

**FROM CIVIL STRIFE TO CIVIC SOCIETY:
NGO-MILITARY COOPERATION IN PEACE OPERATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

The dimensions of peace operations in the post-Cold War era have tended to reflect comprehensive attempts at settling conflicts rather than simply policing ceasefires. As a result, international humanitarian NGOs and multinational military forces are increasingly working together in the same theatre of operations than ever before due to a strong demand for coherence of approach. However, these actors have not always necessarily, acted jointly, or in concert, to achieve the desired goals of sustainable peace. This article examines the various factors impeding effective NGO-military cooperation, and offers suggestions for improvement of the relationship. It argues that given the complex nature of contemporary conflict management and resolution, involving military and non-military activities, only a well-planned and coordinated combination of civilian and military measures can create the conditions for durability of peace in divided societies.

Introduction

The last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century have brought about notable changes in dealing with new security challenges. The demand for multifunctional/ multidimensional peacekeeping which encompasses both traditional peacekeeping and new tasks has increased dramatically in the post-Cold War era as the number of latent and internal tensions spilled over into violent conflicts and their attendant complex emergencies.

International response in the form of multi-functional UN peace operations of recent years thus assumes critical importance. These peace operations have involved a wide range of responsibilities designated political, humanitarian, civil, military, and performed by an array of institutional actors including civilians and military, governmental and non-governmental. This fusion of tasks designed to create space in which peace processes can take root, however, has not been easy and has engendered mixed results.¹ The trend toward coordination and integration of tasks in peace operations was reflected back in 1992 in Boutros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace* and the *Supplement to the Agenda*.² Furthermore, the recent *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations - the Brahimi Report* - has given impetus to the debate on cooperation and calls for among other things, changes, including realistic and clear peacekeeping mandates, robust rules of engagement for military forces, unity of effort, a clear and unified chain of command, and a shift in policing from monitoring to active engagement in restructuring the public security system. It also makes a host of recommendations relating to the UN's capacity to conceive, plan, mount and logistically support complex peace operations.³ These new dimensions of peace operations have thus

tended to reflect attempts at settling conflicts rather than simply policing ceasefires. As a result, civilian and military personnel are increasingly working together in the same theatre of operations than ever before due to a strong demand for coherence of approach. Contrary to expectations, however, the various civilian and military actors involved in peace operations have not always, necessarily, acted jointly, or in concert to achieve the desired aims of sustainable peace. Several areas of tension still exist between the two groups. To date the international community is still grappling with these issues.

It is in this context that this paper explores some relevant considerations pertaining to humanitarian NGO-Military relations in contemporary peace operations.⁴ It argues that given the complex nature of contemporary conflict management and resolution involving military and non-military activities, only a well-planned and coordinated combination of civilian and military measures can create the conditions for long-term stability and peace in societies torn apart by war. First, it briefly examines the differences within and between international military forces and humanitarian NGOs, and their respective roles in peace missions. Any initial steps in developing a complementary approach between these two actors need to clarify their respective roles. Second, it discusses factors impeding effective NGO-Military cooperation in peace missions with a view to overcoming those barriers. Lastly, it offers suggestions for improvement of NGO-Military relations in peace operations.

Over the last decade or so, an expanded role for NGOs in peace missions has occurred. This development has taken place amidst declining development assistance budgets by western governments that has seen greater reliance on NGOs in relief operations and the delivery of development programs. The NGO community itself has

argued that it and other civil society actors are more effective than governments in delivering assistance to people in need. Thus, much of the proliferation of NGO activity has come at the expense of states and international organizations and has further enhanced the important role that NGOs now play in peace operations.⁵ Furthermore, NGOs have also noted that Western governments tend to become involved in peacekeeping activities in the least complex emergencies, while the more difficult ones, for example in the Great Lakes region of Africa, are left to NGOs to run. In the same vein, western governments and militaries, it would seem, have grown more reluctant to engage in peace missions that run the risk of turning into long term commitments with uncertain results and an unclear exit strategy. If this trend continues, NGOs will, in the foreseeable future be indispensable partners alongside the military in peace operations given their ability to forge long term relationships within divided societies.⁶ A closer examination of their relationship or interactions therefore becomes imperative. The nature of contemporary conflicts with easy access to modern communications, cheap weaponry, deliberate targeting of civilians and the perpetration of war crimes, suggests conflicts that are long drawn out and not easily amenable to resolution. Today, the conventional wisdom is that while military means may be employed in attempting to control violent conflict and to create a secure environment necessary for rebuilding divided societies, these measures have to be supported, supplemented, and closely coordinated with civilian instruments, if peace missions are to achieve the goal of restoration of peace and stability.

The dynamics of previous complex emergencies which saw limited need for civil-military interaction, partly because of concerns over ‘mission creep’ on the part of the

military, (and an uneasiness on the part of NGOs working with military forces), have given way to the recognition that supporting civil implementation has become a *sine qua non* to successful missions. The intense field experience of the past few years has tended to reveal the fact that effectiveness of contemporary peace operations will depend on the collaboration of military and civilian actors.

