his team lost approximately twenty projects for this reason. The information

⁹⁶ During an interview with the commander of the Danish battalion's team 9, he noted that the more aggressive attitude of the opponents of the coalition was the result of the lack of daily contact between Danish troops and local population in the Area of Operation. The lack of contact allowed the opponents of the coalition to act with less restraint because it resulted in a lack of intelligence of the local situation, not least about the activities of the enemies of the coalition. According to him, the more robust security measures did not increase the hostility of the local population. According to the commander, the 'pulse concept' used many resources which reduced the frequency of the crucial, regular contact with local authorities. Therefore overall awareness of the situation suffered.

⁹⁷ Johanne Djurhuus, 'Hjertesuk fra Basra', *Politiken*, 15 March 2006.

available seems to suggest that one problem with the availability of resources can be traced to a reluctance in the Army Operational Command to disburse more funding for projects before the resources already allocated had been spent. However, a significant portion of the funding was tied up in pending payments to contractors, which were not treated as spent resources by the Army Operational Command. It seems that the Army Operational Command's reluctance to disburse more funding was connected to the fact that it disbursed funds from the Danish Armed Forces's budgets and was later reimbursed by the Humanitarian Office.⁹⁸ Another problem seems to have been the centralization of the financial management of the funding at the Danish International Logistics Centre (DANILOG) during the tour of duty of team 8, which also slowed down the disbursement of funds.

The reporting presented a problem as well. According to a civilian adviser to the Danish battalion, there was no reporting format until 2006. As a consequence, the reporting was not very thorough. Through his own intervention, a simple reporting format was introduced, as well as a simple flowchart to manage the different Reconstruction Unit Denmark projects. According to him, a lot of his efforts went in building up the Danish battalion's capacity to manage projects. Another problem was that the process of reporting was very cumbersome, as paper copies had to be forwarded to the Army Operational Command and the Steering Unit.

4.3.6 Cooperation between the Civilian Adviser and the Danish Battalion

The endorsement of Reconstruction Unit Denmark projects was assisted by the civilian adviser, which was a pre-condition outlined in the 2005 Concerted Planning and Action guidelines. There is no doubt that the two civilian advisers were an invaluable asset in the project identification process, and their recommendations were respected. The Danish battalion was supported by two different civilian advisers with two different academic and practical backgrounds (humanitarian and engineer). The first civilian adviser was a woman, a Danish national with a broad background in development work in the Middle East. She was hired as a generalist in order to be able to consult the battalion broadly. The fact that she was a woman helped facilitate access to Iraqi women. The second civilian adviser to the battalion had an Iraqi Muslim background. According to our informants this was a definite asset, since he could facilitate dialogue with local counterparts who might not have been interested in collaborating otherwise. He was, for instance, instrumental in re-establishing cooperation with the provincial authorities during the boycott in the

⁹⁸ Interviews, RUD and CIMIC officers.

spring of 2006. In addition, he was able to act as a cultural and political consultant for the battalion and to a certain extent also the Steering Unit. He became an intermediary between the different Danish institutions and their Iraqi counterparts in various ways. Moreover, his technical background as an engineer and his practical experience as a project manager seem to have filled a gap in the battalion.

Nonetheless cooperation with the battalion and the civilian advisers was not without its problems. The second civilian adviser emphasized the tendency of some Danish officers to want to use Concerted Planning and Action projects primarily for 'force protection'. It seems that in some cases there was a tendency to utilize successes to apply pressure on local partners by demanding cooperation in return for reconstruction work.⁹⁹ While 'force protection' can be an added benefit of Concerted Planning and Action projects, this was not their primary objective, and as such it ran counter to the objectives of the guidelines, which stipulated that CPA projects were intended to benefit the local population, not enhance force protection.

4.3.7 The Steering Unit and its Cooperation with the Danish Battalion

At any given time, the Steering Unit¹⁰⁰ had from four to seven advisers employed in Iraq (including the civilian adviser to the Danish battalion), but the development of the Steering Unit was a discontinuous and turbulent process (NIRAS 2007: 8).

