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DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION

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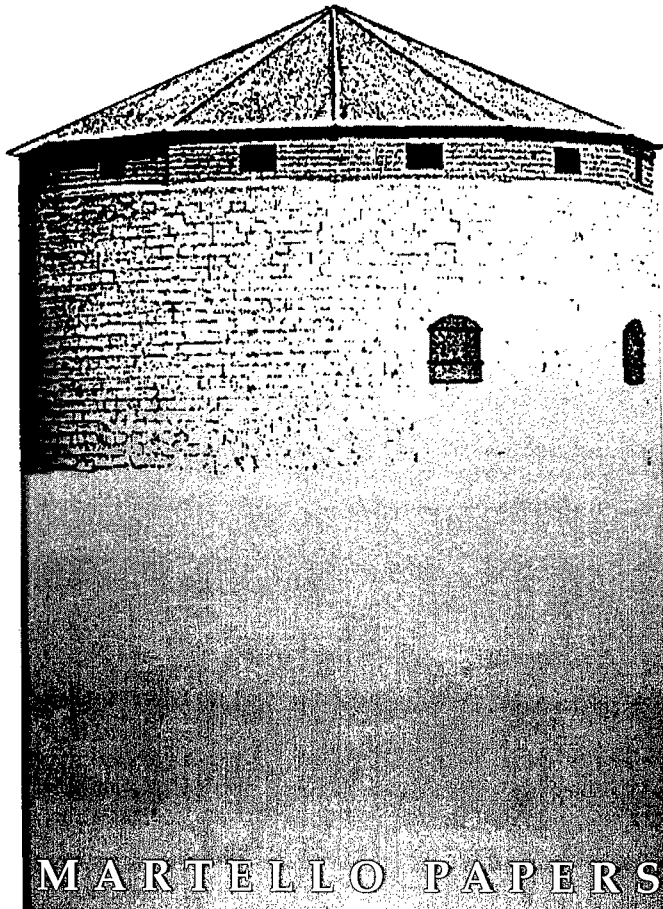
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 1996	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Moral Versus Practical; The Future of U.S. Armed Humanitarian Intervention			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Matthew S. Klimow				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Centre for International Relations Queens University Kingston, Ontario, Canada, K7L 3N6			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Army War College Senior Service College Fellows Program Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Published by Centre for International Relations, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada as Martello Paper Nr. 14 (ISSN 7783-3661;14) (ISBN 0-88977-709-2)				
12a. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution statement A. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited. Copyright 1996.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) This work is the product of research conducted by COL Matthew Klimow, US Army, while he was serving as a Visiting Defence Fellow at the Centre for International Relations, as a Senior Service College fellow (sponsored by the US Army War College). In it, he addresses the humanitarian role of US forces. To what extent can and should the US armed forces fulfil humanitarian missions? What are the political and military pitfalls of such operations? And how does the US decide which humanitarian crises to intervene in? These questions are of critical significance to the development of US military doctrine and strategy in the post-Cold War era.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Humanitarian Interventions Ethical Dilemmas Peacekeeping Operations Armed Intervention			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 95	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

Matthew S. Klimow

Moral versus Practical

*The Future of US Armed
Humanitarian Intervention*



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Centre for
International Relations
Queen's University

MARTELL O P A P E R S

MORAL VERSUS PRACTICAL:
THE FUTURE OF US ARMED
HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

MORAL VERSUS PRACTICAL:
THE FUTURE OF US ARMED
HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

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Kingston, Ontario, Canada
1996

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Klimow, Matthew S., 1952–
Moral versus practical : the future of US armed humanitarian intervention

(Martello papers, ISSN 1183-3661 ; 14)
ISBN 0-88911-701-2

1. United States – Foreign relations – 1993– .
 2. Intervention (International law). 3. United States – Military policy.
 4. United States – Armed Forces – Civic action. I. Queen's University (Kingston, Ont.). Centre for International Relations.
- II. Title. III. Series.

E885.K44 1996 327.73 C96-930077-8

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This work is the product of research conducted by Col. Matthew Klimow while he was serving as a Visiting Defence Fellow at the Centre for International Relations. In it, he addresses the humanitarian role of US forces. To what extent can and should the US armed forces fulfil humanitarian missions? What are the political and military pitfalls of such operations? And how does the US decide which humanitarian crises to intervene in? These questions are of critical significance to the development of US military doctrine and strategy in the post-Cold War era. The Centre is grateful to the US Army for supporting Colonel Klimow during his tour of duty in Kingston. We would also like to thank Marilyn Banting for her assistance in the process of editing, and Mary Kerr for typing the manuscript.

The QCIR engages in scholarly research and teaching on various aspects of international relations, with a particular emphasis on national and international security policies. Working in conjunction with the Royal Military College of Canada, the QCIR also sponsors an active program of guest lectures and seminars. The work of the Centre is supported by a generous grant from the Military and Strategic Studies Program of the Department of National Defence.

We are fortunate to have the advantage of the technical skills of Valerie Jarus of the SPS Publication Unit in producing the *Martello Papers*.

S. Neil MacFarlane, Director, QCIR

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Dr. David Haglund of Queen's University and Dr. Joel Sokolsky of the Royal Military College for the rich bounty of suggestions they provided me throughout the preparation of this manuscript. They gave me more time, insight, and encouragement than I think they realize. I am also indebted to the staff of the Centre for International Relations for their administrative assistance which made my work so much easier. Colonel Reinhard-Wolf Vogt (Visiting Defence Fellow, German Army), Lieutenant-Colonel Steve Chessum (Visiting Defence Fellow, Canadian Forces), and Major Rob Rehbein (Visiting Defence Fellow, US Air Force) were most patient in their reading of earlier drafts of this work and I thank them for their camaraderie and help.

As well, I thank the students at Queen's University and the Royal Military College who listened to my ideas and offered their candid views. To Skelton-Clark Visiting Fellow, Ambassador Louis Delvoie, I give my thanks for his inspiration and friendship. Finally, I thank my wife Edie for her many suggestions and my son Daniel for his support and patience.

Matthew S. Klimow
1996

Introduction

The central question is how to reconcile a concern for moral principles with the imperatives of national power in order to create a meaningful policy that is understood and supported by the American people. The tension between moral and practical is evident.

*General Gordon R. Sullivan and
Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Twomey*

America's Mission

Curious role reversals have characterized post-Cold War debates on US military intervention. Politicians and commentators who traditionally eschewed the use of force by the United States made impassioned pleas for American military intervention in Bosnia. An American president distinguished for his adamant opposition to American involvement in Vietnam's civil war, was seen making his case to a sceptical Congress and even more sceptical American people for military intervention in Haiti. Conservatives who supported humanitarian and civic assistance in Central America as part of the Reagan Doctrine in the 1980s, warned against squandering American lives and resources for humanitarian causes in the 1990s. And when the genocidal mass murder took place in Rwanda in the spring of 1994 American leaders who espoused a global policy of engagement and enlargement helped to thwart UN demands for swift and firm international action.¹

Americans have always disagreed about the extent of US global responsibilities, and the end of the Cold War has reinvigorated that debate. Some argue that America's role in the 1990s is unique because of its unchallenged economic and military power. These advocates urge the United States to honour its legacy of moral leadership and to take prudent risks with American forces, particularly to uphold humanitarian and ethical concerns around the world. Indeed, President Clinton's *national security strategy of engagement and enlargement* reflects an

activist approach to global crises. In the preface to his published strategy, the president states that “[o]ur nation can only address this era’s dangers and opportunities if we remain actively engaged in global affairs. We are the world’s greatest power, and we have global interests as well as responsibilities. As our nation learned after World War I, we can find no security for America in isolationism, nor prosperity in protectionism.”² While few people, to include those in the current administration, suggest that the United States “go it alone,” it is widely recognized that if America does not take the lead, no one else will.³ Others are less enthusiastic about risking American lives in world conflicts. They point to the hard earned lessons of Vietnam, the terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, and more recently the death of several American soldiers in a controversial mission in Mogadishu, Somalia. In a classic debate between “idealists” and “realists,” those advocating realism in foreign policy advise committing American troops only when the nation’s vital interests are threatened. A more activist approach regarding the use of force, realists believe, invites endless interventions as the “world’s policeman,” smacks of imperialism, and leads to needless American casualties.

Humanitarian crises bring the debate on the employment of American troops to a sharp edge. The spectacle of famine, mass murder, and unspeakable brutalities demand attention, if not action by the international community. Most Americans agree that foreign policy cannot be built on altruism and sentimental intentions. Nonetheless, the American people have always held that the definition of national interest be more expansive than mere security and that the country’s moral and liberal ideals serve, to some degree, as determinants of foreign policy.⁴

What is the proper role for the United States in the face of a humanitarian crisis? It initially appeared that a disastrous end to the Somalia mission “cured” the United States of its interventionist tendencies. Indeed, America’s unwillingness to confront Rwandan genocide appeared to verify that a “realist” approach to intervention would prevail over an “idealist” view, at least in the near future. However, the publication of the Clinton administration’s policy of engagement and enlargement, a limited but successful humanitarian mission to aid Rwandan refugees, and the military occupation of Haiti show that the United States will continue to deploy its armed forces for a wide variety of missions. The 104th Congress, which began its 1995 session with great fanfare, added uncertainty to the picture after signalling, as a body, restraint in the use of the armed forces for military operations other than war (MOOTW).⁵

The focus of this study is the ongoing tension between America’s idealist impulse to intervene militarily around the globe in humanitarian causes and the realist recognition that the commitment of the armed forces must be made only with great discretion and when it is clear that the benefits will outweigh any loss to American national interests. Specifically, this paper asks how should the United States balance moral obligations concerning humanitarian crises with the practical imperatives concerning commitment of its military force.⁶ The answer to this

question depends, to some degree, on how terms are defined. Exactly what constitutes a humanitarian crisis and what is an armed humanitarian intervention? Chapter One explores current accepted definitions of these and other terms and establishes the parameters of this paper. These definitions apply throughout the paper as it examines whether the United States should intervene and how best to intervene should it choose to do so.

As the twentieth century draws to a close, it is clear that the United States will use its military when there is a consensus that national interests are at stake. But dreadful humanitarian crises, often in forgotten corners of the world, may have little apparent influence on America's vital interests. As a result, there is considerable debate on whether a humanitarian crisis justifies US military involvement. Chapter One examines the idealist and realist views on military intervention, and asks what moral obligations the US has when confronted with a foreign humanitarian crisis. The chapter also offers a legal, ethical, and practical framework by which to judge whether or not the United States should militarily intervene in a humanitarian cause. It raises some of the most difficult issues decisionmakers face regarding humanitarian interventions: How can the US or the international community decide what levels of barbarity merit intervention when there is so much turmoil in the world? Can free peoples of the world set limits on the number of innocents killed or atrocities committed before mustering the will to intervene? Has a newly defined concept of humanitarian intervention simply reawakened an old version of the "white man's burden," rekindling another form of ethnocentric imperialism? Accordingly, this paper considers the case against intervention and also addresses the issue of America serving as the world's moral policeman.

In his recent book on the use of American military force, Richard Haass noted that "the question of whether to use force can never be divorced from the question of how to use it effectively."⁷ Chapter Two examines the myriad of operational issues that arise once policymakers decide to commit the US military to a humanitarian cause. This portion of the paper addresses the question of limited intervention and whether or not the US should strike at the source of a humanitarian crisis, or simply provide "first aid," treating only the symptoms of the crisis and not the cause. Fundamental to the "how" of military intervention is the question of unilateral employment of American forces versus multilateral action. This chapter also explores how the United States might interact with regional organizations (e.g., the OAS, OAU, or WEU) and how the United States can best rectify goals and criteria that differ from that of the United Nations. Chapter Three shifts the focus from the policy level to actions on the ground. It outlines current US military doctrine regarding operations other than war, commonly referred to as MOOTW, and in particular how it relates to armed humanitarian interventions. Finally, this paper explores both the myth and reality of unique US military capabilities for humanitarian missions and, based on recent operations, what costs these missions incur.

In the end, there are few “neat and tidy” answers to the broad questions surrounding armed humanitarian intervention. Using armed means to accomplish a humanitarian end presents a moral dilemma and engenders a debate between practical calculations of the head and idealist passions of the heart. Nonetheless, the literature in the field is rich and it is worth contemplating these issues in the “quiet” time before the next “Rwanda” demands immediate action by the international community. This study is written for those who will influence future debates on humanitarian intervention as well as for those who may be asked to risk their lives in such a mission. The issues are important, for how America responds to the next humanitarian crisis, whether or not it commits everyday American citizens that comprise its armed forces to a dangerous, albeit humane mission, says something about the United States as a country and has lasting consequences for the international community.

Notes

1. George Wiegel, *Idealism Without Illusions: US Foreign Policy in the 1990s* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1994), p. 163.
2. President William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1994), p. ii.
3. Mary Lord and Martha L. McCoy, eds. *In Harm's Way: When Should We Risk American Lives in World Conflicts?* (Washington, DC: ACCESS, 1994), p. 25.
4. MacKubin Thomas Owens, “A Crash Course in Strategic Reality,” *Strategic Review* 21, 4 (Fall 1993): 5-6.
5. United States General Accounting Office, *Peace Operations: Information on US and UN Activities*, GAO/NSIAD-95-102BR, February 1995, p. 9.
6. General Gordon R. Sullivan and Lieutenant Colonel Andrew B. Twomey, “The Challenges of Peace,” *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* 24, 3 (Autumn 1994): 4-17.
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1. Framing the Debate: American Humanitarian Intervention

We have not yet crossed that divide on the use of force for humanitarian ends. This is all a new frontier, with no historical precedent.

The late James Grant, Director of UNICEF

The scope of this paper is limited to a discussion of American military deployments in response to humanitarian crises, particularly where the United States commits forces in violation of territorial sovereignty or in interference with the domestic affairs of another state. By limiting the scope in this manner, this paper seeks to capture the tension and controversy of placing American soldiers in harm's way to serve humanitarian rather than national interests. Detailed discussion of disaster relief is excluded as well as an examination of political or economic interventions aimed at alleviating human rights abuses. As discussed below, defining these various terms — humanitarian crisis, armed intervention, humanitarian intervention — is both difficult and important.