Differences between the Military and NGOs

Perhaps, it is important to be cognisant of the fact that although there are clear differences of approaches between the military and NGOs, there are also differences both within international military forces, and within the humanitarian NGO sector. The military is not monolithic or a homogenous body. There are disparities in military capabilities, configuration, competence, and levels of professionalism even among northern militaries, and between northern and southern militaries. Some nations are better than others, and are better suited for specific tasks than others. One also finds a wide spectrum of traditions and cultural characteristics exhibited by military forces of various nations involved in a complex emergency. To a greater or lesser extent, these characteristics may reflect national agendas that may subtly differ from international opinion. The composition of UN multinational military forces, for instance, deriving from different national forces can sometimes prove to be a weakness as in Somalia and in Sierra Leone. Thus, the recognition of differences within the military sector is vital. In light of the foregoing, it is not surprising that NGOs are reluctant to sign up to cooperate with all, or even any particular military forces under all conceivable circumstances.⁷

It is also worth noting that there are differences among NGOs in terms of size, mandate, capacity, and levels of professionalism. They determine their missions, mandate, and write their own charters and principles. The upshot of this is the freedom they have and are determined to maintain. This means, according to Slim, that ‘any consensus across the NGO sector about a mission and mandate will often be variable and cast in the broadest terms. It can seldom be assumed that every NGO will be singing the same song in a given situation. Such independence has important consequences for the civil-military relationship and may make NGOs unpredictable and even tempestuous partners’.⁸ Thus, it is imperative that both the military and NGOs put their respective houses in order as a necessary condition for improved relations.

As noted earlier, today’s complex emergencies reflect the complex humanitarian, political, economic, religious, ethnic, and military considerations that require well-thought out long-term solutions designed to address the underlying causes of conflict. This inevitably suggests performance of specific military and civilian tasks. At the policy level, new relationships have been forged between the international security community and humanitarian actors. Military personnel from various countries have become engaged in humanitarian politics, while NGOs involved in global security and conflict resolution have also taken up issues relating to humanitarian affairs.⁹ This fusion of security/humanitarian policy has, at the operational level, seen overlapping roles being performed by the military and NGOs as described by various UN Security Council Resolutions.

Apart from purely military tasks such as the provision of a secure environment for affected civilian population either through disarming belligerents, restoring public order,

or enforcing peace agreements, the military normally play a supporting role in helping NGOs provide relief assistance. They protect relief supplies particularly in unstable situations where armed groups may attempt to engage in banditry, or the diversion of those supplies in order to deny aid to their adversaries. Somalia and the Sudan provide good examples where several NGOs discovered over 80% of food supplies were lost as a result of misappropriation or theft. NGOs attitudes toward such diversions however differ often creating a potential source of tension. In the words of Byman 'major NGOs often don't want to shoot people for taking the food that they brought', the reason being an implicit acceptance that a proportion of their aid will go to the combatants.¹⁰ Such an attitude however presents a conundrum of continuing instability and poses challenges for the overall security environment, since relief channeled to these very groups goes to sustain the war effort. To make sure that relief reaches affected populations, the military may also secure warehouses, convoys routes and various distribution points.

Furthermore, the military may also provide security for NGO personnel. NGOs working without military protection often encounter dangerous situations. Instances of NGOs being attacked abound. It is however, difficult to protect NGOs where their personnel are normally scattered in a conflict zone. In Somalia, for instance, NGOs were reluctant to consolidate their activities because they wanted to maintain close contact with the local population.¹¹ In Kosovo, the dilemmas of armed protection once again came to the fore. There seems to be a presumption that armed protection of NGOs is undesirable since it makes their work more difficult if not dangerous, in addition to compromising their neutrality.¹²

Military forces may also be engaged in de-mining, demobilization, election monitoring, and the implementation of peace accords. These functions overlap with NGOs that are engaged in similar processes. Lastly, in exceptional circumstances, military forces may also be directly involved in the distribution of assistance. NGOs, tend to resent this, and understandably so, given the real danger that humanitarian principles and objectives are likely to be compromised since military operations are framed by a political agenda, and not by the humanitarian imperative. As Pugh rightly points out in this regard: ‘military personnel are not ideally suited to humanitarian work; they lack training, expertise and appropriate policy configurations for building local capacities and accountability to local populations; above all, military acts are inherently political and usually connote partisanship – in contrast to traditional “humanitarianism”, which is idealized as morally autonomous and not politically conditioned or imposed’. On the other hand, he continues: ‘it is infeasible simply to rule out military involvement in relief.’¹³

NGOs for their part, have been engaged in a variety of tasks in complex emergencies that have been the site of peace operations. They are involved at the grassroots level in the distribution of humanitarian aid, capacity-building, conflict resolution, and in long-term projects in support of economic, social development, and reconciliation. NGOs also provide early warning of looming conflict and help in the mobilization of international support for action in conflict zones.