According to a former employee of the Steering Unit, civil-military cooperation was a high priority for it. So-called *samtænkningsmøder* (Concerted Planning and Action meetings) were held on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. These meetings were mostly used as a forum to distribute information about upcoming, ongoing and future activities, as well as to organize practicalities such as escorts and logistics.¹⁰¹ Another crucially important positive effect of the cooperation between the Steering Unit and the Danish battalion was the exchange of information about security-related and political developments. While the Steering Unit provided information from the provincial level, the battalion provided information from the district level.¹⁰² On the negative side, several military personnel complained that an overall plan was not discussed at these meetings. The Steering Unit has been seen by some as a group of individuals managing their own projects, not as a proactive team providing leadership and

⁹⁹ Interview, former civilian adviser to the Danish battalion, May 2008.

¹⁰⁰ For a thorough review of the Steering Unit, see NIRAS 2007.

¹⁰¹ Due to the worsening security situation, the Steering Unit's PSD did not have sufficient capacity to guarantee the security of the civilian personnel when it left the base.

¹⁰² The Danish battalion team 7, End of tour Report.

support to the civilian adviser and the Reconstruction Unit Denmark personnel. However, the Steering Unit was not intended to be the organizing organ of civil-military collaboration in Basra.

4.3.8 Cooperation within the Multi-national Division (South East)

The military personnel interviewed noted that cooperation over civilian and military activities with coalition partners in the military structure in southern Iraq was very limited. The Danish battalion had to report its activities through the chain of command to the British brigade. In addition, there were bi-weekly CIMIC meetings at the brigade level. However, team 8 was told by their British counterparts not to report on the Reconstruction Unit Denmark's activities, since it was part of a bilateral program.¹⁰³ This and the CIMIC unit therefore concentrated on the Danish Area of Operation. A major exception was 'Operation Sinbad' (September 2006 to March 2007), during the tour of duty of team 8, when all the units involved were called in for a coordination meeting at brigade level. The battalion planned the operation in al-Hartha District in the southernmost part of the Danish Area of Operation and participated with the Reconstruction Unit Denmark and the CIMIC unit using funding from both the Commanders Emergency Response Program and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In general, however, the British and Danish efforts in the field of civil-military cooperation ran along parallel tracks and were not integrated.

4.3.9 Multilateral Cooperation

Following the intervention, the Coalition of the Willing took over the administration of Iraq and created the Coalition Provisional Authority. The Coalition Provisional Authority structure in Basra suffered from several major flaws. First, the relatively small numbers of expatriates were faced with the disintegration of the administrative infrastructure of Iraq because of blanket de-ba'athification, which, to begin with, denied the international staff Iraqi counterparts. Only gradually were positions filled by more or less randomly appointed functionaries connected to different political factions. The same was the case with the politicians. This in turn increased local dissatisfaction with the Coalition Provisional Authority. Secondly, the expatriate personnel deployed to the Coalition Provisional Authority were sent by the various partners, giving the Coalition Provisional Authority leadership on the ground little influence over its choice of personnel, and resulting in poor control and difficult cooperation. Thirdly, Coalition Provisional Authority Basra was subject to the overall authority

¹⁰³ Interview, former S9.

of the central Coalition Provisional Authority administration in Baghdad, which was overly centralized and bureaucratized and operated by the US military. This had the effect that Coalition Provisional Authority Basra was blocked from taking crucial decisions at the provincial level. Fourthly, there were frequent turnovers of personnel working on six-month contracts, making the effort discontinuous. Lastly, being under the ultimate authority of Coalition Provisional Authority-Baghdad meant that Coalition Provisional Authority-South did not have an independent budget. This slowed down the process of reconstruction considerably, which at times meant that the Coalition Provisional Authority could not deliver on its promises, further diminishing the credibility of the Coalition. Funding from the Commanders Emergency Response Program was used to compensate for the slow progress of the reconstruction effort.¹⁰⁴ However, the US was capable of channelling much larger funds to reconstruction projects than any other country.