Humanitarian Crises and Intervention: Changing Definitions

Humanitarian intervention is an evolving term in a field where recent global actions have outstripped international law and theory. Despite its lack of a concrete legal foundation, the concept of armed humanitarian intervention has clearly been a popular one since the end of the Cold War. Its definition is important, not only to

political scientists and international legal scholars, but also to political leaders who must build support for military action. There is always a tension between what states do and the legal labels they assign to those actions.¹ This was seen most dramatically in Somalia. Having accepted the Somalia intervention as a humanitarian one, the American public seemed to have been caught off guard by a changed mission which was never clearly articulated by the US or the UN. The political fallout after the United States suffered its highest one-day casualty count since Vietnam, brought a swift end to the mission. What then constitutes a humanitarian intervention as opposed to other types of military missions?

As defined in the 1990s, humanitarian interventions are driven, overwhelmingly, by altruistic motives as opposed to more traditional objectives of economic gain or geopolitical security. The emphasis is on the motive — that of assisting innocent peoples in a foreign country, without primary consideration of gain for the intervening state. Prior to the end of the Cold War, few believed an armed intervention could be mounted for purely humanitarian reasons. Throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, it was generally recognized that a humanitarian intervention was undertaken primarily to further the interests of the intervening state, not to alleviate the suffering subjects of another country. The humanitarian motive was often to protect property rights of the intervening state or to rescue nationals of the intervening state who were trapped in a foreign country, perhaps caught in the turmoil of some other nation's civil unrest (this was a large part of America's rationale for its incursion into Grenada in 1983). In short, if the cause of humanity was served, it was a secondary consequence of an intervention aimed at furthering the interests of the intervening state and not because of a primary interest in addressing the suffering of a foreign people.

Throughout the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union used humanitarian assistance as rationale for sending troops to assist Third World nations in their internal development. Again, much of the motivation stemmed from geopolitical concerns of the two superpowers (e.g., America's policy of containment) than from a desire to help indigent people in desperate need of basic human necessities (food, clothing, shelter, and/or freedom from persecution).

Only with the end of the Cold War has the term humanitarian intervention taken on a loftier, more noble-minded meaning. With the end of East-West tensions, many believed that it was possible to create a new international norm; one in which multilateral action could be taken based purely on altruistic motives, the object being to aid innocent people abroad. Current literature defines humanitarian intervention as the military response to a humanitarian crisis that has been caused or exacerbated by a government or by actors within a state. Decisionmakers and scholars generally acknowledge that a humanitarian crisis includes acts of genocide (the intentional killing by government of people because of their race, religion, ethnicity, or other indelible group membership),² denial of food to the starving (a primary motivation for US entry into Somalia in 1992), and other

gross, systematic brutalities or acts of terror (ethnic cleansing, as practised in former Yugoslavia, might well qualify as “systematic brutality”).

The definition lacks precision and since the end of the Cold War has been in flux. Nuances in this definition take on significance as leaders and elites debate the rationale for deployment of American troops. However, there is wide agreement that only a humanitarian crisis should trigger an armed humanitarian intervention and not the less urgent matter of systematic human rights violations. The boundary between a crisis and widespread human rights violations by a state may be ill-defined. A humanitarian crisis can be described as an extraordinary event which leads to unparalleled suffering.³ The events in Rwanda in the spring of 1994 certainly qualify as an example of a humanitarian crisis. The distinction becomes important when building a case for violating the sovereignty of a state. While levels of intervention are described below, the uninvited placement of troops on foreign soil is the ultimate territorial violation. Military infringement of sovereignty is more likely to be accepted by the international community if there is general agreement that the action is in response to a humanitarian crisis that threatens massive loss of life.⁴

Earthquakes, floods, typhoons, and other natural disasters create what can only be termed as a humanitarian crisis. The American military has long been associated with international relief efforts in response to these and similar situations. In most cases, international assistance is sought and welcomed by the country or countries reeling from such catastrophes. Disaster relief (as distinguished from humanitarian intervention) is relatively free of controversy and the risks to American service members are normally limited to environmental hazards (which may, nonetheless, be considerable). Explicit in the definition of intervention is the interference by one or more states in the domestic affairs of another state. While “intervention” is commonly understood to mean the use of military force, a broader definition might include political or economic interventions to influence the domestic concerns of a target country. For instance, the United States and much of the international community “intervened” politically and economically in South Africa in response to systematic human rights violations under the policy of apartheid. It seems necessary and not redundant for the purpose of this paper, to preface intervention with the word “armed.”⁵

But what level of military involvement constitutes an armed intervention? A US Army water purification team or field hospital is deployed to far off refugee camps have little fighting capability. In fact, their relief functions could be replicated by civilian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or private contract firms. Does the insertion of military service support elements constitute an armed intervention? To some, the term armed intervention connotes war fighting or the explicit threat of applying combat capabilities in support of an intrusion into another state. However, this paper recognizes a broader concept of the term “armed” and includes employment of noncombat, service support units (transportation, logistical,

medical, and communication units are normally associated with the term combat service support). There are three reasons for including military support services in this particular definition of armed intervention.

First, it is necessary to explore the full spectrum of US military involvement in a humanitarian crisis from the limited deployment of combat service support (CSS) units to a major commitment of combat formations. Even in a humanitarian intervention limited to service support units, the unwelcome presence of US troops puts American lives at risk from hostile action, elevating the political stakes. In fact, most American CSS units intervening in a humanitarian crisis will have a tailored force protection package. This underscores the fact that in every "manmade" humanitarian crisis, there are elements that will resent and resist any outside military presence, regardless of the intervening state's altruistic motives. As will be discussed in the following chapter, intervention for humanitarian purposes often leads to political entanglements, which increases the risk to soldiers on the ground.⁶ A small US presence therefore opens the door to military escalation, especially should it be deemed that stronger forces are needed to protect the humanitarian providers.

Second, deployment of small military detachments to assist in international humanitarian crises affects overall US military readiness. This raises the issue of the moral versus the practical. The desire to fulfill a moral calling and serve the cause of humanity may have practical consequences for America's defence. With a smaller military, forces employed for humanitarian missions (and the planning headquarters of those units) are unavailable for missions that may have a critical impact on vital national interests.

Finally, as the world's sole superpower, any degree of American military participation or lack of involvement in a humanitarian crisis carries great political significance. The degree of American military commitment and corresponding political leadership will likely have tremendous bearing on the overall success or failure of the international community's effort to save lives in a humanitarian crisis.

Wilsonian Idealism: An American Legacy

Robert Osgood's study of the legacy of Woodrow Wilson and American foreign policy, opens by describing the classic struggle of the human conscience. People, as Osgood theorized, are prone to ideal aspirations but more often than not, fail to achieve their lofty goals because of an innate selfishness.⁷ In short, noble ambitions require sacrifice that few, in the end, are willing to make. Osgood has used this personal struggle to illustrate a larger and more profound debate among the American people, "[t]he problem of reconciling national self-interest with universal ideals transcending the interest of particular nations forms a central theme [in the] study of America's foreign relations." The moral tug-of-war described above forms a metaphor of the current debate on humanitarian intervention.

Virtually all nations decry genocide, the use of famine as a tool of war, and ethnic cleansing. Yet, who in the international community will risk blood and treasure to address these wrongs in distant lands? More importantly for the purpose of this paper, does the United States have an exceptional role to play in a humanitarian crisis by virtue of its founding principles and its embedded moral beliefs? Does its status as sole remaining superpower carry unique moral obligations?⁸

The classic starting point in examining this foreign policy debate is Woodrow Wilson's idealism during World War I and his campaign to impose on the world an international moral framework at the end of the fighting. Wilson led America into the war with talk of a crusade and an unabashed appeal to the American people to subordinate self-interest to moral principle.⁹ In preparing his country for war, President Wilson emphasized the spiritual nature of America's cause, believing America's might derived from its spirituality. It only followed, by his reckoning, that any suggestion of the country fighting for self-interest would taint the sense of mission and dilute America's strength.

In his war message of 2 April 1917 Wilson spoke of American intervention predicated on serving others in the name of international justice and political liberty. In rallying the American people to send their sons off to the trenches of Europe, he said of America's noble mission: "But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts — for democracy, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for universal domination of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free."¹⁰ After the war, Wilson projected his altruistic passion toward a vision of what would most certainly be called today, "a new world order." His concept, articulated in his famous Fourteen Points, aimed at fostering democracy throughout the world with the hope of bringing together "conscious-bound nations" like the United States — nations with democratic ideals — to act for the common good of humanity. The son of a Presbyterian minister, Woodrow Wilson derived his views from a Christian-liberal tradition of Western civilization. He envisioned a liberal, high-minded "league of nations" working toward a shared goal of peaceful resolution of international conflicts.

As for his own country, Wilson conceived of a nation that served as the hope of the world, acting unselfishly to usher in a new age of international harmony and justice. He reminded the American people of the purity of motive in their struggle: "I have uttered as the objects of this great war ideals, and nothing but ideals, and the war has been won by that inspiration." In Europe, Wilson spoke passionately to America's allies of his vision which "rejects the standards of national selfishness that once governed the counsels of nations and demands that they shall give way to a new order of things in which the only questions will be 'Is it right?' 'Is it just?' 'Is it in the interest of Mankind?'"¹¹

Woodrow Wilson believed that the deeply moral, unselfish vision of a postwar world would appeal to his fellow Americans. With tragic naivety, he counted on

the common people of America to be as ardent and consistently altruistic as he. However, this was not the case. America, having followed their commander-in-chief into war for the loftiest objectives, eventually rejected their president as he tried to inject his idealism into the peace that followed. Wilson had been able to convince Americans that they had fought to make the world a better place. But as the selfish and vindictive character of the Versailles Treaty became apparent to the American public, revulsion grew. Robert Osgood cites this as the basis for postwar disillusionment with American intervention. In his assessment, Wilson's principled crusade left people feeling duped: "[It was felt] America had been played for a sucker; American beneficence had been turned to the evil advantage of selfish and unenlightened forces. Never again!"¹²

While Americans ultimately rejected Wilson's world view, the ingredients of his vision remain. References to "Wilsonianism" are common in the literature and American presidents are typically measured by their degree of adherence to or deviation from Woodrow Wilson's concept of a liberal democratic world order.¹³ More importantly, strains of Woodrow Wilson are heard in today's debate surrounding armed humanitarian intervention. In a 1993 *Foreign Affairs* article, Stephen Stedman wrote of "the new interventionists" — those of President Clinton's generation intent on making America live up to its professed ideals.¹⁴ Their roots, according to Stedman, lie in traditional Wilsonian liberalism, wedding moral obligations of the international community with the United Nations' eagerness to intervene in domestic conflicts globally.

Traditional Wilsonianism captures, quite vividly, the moral side of the debate surrounding humanitarian intervention. Woodrow Wilson did not shy from the use of force to impose moral solutions to international problems. Today, the growing number of ethnic conflicts conjures up the idealist Wilsonian impulse to militarily intervene; not only for the sake of democratic values, but for a more profound reason — the sanctity of innocent human life. In his recent book entitled *Politics Without Principle*, David Campbell wrote that in circumstances like those confronted in the Balkans or Somalia, "to declare that inaction is appropriate because there are either no national interests at stake or no effective policy options available is to deny that each presents a challenge to the affirmation of life."¹⁵

The enduring appeal of universal moral ideals is undeniable. The United States, in particular, is fond of citing moral, spiritual, and social values as the foundations and guiding principles for military intervention.¹⁶ In some ways, the demise of the Soviet "Evil Empire" as a clear enemy has only increased the demand for moral clarity to justify and shape foreign policy.¹⁷ Just as the United States declared that no country was unimportant under its Cold War containment policy, some would have the US take a moral stand and say that no country is unimportant when human rights are grossly violated in the post-Cold War era.

But as Reinhold Niebuhr wrote, "no nation can be one hundred percent altruistic."¹⁸ Woodrow Wilson died a tragic figure, physically and emotionally broken

after failing to convince his fellow Americans to transcend their national self-interest in favour of universal, moral ideals. Wilson refused to balance or even temper his idealism with political realism. In doing so, he failed to recognize the limits of American good will. In that regard, America at the end of the twentieth century is no different than Wilson found it in 1919 — “the American people have no desire to sacrifice traditional modes of national conduct for the sake of other nations and peoples.”¹⁹

Wilson’s tragedy of 1918-19 seems strikingly similar to the current position of those who so eagerly sought multinational humanitarian interventions in the post-Cold War, post-Gulf War, years of 1992-93. This time the tragic figure is Boutros Boutros-Ghali whose vision of an interventionist UN now appears to be dimmed if not completely lost. If there is a future for meaningful, productive armed humanitarian interventions and if Americans, as well as the international community, are to muster the political will to fulfill a moral obligation to those in crisis, Wilsonian ideals must take into account national self-interests as described by the realist political tradition.

Realism, The National Interest, and Humanitarian Impulse

Realism (as opposed to Wilsonianism) was the preeminent theory in international politics during the Cold War era. Political considerations dominate in the realist formulation of foreign policy, with the recognition that power — backed by the threat of military might — is the currency of world affairs.²⁰ Realists claim to be concerned with the observance and analysis of political “facts,” or “what is” versus the idealists’ “what ought to be.” In the debate over humanitarian intervention, the realist view is decidedly sober and hard-boiled compared to the idealist view.²¹ Because realists focus on the present day give and take of power among international actors, they often discount a country’s historic social, cultural, and political heritage when calculating what constitutes prudent, rational action on the international stage. Hence, realists question the value of America’s Wilsonian tradition of liberal democratic internationalism. In particular, staunch realists view humanitarian interventions as dubious ventures if America’s military power is frittered away with little or no tangible return for the United States. The classic realist view tends to discount the idealist contention that humanitarian actions indirectly advance the cause of US national security or that Americans have a moral obligation to serve all of humanity.

Realism’s central tenet is national interest. It is a surprisingly vague term for a phrase so fundamental to foreign policy debate. Broadly defined, national interests are what the majority of people see as their country’s legitimate long-term shared interests in relation to the rest of the world.²² Self-preservation of the state is the one immutable interest all citizens agree on, but beyond that, opinions vary.²³ In the debate on humanitarian intervention, realists see national interest as a ballast

of restraint and an assurance of consistency against moral exuberance that might inspire overinvolvement and altruistic interventions.