Barriers to Effective Cooperation

Relations between the military and NGOs are problematic when they both operate outside of their 'comfort zones' in peace missions. Political, humanitarian, security, socio-economic, legal, and other issues cannot be separated into watertight compartments and are inextricably linked. Thus, they both need each other and an understanding of how the other operates. Yet there are numerous barriers or impediments militating against a harmonious relationship. A widely noted challenge relates to the proliferation and heterogeneity of civilian actors involved in recent missions which tends to create a host of problems. The sheer number of humanitarian NGOs often makes it difficult to have an overview of their activities, let alone coordinate them. This proliferation of NGOs has resulted in a growing coordination challenge. Reports indicate that some 250 NGOs were operating in the complex emergency in Goma, and about 175 in Kigali in 1994. A similar number currently operate in Kosovo. While the plethora of NGOs allows for implementation of an array of services and the provision of aid, this development also leads to poor standards of provision and management, in addition to exacerbating conflict by fuelling wartime and post war economies.¹⁴ Coordinating the activities of these NGOs, in the words of Bellamy, 'could be likened to "herding cats"'. Each NGO has its own specific area of interest and expertise.¹⁵ While they bring a wide range of competence to the field; some are highly effective and others are simply not. Attempts by military authorities to control and coordinate their work are sometimes resented. The impressions formed by the military of the work of the less competent ones, also tends to colour the perception of the whole spectrum of NGOs as incompetent and their operations as disjointed or uncoordinated.¹⁶ Moreover, the large number of NGOs means the tendency

towards more competition rather than collaboration. In Somalia for instance, many NGOs started operations after the military intervention, lacking both the experience or knowledge of the country, or even what had taken place before their arrival. The result was poor coordination partly stemming from the unwillingness to consult those with knowledge of the situation. The inclination on the part of the NGOs, in the words of Duffey, was to 'do their own thing'.¹⁷ The competition for high visibility, fund raising requirements, and media coverage makes it difficult for NGOs to agree on a common strategy. The consequences of this competition suggests not only is coordination with the military highly unlikely, but that it also has profound implications for the overall effectiveness of peace missions.

Another impediment to civil-military cooperation stems from the mutual lack of familiarity and the new roles that they are playing both jointly and severally. Military forces have made very little effort to engage NGOs. They lack an understanding of the different hierarchies, charters, distinctions, and modes of operation of NGOs, and a lack of recognition that what works with one NGO may not work with another. Byman maintains this lack of knowledge is institutional. This is the case, since the knowledge gained from the limited contact by the military with NGOs is not retained. The practice with the US military for instance is that only civil affairs officials, who are mainly reservists, regularly work with NGOs. Thus, obtaining the relevant knowledge before a crisis erupts, when the reserves are less likely to be deployed, is difficult. There is also a corresponding ignorance of the military on the part of NGOs. Military organisation, hierarchies and capabilities are often poorly understood. The result is that NGOs often make unrealistic demands on the military.¹⁸ The problem is also compounded by the fact

that NGOs are often suspicious of the military and vice versa. Thornberry notes how in recent missions, NGO workers tend to be much younger than their military counterparts, and this age difference can sometimes reinforce perceived differences of approach.¹⁹

Closely related to the lack of familiarity is the common refrain and recurrent theme about differences in organizational cultures between the two communities. Both NGOs and the military are in agreement that cultural incompatibility is at fault and often one of the primary obstacles to effective cooperation.²⁰ In many ways, as Slim maintains, ‘military and humanitarian organizations find themselves as much connected as separated by the common roots in war’, and the perceived nobility both of dying for one’s country and of saving life; a major difference, however, is that while the military find it easy and morally acceptable to be humanitarian occasionally, the reverse of NGOs taking part in military activities is much less likely.²¹ Jenny encapsulates the differences when she writes: ‘An army and a humanitarian organization work with fundamentally different rationales. While soldiers respond to clear lines of command, sets of rules and operational orders, aid workers are generally independent minded and retain considerable decision-making power at field level.’²² Military officers working with local authorities have been reluctant to cooperate with NGOs; an inherent mistrust that stems from the very different institutional cultures. NGOs are less hierarchical than the military and are under no obligation to take instructions from people outside their group, and so there is more freedom of action which they cherish. This makes it difficult for the military to engage in any sort of cooperative arrangements with NGOs. A possible consequence might be the tendency by the military to think they can provide better quality aid.

Also, in dealing with issues relating to security, some military personnel act in a hegemonic manner towards the NGOs, typified by the attitude 'only we understand the security situation'. In Somalia, this attitude was counterproductive as the military were less knowledgeable about the cultural, social, and political realities of the situation.²³ Duffey drives home the point when she remarks: 'the operations in Somalia exposed serious organizational culture differences between the military and the diversity of civilian agencies'.²⁴ For NGOs, it is easy for any sort of cooperation to be resented as 'encroachment'.²⁵ Brigadier Cross provides the interesting example of Kosovo where military-led meetings were instinctively viewed with suspicion by NGOs, expecting those meetings to be highly structured and for 'orders' to be given. Not surprisingly, many NGOs stayed out of those meetings or were reluctant participants, and throughout the NGO community there was a noticeable determination not to be controlled or commanded. The end result was military resources were not optimally utilized.²⁶ The reluctance of NGOs to cooperate with the military, according to Stockton, stems from cultural and practical reasons. He argues that the NGO community harbours a tradition of embattlement with authority, especially that in uniform, and this has profound implications for any successful degree of cooperation. Practically, the military tend to monopolise media coverage which NGOs resent because of a perceived loss of fundraising.²⁷ A military agenda may also be perceived as overshadowing a humanitarian one. During the Australian led intervention in East Timor, many NGOs raised concerns regarding the dominance of security issues to the exclusion of humanitarian ones in the early stages of the mission planning.²⁸