Following the transfer of power to the Iraqis in June 2004, no institution was responsible for overall multilateral cooperation. There were donor-coordination meetings, but no common planning or strategy for the multilateral effort at the provincial level.¹⁰⁵

Then in April 2006, a British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team was created in Basra. The Provincial Reconstruction Team Program for Iraq is a US-led, civil-military effort to assist Iraq's provincial and local governments in governing effectively and delivering essential services. The Program provides integrated and multidisciplinary teams of coalition civilian and military personnel to teach and mentor provincial and district government officials in the core competencies of governance and economic development (SIGIR 2007). As such, Basra Provincial Reconstruction Team is an advisory organization, being part of the coalition's exit strategy in providing process facilitation and capacity-building in relation to the Iraqi authorities' Provincial and National Development Strategies (PRT Basra 2006).

Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra is a multinational team, with members drawn from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Canada. It was organized into five component teams: Governance, Economic, Rule of Law, Security and Infrastructure. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided three advisers to the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra in order to support the multilateral side of the reconstruction effort in Iraq and strengthen the capacity-building effort.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, former Director of Civil Affairs for Concerted Planning and Action, October 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, former Local Governance Fund adviser, June 2008.

Hence, the work of Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra was hampered by an increasingly difficult security situation. According to one former Danish deputy chief of staff of Basra PRT, at one point Basra Palace was being hit forty times a day by rocket and mortar attacks, making work impossible.¹⁰⁶ As stated in a 2007 report, 'Until the violence in Basra subsides and the region is perceived as secure, PRT officials do not expect significant economic development or job creation to take place in the region' (SIGIR 2007 31).

Security was not the only problem for the Basra Provincial Reconstruction Team. It seems that the Provincial Reconstruction Team's work was hampered by internal conflicts. It would appear that these internal discords were to a large extent created by the fact that it was a piecemeal institution with a lack of clear guidelines. The staff were contractually bound to various national institutions, which set the stage for the promotion of national interests, rather than following a clearly defined Basra Provincial Reconstruction Team policy. As a result, the different advisers acted rather autonomously. The Basra Provincial Reconstruction Team nevertheless provided substantial input to the Provincial Development Strategy by having advisers consult the responsible Iraqis.

A promising cross-institutional initiative was taken by Danish personnel in the field in 2006. The former deputy chief of staff of Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra and the governance section of PRT Basra began working closely together with the Danish battalion – the Reconstruction Unit Denmark in particular – in order to build up the administrative capacity of the district councils by holding seminars for them. The Steering Unit and the Danish police also participated in this process. As such civilian and military organizations from different levels became involved and with them their Iraqi counterparts. The benefit of this initiative lay not only in harmonizing the effort of coalition entities, but also in linking together the different levels of the Iraqi administration. For instance, the close contact that the Reconstruction Unit Denmark had established with the district councils allowed PRT personnel to obtain information on their reconstruction needs from these councils. The trust that the Reconstruction Unit Denmark had fostered with the district councils facilitated that the PRT personnel in training the councils in applying for provincial funding which they had no prior knowledge of. In effect this initiative became sufficiently known in the international community in Basra for it to be chosen as pilot project that could be copied by the British, but due

¹⁰⁶ Interview, former Deputy Chief of Staff Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra.

to the Danish withdrawal this never materialized.¹⁰⁷ Thus, as a model, this way of bringing together the resources, knowledge and competencies of the different types of agency within the international community – both military and civilian – in improving the local administration could be used as an example of successful concerted civil-military cooperative action in the future.

¹⁰⁷ Interview, former Deputy Chief of Staff Provincial Reconstruction Team Basra.

5. Findings and Recommendations

The experience of Danish civil-military cooperation in Iraq has been characterized by flexible, ad hoc solutions aimed at adjusting to the rapidly deteriorating conditions of security and to a framework for cooperation which has largely been beyond Danish influence. The findings of this report focus on the degree to which Danish institutions have been able to produce a concerted civil-military response in terms of analysis, strategy, planning, coordination, monitoring and capacity for the incorporation of analysis and lessons learned.