W. David Clinton gives a thorough airing to the issues surrounding American national interests in his book, *The Two Faces of National Interest*. His insights go to the heart of questions regarding when America should commit itself to armed humanitarian missions. He cautions those who might consider committing American troops to *any* type of intervention to think in terms of national interests — of balancing power and commitments — to be calculators rather than Wilsonian crusaders.

Throughout the twentieth century, wise American leaders have relied on formulations of national interest to induce prudential restraint and force those eager to intervene to compare ends and means with reason rather than emotion. In the tug and pull that precedes a decision to commit US troops to a humanitarian mission, realist talk can lead to a supercharged debate. When innocents are being slaughtered by the score as they were in Bosnia or Rwanda, those advocating a restrained response or demanding to clarify what American interests are at stake, are apt to be depicted as “amoral (or even immoral) practitioners of a realpolitik devoid of moral content.”²⁴

Realists reply that the prudent pursuit of national self-interest is an ethical imperative of any government and contend that the pursuit of ideals leads to ideological crusades which typically end in tragedy. American intervention in Somalia, while not on the scale of a crusade, ended in tragedy enough. Though realists are loath to describe military intervention in moralistic terms, they do acknowledge an ultimate moral obligation on the part of politicians. According to Hans Morganthau, the highest moral duty of a statesman is to safeguard the national interest with which he or she is entrusted.²⁵ It follows that realist views serve as a cautionary force in the debate over intervention. Realist thinkers can be counted on to demand a public accounting of what national interests are sufficiently at risk to merit the commitment of American armed might.

As a result of the dominance of realist thinking, two trends were prevalent during the Cold War. First, America’s policy of containment provided realists with a rationale for a number of interventions all in the name of checking the spread of communism: Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, and Grenada are but a few. Second, interventions that might have produced a confrontation between the nuclear superpowers were avoided in favour of many so-called “proxy wars.” Direct intervention by one side into others’ sphere of influence was all but unthinkable, a testament to realist, nuclear prudence. Accordingly, the West turned “deaf ears” to cries for help in a variety of situations, from the invasions of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) to the genocide perpetrated by Pol Pot against the people of Cambodia during the 1970s.²⁶

Today, without the need to contain communism, national interests are less clear or at least they lack the immediacy that the Soviet threat provided. Not surprisingly, this change is reflected in the US military, where current doctrine has been

noticeably broadened from a sharp focus on conventional war (based on the Soviet war machine) to one that now includes MOOTW.²⁷ Recognition of the diverse utility of America's unmatched military has, in the minds of some, signalled a weakening of the realist position that has traditionally acted to dampen interventionist sentiment.

Is Realism Still Real?

In some ways, America's Cold War victory has meant realism is not so real anymore. Realist arguments no longer hold sway as they once did during the days of superpower rivalry. When the threat of communist aggression was apparent to the American public, it was possible to reconcile national self-interest with ideals such as exporting democracy, campaigning for justice for people abroad, and defending human rights and dignity.²⁸ In today's post-Cold War world, there is no common enemy against which to galvanize America's moral senses. The more that basic security needs are met, the more likely Americans are to be expansive in defining policy goals in abstract concepts. Hence, forms of humanitarianism may be construed as legitimate national interests, or national interests may simply be "put aside" momentarily in order to answer a humanitarian call for help. Realists may cite the logic of risking American lives only when clearly defined national interests are threatened. But without a Cold War enemy to give those interests a "face," America's idealist impulse lacks the counterweight of realism; hence the current turn to humanitarian undertakings.

Unrepentant realists argue that political observers are merely misreading basic motivations regarding recent interventions that have an element of humanitarian concern. By their reasoning, the United States is a conscience-based nation and occasionally, it may act on its altruistic impulses. But these instances are aberrations, not a new trend. For strict adherents of this philosophy, "realism remains real," and they point to "needless" American deaths in Lebanon and Somalia as examples of the consequences of straying from realist calculations in foreign policy.

There is also a more cynical view of modern day humanitarian intervention. Some hold that recent and current interventions may appear to be humanitarian in nature but in actuality, reflect *realpolitik* thinking. For example, for all the talk about restoring democracy and ending the brutality of the Cedras regime in Haiti, the motivation for American military occupation was driven by refugee flows and the practical consequences that this had on domestic politics. Similarly, some claim that the overwhelming motivation of many European governments as well as the United States concerning the fate of the former Yugoslavia is purely one of politics. Again, refugee flows pose domestic concerns in Europe and the possibility of the fighting spilling over into other parts of Europe provides the true motivation for intervention. While the degree of human suffering, particularly by innocents, has aroused public attention, altruism is not enough to bring US or

European leaders to consider seriously a forceful intervention. In short, human suffering is regrettable, but suffering has never been (in realist philosophy) a reason to intervene in the affairs of another state. In this regard, and by this thinking, the end of the Cold War has not tipped the balance from realism to idealism.

Perhaps Rwanda provides the best evidence that the realist strain has lost less of its vitality than some would like to believe. While the United States eventually deployed its military for, what most agree, was a purely humanitarian mission, the Clinton administration steadfastly refused to address the genocidal murder of hundreds of thousands of people. Operation Restore Hope avoided confronting the butchers who perpetrated mass murders and instead focused on feeding those refugees who made it to the squalid camps in Zaire. The truth is that sub-Saharan Africa holds very few national interests for the United States. Without significant strategic interests at stake, US objectives in Africa, according to former Assistant Secretary of Defense Charles W. Freeman, Jr., "are very modest."²⁹ In assessing US action (and inaction) during the Rwandan crisis, military analyst Stephen Metz wrote, "[t]he limits of our interests must shape our goals.... Critics who argue that such an approach leaves the root causes of disaster unchanged ... are correct but misguided. The limits of our *interests* [emphasis added] and the extent of our global commitments simply will not allow sustained, expensive engagement in sub-Saharan Africa."³⁰

Whether or not realism in America has lost some of its sway in the post-Soviet world, there is no denying that the American nation has been and will remain vulnerable to acting on its collective emotions rather than on hard realist logic. If this were not so, there would be no debate since humanitarian interventions, by the strictest definition, are grounded in altruism and not national interest. Were national interest at stake, any resulting intervention would be political, or something other than a humanitarian intervention (although as discussed below, political objectives and altruistic goals often coincide). The fact is, the US continues to act militarily on moral grounds (sometimes, as in Somalia, without regard to any geopolitical gain).

The United States appears to have two broad strains of political consciousness that exist simultaneously: Wilsonianism and political realism. Although one holds forth at one time and the other comes to the fore at other times, there is normally some sense of balance. However, when idealism rapidly ascends in the public consciousness, fuelled by media images of innocent people suffering abroad, a prudent balance can be lost.³¹ This not only portends hurried, ill-conceived interventions, it also produces startling inconsistencies regarding humanitarian policy. Why, for instance, did the US launch a mammoth effort in Somalia rather than in the Sudan or in some other equally abhorrent crisis? On the surface, at least, it would appear that the media had some affect on mobilizing the American people to demand action, thus influencing both the decision to intervene as well as where to intervene. The rush to answer a moral call to action in Somalia illustrates

America's sense of a moral mission and the difficulty in managing the demand for action once it catches fire in the public domain. America's idealist impulse has been an unpredictable element throughout history, sometimes fostering extravagant aspirations that create unrealistic expectations. In a noble sense, selflessness and principled ideals have the potential to lift the United States to act beyond what its national interests require.³² However, military interventions undertaken with only moral underpinnings and without national interests as a foundation have, more often than not, reaped unintended, unhappy consequences.

How then does the United States serve both its conscience and proceed in building and maintaining a logical, predictable, and consistent foreign policy? Can perceived moral obligations be reconciled with national interests in the face of a pressing humanitarian crisis? It would seem desirable to have a United States as a world leader that can keep its eyes fixed on ultimate ideals "without losing its footing on the solid ground of reality."³³ To maintain one's political footing, there are moral trade-offs that a leader must make.

Kenneth Waltz wrote that "[i]f the preservation of the state is not in question, national goals easily fluctuate between the grandiose and the frivolous." Waltz could not have foreseen the demise of the Soviet Union when he wrote those words, but his admonishment has tremendous meaning in the 1990s. As a presidential candidate, Bill Clinton struck a distinct moral tone in urging forceful American action in the former Yugoslavia. Similarly, there was an urgent, compelling force among the American people that helped propel President Bush's decision to launch a humanitarian effort in Somalia. If it is inevitable that the idealist strain will show forth in Post-Cold War American politics and policy, how do leaders guard against "grandiose or frivolous" humanitarian missions?

The short answer is, national loyalties must come first. If the United States government undertakes a mission that means expending American lives, the object should rightfully be one that means improving the lives of the American people. George F. Kennan wrote that it is right and normal that private opinion influence the conduct of diplomacy. However, moral obligations of governments are *not* the same as for individual citizens. Government, in Kennan's words, is an agent, not a principal. Hence, "the obligation of government is to the *interests* [original emphasis] of nation and the society it represents, not to the moral impulses that individual elements of that society may experience."³⁴

The realist message regarding humanitarian intervention in the 1990s could not be stated any bolder than by the leading political scientist of American military thought, Samuel Huntington. In a December 1992 symposium entitled, "Nontraditional Roles for the U.S. Military in the Post-Cold War Era," Huntington asked, "should the US armed forces be used to provide humanitarian relief in situations where such efforts are likely to be opposed by one or more of the conflicting parties?" His answer was emphatic: "It is morally unjustifiable and politically indefensible that Americans should be killed in order to prevent Serbs

and Bosnians from killing each other.... The American armed forces should perform military missions involving possible conflict ... only when they promote American security and are directed against the enemies of the United States.”³⁵

Boundaries of Humanitarian Duty

Does the United States have a moral duty or legal obligation to respond to a humanitarian crisis or can the nation debate and weigh the possibility of intervention and act at its discretion? Do the tenets of international law, the United Nations Charter, the international Genocide Convention, or other legal instruments prescribe action in certain cataclysmic humanitarian situations? Where do law and morality coincide? Where do they diverge? This chapter traces the evolving nature of these issues and concludes with a summary of where law and ethical norms stand today.

Discussion about sovereignty and moral obligations have been a permanent feature of the foreign policy debate concerning armed interventions. However, there is general agreement that a new chapter is being written in these matters as a result of the demise of a bipolar, superpower rivalry.

In the European state's system of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, intervention was viewed as a legitimate exercise of power. But this concept changed with the experience of World War II, and the founders of the postwar United Nations gave voice to concerns of intervention in the organization's charter. Reflecting on the just-completed crusade against Nazi Germany and imperialist Japan, the international community saw two broad objectives in forming a world body of nations: the need to eliminate pretexts for military interventions because of its obvious dangers and the hope for international action to prevent the repeat of atrocities on the scale of the decimation of European Jewry by the Nazi regime.³⁶ While these two goals are not necessarily incompatible, they reflect conflicting views on the use of force. During the Cold War years, the sanctity of territorial integrity and protection of political sovereignty took priority over the concern for human rights and governmental abuse of its own citizens.

In fact, the UN Charter emphasizes the sacredness of borders. Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter directs that nations refrain from “the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”³⁷ This is further reinforced in Article 2(7), which states that “nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdictions of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter.”

The UN's ill-fated predecessor, The League of Nations, had contained in its covenant a clause providing for the protection of national minorities. This humanitarian principle — an idea that opened the door to humanitarian interventions to rescue groups or persons persecuted by their own government — was eclipsed

in the writing of the UN Charter. The United Nations underscored supremacy of the sovereign state (rather than the people who composed the state) and emphasized the concept of self-determination. Although "self-determination" would seem to pertain to the rights of individuals, the UN Charter uses the phrase in reference to the rights of states to declare themselves free of any colonial power. As such, the Charter concept of self-determination reinforces the idea of state sovereignty free from outside intervention.

The Charter injunction against violations of sovereignty makes sense at face value. Interfering in the affairs of another nation holds too much potential for abuse. Hedley Bull, who wrote extensively about the issues of intervention in the 1980s explained that "ultimately we have a rule of non-intervention because unilateral intervention threatens the harmony and concord of the society of sovereign states."³⁸ Smaller, Third World nations, fearing superpower interference, were especially comfortable with the Cold War emphasis on territorial integrity. Many of these nations experienced great power interventions based on Western concepts of justice and human rights throughout their histories. Latin America, in particular, had a "bellyfull" of America's Wilsonian ethics with repeated interventions in the Caribbean and Central America throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, with the close of World War II, states' human rights practices were, with few exceptions, considered a matter of domestic jurisdiction and of no legitimate concern to other states or the international community.

The emphasis on territorial integrity carried with it the implicit understanding that states were free to govern their respective subjects as they saw fit. The Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), ratified in 1948, provides interesting insight on the primacy of state over the citizen. Rather than beginning the text with the phrase, "We the peoples," as was done in the lead sentence of the UN Charter, the Latin states chose to emphasize the power vested in the sovereign governments of their respective states; hence the opening phrase, "In the Name of the Peoples, the States [are] Confident."³⁹

Additionally, Article 15 of the OAS Charter categorically denies the right of intervention, "for any reason whatsoever, in the internal or external affairs of any state."⁴⁰ This explicit, unequivocal wording seemed more than prudent during the 1980s as the United States staged military exercises in Honduras, provided Army Special Forces advisors to El Salvador, and actually mined the waters off the Nicaraguan coast. With American hegemony in the region so palpable, every state in the hemisphere had reason to wonder if their country would be a future target of US intervention. Asian and African states held similar sentiments regarding Western intervention, especially those that suffered from colonialism directly or insidiously. Further, many in the West feared that if the US intervened regionally (in Latin America), the former Soviet Union would have had yet another excuse to do mischief in its own sphere of influence.⁴¹ Just as Hedley Bull had implied, the fewer the instances of interference by one state into the affairs of another, the more predictable and stable the world.

Agenda For Peace: Tracing the Roots of 1990s' Humanitarian Intervention

Several significant events since the fall of the Berlin Wall softened international norms concerning intervention. The most striking action on the world stage was a United Nations' coalition waging war to oust an Iraqi invading force from Kuwait. But more significant in terms of humanitarian intervention was the interpretation given to UN Security Council Resolution 688, which laid the ground work for Operation Provide Comfort, the humanitarian mission to feed and protect Kurds in northern Iraq. In retrospect, Resolution 688 has been a watershed and more precedent setting than was understood at the time of its passage.⁴² The Security Council's action explicitly overrode the objections of the sovereign government of Iraq and allowed forces of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands to deploy a military force within Iraq's own territory. These forces eventually handed over their humanitarian activities to a United Nations' led force which remains, despite Iraqi protests, inside Iraq some four years after Operation Desert Storm achieved the liberation of Kuwait.