Problems have also arisen in the context of a reluctance of NGOs dealing with the military because of the perception of compromising their security, impartiality, neutrality, or even because of a mistrust arising from previous experience.²⁹ In operational terms, NGOs are apprehensive that the use of the military to protect relief supplies and personnel might have the opposite effect: the turning of humanitarian facilities and staff into perceived enemies, and therefore, targets.³⁰ One of the large NGOs that had operations in Albania encountered a situation subsequently in Angola that compromised its operations in that country because Angolan rebels had seen the NGO working in a refugee camp where NATO forces were also present. In no uncertain terms, the NGO was told ‘we don’t trust you; you’re with NATO’.³¹ In Somalia, the attempt to apprehend the warlord Mohammed Aideed, for instance, was viewed at least by his supporters as the US and UNOSOM taking sides in the conflict. Consequently, NGOs feared this loss of neutrality would make them targets, and this was borne out with the attack on World Vision personnel by militias as an expression of displeasure with the US-led enforcement action.³² In the wake of the Rwandan genocide, NGOs refused to allow UNAMIR to lend support to their efforts or needs, often claiming to have enough experience in dangerous situations that they did not need the UN’s help or protection.³³ Moreover, NGOs have also expressed fears of being co-opted into a ‘new Cold War strategy whereby the national interests of a dominant power define the operations of the day – meaning that NGOs could become a non-military extension of a new structure for great power interests working beside or through the UN’.³⁴ In general, NGOs have more reservations working with the US military than with those of smaller powers, because the US is often seen as having a political agenda, hence working with US military forces

risks being seen as US pawns.³⁵ Aaronson has also highlighted from Save the Children's perspective, what is termed the "new reality" of humanitarianism that attempts to bring political, military, and humanitarian objectives within the same framework. For him, that represents a real danger that humanitarian aims and principles will be compromised as a result of which the capacity to alleviate suffering will be reduced.³⁶ Given the Brahimi Report's conclusions on the need for a robust force posture and a sound peacebuilding strategy which implies that the UN must now be willing to take sides, one should not lose sight of the fact that the more assertive a peacekeeping force becomes, the more likely it is bound to confront or engage rogue forces. In such circumstances NGOs will have to be seen as distinct from the military. Also, NGOs must weigh the advantages of short-term cooperation with the military against the possible consequences of long term alienation since they often remain long after military forces have departed. The perils of close association with the military have meant NGOs distancing themselves, wherever possible, from military operations. Overall, NGOs insistence on impartiality, neutrality, and independence have served as a stumbling block to any long term planning with the military.

NGOs are also often unwilling to share information not only among themselves, but also with the military. Although, they are forthcoming with information concerning the needs of suffering people, they are reluctant to share other sensitive information with the military. They will for instance not give information on the host government fearing it might jeopardize their operations in terms of access to crisis areas. Some NGO personnel are concerned that the military seeks information that goes beyond the immediate crisis.

On the other hand, the military will not share information with NGOs due to operational secrecy, for example, on issues relating to deployments and capabilities.³⁷

Towards Achieving Mutually Workable Relations

In light of the above discussion, it is quite clear that more effective peace missions will require minimizing or overcoming the problems examined that currently plague military-NGO relations. As noted earlier, the utility of broader cooperation and coordination between military and civilian actors is becoming more widely recognized in the international community.³⁸ Yet, coordination itself is a value-laden concept. For some, it implies ‘control’, while others resist being bogged down by interminable layers of bureaucracy.³⁹ Cooperation is a relatively weak concept for the military, but it has stronger meaning for NGOs. Although, from the British military perspective for example, cooperation is more about consensus and heading together in an agreed direction, than strict coordination and command, to achieve a comprehensive approach based on complimentary capabilities.⁴⁰ The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines cooperation as ‘working together to the same end’, while coordination is defined as ‘bringing together (various parts etc.) into a proper or required relation to ensure harmony or effective operation’. These definitions are simple enough and relatively straightforward in their application to the military/NGO context in terms of achieving mutually workable relations. As Jakobsen suggests, civil-military relations mean ‘creating an effective partnership with civilian agencies and NGOs based on mutual respect and coordination by consensus and not command’.⁴¹ Thus, both the military and NGOs need to understand

why they are involved in a particular peace mission and can only improve cooperation and collaboration through flexibility and building trust.