1. Danish civil-military cooperation in Iraq was heavily influenced by external factors. Apart from the decision to participate in the Coalition, Denmark had little influence on the US military-led stabilization and reconstruction process and was not involved in the planning – to the extent that there was any – of the post-conflict phase. Due to the contested nature of the mandate, the departure of the UN and the general deterioration in the security situation, the participation of international and non-governmental civilian actors in stabilization and reconstruction was limited. While reconstruction was therefore based mainly on bilateral programmes, the multinational coordination seemed overly bureaucratic and centralized, which affected Danish efforts on the ground.

2. An initial strategy based on flawed assumptions. The Danish Iraq strategy was based on assumptions which did not hold. Like its coalition partners, Danish strategy-makers believed that combat would end shortly after the toppling of the Ba'ath regime. As insurgency and infighting became more tenacious, the Danish entities gradually adjusted to the new situation. Nevertheless, the problems point to the crucial role of information, identification of actors and analysis of interests and conflict potentials in the contexts of deployment. In Iraq, the Coalition underestimated the potential for conflict, with detrimental effects for the post-war phase.

3. Elements of coherence in the Danish strategy. Denmark's overall strategy was never very explicitly or clearly stated. It can be extracted from various documents and analyses and shows elements of coherence. In the early strategy, reconstruction efforts were concentrated in Basra city and province. By its presence in the territory, the military was expected to contribute to a security umbrella for civilian reconstruction in a peace-building scenario. In response to the deteriorating security situation, the strategy incorporated the Concerted Planning and Action initiative and the

facilitation by the military of relief and reconstruction tasks. In 2005, in the context of elections for provincial and district councils, the strategy was re-oriented towards capacity-building in the army, police and local administration. While not explicitly stated, a strategic linkage may be seen between on the one hand Reconstruction Unit Denmark's projects enhancing the project management capacity of district councils, and on the other hand the Steering Unit (and the Provincial Reconstruction Team) contributing to the planning capacity of the provincial government.

A further development of the Concerted Planning and Action approach at the strategic level would have implied, for example, that the strategy took greater account of the possible interactions between and mutual impacts of its different elements. How, for example, were the agricultural and local governance programmes expected to affect the dynamics of conflict? And how do search and arrest operations influence the ability of associated civilian actors to engage in reconstruction and capacity-building?

4. Different perceptions of strategy. In particular, military sources have suggested that Danish reconstruction lacked a coherent strategy.¹⁰⁸ This criticism points to differences in perceptions between the armed forces and Ministry of Foreign Affairs' personnel regarding what a strategy for reconstruction should look like. While the former leaned towards fast and visible rebuilding efforts in accordance with an overall plan, the latter leaned towards more participatory processes to increase the capacity of councils to develop plans, priorities and projects, and to link the different levels of administration and representation. To the extent that this has been explicitly stated in the Iraq strategy and the specific Concerted Planning and Action strategy, it has not been communicated to the personnel serving on the ground. Moreover, the focus on bilateral, stand-alone projects in the Danish strategy might have left the impression that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was 'doing its own thing' without being integrated into a coherent Danish plan.

5. Balancing strategic guidance and flexibility. At the level of the ministries, it has been argued that having an overly detailed strategy for Concerted Planning and Action projects would have hampered the flexibility and freedom of initiative of the fielded personnel, who had to adapt to rapidly changing conditions. In the field, however, the personnel, civilian as well as military, lamented the lack of an operational strategy and more detailed guidance. What they saw as a lack of strategic guidance and clear

¹⁰⁸ See, for instance, Hundevadt, 19 November 2006.

mandates created confusion regarding priorities, possibilities for joint projects, divisions of labour etc. when adapting to changing contexts with many stakeholders.

