

CIMIC Seminar CIMIC is no Rocket Science

by LTC Math Weijers

On 8 October 2008, G9 branch organised its annual CIMIC Military Cooperation seminar. This year's focus was to provide non-CIMIC personnel (particular those who are going to deploy to Afghanistan in 2009) with the basic knowledge about CIMIC in order to assist in a better understanding of all CIMIC related subjects in general. The seminar furthermore aimed on creating understanding for effective integration of CIMIC and CIMIC staffs in the entire staff work within the HQ. CIMIC Centre of Excellence (CCoE) from Twente (NLD) provided all lectures.

The seminar was opened by BG Scuzs, DCOS CS DIV. After his opening Col Kuijpers, director CCoE took the floor and explained the idea behind CCoE. In particular he mentioned that CCoE is not owned by NATO but working closely with and for NATO. The Centre is sponsored by nations (Poland, Germany, Latvia, Denmark and the Netherlands). Since its existence CCoE is providing CIMIC training (CIMIC liaison course, CIMIC basic course and CIMIC staff course), Exercise support but also developed several documents such as CIMIC related documents with an African focus, the 2nd edition of the CIMIC handbook, the second edition of the MEL/MIL handbook besides others.

After his short introduction LTC Nils Gallagher (GER) gave a very good briefing on CIMIC within NATO. At some stage he explained how to understand the difference between cooperation and coordination. Take a marriage as example. If your marriage is good you talk about cooperation. If you do not have a good marriage you use coordination to set things right. Cooperation is done with the civil bodies while coordination takes place internal the military organisations. CIMIC is a functionality rather than an activity. LTC Gallagher also briefed the audience

about the different CIMIC assets available to support a COM such as CIMIC staffs, CIMIC units, and Functional specialists. LTC Uwe Willert (GER) addressed the issue of interaction with civilian actors. In order to be able to cooperate with civilian actors it is essential to know their background and the guidelines they use when it comes to support of people suffering. Mutual understanding and respect of principles, codes and doctrine and sectors of work is essential to work together. More joint training between the military and civilian is a must. It is also very important to share information between the two organisations. Military should assist humanitarian organisations



only after request.

Mrs Floor Plikaar (who gave an excellent briefing to last years seminar on Failed States) gave her vision and ideas about protecting the civil space. In her view, CIMIC is the ticket to leave the mission. You have to identify the conflict drivers in all subsystems like social, justice and economy. Try to find the gaps outside the other area (not the military/political area) taking into consideration the ethnic background. Bottom line: Civil problems need civil solutions.

LTC Arthur Haccou (NLD) introduced the audience to "CIMIC in an integrated staff". Main issues mentioned by the speaker: Nation building is not a NATO policy, no security without development and vice versa, the importance of the population's perception of our performance and the fact that civil affairs differs from CIMIC. With civil affairs the military give something to the population in order to exploit them. The military take over the responsibility rather then to assist in building capacity. The briefing went into some detail about the integration of G9 within the staff and how G9 should interact with the rest of the staff and vice versa.

Col Kasselman (deputy director CCoE) was the last briefer for the day. As the G9 of RC N in Afghanistan he took us through his experiences and lessons learned/observed during his stay in the Northern part of Afghanistan... Main issues: cultural awareness is a force multiplier, rumours is a kind of sport in Afghanistan just like betray and sheeting. In the different RCs there are no Govt reps because G1RoA does not have Regional area's. Assessments is one of the corner stones which contribute to effective CIMIC.

The seminar ended with a short summary of the main issues briefed, LTC Math Weijers thanked the briefers from the CIMIC Centre of Excellence for their important support for the program. For those who were not able to join us, a missed opportunity to increase the CIMIC awareness. For those who attended thanks.....