The new interventionists interpreted Saddam Hussein's treatment of his own people — the Iraqi Kurds — to be an act of internal aggression which constituted a threat to international order and stability. By this way of thinking, humanitarian intervention in a state's internal affairs, as conceived in Security Council Resolution 688, was a legitimate undertaking for the international community. In a sense, the new interventionists reinterpreted the key phrase, "self-determination," as stated in the UN Charter, to mean individual self-determination, not the collective self-determination originally intended by the Charter's authors.

In 1992, a new United Nations' secretary-general, former Egyptian Foreign Minister Boutros-Ghali, was more than eager to develop the burgeoning growth of liberal internationalism spawned by the colossal success of United Nations actions in the Persian Gulf. In his January 1992 50-page report, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peace-Keeping*, Boutros-Ghali acknowledged that "[r]espect for ... fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress." However, in his next sentence, the secretary-general boldly stated that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed; its theory was never matched by reality. It is the task of leaders of States today to understand this and to find a balance between the needs of good internal governance and the requirements of an ever more interdependent world."⁴³

Coinciding with the announced "demise" of the sacredness of territorial sovereignty was a shift in the locus of power within the United Nations. The General Assembly had traditionally been at the centre of UN activity and it was in this chamber that the smaller states — those who most feared intervention — found a voice and a degree of power. However, the end of a US-Soviet deadlock and the momentum of Desert Storm propelled the Security Council into the spotlight.

Dominated by the five powerful permanent members, the United States, Russia, China, France, and Great Britain, the Security Council had in the early 1990s fewer inhibitions regarding the authorizations of humanitarian interventions than the General Assembly. The five permanent members have little reason to fear interventions from other states. Indeed, within months of Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq, and less than a year after Boutros-Ghali issued his *Agenda For Peace*, the United Nations authorized a humanitarian relief mission to Somalia. With troops of UNOSOM I on the ground in Mogadishu, Boutros-Ghali reinforced his world view in an article published in *Foreign Affairs* in the Winter of 1992-93:

while respect for the fundamental sovereignty and integrity of the state remains central, it is undeniable that the centuries-old doctrine of absolute and exclusive sovereignty no longer stands, and was in fact never so absolute as it was conceived to be in theory ... the rights of the individual and the rights of peoples is a dimension of universal sovereignty that resides in all humanity and provides all peoples with legitimate involvement in issues affecting the world as a whole.⁴⁴

Post-Cold War to Somalia: Resurgent Wilsonianism

If Boutros Boutros-Ghali appeared to be the right person to exploit interventionist opportunities at the United Nations, America's intellectual and academic elite were equally eager to ensure the United States lived up to what many viewed as its moral obligations. For many, it appeared that a window had opened that would allow America to wed its liberal democratic values to the United Nations' eagerness to intervene in a growing number of humanitarian crises. 1992 and 1993 were banner years for journal articles concerning humanitarian intervention, almost all trumpeting a call to arms, with titles such as "Enlarging the UNs' Humanitarian Mandate," "The Recovery of Internationalism," "The Twilight of Sovereignty," and "Forward to the Beginning: Widening the Scope for Global Collective Action," among others. In the early 1990s, new civil wars and ethnic violence seemed to erupt almost daily in various parts of the world. New interventionists viewed these conflicts as more prevalent, violent, and threatening to international security than in previous eras. Many characterized this period of the early 1990s as a time of shifting public attitude from one of honouring legal norms that preserved the status quo of sovereign states to that of moral idealism that defended the rights of the oppressed. N. J. Rengger captured this crusading spirit when he wrote in 1993: to put total and strict trust in state sovereignty as the guarantor of the political, economic, and cultural integrity of a community of people would lead to "an almost inhuman passivity in international affairs."⁴⁵ Charles Beitz expressed similar sentiments noting that, "it is simply not true that the values we protect when we respect a state's sovereignty will outweigh the values we advance when we invade it."⁴⁶

Moral philosophers started to examine and question the normative assumptions that underpinned the concept of nonintervention. With the danger of a

superpower confrontation fast fading, human rights, particularly in the context of ethnic conflict, became the regular feature of international political debate.⁴⁷ Many believed that a non-Soviet world meant a greater interdependence of nations, a notion that further weakened a rigid view of sovereignty. It was as if those who were forced to "sit on their hands" and silently observe human rights abuses during the Cold War were now free to demand intervention.

Despite an atmosphere in the early 1990s ripe for bold humanitarian action, a small cadre of international-relations thinkers and practitioners remained reluctant to validate humanitarian intervention on ethical grounds. This reluctance stemmed from a number of factors. First, sovereignty, as a social construction carried significant, proven moral value. While arguing against intervention might be interpreted as allotting sovereignty a higher value than any other, to argue for intervention seemed to threaten the moral utility of sovereignty. Second, the complexity of both explicit and hidden motives that push nations toward humanitarian intervention, the lack of clarity in international law, and the difficulty of defining moral action across differing cultures and religions create tremendous uncertainty. Third, there existed in the early 1990s, and perhaps more so in 1995, a lack of confidence that humanitarian interventions would do more good than harm. As the former Yugoslavia experience has demonstrated, well-intentioned military intervention can lead to unforeseen political complications that exacerbate the root causes of manmade humanitarian crises. Finally, there is valid concern about the absence of moral actors that would willingly accept responsibility and carry out a moral mandate under the banner of humanitarian intervention.⁴⁸ These and other views that challenge the legality and ethics of humanitarian intervention are fully explored later in this paper. The point to be made here is that the euphoric leap toward multilateral humanitarian interventions was never as widely accepted or fully embraced as once believed.

Ian Forbes and Mark Hoffman, editors of a collection of essays entitled, *Political Theory, International Relations, and the Ethics of Intervention*, concluded that: "Despite the strength of an ethical justification for a potential intervention, despite the acknowledged need or desire for bringing about change in a particular situation, and despite the view that there should not be a general prohibition against moral critiques in international relations ... the balance remains untipped in favour of justified intervention."⁴⁹ It can be said that the impending demise of sovereignty is greatly exaggerated. Impassioned support for humanitarian interventions and the rush to revise "antiquated notions" of territorial integrity reflect symptoms of "an exuberance for a still undefined world order, but the truth is that sovereignty is not in its twilight, nor is it at bay. When sovereignty interests and human rights collide, states rarely lose."⁵⁰

Given recent world events, it is fair to ask if the "moment" for humanitarian intervention has been lost. The Somalia mission has been completed and while pundits debate the successes and failures of the operation, the precedent for humanitarian intervention has been established. Further, there is evidence that the

American impulse to use force for humanitarian causes survived the Somalian experience. A poll conducted by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press in August 1994, revealed that "56% of the public still approved of sending US military forces to Asian or African countries in order to prevent famines and mass starvation."⁵¹ Other countries appear to remain willing to risk blood and treasure during a humanitarian crisis. In 1994, French combat troops landed in Rwanda in the midst of that tremendous upheaval. Months later, US troops landed in Haiti with the blessing of the United Nations and the Organization of American states. Journal articles and books continue to appear with recipes for interventions along with calls for a broader role for the United Nations and a corresponding diminishing respect for sovereignty. Nonetheless, the tension between moral and practical — between national interests, sovereignty rights, and moral obligations — seems intractable, and something akin to a "theological cul-de-sac."⁵² It is a stalemate born with the United Nations and the inherent contradiction of an organization whose members are states imbued with sovereign rights, but whose charter and goals express human, moral values.

This paper would lack some of its significance if it were not for the spectacle of modern day genocide occurring in Rwanda during the spring of 1994. The international response was decidedly limited in proportion to the magnitude of the atrocities committed. Just as telling was the muted, short-lived sense of indignation expressed by ordinary people in the United States, Europe, and major nations outside the region. In many ways reaction to the Rwandan crisis gives an indication of how the international community and the United States are likely to limit their humanitarian response in the future. The same *Times Mirror* poll that indicated that a small majority of Americans would support limited humanitarian interventions abroad also showed a large majority opposing the use of US forces to restore law and order if governments break down. There is a clear aversion to devoting America's assets toward a sustained effort that might entail peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or nation building.

In their introduction to *Humanitarianism Across Borders: Sustaining Civilians in Times of War*, Thomas Weiss and Larry Minear write that we are leaving an era where humanitarian needs are subservient to geopolitical considerations and are now groping toward arrangements where human rights crises become "legitimate international concerns irrespective of where they take place."⁵³ Their view that humanitarianism across borders represents the direction of the future, predates the unraveling of the UN mission to Somalia and the tepid international response to Rwanda. Since the plunge into Somalia in late 1992, there has been a reversal of fortune in humanitarian enterprises. Clearly, enthusiasm for humanitarian interventions, as heralded by Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 and envisaged by Weiss and Minear in 1993, has been on the wane and there is little reason to be sanguine about recapturing that crusading spirit in the near future. On the other hand, there is an acknowledged acceptance of interventions on moral grounds that was unthinkable during the Cold War years. There seems to be no going back to the old

days of strictly proscribing humanitarian interventions. In fact, there is general agreement that international law is slowly evolving in this regard, in an attempt to be relevant to a post-Soviet world. The desire to make international convention and law more nearly congruent with normative moral principles is a natural consequence of dramatic changes brought on by the end of the Cold War. However, policymakers and international-relations thinkers must be guarded in their talk about morality and rights-based interventions lest they set obligations ahead of current practice.

The problem with many of the current arguments in favour of the liberal use of humanitarian interventions is that they fail to recognize that the use of military force often has an unpredictable impact on other important social ends — justice, stability, and freedom — domestically for the intervening state or states and in the region of the world where force is applied.⁵⁴ For this reason, enthusiasm for armed humanitarian interventions has been tempered not only in the United States but among other nations as well. As two British political scientists, R. J. Vincent and Peter Wilson, recently observed, “The objection to [the concept of humanitarian intervention] is that obligations will be set that are too far ahead of what can conceivably be achieved in the current international community.”⁵⁵

There is evidence that theory is running ahead of practical considerations as Vincent and Wilson suggest. Post-Somalian debates on future interventions show a pattern of “agreement in principle, paralysis in practice.” As Michael Mandelbaum of Johns Hopkins University recently noted, “the Security Council has become a font of resolutions authorizing international action. But the United Nations lacks the means to carry out its resolutions, and its member states lack the will to do so.”⁵⁶ Testament to the UN’s limits can be found in Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, issued on 3 January 1995. The somber tone and subdued outlook of the secretary-general as portrayed in his latest document is nothing short of striking when compared to the much heralded 1992 *Agenda for Peace*. In his 1995 paper, the secretary-general acknowledged UN failures, noting that:

The Organization has attracted intense media interest, often laudatory, more often critical, and all too often focused on only one or two of the many peace-keeping operations in which it is engaged, overshadowing other major operations and its vast effort in the economic, social and other fields.... Certain areas where unforeseen, or only partly foreseen, difficulties have arisen [show that] there is a need for the Member States to take the “hard decisions” I referred to two and a half years ago.⁵⁷

As of this writing, the hard decisions the secretary-general calls for and which are needed if the UN is to expand its humanitarian response capabilities, are not forthcoming. Incidents of dramatic, widespread human suffering should and must illicit swift response from the international community. However, not all human rights violations merit overt military interventions. Inhumane treatment of classes of people and the perpetuation of indignities are difficult to ignore. Given the UN’s initial experiences in the 1990s style of armed humanitarian interventions, it is

now clear that member states will more carefully assess any requests for future intervention and consider the full range of political, ethical, and military implications of their collective actions or inaction.

Law and Ethics as they Stand Today

The United Nations has firmly established that politically driven humanitarian disasters are grounds under the Charter for armed intervention. The UN would prefer consent of the government of the state concerned before intervening, even if the consent was issued by questionable state authorities.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, it seems clear that the Security Council will authorize Chapter VII action if the scale of the emergency is sufficient. Chapter VII can be invoked only for threats to international peace and security. However, in the current environment, there is a willingness to label humanitarian crises as such threats, citing as justification refugee flows or the danger that fighting may spill over into neighbouring countries. Exuberance for humanitarian interventions that marked the beginning of the decade has faded. The mid-1990s view of armed humanitarian interventions is somewhat restrained. The acceptance of armed humanitarian interventions as legal action under certain conditions does not mean that the international community recognizes a right of armed intervention as extensive and pervasive as early enthusiasts envisioned.⁵⁹

Less clear is the question of whether the United States (or the international community) has the *obligation* to intervene in a humanitarian crisis of significant dimension. This very question arose when Iraq began the brutal repression of its Kurdish population immediately following Operation Desert Storm. The Bush administration's official answer was "no" — international obligation did not extend past repelling aggression. However, days later the United States changed its position and immediately launched Operation Restore Hope, calling it a humanitarian intervention. Opinion is divided as to both the motivation of this humanitarian intervention and its precedence for future crises. If an ethical obligation existed to protect Kurds, it was primarily because the American-led coalition set the crisis situation in motion by encouraging the Iraqi people to overthrow their government. When that effort failed, nothing was done to protect the Kurds from the wrath of a vindictive Saddam Hussein. Some saw the humanitarian intervention in Northern Iraq as a political response staged to show that Saddam Hussein no longer had the power to act with impunity even within his own borders. Whatever the case, no one has suggested that an obligation existed to intervene based purely on the issue of the immoral treatment of the Kurds. The intervention into Northern Iraq was a result of the consequences of earlier specific acts that contributed to the humanitarian crisis.