The problem points to the question of how tall-order objectives and strategies (democratization, peace and development) are operationalized and transformed into activities that fit the changeable situation on the ground. Obviously operational flexibility and decentralized decision-making are necessary, but this flexibility depends on the existence of a clear framework and mandate. The Danish battalion had decentralized authority but lacked a clearer strategy for reconstruction, which resulted in an uneven course of implementation. In the case of the Steering Unit,¹⁰⁹ which was created with the idea of decentralizing decisions to the field level and enabling flexible coordination, it was given neither an independent budget through which it could finance projects nor a clear mandate to undertake diplomatic activities. This slowed down its operations.

6. The discontinuity of the six-month rotation of the Danish battalion. The term of service for military deployments is six months, and it is acknowledged that longer postings were not an option under the circumstances in Basra. This did, however, lead to a lack of continuity in Reconstruction Unit Denmark projects and contributed to a focus on short-term impacts. The posting of the civilian adviser and the two weeks of overlap of RUD/CIMIC personnel that was introduced late in the process mitigated this problem somewhat. But every new team was apparently determined to leave its own mark and hence to start afresh with new projects. For the purposes of continuity and planning, it was even more problematic that Protection Team Basra served only six-week tours, especially because the team was an important point of communication between the civilian and military entities.

7. Extensive practical but little strategic coordination in the field. In the field, operations were extensively coordinated at the practical level between the Steering Unit and the Danish battalion with regard to escorts, monitoring projects, joint meetings with district councils, etc. Depending on personal qualifications, the civilian advisor played an important role as a broker between the two entities, as well as between these and the local authorities. While practical coordination took place, interviews suggest that only a little strategic discussion or coordination developed in the interaction, and only upon individual initiative.

¹⁰⁹ But according to interviews with staff in the Concerted Planning and Action and Provincial Reconstruction Team, these suffered similar symptoms

8. Stabilization and reconstruction projects have political dimensions. The Danish government's explicit objective in Iraq has been to contribute to the establishment of a democratic Iraqi state that respects human rights and conducts good governance. The elections in 2005 created a set of institutions which became obvious partners in this endeavour. However, not surprisingly, given the context of violent, factional conflict, elections brought district and provincial councils to power whose members in many cases had direct ties to militias and illicit activities. This represents an inherent dilemma of stabilization and democratization efforts that may incorporate, legitimize and support armed *de facto* power-holders.

Another version of the same dilemma manifested itself in the limited support given to vulnerable and excluded groups through Concerted Planning and Action projects, despite the fact that this was one of five objectives stated in the CPA guidelines. Project identification was not based on socio-economic data, and local needs assessments were not carried out. Working through the district councils implied a risk of meeting only the priorities of the leaders and their constituencies while marginalizing vulnerable groups, as in the case of the Marsh Arabs in one of the districts in the Danish Area of Operation.

Democratic or not, the councils provided an access point to local power-holders, while reconstruction projects generated a process with the potential for opening up a political space for the negotiation of conflicting interests. Most of the projects provided material assistance in the form of repairs and the construction of roads, bridges, schools and health clinics. Negotiating priorities, locations and beneficiaries is a process with political implications. Thus, projects can have several functions: in addition to the stated aim, they can function as media for the capacity-building of the councils and for dialogue between different stakeholders and levels of authority. In this way, reconstruction projects may become means of political stabilization in an environment characterized by contested political orders. While this potential was generally left unexplored, in 2007 the Steering Unit, the Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Danish battalion made a promising planned effort to forge links between district and provincial government.

This political function of reconstruction projects is different from the generally assumed function of forging consent and hence security by providing public goods that people supposedly appreciate. This 'Winning Hearts and Minds' logic underpinned the operation in Basra. The principles of even-handedness and general coverage were by and large followed, but there were also cases in which, contrary to the Concerted

Planning and Action guidelines, projects were approved disproportionately in one district in order to convince the neighbouring district that it was wrong to deny the Danish troops access.

9. There are limits to the effectiveness of armed reconstruction. As the threat level to the Danish entities increased during 2006-07, the Danish battalion considered it necessary to provide more robust escorts (the 'pulse' concept) when the Reconstruction Unit Denmark, Danish police and Danish civilian personnel needed to visit their Iraqi counterparts. The more robust military presence had the effect of reducing the overall contact between the Danish entities and local Iraqi authorities. This had implications for the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of armed reconstruction, as well as the situational awareness of the military.