Despite efforts to address issues of cooperation and coordination, it seems to be the case that either lessons have not been learned or indeed few lessons have been learned, or as Weiss bluntly puts it ‘ perhaps too many lessons have been learned periodically’.⁴² In any case, the problems discussed earlier still exist. It has been suggested that this may be due in part to the fact that *ad hoc* improvements made at the working level, largely by personalities involved in the field, have not translated into policy and institutionalised in higher offices.⁴³ In order to remedy this state of affairs, there is the need to address a number of issues both within NGOs and Military forces as an initial step to breaking down the barriers to cooperation. Civil-civil coordination is important and should be seen as part of the overall strategy to enhance the effectiveness of peace missions. NGOs will have to demonstrate that preserving their independence does not mean the duplication of work in certain areas and leaving gaps in others.⁴⁴ The creation of an NGO coordination body to discuss a common programme of action; to act as the centre for information exchange; and first point of contact for NGOs arriving in a particular crisis situation should be encouraged as a way of consolidating their operations.⁴⁵ NGOs also need to constantly re-examine their performance in the context of ongoing efforts aimed at developing a comprehensive code of conduct conveying their missions, objectives, and operating procedures more clearly to the military such as the initiative taken by the ICRC.⁴⁶ In addition, agreement should be sought among NGOs on modalities of civil-military cooperation with a view to encouraging greater unity of effort in theatre as part of a new partnership, given the ‘new reality’ integration of

humanitarian, political and military activities. It has been suggested that the Steering Committee on Humanitarian Response which is a coalition of large international NGOs that informs the UN about NGO policies would be a suitable forum to examine these issues.⁴⁷

For military forces, streamlining and harmonizing operational plans and goals of potential troop-contributing nations, for example, on what constitutes adequate protection of civilians, should be undertaken where possible at the start of a mission. A detailed development of a field manual for use by military contingents of various nations for each peace mission should be a step in the right direction to avoid confusion over operating principles. It is encouraging that the United Nations' Department of Peacekeeping Operations is currently developing a training programme including mission-specific preparations for military forces.

Another consideration for better coordination in closing the gap regarding cultural differences is that, at a minimum, the military should ensure familiarity with relevant NGOs that play leading roles in peace missions. A concerted effort through the organization of conferences, identifying and conducting joint exercises, training, planning, and offering courses examining civilian-military relations in military educational institutions should be encouraged.⁴⁸ This will lead to an improvement of the overall awareness of NGOs concerns and capabilities and vice versa. It will also ensure familiarity with each other at the pre-deployment stage and foster predictability, given the difficulties of the military in comprehending the diverse nature of humanitarian action in peace missions.⁴⁹ Ultimately, such joint initiatives may also result in the development

of common standards of good practice within and between the military and NGOs operations.⁵⁰

In order to avoid duplication, it is important to define and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various actors engaged in complex emergencies more clearly. This will go a long way in enhancing who is best for what job. Achieving maximum effectiveness from any federated response suggests the need for a clear division of labour. Discussions could start both within and outside of the UN regarding an “inventory” of activities carried out by the various actors, analyzing where their functions overlap or conflict, and how these could be improved.⁵¹

The UK Ministry of Defence Civil-Military Co-operation philosophy recognizes with regard to early engagement with civilian organizations that ‘each organisation needs an appreciation of the values and principles which motivate and guide the activities of others, and the mandates under which each of them operate. Fostering this greater understanding should reduce the suspicion and resistance to cooperation that sometimes surface during operations’. To this end, prospects for any enhanced collaboration should be complementary and based on a clear understanding and respect for each other’s mandates and operating principles. Ultimately, as Van Brabant asserts relating to different mandates: ‘agencies have to recognise that the underlying humanitarian mandate is the same: save lives, reduce suffering and try to restore local capacities. The work of different agencies is therefore inherently complementary’.⁵² To this end, creating institutions to promote familiarity would go a long way in helping cooperation during a crisis.

Also, to overcome lack of coherence across the entire range of operations in the field, possibilities for cooperation will require the exchange of information at all levels, building on the awareness and understanding established prior to deployment. The need to know what can and cannot be achieved, what will and will not be undertaken, by whom and under what circumstances will be important factors in the attempt at having the desired impact on complex emergencies. This communication imperative has already resulted in work on the coordination of information being undertaken in the NGO community. The Humanitarian Co-ordination Information Centre (HCIC) set up in Kosovo as a centre for data sharing available to all organizations and agencies is one such example. As Fitz-Gerald and Walthall note: ‘it provides information on who is doing what, where and when and provides visibility to “empower the doers”’.⁵³ This helps in the categorization of information and the development of common standards. The need for the military to become involved in initiatives such as the HCIC will help in the provision of overall clarity on the role of all actors and whom they are trying to help.⁵⁴

In recent years the military, for its part, has also sought to improve its relationship with NGOs through the evolution of Civil-Military Co-operation Centres (CMOCs) or other coordinating mechanisms. Liaison officers have also been attached to the leading NGOs in the field. These developments have facilitated interaction between the various actors by working together and building personal relationships. Although these cooperation centers have had a mixed record in bringing together the military and NGOs, they can be improved and serve as useful models for future operations.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The fundamental task in securing peace today is one of assisting in the long-term political and social transformation of war-shattered societies. Comprehensive peace operations, as Eide notes, thus need to address not only the immediate military and humanitarian concerns, but also the longer-term tasks of state building, reforming the security sector, strengthening civil society and promoting social reintegration.⁵⁶ These tasks can only be effectively implemented through a well coordinated system involving both the military and NGOs. Although significant differences do exist between these actors hindering closer relationships in the field – a reflection of their respective missions, expectations, perceptions and professional ethos – this should not, or at least should not be, as Cross observes, a battle between ‘bloody hands’ and ‘bleeding hearts’.⁵⁷ Working separately in an uncoordinated manner is likely to lead to undermining each other with substantial implications for bringing about peace in divided societies. Understanding and accepting these differences and moving forward through familiarization with each other, planning together, communicating, and an appropriate division of labour regarding roles and responsibilities will go a long way towards improving the ability to adequately respond to complex emergencies. Flexibility on the part of the Military and NGOs will be the key to further progress.