In all of the discussion on humanitarian intervention, only one legal document implies an obligation to intervene; that is the Genocide Convention of 1948 to

which the United States is a signatory. Article II of the Convention defines genocide as "acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group ... deliberately inflicting in the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole for part."⁶⁰ While this article and others in the Convention make specified acts illegal under international law, there is no effective enforcement mechanism. It falls to individual states, acting alone or in concert with other nations, to make international law "work." Article VIII of the 1948 Convention specifies that states must call upon the United Nations to take appropriate action under its Charter to prevent or suppress acts of genocide.⁶¹

Most recently, Rwanda demonstrated how difficult it was for the international community to declare such savagery to be an instance of genocide, let alone decisively act to stop the killing. Critics have charged that the Clinton administration instructed its UN spokesperson not to describe the deaths in Rwanda as an incidence of genocide because it would have made it more difficult to stand aside and watch the slaughter continue.⁶² Secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali publicly admitted he could not raise contributions of military forces from member states for the Rwandan crisis and this paralysis at the UN stands as a reminder that nations weigh their own interests carefully before honouring global ethical or legal obligations.⁶³

In summary, while the legal right to intervene (under UN auspices) has been established, only the international Genocide Convention suggests that states (and then only the signatories) are legally obligated to act on behalf of the oppressed people of other countries. Obligation implies a *binding* duty which *must* be performed. This should not be confused with what *ought to be done*. Statesmen must be free to use the resources of the state to maintain a balance of several competing claims — order, justice, and freedom — both domestically and abroad. Mandating intervention or implying that there is an obligation to intervene in the affairs of other nations undercuts wise statesmanship and often has dire consequences.

Based on its history, moral underpinnings, and current place in the world, the United States of America might well be considered to have a moral obligation to speak out forcefully and truthfully whenever it sees grave social injustices. Some would say America has a moral duty to lead in that regard. But the moral duty to lead the fight against conditions of inhumanity does not equate to automatic resort to armed intervention. Undoubtedly the United States *ought to act* on its moral impulses when the assault against humankind is as stupendous as it was in Nazi Germany or in Rwanda. However, the United States will always balk at any international formula that dictates when and how American troops will be deployed in distant countries. In 1994, The Working Group on Peacekeeping and the US National Interest, composed of a distinguished array of scholars, members of Congress, and former cabinet members, concluded the following:

At no time should the United States' participation in a UN peace operation result from anything but the nation's own choice. The United States is now under no legal

obligation to participate in any UN operation, even those it votes for or urges on the world body. In approving a Security Council motion to initiate a peace operation, the United States' one obligation is to pay its assessed share of the cost. The power to control US participation in UN actions also must be protected.⁶⁴

Although with the exception of genocide, the United States sees no binding obligation to act in the face of a humanitarian crisis, there will still be those times when it ought to commit forces to a humanitarian intervention. There must be a construct for making such decisions that considers domestic political will and that provides a hierarchy of claimants for humanitarian assistance in a world of violently collapsing states. The next section provides an ethical framework for assessing such claims.

Framework for Decision: Ethics, Law, and Political Reality

A handful of writers have attempted to develop a framework for appraising demands for intervening in a humanitarian crisis. Most rely on a mixture of legal precedents and ethical precepts such as those provided by the just-war tradition. As a committee of prominent international lawyers concluded, "[t]o reduce the risk of *ad hoc* and inconsistent actions, a system of genuine humanitarian intervention will require firm legal underpinnings [and] consistent criteria [in addition to] adequate institutional and financial resources."⁶⁵ The just-war tradition and international law do provide a useful framework for an ethical and legal appraisal of armed humanitarian intervention, but taken alone, fail to account for the current political or practical issues that carry tremendous weight in the minds of decisionmakers. Ethical norms may deem a cause worthy of intervention, legal constructs may pave the way for international military action, but in the end, political considerations will determine if an intervention is doable. To borrow a phrase from Richard Haass, "judgments of desirability cannot be made divorced from assessments of feasibility."⁶⁶

While political considerations may change much more frequently than law or normative moral values, there are broad measures that can be used to assess the practical elements that might help determine when humanitarian intervention is merited. Several conditions are described below by which both policymakers and citizens might judge the appropriateness of military intervention. While the guidelines are, to a great degree universal, they reflect issues fundamental to American decisionmakers in particular.

A Worthy Victim

A 1991 editorial in *The Economist* made the tongue-in-cheek observation that the first requirement for a legitimate intervention is a "genuinely deserving victim to

rescue.”⁶⁷ Accordingly, the first requirement that must be fulfilled to justify an armed humanitarian intervention is that there be a morally just cause for the use of force. Unfortunately, there appears to be no shortage of human beings trapped in circles of despair, facing unimaginable horrors. Genocide, notes Irving Louis Horowitz, “is an ongoing concern not a historical remnant.” Some believe that by 1995, Americans have been numbed into inaction by the depth and degree of global suffering. However, it is sympathy and not gold, glory, or strategic calculation, that lies behind US interventions in the post-Cold War era. And sympathy is both a powerful human emotion and a precious one. To conserve this resource and ensure its potency when sympathy is needed to transform emotions into actions, armed interventions must be reserved for the most extreme crises.

In his work, *Just and Unjust Wars*, Michael Walzer referred to such situations as “supreme emergencies.” As he noted, “[e]veryone’s troubles make a crisis.” However, a supreme emergency “lies at the outer limits of exigency, at a point where we are likely to find ourselves united in fear and abhorrence.”⁶⁸ The nuance between a humanitarian crisis and a supreme emergency is an important one in a world that can make claim to several situations of inhumanity. Walzer used Nazism to explain his concept, describing a supreme emergency as:

an ultimate threat to everything decent in our lives, an ideology and a practice of domination so murderous, so degrading even to those who might survive, that the consequences of its final victory were literally beyond calculation, immeasurably awful. We see it — and I don’t use this phrase lightly — as evil objectified in the world, and in a form so potent and apparent that there could never have been anything to do but fight against it.... Here was a threat to human values so radical that its imminence would surely constitute a supreme emergency, and this example can help us understand why lesser threats might not do so.⁶⁹

Thus humanitarian interventions have an ethical basis that justify violation of sovereignty. However, such an undertaking would require general international agreement that armed force was being deployed in the face of a “supreme emergency.”

This view does not go unchallenged. Human rights theorist David Luban put a much lower threshold on when interventions might be ethically justified. He believed too much weight had been allotted to state sovereignty and contended that it is not simply extreme cases of genocide or mass murder that justify intervention, but any violation of basic human rights.⁷⁰ According to Luban, the state that rules violently against the will of its own people not only forfeits the right against foreign invasion, but that under extreme circumstances, intervention becomes an international duty. Indeed, limiting humanitarian interventions to only the most extreme crises will not please many who have come to expect more in the post-Cold War age. Humanitarian crises are messy but we cannot pare down humane considerations to the bare essentials of how many lives are lost before action is justified. An exclusively rule-centred approach to intervention would certainly prove to be inadequate.⁷¹ Few people suggest that the US or international

organizations depend on body counts or the establishment of precise rules to determine if a humanitarian crisis is sufficiently grave so as to demand intervention. Statesmen and ordinary citizens will find that there are few definitions that might be used to interpret just what constitutes a supreme emergency. Even the definition of genocide as specified in the 1948 Genocide Convention, fails to account for mass murder of peoples for political beliefs, random executions to terrorize populations, systematic rape and torture, ethnic cleansing, or other acts that might lead to the consensus that a supreme emergency existed. And it is the supreme emergency, however defined by the American people and their leaders, that merits intervention. To ignore such vile and base behaviour diminishes the character of a great nation like the United States. Inaction in the face of a supreme emergency would ultimately corrupt America's core values.

Weighing the Sacrifice Required

The second requirement in determining whether or not to engage in an armed humanitarian intervention is an assessment of costs to the United States. This requirement is at the heart of Huntington's admonishment that a state's moral obligation is first to its own citizens, and in particular, to the citizen soldiers who might be called on to conduct an armed humanitarian intervention. While putting American lives first may be self-evident to some, the concept directly counters the categorical imperative of the human rights movement — the notion of equal value of all human lives.⁷² Indeed, "that all men are created equal" lies at the heart of America's core values. However, the world remains divided by nation-states. As much as has been written about the increasing interdependence of nations, there is no global community on the near horizon. People still turn to their respective governments for their well-being, for their security, and for the integrity of their political life. These fundamental needs remain paramount. They are the *raison d'être* for government. As George Kennan noted, taking care of American interests and assuring the blessings of the American people, leaves little energy and attention to other undertakings that might spring from moral impulses of some of its citizens.⁷³ As if to reinforce this point, Stephen Cimbala noted that "US involvement in Somalia in 1993 and in Lebanon a decade earlier showed that it does not take a Vietnam to put the US armed forces into mission malaise."⁷⁴ This malaise was not confined to the military but reflected the disenchantment of the American people with the sacrifice of young US citizens for dubious causes — dubious in the sense that little good seemed to come from what had been given.

If America's sons and daughters must die in combat (whether or not such action be termed a war), Americans believe it important to say "they did not die in vain." As Michael Walzer observed, "when we can't say that or think that [they did not die in vain], we mix our mourning with anger.... There must be purposes that are worth dying for, outcomes for which soldiers' lives are not too high a price. The idea of just war requires the same assumption."⁷⁵

America's leaders in 1995 must also acknowledge two strongly held convictions: first, that despite frequent images of chaos on the evening news, the end of the Cold War has left the world a safer place, with diminished need to send American troops abroad and second, that the president and Congress should attend to the nation's long neglected domestic agenda.⁷⁶ There is a strong sense in the country that the time has come to turn inward and to spend the long awaited peace dividend at home.

Samuel Huntington acknowledged that "[t]he United States has a clear humanitarian interest in preventing genocide and starvation, and the American people will within limits support intervention to deal with such tragedies.... In such circumstances the American people may even accept some American casualties."⁷⁷ However, both the American people and the nation's leaders must grapple with the degree of commitment the country would be willing to accept. The US has and will undoubtedly continue to conduct minor interventions or assist a multinational force from the sidelines in situations where there appear to be modest costs and risks. If we fail to help in a humanitarian crisis, we have violated no one's rights. However, if we fail to aid in a crisis where there are no comparable costs to ourselves, then we may be construed as responsible for the consequences of our inaction. In short, there is moral imperative to aid in a crisis if that duty can be discharged without significant sacrifice.

The ability to sustain an intervention over time and to bear human and financial costs, are linked directly to the perceived importance of the interests at stake. Many would equate "interests at stake" to the realist conception of national interests. However, America can be said to have "moral interests" or "humanitarian interests" as well. These intangible interests help define the United States as a nation and have occasionally been used to rally support for sending American troops abroad. There is no need to justify an armed humanitarian intervention by cloaking humanitarian or moral interests in the vernacular of traditional material national interests. Some would broaden the definition of what constitutes threats to international security by including the myriads of atrocities committed by mostly Third World governments. A common theme in current literature is that humanitarian crises threaten to spill over into neighbouring states, creating refugee flows that lead to regional instability and thereby present legitimate threats the peace and security of all nations. This is an argument for humanitarian intervention on realist grounds, in the belief that America's, and every other country's, national interests are threatened by far off humanitarian disasters.

Believing that national interests are served by undertaking humanitarian missions requires something of a leap of faith — and a necessary one. Peter Shiras wrote that "humanitarian assistance is not an instrument of policy and should not be used either to advance policy goals or to avoid political action."⁷⁸ Service to humanity speaks for itself and intellectual contortions to justify intervention in realist terms only muddle the picture. Again citing George Kennan, "what one does only as a matter of duty without being impressively moral, that one approaches

a higher moral standard." For all the talk of the media's ability to sway public attitudes, America's sensibility is finely tuned to what merits the sacrifice of American lives. At times moral interests may outweigh more traditional national interests. It is, therefore, essential that Americans know the purpose behind any intervention along with some reasonable forecast of the risks involved.

Those who fret that America will withdraw into an isolationist cocoon need not worry. If there is a national instinct toward isolationism, there is an equally strong humanitarian impulse. Notwithstanding the slow response to the Rwandan crisis, when America is confronted with a supreme humanitarian emergency, it will eventually act. But America's leaders must temper the moral outrage of their citizens and the attendant calls for intervention by highlighting the limits to America's military power in such situations and the likely cost in blood and treasure.

Armed Intervention only as a Final Recourse

The third condition in a decisionmaking framework for humanitarian intervention is taken from the just-war theory — that military intervention be taken as a last resort, after all other measures have failed or clearly would fail, and massive loss of life is impending.⁷⁹ This often cited requirement makes imminent sense since military force, even in a limited mode, introduces a new degree of lethality to a situation and may produce unforeseen harmful effects. Accordingly, both international legal experts and scholars concerned with the ethics of war agree that states are obligated to consider, if not employ, means short of military intervention to achieve humanitarian objectives in a target state.

Professor Richard Lillich, a leader in humanitarian law and ethics during the 1970s and 1980s, proposed a number of offensive strategies and initiatives that constituted "interference" or "intercession" in the affairs of another country that might be employed short of full fledged intervention.⁸⁰ He carefully distinguished between intervention and intercession. Lillich defined intervention as an overt attempt to interfere and alter the conditions of another state, usually by force. Intercession, on the other hand, constitutes "interference consisting of friendly advice given or friendly offers made with regard to the domestic affairs of another state."⁸¹ Lillich noted that in diplomatic parlance, "friendly" characterizes almost any interaction between states short of armed conflict.

The range of policy intercessions that Lillich suggested ran on a continuum from low level, symbolic diplomatic manoeuvres to more serious steps, including: (i) unpublicized diplomatic talk condemning human rights abuses, (ii) open expressions of sympathy for the oppressed with public condemnation of a state's human rights record, (iii) formal protests by ambassadors or heads of state, (iv) use of an international forum such as the OAS, UN, or International Court of Justice, and (v) "uniform and consistent application of economic sanctions."

Time looms over the decisionmaking process in virtually any humanitarian crisis. When people are the target of horrendous atrocities, it may be of little use

and even unseemly to debate diplomatic measures, argue the fine points of international law, or attempt to apply economic sanctions that have been shown repeatedly to be of little value in pressing an authoritative regime to modify its behaviour. Michael Walzer concludes that “[o]ne always wants to see diplomacy tried before the resort to war, so that we are sure that war is the last resort.” But he concedes that in some cases, “it would be difficult ... to make an argument for its necessity.”⁸² In short, if the emergency is sufficiently extreme and the likelihood of diplomatic success nil, immediate military intervention may be a legitimate course of action.