10. Limited knowledge of effects. Evaluations, reviews and research¹¹⁰ regarding civil-military cooperation in Iraq suggest that consistent monitoring, reporting and evaluation of effectiveness remained a problem. Conditions of insecurity obviously hampered assessment of the effects of operations and programmes, but other obstacles militated against a comprehensive learning of lessons, such as the lack of concerted reporting formats and indicators, the separate civil and military command structures, the involvement of many offices and entities, and the lack of a common archival system. The accumulation of experience and lessons learned has tended to take place in separate institutions rather than in the Standing Civil Servants Committee.

11. Capacity for change and adaptation, but how fast? In line with previous reports, and based on the experience of deployed military and civilian personnel involved in stabilization and reconstruction, this study observes that the civil and military parts of the system have been capable of incorporating new information and suggestions for necessary improvements. From the outset in 2003, the systems for recruitment, pre-deployment training and briefing, as well as the arrangements for civil-military cooperation, were largely inadequate for the challenge that the operation in Iraq presented. Since then, the Concerted Planning and Action concept (2004) and related institutions (Steering Unit and Standing Civil Servants Committee in 2005) have been developed, together with security courses for civilian personnel (2005) and mission-specific and Concerted Planning and Action courses for CIMIC personnel (2006 onwards), the selection of whom has also become more focused. However, while this represents considerable and sometimes difficult efforts, the speed of implementation

¹¹⁰ COWI 2006, COWI 2007, NIRAS 2007, Skadkaer Consult 2008.

has not been optimal. While this depends on the perspective and standards applied, there seem to be considerable differences among civil and military institutions with regard to expectations of the speed of change, adaptation and improvement.

Recommendations

While the Danish military engagement in Iraq is a closed chapter, the experience of civil-military cooperation in Iraq 2003-7 points to the following suggestions for future operations involving civil-military cooperation:

1. The insufficient pre-intervention planning and the unforeseen events that developed in Iraq underlines the crucial importance of having access to information and analysis of the political dynamics and conflicts in specific areas of operation as quickly as possible. On this basis, it is recommended that the government undertakes regular revisions of the strategies for gathering, analysing and sharing information with relevant partner governments and organizations with regard to evolving fragile situations. The strategies should distinguish between countries of development cooperation and other countries and areas.
2. Confirming the direction in which the Danish government has moved since 2007, the study points towards the need to strengthen the capacity for development of integrated strategies that include considerations of how different (civil and military) elements of the strategy may affect each other, as well as the overall political goal of the operation.
3. The ministries involved should provide clear and system-wide communication of overall integrated strategies and put emphasis on how the general strategic goals are translated into operational goals.
4. The experience of the Steering Unit in Basra suggests that the government should provide clear policy frameworks and mandates for coordinating entities at the field level where local grant authority and some level of political representation will allow for flexible and timely operational decisions. The posting of staff from the ministries in coordinating offices is likely to improve communication between Copenhagen and the field.
5. Even though CIMIC/RUD training and performance apparently improved considerably over the course of the operation, this study confirms the findings of other

reports which have recommended various changes in order to improve cooperation, performance and continuity at the tactical level. These include common training and briefing of civilian and military personnel based on realistic scenario exercises, staggered, overlapping or maybe extended deployment of CIMIC teams, and the deployment of civil advisors for as long as possible.

6. The study confirms that standard development indicators cannot be applied under the conditions of fragile situations and weak or non-existent national authorities, but also that alternative benchmarks and indicators should be developed for actual operations. Likewise it is important that the ministries involved harmonize and centralize procedures and capacity for the management of monitoring, reporting, debriefing, evaluation and lessons learned across the participating entities.

7. Due to the constraints of this and previous studies regarding access to Iraqi actors in the areas of operation, as soon as conditions permit the government should promote a collaborative UK/DK/Iraqi investigation in the Basra area to capture the local perspectives and possible effects of civil-military activities. The aim would be to deepen understanding of how combined civil-military actions can widen political space at the district and provincial levels and suggest ways to improve conciliatory approaches.