ENDNOTES

*An earlier version of this paper has been published in *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 10 No. 1, Spring 2003, pp.24-39. My thanks to the publishers for permission to reproduce substantial portions of the article here.

¹ By the mid-1990s, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) intimated that the human costs of conflicts and complex emergencies were overwhelming the international community's ability to respond. There were at least 56 conflicts in progress at the time reflecting movement away from inter-state disputes to civil conflicts. Events over the last five years have only reiterated the ICRC's concerns with ongoing civil wars and continued insecurity in countries such as Indonesia and East Timor, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa, and, in the Balkans, to name only a few. These wars have been spawned by political, religious, and economic factors, or from identity-based issues, and have frequently involved the targeting of local civilian populations, resulting in internally displaced persons and refugee movements across national borders. The threat posed to regional and international security cannot be over-emphasized, and persists into the new millennium. While the exact toll in human life and suffering is not known, the consequences of these developments have put several millions of people at serious risk.

² *Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992, para 82. He recognized that "[i]f UN efforts are to succeed, the roles of the various players need to be carefully coordinated in an integrated approach to human security". Similarly, in a World Bank and Carter Center conference in 1997 participants advocated "an integrated strategic framework characterized by: a coherent and comprehensive approach by all actors; partnerships and coordination between the various members of the international community and the national government; a broad consensus on a strategy and related set of interventions; careful balancing of macroeconomic and political objectives; and, the necessary financial resources". The World Bank and the Carter Center, "From Civil War to Civil Society", 19-21 Feb. 1997 conference proceedings report, July 1997, cited in Dayton Maxwell, "Facing the Choice Among Bad Options in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies" in Max Manwaring and John Fishel (eds), *Toward Responsibility in the New World Disorder: Challenges and Lessons of Peace Operations*, London: Frank Cass, 1998, p.179.

³ See *The Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*.

⁴ CIMIC (Civil-Military Co-operation) is a term widely used to characterize the management of this type of civil-military interface. This terminology is current both in NATO and the UN. The NATO definition of CIMIC is along the lines of a partnership between civil and military organisations in support of the military mission. For NGOs, this is seen as a military concept. The inherent danger of CIMIC is that it could lead the military to go beyond the performance of its (military) mandate and focus more on humanitarian activities than on peace and security functions. The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, for example, is considering the adoption, with minor changes, the UN definition. CIMIC is defined as: 'The relationship of interaction, co-operation and co-ordination, mutual support, joint planning, and constant exchange of information at all levels between military forces, civilian organisations and agencies, and in-theatre civil influences, which are necessary to achieve an effective response in the full range of operations'. See UK MOD, *Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Philosophy Document*. This definition, thus is along the lines of support for the long-term comprehensive solution to a crisis. The concepts and procedures of Canadian CIMIC doctrine, for example, are drawn largely from American Civil-Affairs (CA) doctrine with minor differences. Canadian doctrine emphasizes co-operation over direction; a reflection of Canada's greater experience with peacekeeping. See DND, *Civil-Military Co-operation in Peace, Emergencies, Crisis and War*, Canada, 1999. Cited in Sean Pollick, 'Civil-Military Co-operation: A New Tool for Peacekeepers', *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol.1, No.3, autumn 2000, p.11. For an outline of what CIMIC is not, see for example, J. Rollins, 'Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC) in Crisis Response Operations: The Implications of NATO', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.8, No.1, Spring 2001, p.123. See also, Stuart Gordon, 'Understanding the Priorities for Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)', *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, 13 July 2001, <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a068.htm> (for an exposition on the evolution of structures for managing the civil-military interface and the issues that confront CIMIC planners). It should

be noted that the term CIMIC is still dogged by a plethora of definitions and concerns. A degree of caution should therefore be exercised when referring to CIMIC.

⁵ For a fuller discussion of the increased role of NGOs in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations see Francis Abiew and Tom Keating, 'NGOs and UN Peacekeeping Operations: Strange Bedfellows', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.6, No.2, Summer 1999, p.89; Andrew Rigby, 'Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management: The View from the Non-Governmental Sector', *International Affairs*, Vol.77, No.4, 2001, p.957.

⁶ Recent research focusing on the Netherlands and the UK, suggests, however, that some donor governments have retreated from this "chequebook approach to relief" since the mid -1990s for a variety of reasons, not least in response to perceived political pressure for greater "visibility". See, Joanna Macrae and Nick Leader, 'Shifting Sands: the Search for 'Coherence' between Political and Humanitarian Responses to Complex Political Emergencies', *Humanitarian Policy Group Report No.8*, Overseas Development Institute. Cited in Mike Aaronson, 'NGOS and the Military in Complex Emergencies: The New Realities - The NGO Perspective', Paper presented at *Wilton Park Conference*, 23 April 2001, pp.3-4.