What if large-scale loss of life has not occurred, but decisionmakers believe a blood bath is about to erupt? In such a case, perceptions are critical. Any number of factors may convince decisionmakers that it is “five minutes-to-midnight” and only an immediate insertion of troops will prevent a rampage similar to that seen in Rwanda in April 1994. Particularly telling in this regard is the postmortem of the Rwanda genocide given by Canadian Major-General Romeo Dallaire, who was commanding the United Nations’ forces in and around Kigali. Dallaire said that the signals and warning signs were clear that a planned massacre of Tutsis was about to begin. Yet little if anything was done to act on these forebodings and once the actual killings began, the international community response was feeble — “a scandal” in Dallaire’s words.⁸³

There is no clear formula that decisionmakers can use to determine if preventive military intervention is justified. Swift, strong, military intervention before events swirl out of control may save untold lives. Given the recent Rwandan debacle (decried uniformly as too little, too late), the international community may give thought to a “preemptive” intervention. However, the reality is that the United Nations is crisis driven; interventions are not proposed, much less authorized until lives have been lost and the prospects for large-scale death or the expansion of war are great. With the strong presumption against the violation of sovereignty, anything short of a major humanitarian crisis will likely evoke “lower-level responses,” usually in the form of preventive diplomacy.⁸⁴

The Idea of Proportionality

Critical to any consideration of intervention and a common theme in the study of the ethical conduct of war is the concept of proportionality — employing only the amount of force warranted. Proportionality implies the commitment of “the minimum number of troops to save a maximum number of lives.” This concept has special relevance in a humanitarian intervention since the sole purpose of applying force is to save lives. International law expert Thomas M. Franck once noted, “[i]n rescue operations there is always a kind of statistical problem about how many people are getting rescued and how many are getting killed in the process of being rescued.”⁸⁵

Therefore, the question to ask before mounting an armed intervention is whether there is a reasonable prospect of accomplishing specified humanitarian objectives at a proportionate cost. There are those ready to argue, with a long list of historical examples, that in most cases interventions have done more harm than good. A case can be made that it was the fear of doing more harm than good that has kept the international community from mounting a sizeable humanitarian intervention in the former Yugoslavia. Clearly there is the concern that the intervening party, be it NATO or individual nations, may be drawn into the civil war without achieving peace.

The principle of proportionality is valid when its intent is to limit undo harm to civilians and innocents and conserve US resources and lives by placing no more troops in harm than is warranted. Proportionality should not be taken to mean that the intervening force be so constrained that it would fail in its mission. How many and what type of military force to employ in an armed humanitarian intervention will be discussed in the latter half of this paper. However, regardless of the potency of force employed, weight must be given to the potential for unacceptable escalation and the resultant loss of life.

It behooves any military planner to consider the words of Carl Von Clausewitz:

If one side uses force without compunction, undeterred by the bloodshed it involves, while the other side refrains, the first will gain the upper hand. That side will force the other to follow suit; each will drive its opponent toward extremes, and the only limiting factors are the counterpoises inherent in war.... To introduce the principle of moderation into the theory of war itself would always lead to a logical absurdity.⁸⁶

The notion of proportionality "appeals to the American notion of fairness; it has its roots in the Old Testament credo of 'an eye for an eye,' a concept intended as a call not for revenge but for limiting punishment to what was warranted by the crime."⁸⁷ However, that should not be confused with conducting an intervention with insufficient forces or with imposing imprudent restrictions on the employment of military resources to include weapon systems. There are serious consequences for employing limited force against factions that may have unlimited objectives. Clausewitz warned that a brutal, determined enemy can "up the ante." Well-intentioned people clamoring for military action to end human suffering often have no conception of the objectives they wish to achieve, by what means, and what consequences might result from a hasty intervention. Some attempt must be made *before* deciding to intervene as to what proportion of violence and destruction the intervention can tolerate before the humanitarian benefits are lost.

In testimony before the United States House of Representatives Select Committee on Hunger, an international human rights organization stated that a legitimate armed humanitarian intervention must be necessary, proportionate and strictly limited to its humanitarian purposes. It must not be used, for example, to overthrow a government or to gain territory. This approach preserves the true

humanitarian nature of the intervention and discourages the use of force as a pretext for political interference.

Armed interventions cover a wide range of military action — preventive attacks, punitive strikes, rescue of nationals. These various categories of intervention each carry a different status in the eyes of the international legal community. Armed *humanitarian* intervention earns its unique status by maintaining its altruistic character. The decision to launch a humanitarian intervention must be firmly grounded in and limited to humanitarian objectives. If decisionmakers wish to justify an intervention on humanitarian grounds, the aims of the intervention must be narrow, such as providing food, life sustaining supplies, and/or protection to starving, oppressed peoples. A humanitarian intervention should not seek to change those in political authority, even when they have instigated or perpetuated the crisis. By definition a humanitarian mission is restricted to minimizing the suffering until either the authority changes or its policies change.

How pure must humanitarian motivation be in order to preserve its distinct character? Like all actions on the international stage, various states will interpret differently the purity of motives of those who proclaim an intervention to be a humanitarian undertaking. As one international legal scholar wrote, on occasions where the cause of humanity coincides with interests of the intervening state, you have what is called a humanitarian intervention, but in fact it is a political one; “the humanitarian result is incidental.”⁸⁸ Similarly, pure humanitarian motives may propel a state or coalition of states to launch a humanitarian intervention. However, upon achieving their stated humanitarian mandate, the intervening states may remain in the target country to accomplish political goals, thus altering the character of the intervention. For these reasons, proponents of humanitarian intervention jealously guard the use of the term “humanitarian” lest it become cynically viewed as a facade for a variety of political ends.

In summary, before embarking on an armed humanitarian intervention, decisionmakers should be able to satisfy the following criteria:

- the object of the intervention be humanitarian,
- the motive be purely to serve humanity and not to reap benefits for the intervening state,
- the duration be limited to achieving the stated humanitarian goals, and
- the effects on the target country (and impact to international stability) be minimal.

A Figleaf for Military Mischief?

Today, there is clearly a growing acceptance that in some instances, humanitarian intervention is morally justified, meets normative legal precepts, and can accomplish more good than harm. This represents a change from recent years when

many feared the humanitarian label would be misapplied — a disguise for imperial intrusion, a cloak for gunboat diplomacy by the US, aggrandizement by European powers, or a blue (UN) figleaf for some crass political ends.⁸⁹ However, with the end of the superpower rivalry, the true humanitarian nature of the *initial* intervention into Somalia, and the perception that ethnic violence has increased the number of humanitarian emergencies, all but a few seem convinced that humanitarian intervention is a desirable option for the 1990s. Nonetheless, doubters do remain, and it would be wise to weigh their arguments and concerns. For the most part, their objections are not legal but ethical and pragmatic. What then are some of the concerns of those who hesitate to sanction intervention even on humanitarian grounds?

One argument parallels the logic already outlined regarding the erosion of the concept of sovereignty. Some well-intentioned observers of international security affairs express concern that recourse to force, even for genuinely humanitarian purposes, diminishes the psychological constraint on the use of force for other purposes. Further, when armed might succeeds in securing humanitarian objectives, it heightens the expectation that military power will be the preferred option of the international community, rather than the option of last resort.

Others echo the theme that military interventions for any purpose tend to have unintended, negative consequences. A current fear is that successful humanitarian interventions, particularly if undertaken unilaterally, will be cited as precedence for action by less scrupulous nations that will abuse the humanitarian label. Specific concerns focus on possible Russian military missions in their “near abroad,” ostensibly for humanitarian purposes but in reality to extend its hegemonic reach. Some might counter that if the intervening force is a small and tailored support force without substantial combat capability, there would be little chance for “mischief.” However, any placement of troops on foreign soil signals the potential for increased political-military commitment and can be a way of projecting military power without the use of combat troops.

A handful of opponents to armed humanitarian intervention attack the concept on completely different grounds. They challenge the moral standards by which the international community judges the actions of nations regarding the treatment of their people. George Kennan noted that there are no international standards of morality to which the United States can look for guiding principles. As a result he concludes, “interventions must be based on *our own* [his emphasis] moral standards.” Others flatly reject his conclusions. They claim that because a transcultural set of human rights does not exist there is no basis for the concept of a just humanitarian intervention. These scholars brush aside arguments that the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as an example of internationally accepted humane principles. In their view, the Declaration springs from the Western liberal tradition and “smacks of ethnocentrism.”⁹⁰

This is a view not frequently found in Western literature. Frederick Cuny, an expert in humanitarian relief missions, also reminded us that the body of interna-

tional law that protects refugees and oppressed peoples reflects the Judeo-Christian heritage. Yet, the focus of current and likely humanitarian "hot spots" is in the non-Christian world, often Islamic countries. He wrote, "principles of humanitarian service [do] not always translate well in the Muslim World."⁹¹ This reinforces the view that there is no universal belief in humanitarian principles despite Western presumptions to the contrary. Caroline Thomas writes,

[i]f there are any transcultural values within the international system, then those values must derive from recognition of sovereignty and national self-determination.... If states act out of moral considerations other than those flowing from the morality of sovereign statehood itself, the flood gates will be opened for intervention motivated by particularistic interpretations of human rights.⁹²

American political philosopher Charles Beitz noted similar concerns, writing:

outsiders are seldom in a position to understand enough about a culture's past and present to grasp the reasons for what seems to be ethically unacceptable policies on the part of the local government, or to formulate plans for interference with a reasonable chance of long-term success in bringing these policies to an end.⁹³

Caroline Thomas acknowledged that this current period in history is a time of nation-building and state-building throughout the Third World, often accompanied by ethnic conflict and shocking violence. The results may be anathema to many in the West, but she claims that the regrettable offshoots of inhumanity resulting from these Third World struggles are little different from spurts of brutality that today's industrialized nations underwent as they matured into stable, more humane states. Nations of Western Europe, now considered a model for statehood, have long bloody histories that include pogroms, massacres of innocents and the brutal elimination of entire state entities. While it took centuries for the current "developed" nations to evolve, Thomas sees that humanitarian interventions or the threats of such interventions are "[a]ttempts [to] forcibly engineer nation-state building at high speed in a 'hot-house' environment."

She goes on to decry the "crusade mentality" inherent in any call for armed humanitarian intervention. She warns that "the idea of wars being fought not for rational limited ends, but for ways of life, for good against evil, adds a very dangerous element to international relations." She fears that weaker states will fall victim to Wilsonian idealistic, "self-seeking humanitarianism." She concludes that "strict adherence" to the central norm of non-intervention is the morally superior position.⁹⁴

Notes

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2. *Humanitarian Intervention and American Security Policy*

The will to uphold human rights failed dismally in 1994. Having bound and shelved the volume of high-sounding pronouncements made the year before at the World Conference on Human Rights, the major powers led a wholesale retreat from their implementation. These governments shrank from the year's most urgent challenge — preventing genocide in Rwanda.

Human Rights Watch World Report 1995

The Fleeting Nature of American Altruism

Given the compelling arguments on both sides of the issue, America seems to be groping for some comfortable middle ground regarding armed humanitarian interventions. Tremendous amounts of political energy have been expended explaining, promising, even proclaiming that the United States cannot and will not be the world's moral policeman. While some view this as a political reality, others see it as an excuse to shuck a leadership role in determining how the international community might respond to a humanitarian crisis. Policing does not equate to leading. Similarly, humanitarian intervention in one country does not imply the beginning of a crusade to police all of the world's injustices. Just as Americans should resist an idealist impulse to intervene in all but extreme cases of inhumanity, Americans must also reject the reasoning that if the United States responds to one humanitarian crisis, it must react to all. The United States must exercise judgement, recognize its limits, and decline to intervene without apology. The challenge is to do so without earning an isolationist label and without abdicating a leadership role in these matters.¹

Over four decades ago, Robert Osgood wrote that there is “a fleeting and insubstantial quality of American altruism [when it is not anchored to] the balance wheel of political realism and fundamental national self-interest.”² Charlie Brown, of *Peanuts* fame was equally eloquent when he said, “I have my strong opinions — but they don’t last long.”³ Public opinion in the US can shift rapidly and Americans have shown again and again a degree of ambivalence toward presidential calls to action. Since pure humanitarian missions lack the sustaining force that accrues when national interests are threatened, the “balance wheel,” to use Osgood’s term, will be based on the public’s perception of the enormity of the humanitarian crisis. As commander-in-chief, the president must show leadership in shaping public perception and maintain a prudent regard for the possible consequences of an armed humanitarian intervention. Clearly, Congress also demands a role in determining US commitments abroad. In a world plagued by ethnic violence, farsighted leadership is crucial in shaping the country’s response to a crisis in order to conserve US assets for the supreme humanitarian emergencies that most offend American sensibilities. In the areas where idealism and self-interests coincide, America can take advantage of overlapping humanitarian goals and political objectives and act forcefully.

Cynics have chided the suggestion that the United States base humanitarian interventions on anything other than normative moral judgements, labelling the current Clinton administration policy as one of initiating armed intervention only if a humanitarian crisis is “gross or close.” *New York Times* reporter Elaine Sciolino wrote, “The United States, under Bill Clinton just as under George Bush, tackles only those crises that are too serious or too painful or too close to home to avoid, while ignoring others or leaving them for other [world] policemen to resolve. Haiti was a crisis that was too close to home, and ... Iraq was a crisis too serious to ignore.”⁴ “Gross and close” is hardly a flattering description for any policy, let alone one focused on moral virtue and altruism. Nonetheless, it serves to remind us of the natural limits that exist on employment of American troops where national interests are not at stake. To push past these limits, it is incumbent upon the president of the United States and Congress to build and sustain support for such an intervention.

Closely associated with the issue of when and where to intervene is the matter of consistency. Can the United States justify an armed humanitarian intervention if the situation is “gross and close,” say in Latin America, but ignore equally barbaric crimes against humanity simply because a crisis is far away in Africa or Asia? The sheer number of humanitarian crises alone makes it inevitable that America will be selective in committing US armed forces and hence inconsistent and uneven in applying moral principles. This leaves the United States open to charges of hypocrisy and of putting crass national interests before the lives of those caught in some horrific circumstance.⁵

Consistency is not an issue reserved solely for the United States. The international community has a notably inconsistent record in its treatment of some of the

world's most recent genocidal mass murderers. Despite the stupendous atrocities committed by Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, they recently gained international legitimacy in a United Nations brokered peace agreement. Mozambique's RENAMO similarly found recognition without feeling the sting of international retribution for its brutal murder campaign. On a different scale, the United States has been recently criticized for its China policy in which the US granted China the Most Favoured Nation trading status despite its abysmal human rights record.