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Annexes

DIIS REPORT

Annex A: Time-line

Annex B: List of people interviewed

Annex C: District Councils in DANBN/AO

Annex A: Time-line

Iraq	Denmark
<p>February 2003: The US, Britain, and Spain submit a resolution to the UN Security Council stating that "Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity afforded to it in Resolution 1441," and that it was now time to authorize use of military force against the country. France, Germany and Russia submitted an informal counter-resolution to the UN Security Council stating that inspections should be intensified and extended to ensure that there is "a real chance to the peaceful settlement of this crisis," and that "the military option should only be a last resort."</p>	
<p>March 2003: The war against Iraq begins as the Coalition launches Operation Iraqi Freedom.</p>	<p>March 2003: Parliamentary Resolution B 118, authorizing Danish military support to Operation Iraqi Freedom, is adopted by the Danish Parliament. The Danish military contribution is one submarine, one corvette, one medical team, and staff and liaison personnel.</p> <p>Parliamentary Appropriation 111 granting DKK 180 million for humanitarian assistance and DKK 170 million for reconstruction activities in Iraq is adopted.</p>
<p>April 2003: The Coalition Provisional Authority is invested with executive, legislative, and judicial authority over Iraq.</p>	
<p>May 2003: The US declares an end to major combat operations.</p>	<p>May 2003: Parliamentary Resolution B 165 authorizing the deployment of a Danish Battalion (ca. 380 soldiers) to south eastern Iraq.</p>
	<p>May/June 2003: BANBN Team I is deployed in Basra.</p>
<p>July 2003: Iraq's Interim Governing Council (IGC), composed of 25 Iraqis appointed by American and British officials, is inaugurated. The Council has the power to name ministers and will help draw up a new constitution for the country. However, the American administrator, Paul Bremer, retains ultimate authority.</p>	

Time-line (continued)

Iraq	Denmark
<p>August 2003: Bombing of UN Headquarters following which most NGOs and IOs pulled out of Iraq.</p>	
	<p>September 2003: The 2003 Guidelines for military-humanitarian cooperation are issued.</p>
	<p>February 2004: Steering Unit is established in Basra.</p>
<p>Moqtadr al-Sadr's "JAM"-movement begins its armed anti-Coalition campaign in southern Iraq.</p>	<p>March 2004: The Concerted Planning and Action Initiative is launched.</p>
<p>June 2004: Power is handed over to Iraqis, marking the end of the Coalition Provisional Authority. The Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period (also called the transitional administrative law or TAL) takes effect.</p>	
<p>January 2005: Elections to select a 275-seat National Assembly went ahead as scheduled. A total of 8.5 million people voted, representing about 58% of those Iraqis eligible to vote. But violence accompanied the voting, with 260 attacks taking place on election day, the largest number since the war began. A coalition of Shiites, the United Iraq Alliance, received 48% of the vote; the Kurdish parties received 26% of the vote, and the Sunnis just 2%. The Sunni vote was so low because most Sunni leaders had called for a boycott.</p> <p>Muhammad al-Waeli of the Sadrist current al-Fadhila becomes governor following provincial elections.</p>	
	<p>February 2005: First civilian advisor arrives with DANBN team 5.</p>
	<p>May 2005: Parliamentary Decision B 89 and the 2005 Iraq-Analysis emphasize a strategic shift in both the military and civilian strategy towards more Iraqi ownership and capacity-building.</p>

Time-line (continued)