⁷ See Hugo Slim, 'The Stretcher and the Drum: Civil-Military Relations in Peace Support Operations', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.3, No.2, 1996, pp.126-128; Ted Van Baarda, 'A Legal Perspective of Cooperation between Military and Humanitarian Organizations in Peace Support Operations', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.8, No.1, Spring 2001, p.99; Mike Bryan, 'Observations on Wilton Park NGO Conference Report', *Wilton Park Conference*, April, 2001.

⁸ Slim, *ibid.*, p.128.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.129.

¹⁰ Daniel Byman, 'Uncertain Partners: NGOs and the Military', *Survival*, Vol.43, No.2, summer 2001, p.99.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Michael Pugh, 'Civil-Military Relations in the Kosovo Crisis: An Emerging Hegemony?', *Security Dialogue*, Vol.31, No.2, June 2000, p.236.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.230.

¹⁴ Pugh, (note 12 above), p.235. Hugo Slim, however, notes that despite this picture of NGO proliferation, the apparent confusion on the ground is less significant than the figures might lead one to believe for a number of reasons. First, the high profile emergencies tend to distort the facts somewhat, since the so-called 'orphan emergencies' have involved significantly lesser NGO numbers - in tens rather than hundreds. Second, a significant proportion of funding in any emergency whether high profile or not, only goes to a relatively small number of big NGOs. See Slim, (note 7 above), pp.127-8.

¹⁵ Christopher Bellamy, 'Combining Combat Readiness and Compassion', *NATO Review*, summer 2001, p.10.

¹⁶ Pollick, (n.4 above), pp.6-7.

¹⁷ Tamara Duffey, 'Cultural Issues in Contemporary Peacekeeping', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.7, No.1, Spring 2000, p.156.

¹⁸ Byman, (note 10 above), p.106.

¹⁹ See Cedric Thornberry, 'Peacekeepers, Humanitarian Aid, and Civil Conflicts', *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, 3 June 2000, p.3. [<http://www.jha.ac/articles/a002.htm>]. He cites the example of a vivid exchange between an experienced general and a young humanitarian female worker, and the perception of that worker by the officer after he was lectured. Needless to say, the exchange did not go very well.

²⁰ Meinrad Studer, 'The ICRC and Civil-Military Relations in Armed Conflict', Paper presented at *Wilton Park Conference*, April 2001, p.11.

²¹ Slim, (note 7 above), p. 124; see also, *ibid.* Although Slim also acknowledges 'despite apparently similar organizational behaviour, international humanitarian organizations tend to be made up of people who have profound reservations about militarism'.

²² Joel Jenny, 'Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies: Finding Ways to Make it Work', *European Security*, Vol.10, No.2, Summer 2001, p.27.

²³ Duffey, (note 17 above), p.156.

²⁴ In the same context, the then Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN, Petrie, concluded: 'Somalia confirmed that you cannot have two distinct structures [military and humanitarian] and expect that to work.'

The two components must understand each other and how they can complement each other...Each must be co-opted into the other's way of thinking.' Quoted in *ibid*.

²⁵ Gordon, (note 4 above), p.8.

²⁶ T. Cross, 'Comfortable with Chaos – Working with the UNHCR and the NGOs: Reflections from the 1999 Kosovo Refugee Crisis', Paper presented at *Wilton Park Conference*, April 2001, p.21

²⁷ Cited in Gordon, (note 4 above), p.8.

²⁸ Gordon, *ibid*.

²⁹ Weiss observes in this context that many civilian humanitarians argue injection of military forces jeopardizes the impartiality, neutrality and consent that have traditionally underpinned their work, and in the long run, addresses none of the structural problems that led to the eruption of violence in the first place. Thomas Weiss, *Military-Civilian Interactions: Intervening in Humanitarian Crises*, Lanham:Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 1999,p.3.

³⁰ Romeo Dallaire, 'The Changing Role of UN Peacekeeping Forces: The Relationship between UN Peacekeepers and NGOs in Rwanda', in Jim Whitman and David Pocock (eds.), *After Rwanda: The Coordination of United Nations Humanitarian Assistance*, London: Macmillan Press, 1996, p.207.

³¹ Ted Van Baarda, (note 6 above), p.103.

³² Byman, (note 10 above), p.104. It is precisely the sort of situation Gordon reminds us about when he states: 'humanitarian action alongside an enforcement force may...be perceived as being utilized by politicians to legitimize military action and overcoming controversies relating to mandates and legality. This may also prejudice the willingness of members of the humanitarian community to become part of an "integrated" structure'. Gordon, (note 4 above), p.8.

³³ See Dallaire, (note 30 above), pp.210-11.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.207.

³⁵ Byman, (note 10 above), p.105.

³⁶ He cites the example of Afghanistan (prior to the US war on terrorism in that country) where the UN devised a strategic framework that attached conditionalities to the continuation or resumption of humanitarian work, that covered for instance, progress towards peace. When the conditions were not met, humanitarian assistance was greatly reduced. NGOs in those situations were essentially prevented from carrying out their mandate because political objectives got in the way. For him, the lack of progress towards peace restricted humanitarian aid and protection at the very time it was needed most. Aaronson, (note 6 above), p.5.

³⁷ Byman, (note 10 above), p.105.