Perhaps the most discussed factor regarding consistent response to humanitarian crisis is media coverage. One of Canada's more astute international observers, the late John Nicholson decried the "media distortion" that plays a role in where and when nations intervene. He cited the Cable News Network (CNN) in particular, and the influence it exerted in the decision to intervene in Somalia in 1992, a time in which more innocent people were dying of starvation in southern Sudan. According to Nicholson, "[CNN] started telling people what to believe and where to start their new wars."⁶

Thomas Weiss and Larry Minear agree that the media has become a key player in the matter of humanitarian response, noting the 400 plus news items regarding Somalia in 1992, as compared to only six on the Sudan.⁷ There can be no doubt that the "loud" emergencies in war zones receive much more attention and thereby give state leaders in countries like the United States a basis for which to build consensus and support for an armed humanitarian intervention. "Silent" humanitarian crises, no matter how deserving of international redress and action, are unlikely to receive equal consideration.

Public opinion does not necessarily lead in these matters. George Bush's decision to mount a US airlift from Mombasa to Somalia in the midst of the presidential campaign and the subsequent decision to intervene in Somalia was only partly due to public pressure. More likely, it was a retiring politician's desire to be associated with a humane cause and to be remembered as "a kinder, gentler" chief executive that motivated his decision. In short, media images left the public predisposed to such action, but did not cause them.⁸

Many other factors could affect the degree of consistency regarding armed humanitarian missions. Historical, cultural, ethnic, and political ties to a region or particular country are bound to create an imbalance in the interest the United States or any other country may have in an ongoing humanitarian crisis.⁹ Even where these factors are not at play, the risks involved in an armed intervention will almost always be a key deciding factor when nations contemplate commitment of their troops. This alone is almost always likely to outweigh the notion that interventions be chosen by the degree of suffering or need within a target state.

All of this leads to the question of whether or not it matters if the United States is consistent in responding to various humanitarian crises. Morally, it does. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stung the West in 1992 with his charge that the United Nations Security Council was paying more attention to Yugoslavia

than to Somalia, characterizing the European crisis a rich man's war.¹⁰ It would be unconscionable for the United States to ignore its fundamental commitment to the importance of all human life by basing intervention decisions on the victim's culture, region, race, or religion.¹¹ Anthony Lewis wrote that failure to address genocide, mass murder and other present day scourges, undermines basic Western values and "corrodes the essence of a democratic society."¹²

There are more practical reasons to consider the effects of consistency on foreign policy. A perception that the United States lacks the will to intervene in marginal areas such as Africa, could lead to catastrophic misjudgements of US intentions in critical areas.¹³ The implication is that an inconsistent, incoherent approach to humanitarian crises may undercut America's credibility when it threatens armed intervention for other reasons. Likewise, inconsistency makes it more difficult to gain international backing for multilateral action. America's hasty retreat from Somalia surely left allies wondering if the US will commit to a multilateral intervention in the future only to depart leaving others "holding the bag." Finally, unchecked aggression diminishes Third World belief and confidence in the Western alliance.

All of this points to the need for a cautious, unemotional, reasoned approach to a humanitarian crisis — a difficult task when the news media broadcasts scenes of suffering and daily death totals. To be morally consistent, the United States must acknowledge each crisis and express an appreciation of the humanity of those suffering from oppression. When the United States deems armed intervention to be imprudent for whatever practical reasons, it should seek to influence the situation through other means, as described earlier. Using the framework outlined in this paper, American leaders must offer the long view to those prone to act impulsively on emotion or righteous indignation.

Limited Intervention

The hard questions and answers do not stop with the issue of whether or not to intervene. Even if America's leaders show an inclination to mount an armed humanitarian intervention, preliminary planning considerations regarding how to accomplish such a task must take place to determine if the job is doable. A determination that an intervention is justifiable is not enough to launch American men and women into harm's way. Congress, as well as the general public, can be expected to demand assurance that the humanitarian mission is well-conceived, limited in scope, duration, and cost, and that American forces will have the means at their disposal to get the job done.¹⁴

This means that almost by definition, humanitarian interventions must be limited in both means and ends. Any decision to inject American forces into a humanitarian crisis on moral grounds will be constrained by the moral principles for which the United States is intervening, by the morality of the means America employs to secure its humanitarian objectives, and by the morality of the likely

consequences of US actions.¹⁵ Americans expect results when their troops are put at risk, and in a self-proclaimed humanitarian mission, the public expects evidence that immediate human suffering has been relieved. Once the United States alleviates the most egregious inhumane conditions within a country, questions arise about what to do next. Can the US walk away from an emergency having applied only the "first aid" of humanitarian relief? Must it make some attempt to treat the root causes of a crisis in order to effect a long lasting cure? After all, why feed the starving in a war-ravaged country only to have the same humanitarian crisis resurface months after American troops depart?

Humanitarian interventions lack the mandate to alter the fundamental causes of inhumane conditions when the primary or contributing factors are political. According to a 1995 Congressional report, humanitarian interventions involve the use of America's armed forces only to relieve misery and suffering. "Humanitarian operations ... *do not attempt to directly resolve disputes or support a peace settlement*" (emphasis added).¹⁶ However, when suffering has political causes, the methods of alleviating that suffering will ultimately take on political dimensions. Hence, a humanitarian intervention will necessarily become a more traditional political-military intervention. Michael Mandelbaum cited Somalia as a case in point. In that intervention, Americans supported the dispatch of US troops to relieve suffering under the misunderstanding that the mission would avoid the entanglements of local Somali politics. "The public," according to Mandelbaum, "believed that the intervention would be costless, especially in our most valuable currency: American lives."¹⁷

Indeed, the attractiveness of the option of an armed humanitarian intervention lies partly in its appeal to a high moral purpose and partly in the implication that the intervention can and will be limited to accomplishing that purpose. Even in the wake of Somalia, there remains a sense that the humanitarian aspects of feeding the starving were extremely successful and it was the shift to nation-building that brought about disaster. The failure in Somalia, according to Richard Haass, was not the humanitarian mission but the add-on mission of trying to change the political situation directly. Haass argues that humanitarian missions have a limited purpose which is to protect and keep people alive until the political situation changes. He stated that Mandelbaum was wrong in his assertion that humanitarian intervention inevitably leads to political involvement.¹⁸

To prove his point, Haass cited America's success in maintaining a humanitarian focus to Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq. In that case, the United States chose not to seek a political solution to the Kurdish problem. Instead, the US has settled on the humanitarian tasks of protecting and sustaining a persecuted minority. Haass maintained that in Somalia, ambitious policymakers departed from their humanitarian mandate and then failed in a nation-building mission by not matching their ambition with adequate force.¹⁹

The important point is understanding the manner in which humanitarian interventions are limited. It is not necessarily a matter of duration, since Operation

Provide Comfort has been ongoing for years. Armed humanitarian interventions are limited only in that they are not designed to alter or address the fundamental political-social source of a humanitarian crisis. That is not to say that humanitarian missions are without violence. Former chief of staff of the United States Army, General Gordon Sullivan, noted that US armed forces may deploy to achieve humanitarian goals but not necessarily in a peaceful way. A likely humanitarian mission might entail American combat forces battling to carve out an armed humanitarian zone or safe haven to protect endangered people, similar to US action in northern Iraq or the French intervention into Rwanda in June 1994.²⁰ Such a mission might be costly in terms of American lives. Again, the limiting factor of a *humanitarian* intervention lies not in cost or duration but in the nature of the mission. The ultimate solution to a crisis would likely follow the completion of the humanitarian intervention and might take the form of diplomacy, economic sanctions, or compelling military actions to include nation-building or forceful peacemaking. It is through these missions, related to the humanitarian cause but distinct from the humanitarian intervention, that the political tasks come to the fore.

The level of US commitment is a function of comfort — how much risk and/or sacrifice the American people are willing to tolerate. After Somalia, Americans may condone a brief humanitarian intervention where national interests are not a factor but choose not to accept a deeper political role even if that leaves in place the ingredients that may re-ignite another humanitarian disaster. Polls of the American people clearly expressed this attitude as noted in the August 1994 survey by the Times Mirror Center entitled “The People, the Press, and the Use of Force.” Apparently reflecting this public sentiment, the United States’ decision regarding its mission to Rwanda in the summer of 1994, was to announce a limited intervention in terms of mission and duration. Richard Haass offered a simple rule of thumb in setting the limits to humanitarian undertakings: “The United States can stay involved either if costs are low or if interests are high. What cannot be sustained are high-cost, low interest engagements.”²¹

Buying Time, Saving Lives

What value is an armed humanitarian intervention if its scope is so limited that the root causes of a humanitarian crisis are left in place? The question is most compelling in regards to Rwanda where, exactly one year after the spring of 1994 rampage against the Tutsi minority, the humanitarian crisis had subsided. Cholera no longer plagued the refugee camps in Zaire, in large part due to American military intervention. NGOs, such as Doctors Without Borders, have succeeded in lowering the mortality rate to one death per 10,000 people per day, approximately that of developed Western societies.²² However, all parties cite the high potential for the eruption of violence and more refugee flows. The *Washington Post* reported

that several nongovernmental organizations are now asking if their successful relief effort only prolongs the Rwandan conflict they so desperately want to see resolved. Two Canadian diplomats observed that "the humanitarian rationale for the refugee camps is gone."²³

Diplomats and relief experts believe that the only hope for a lasting resolution is if Hutu refugees, numbering upwards of one million, abandon the camps in Zaire, return to Rwanda, and cooperate with the Tutsi-led government for relief. However, the Hutu warlords that initiated the murder campaign against the Tutsis now run the refugee camps in Zaire. The UNHCR, which is the *de facto* government for the refugee camps, is essentially paralysed and unable to provide security within the camps or inspire confidence that the UN would protect those Hutus who choose to return to Rwanda. One UN official called the Rwandan refugee situation the biggest scandal in the organization's history.²⁴ The predicament for the United Nations and for individual NGOs is whether to abandon the camps of Zaire and offer food, shelter, and sustenance only inside Rwanda. The ethical question is further clouded by the fact that the enormous relief effort in Zaire indirectly strengthens the power structure of the Hutu warlords who are determined to resume their bloody campaign against the Tutsis. Indeed, there is reason to fear that the immediate relief effort not only *prolongs* the overall crisis but may eventually *contribute* to an even bigger blood bath by sheltering Hutu warriors as they gird themselves for another offensive.

In fact, many relief agencies have been quietly relocating their effort from Zaire to Rwanda. The perplexing questions are: Will the Hutu peasants follow them into Rwanda? Will the Hutu warlords *allow* their people to leave Zaire? and Will this force the Hutu army in exile to launch desperate reprisals?²⁵ Clearly, military intervention cannot substitute for more fundamental policies and actions that forge cultural, economic, social, and political relations among battling parties.²⁶ However, armed interventions can relieve human suffering in the short term while they buy time for diplomacy and often dampen dangerous unstable situations that are on the verge of losing even more death and destruction. Humanitarian interventions might pave the way for long-term approaches to solve underlying problems should the United States or other actors choose to invest in such an undertaking.²⁷

Robin Hay noted that even a limited humanitarian intervention that provided a break in the killing can be used as the "thin edge of a wedge" that leads to negotiations and a more lasting solution. He optimistically wrote that the short respite and breathing space gained from a humanitarian intervention and more particularly from a humanitarian cease-fire, "may serve to moderate the intensity of a particular conflict by introducing moral and humanitarian values."²⁸ Former United Nations Under-Secretary General Sir Brian Urquhart noted that anything that proves to the belligerents that the fighting could stop is a good thing.

Unfortunately, the degree of hatred and viciousness that create a supreme humanitarian emergency is a symptom of underlying problems that defy any obvious solutions. Hence, the fear that any humanitarian crisis is a "tar baby," and that a

nation mounting a humanitarian intervention would be forced into an open-ended mission or drawn into a costly military-political conflict. At best, an armed humanitarian intervention would eliminate the worst symptoms but not cure the disease itself. Recent humanitarian undertakings also raised the spectre of belligerents manipulating the humanitarian assistance to serve their own purposes. This no-holds barred atmosphere has made even some of the most experienced and determined professional relief organizations reassess their methods and goals.

It should be remembered that a nation that wishes to achieve any worthy goal will ultimately be forced into a series of moral compromises. In that regard, even an altruistic humanitarian intervention is tinged with the "sin of selfishness."²⁹ The United States demonstrated the ability to make tough moral compromises by severely limiting its response to the 1994 tragedy in Rwanda. While the US rightfully took satisfaction in the large number of lives it saved in the squalid Rwandan refugee camps in and around Goma, Zaire, critics attacked America's response as slow, inadequate, and devoid of leadership.³⁰ However, it is important to note that much of the criticism was not that the United States (and other states) failed to wade deep into the midst of the killing fields to defeat the Hutu army; rather, that the United States did not *lead* an effort to mount an effective armed humanitarian intervention that could have created safe havens, without entering the war on behalf of the persecuted Tutsis.

Even Human Rights Watch, which severely chastised the Clinton administration's lack of moral leadership in "abandoning Rwanda," advocated a humanitarian intervention that was limited in scope. In their annual *Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*, the organization wrote, "the United Nations ill-fated experiment in 'peace enforcement' in Somalia points to the need to incorporate human rights protection into humanitarian operations, *and to limit those operations to the protection of civilians.*" (emphasis added).³¹

The Paradox of Success

There are two paradoxes associated with successful American armed humanitarian interventions. First, the demonstrated ability to conduct an intervention — to keep its scope strictly limited in size and cost, to achieve a visible degree of relief for some suffering mass of people, and to then withdraw American forces before becoming entangled in long-term commitments — puts more and more demands on the United States to act as moral policeman, a role Washington is determined to avoid. Certainly the Pentagon has achieved a degree of comfort in handling such missions, although it appears reluctant to acknowledge that fact, even to itself. The ability to conduct very limited operations in northern Iraq, Rwanda, Haiti, and most recently in orchestrating the final withdrawal of United Nations' forces from Somalia, all demonstrate the feasibility of successfully employing

the military toward humanitarian ends without drawing large numbers of casualties and without becoming bogged down in lengthy interventions.