Iraq	Denmark
	June 2005: Parliamentary Appropriation 158 for the period 2005-2008, granting a further DKK 250 million for humanitarian and reconstruction activities is adopted.
	September 2005: The 2005 Guidelines for military-civilian cooperation are adopted.
October 2005: A new constitution passed, with 79% of voters supporting it. Turnout among Sunnis is high.	
December 2005: National parliamentary elections are held in Iraq.	
	February 2006: Second civilian advisor arrives with DANBN team 7.
April 2006: Nuri al-Maliki of the Shiite Dawa Party is approved as prime minister, ending four months of political stalemate. PRT's are created across Iraq.	April 2006: MFA deploys three advisers to the British-led PRT Basra.
January 2007: The "Surge" is launched by the U.S.	
	April 2007: Parliamentary Appropriation 105, granting DKK 100 million for internally displaced people and refugees in Iraq and neighbouring countries; and Parliamentary Appropriation 106, adding a further DKK 90 million to the reconstruction effort for the period 2007-2008 as the focus shifted from Basra to Baghdad are adopted.
May 2007: The International Compact with Iraq (ICI) was launched in Sharm al-Sheikh by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.	
	June 2007: Parliamentary Decision B 162 authorizes the withdrawal of DANBN from Basra. The shift in the civilian project-oriented aid to Basra to the support and capacity-building of the central government in Baghdad is also announced in B 162.
	August 2007: The Danish military engagement in Iraq ends, and DANBN withdraws from Iraq.

Annex B: List of people interviewed

Name (mr/ms)	Date	Titel/Occupation	Institution
Ms. Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen	17.04.2008	Head of Department	MFA/HUM
Ms. Pernille Hougesen	17.04.2008	Adviser	MFA/HUM
Mr. Peter Alexis	17.04.2008	Head of Office	MoD
Mr. Hewi Babakhan	05.05.2008	Former Civilian Adviser to DANBN	MFA/HUM
Ms. Johanne Djuurhus	05.06.2008	Former Civilian Adviser to DANBN	MFA/HUM
Mr. Finn Hegne	20.05.2008	Former CIMIC-S9	Danish Armed Forces/ DANBN/Team 8
Mr. Simon Rewers Hansen	29.05.2008	Former Chief of RUD unit	Danish Armed Forces/ DANBN/Team 7
Mr. Christian Aarhus	04.06.2008	Former CIMIC-S9	Danish Armed Forces/ DANBN/Team 8
Mr. Nicholas Webør	16.06.2008	Former Chief of RUD unit	Danish Armed Forces/ DANBN/Team 9
Mr. Nikolas Ørum Keller	20.06.2008	Former CIMIC officer and LGF-project Adviser	Danish Armed Forces/ DANBN/Team 3 and MFA
Mr. Jesper Frovin Jensen	18.07.2008	Former Head of Steering Unit	MFA/MENA
Mr. Jack Bohr-Christensen	23.07.2008	Former Deputy PRT	MFA/MENA
Mr. Svend Christian Libberts	07.08.2008	Former Deputy Chief of Staff	Danish Armed Forces/ DANBN/Team 9
Mr. Jacob Rogild Jacobsen	27.08.2008	Head of Section	MFA/MENA
Mr. Thomas Anker Christiansen	27.08.2008	Head of Department	MFA/MENA
Mr. Thure Christiansen	27.08.2008	Former Head of Section	MFA/HUM
Mr. Jan Top Christensen	29.08.2008	Former Head of Department	MFA/HUM
Mr. Erling Sørensen	04.09.2008	Former Senior Police Adviser	Royal Danish Police
Mr. Leif Christensen	05.09.2008	Assistant Commissioner	Royal Danish Police
Mr. Finn Berthelsen	26.09.2008	Former Chief of CIMIC unit	Multinational Division South East
Mr. Tommy Petersen	28.10.2008	Former Director of Civil Affairs	Coalition Provisional Authority -South
Mr. Ole Stokholm Jepsen	05.11.2008	Former Senior Agricultural Adviser	Coalition Provisional Authority -South/ MFA/NIRAS
Mr. Henrik Flach	24.11.2008	Former Commander of DANBN	Danish Armed Forces/Team 3
Mr. Kim Bruno Petersen	24.11.2008	Former Commander of DANBN	Danish Armed Forces/Team 9

Annex C: District Councils in DANBN/AO



Legend:

- The district council cooperated the entire period
- ◐ The district council cooperated approximately half of the period.
- It was unsure if the district council did cooperate even if it claims it did.