³⁸ There is a developing experience and doctrine of civil-military collaboration or cooperation. Van Brabant notes discussions aimed at ensuring that political and assistance strategies are 'better informed' about each other having taken place for instance in Afghanistan in the context of the strategic framework'. Similar approaches are being developed in the Caucasus, and were developed in 1993-4 in Angola, where the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General provided effective support when the NGOs needed it. Koenraad Van Brabant, 'Understanding, Promoting and Evaluating Coordination: An Outline Framework', in D.S. Gordon and F.H. Toase (eds.), *Aspects of Peacekeeping*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, p.156. See also, Bruce Jones, *The Challenges of Strategic Coordination: Containing Opposition and Sustaining Implementation of Peace Agreements in Civil Wars*, *IPA Policy Paper Series on Peace Implementation*, June 2001, New York. For a useful discussion on models of co-operation and coordination which is beyond the scope of this work, see for example, Gerald Hatzenbichler, 'Civil-Military Co-operation in UN Peace Operations Designed by SHIRBRIG', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.8, No.1, Spring 2001, pp.117-21; Ted Van Baarda, (note 7 above), pp.107-112.

³⁹ Jon Bennett, 'Coordination, Control and Competition: NGOs on the Front Line', in Jim Whitman and David Pocock (eds.), (note 30 above), p.136.

⁴⁰ Cited in 'NGOs and the Military in Complex Emergencies', *Summary of Wilton Park Conference*, 23-26 April 2001, p.7.

⁴¹ Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'The Emerging Consensus on Grey Area Peace Operations Doctrine: Will it Last and Enhance Operational Effectiveness?', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.7, No.3, Autumn, 2000, p.42.

⁴² This judgement is based on ongoing research by Brown University's Humanitarianism and War Project reviewing institutional performances and adaptations in post-Cold War crises. Weiss further suggests that although 'lessons learned' has become a buzzword in the post-Cold War environment, as demonstrated by

the creation of lessons-learned units in the UN, and in other institutions, nevertheless, this phenomenon should not be confused with the actual learning of lessons. See Thomas Weiss, 'Learning from Military-Civilian Interactions in Peace Operations', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.6, No.2, Summer 1999, pp.115-118.

⁴³ This was noted by the conference organizers at Cranfield University's Department of Defence Management and Security Analysis and the Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre, at a conference on the Kosovo experience held in May 2001 that brought together experts, practitioners, policymakers, and academics to explore issues involved in moving towards an integrated approach to complex emergencies.

⁴⁴ Jenny, (note 22 above), p.30

⁴⁵ These coordination bodies have worked well in practice in such places as Thailand, Ethiopia, and in Mozambique as a way round dealing with the sheer number of NGOs that are engaged in complex emergencies. See Bennett, (note 30 above), pp.143-145.

⁴⁶ The introduction of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (1994) and the accompanying Humanitarian Charter (SPHERE 2000) are initial steps at developing a beneficiaries Charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response. They represent efforts at creating an ethical framework with the objective of advancing effective humanitarian action by aid agencies. The danger with codes of conduct, however, in the words of Lancaster is that 'they allow managers to focus more on monitoring conformance than mentoring and coaching practitioners'. Monitoring compliance with the Code, for him, 'does not adequately promote individual commitment to its principles'. For a further exposition on the effectiveness of codes of conduct regarding NGOs, see Warren Lancaster, 'The Code of Conduct: Whose Code, Whose Conduct', *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, June 2000, pp.1-9 [<http://www.jha.ac/articles/a038.htm>].

⁴⁷ See for example, Peter Bell and Guy Tousignant, 'Getting Beyond New York: Reforming Peacekeeping in the Field', *World Policy Journal*, Vol.XVIII, No.3, Fall 2001, pp.41-46.

⁴⁸ For a detailed discussion of these issues see for example, A. Fitz-Gerald and F. Walthall, 'An Integrated Approach to Complex Emergencies: The Kosovo Experience', *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, August 2001, pp.1-7 [<http://www.jha.ac/articles/a071.htm>].

⁴⁹ This recognition of broader planning should be given priority in preparations prior to deployment in peace missions. A study of the Rwandan genocide by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' Lessons Learned Unit poignantly stated that 'a comprehensive humanitarian plan, developed along with the military and security plan for the mission, would have allowed for a better meshing of objectives...It would have sensitized the humanitarian and military actors to the mandate, procedures and culture of the other, allowing them to work better together'. Quoted in Walter Clarke, 'Waiting for the "Big One": Confronting Complex Humanitarian Emergencies and State Collapse in Central Africa', in Manwaring and Fishel (eds), (note 2 above), p.95.

⁵⁰ Slim, (note 7 above), p.139.

⁵¹ Bell and Tousignant, (note 47 above), pp.45-46.

⁵² Van Brabant, (note 38 above), p.144.

⁵³ A. Fitz-Gerald and F. Walthall, (note 48 above), p.4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

⁵⁵ For examples of activities carried out by these Centres see Pamela Aall, 'NGOs, Conflict Management and Peacekeeping', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.7, No.1, Spring 2000, pp.133-134; Pollick, (note 4 above), p.9.

⁵⁶ Espen Barth Eide, 'Peacekeeping Past and Present', *NATO Review*, Summer 2001, p.8.

⁵⁷ T. Cross, (note 26 above), p.iii.

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