The second paradox is somewhat different. Robert Osgood chronicled the phenomena in describing the rapid demise of America's Wilsonian idealism after successfully concluding World War I. He suggested that once America achieved its victory, altruism collapsed. In his words, America "let its moral muscles relax."³² Peter Shiras, director of government relations for the American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction), drew a similar picture regarding the long-term failure of Somalia. According to Shiras, "[o]nce the 'humanitarian problem' was dealt with in Somalia by sending in the troops, diplomatic efforts to bring peace lost the urgency they had previously, precisely when they were most needed."³³ In short, gone with the images of starving children was the impetus to engage in the tougher, long-term diplomatic and nation-building measures needed for a lasting solution. The same can be said of Rwanda. With the withdrawal of American troops from the refugee camps and the end of the cholera epidemic, public consciousness was minimal and mainstream media interest has evaporated. Yet, the explosive potential of the problem begs for preventive measures rather than a repeat of events witnessed in 1994. With the humanitarian crisis "under control," few nations are willing to invest in long-term solutions.

Multilateral or Unilateral Intervention?

The tremendous volume of early 1990s literature on the theory and practice of humanitarian intervention — virtually all of it enthusiastic about the concept — uniformly took the view that such efforts should not be carried out unilaterally. In an essay with the telling title, "Intervention and Virtue," Barrie Paskins wrote that multilateral action must be the norm since "suspicion and resentment that the intervention is 'really' selfish will be the greater to the extent that it is unilateral."³⁴ A multilateral effort undeniably lends a degree of legitimacy to a humanitarian intervention and allows for a sharing of the costs and risks. While the United States still reserves the right to act unilaterally, more than one official in the early days of the Clinton administration expressed the view that "the United States should explicitly surrender the right to intervene unilaterally in the internal affairs of other countries by overt military means or by covert operations."³⁵ Paskins notes that there is virtue associated with multilateral action, but also potential drawbacks when considering an armed humanitarian intervention.

The benefits the United States reaps from multilateral interventions are relatively clear. First, legitimacy counts — it would be a mistake to underestimate the value of winning the rhetorical arguments in favour of intervention within the international community. This was apparent in the Gulf War, where the United States could have brought its military prowess to bear unilaterally, but still fought

the diplomatic battle for legitimacy. The violation of sovereignty based on humanitarian motives is still a new concept in international affairs, and a multinational effort, especially one with United Nations' sanction, reduces suspicions that individual actors may be furthering a self-serving national agenda.

France's 1994 unilateral expedition into Rwanda is a case in point. The Rwandan Patriotic Front, battling to wrest control from the Hutu government that staged the wanton massacre of hundreds of thousands of Tutsis, discredited France's assertion that its intervention was purely humanitarian. The French government had long-time ties to the Hutus, and some felt Paris would not allow the Hutus to lose power. The presence of other countries in the intervention might have helped quash any doubts about French intentions.³⁶

The second obvious benefit to multilateral action is the spreading of costs and risks. While there is potential for a humanitarian mission to Latin America, the most likely flash points for a humanitarian crisis are far from US shores. To mount an effective military intervention, the United States would likely require basing rights, overflight permission, and cooperation from countries in the area of operation. Any military action, humanitarian or not, is expensive. Both Congress and the American people can be expected to question money invested in operations where US interests are not at stake. Clearly, the US public believes that humanitarianism is "universal" and the burden of intervention should be shared.

By 1995, the limits to America's idealism were becoming clearer and current literature reflects the search to find effective multilateral solutions to humanitarian problems. Philip Gordon wrote of the Rwandan crisis as: "the United States is the most capable, best organized, and most impartial outside force [to lead an armed humanitarian intervention into Rwanda], but with Haiti, North Korea and Bosnia on its plate, and after the Somalia disaster, no one should expect the Americans to remain deeply engaged in a region where its national interests are not at stake."³⁷

It is easy to conclude that in most situations, the United States will favour interventions that are at least partly multilateral. However, there are disadvantages to this approach. First and most obviously, is the crucial factor of time. The days and weeks spent hammering out diplomatic agreements, building consensus on roles and missions, and assembling a combined military force under a unified command is time in which thousands may die in a humanitarian crisis. Ad hoc actions of this nature are sure to suffer in planning, coordination, and execution. One international legal expert remarked that when the lives of innocents are being lost by the hour, insistence on "multilateral action" can be a code word for no effective humane intervention.

The second disadvantage is in the loss of control over some of the operational aspects of the intervention. Even if American interests are purely altruistic, domestic considerations, and military factors may place the United States at odds with coalition partners in specifying deployment options, chain of command, and courses of action. Somalia is often cited as an example where American strategy

and options were regrettably tempered by the need to share responsibility with the United Nations and other contributing nations. Unilateral action obviously avoids cumbersome military and political arrangements when time is of the essence.³⁸

Third, the United States may wish to limit, or eliminate for political reasons, the participation of some states in an armed humanitarian intervention, especially if there is the perception that their motivation is to advance self-interests. In such cases the US may still choose a multilateral course but take steps to restrict those who join in the effort. The reverse is also true. In some regions of the world American military presence would foment a tremendous negative and volatile reaction to a worthy humanitarian undertaking.

Finally, unilateral action diffuses potential controversy involving American troops under United Nations or foreign command. The much discussed Presidential Decision Directive -25 (PDD-25), "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations," noted that the greater the role for the US military, "the less likely it will be that the US will agree to have a UN commander exercise overall operational control over US forces."³⁹ The Presidential Directive does allow for American troops serving under foreign commanders for "prudent or advantageous" reasons, and in fact in 1995, there were many Americans under foreign command. However, the more likely an intervention may produce US casualties, the more the American people and their Congressional representatives will scrutinize the mission and the operational command arrangements.

Unilateral action is extremely tempting. The United States gains broad latitude politically as well as militarily, it maximizes speed and secrecy, and avoids the bureaucratic encumbrances of the United Nations — a source of frustration and ridicule among many Americans. The better choice would be to develop and improve the United Nations' ability to field a multinational force on short notice. But until that happens, and such reform is not on the horizon, quick US unilateral action may be the only hope for the victims of gross human rights abuses. However, this appears to be a unique historical moment, and perhaps a fleeting one, in which even great powers seem committed to relatively benign use of power. Because this time of great power benevolence may not last, unilateral intervention will always be viewed in the international community with trepidation.⁴⁰ In the current atmosphere internationally, as well as in Washington, the United States would likely act unilaterally only with some type of blessing from the United Nations Security Council.

Even if the United States views multilateral intervention as desirable, it does not relieve the United States of the burdens it has as the preeminent great power in today's world. The United Nations may be able to cobble together relief efforts on a small scale or where outside multilateral intervention faces no military threat. However, forced entries and major logistical undertakings may require US leadership as well as participation.

In his 1993 book, *Beyond Charity*, Gil Loescher wrote of the need for Western leadership to invigorate multilateral efforts operating under UN auspices. According to Loescher:

The United States is still the only nation whose leadership most other nations are willing to follow, and it is the country most capable of setting up various measures to direct international efforts toward a constructive goal. Therefore, American leadership is vital in galvanizing collective efforts to resolve many of the complex humanitarian problems of the post Cold War era. While addressing American domestic needs is important, governmental willingness to deal with regional and international instabilities, such as ethnic conflicts and mass refugee movements, is critical to America's prospects — particularly if the United States wants to play an effective role internationally. Moreover, without active American involvement, the international community will be limited to reactive, damage-control measures in response to humanitarian crises. As we move toward the twenty-first century, the United States, along with other donor countries, must make every effort to provide the financing, commodities, and other resources that alone can enable the UN to meet the expectations invested in it.⁴¹

Some observers are not sanguine about America's willingness to lead in humanitarian efforts. David Hendrickson wrote in 1994, "[it is time the US] abandons illusions of a kind of leadership [it is] not really prepared to exercise on behalf of a vision of world order the price of which [the US] has no intention of paying."⁴² Similarly, Alan K. Henrickson wrote that "the United States will not necessarily any longer provide the economic or even the military substance — that is, the weight — required for the leverage it still wishes to exercise.... Selectivity and pragmatism rather than the 'assertive multilateralism' associated with the Clinton administration in its early days, have become the key notes of US foreign policy."⁴³

Without national interests at stake in humanitarian ventures, the degree of leadership the US chooses to exercise in an armed multilateral intervention is likely to be based on the urgency of the humanitarian crises and the difficulty of the rescue mission. Richard Haass has suggested that "the more ambitious the undertaking, the more US leadership and contribution will be necessary and the more likely the United States will want to act in a loosely structured fashion."⁴⁴ Indeed, strong leadership is essential if the players in any multinational effort have little or no vital interests at stake. In those cases (and humanitarian efforts fall into this category) participants will be less willing to commit totally to an effort and are more likely to focus on national prerogatives rather than on mission accomplishment. In short, humanitarianism may not be a very strong "glue" to bind multilateral partners together. It presents yet another reason for the United States to approach multilateral operations with caution if not apprehension.

When the stakes are high and the humanitarian crisis desperate, the United States might be needed to do virtually all of the difficult military work with nominal participation from coalition partners.⁴⁵ This has been equated to the "sheriff and posse approach," in which the US carries out a Security Council mandate

with the help of a posse from member states of the United Nations. Such an approach gives the US broad leeway in shaping the humanitarian mission with some of the benefits of a multilateral action. Although work continues on building a UN rapid reaction force, each donor nation will ultimately have the final say on whether they will participate in a specific operation. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali noted in his "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace," that not one of the 19 countries that had stand-by troops committed to the United Nations in May 1994 agreed to contribute to a Rwandan rescue mission.⁴⁶

Virtually all of the options described above have the glaring deficiency of mustering a military force in an *ad hoc* manner. Short of NATO, or success in building a UN reaction force that really works, this is the reality of humanitarian interventions in the mid-1990s. If time allows, multilateral action brings several advantages. However, the US would be foolish to forsake the unilateral option for short duration missions. The economy and efficiency of acting alone provides the responsiveness critical when the lives of both victims and rescuers are on the line.

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3. *Operational Capability and Costs*

If the American military presence lasts for longer than six months, or if any significant casualties are incurred, I believe that public support for this effort will wane quickly. Truth be told, a collection of Somali clan leaders simply decided that starvation was an appropriate weapon to be used against their fellow citizens... If young Marines begin to be killed, the average American voter may wonder what our interest is in restoring civility among a group of people seemingly bent on destroying each other.

Ambassador David C. Miller, Jr.

Operational Considerations

Former chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, General Colin Powell laid out some fundamental questions that ought to be answered before American troops hit the ground in the post-Cold War world: Is the political objective clear, important, and understood? Have nonviolent means been exhausted? Will military force gain the objective sought? At what cost? Have gains and risks been analyzed? How will the situation alter once US forces are introduced and what will be the consequences?¹ Like most other commentators on humanitarian intervention, General Powell begins with a heavy emphasis on wisely and carefully crafting an unambiguous mission — one that stands a good chance of succeeding. Humanitarian intervention missions are often lumped under generic headings such as military operations other than war (MOOTW), Peace Operations or Disaster Assistance.² However, humanitarian interventions are unique. Disaster assistance and traditional peacekeeping imply invitation and neutrality. Humanitarian intervention, as has been discussed, violates sovereignty and intervening forces can

expect resistance by one or more factions. This requires different strategies, force structure, and equipment than other missions the military may accept under the heading MOOTW.

In the sense that humanitarian interventions are a response to political events, Michael Mandelbaum was correct. But an armed humanitarian intervention can be mounted that attempts to avoid the underlying political causes. The challenge to United States decisionmakers is to fashion a military mission that avoids confusion between a humanitarian mandate and any attempt at peacemaking or nation-building. Likewise, humanitarian interventions should not be a fig leaf for such political missions nor should "mission creep" cloud humanitarian goals. If the United States *chooses* to undertake the difficult chore of peacemaking and/or nation-building, it should do so with its eyes open to the requirements and sacrifices that these missions entail.

The United States may, by its own design or in conjunction with United Nations operations, find itself attempting to conduct a humanitarian intervention at the same time that other missions (diplomatic as well as military) are taking place. The problem with mixing armed humanitarian intervention with missions such as peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or nation-building is that their fundamental goals and operating principles usually conflict. This stems primarily from the attempt of humanitarian missions to avoid delving into political solutions and the fact that giving humanitarian aid in a conflict affects the balance of power between belligerents. While peacekeepers, for instance, strive to remain neutral, soldiers on humanitarian relief missions will almost certainly be taking sides as a matter of perception if not as a matter of fact. The issue of neutrality in peace operations has been widely addressed in current literature, but it is, nonetheless, often misunderstood or misapplied when referring to military aspects of humanitarian intervention.

The Misconception of Neutrality

Much of the confusion regarding the idea of neutrality stems from the altruistic or humane impetus that drives an armed humanitarian intervention. The Humanitarianism and War Project of the Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University emphasizes nonpartisanship in the third of its eight principles of humanitarian assistance:

Providence Principles of Humanitarian Action in Armed Conflict

1. Relieving life-threatening suffering: Humanitarian action should be directed toward the relief of immediate, life-threatening suffering.
2. Proportionality to need: Humanitarian action should correspond to the degree of suffering, wherever it occurs. It should affirm the view that life is as precious in one part of the globe as another.

3. Nonpartisanship: Humanitarian action responds to human suffering because people are in need, not to advance political, sectarian, or other agendas. It should not take sides in conflicts.
4. Independence: In order to fulfill their mission, humanitarian organizations should be free of interference from home or host political authorities. Humanitarian space is essential for effective action.
5. Accountability: Humanitarian organizations should report fully on their activities to sponsors and beneficiaries. Humanitarianism should be transparent.
6. Appropriateness: Humanitarian action should be tailored to local circumstances and aim to enhance, not supplant, locally available resources.
7. Contextualization: Effective humanitarian action should encompass a comprehensive view of overall needs and of the impact of interventions. Encouraging respect for human rights and addressing the underlying causes of conflicts are essential elements.
8. Subsidiary of Sovereignty: Where humanitarianism and sovereignty clash, sovereignty should defer to the relief of life-threatening suffering.³

In principle, impartiality or nonpartisanship, as Minear and Weiss call it, sounds like common sense. However, this can be a “destructive misconception” when belligerents are still fighting.⁴ The root question of any conflict is who rules when the fighting stops. Starvation, torture, mass murder, and/or ethnic cleansing are means to an end in many of the conflicts currently raging in the world. An intervention to assist the victims of such atrocities puts the intervening force squarely in the equation of such a power struggle. It is impossible to enter a bitter conflict that has produced horrendous atrocities without taking sides; to think otherwise shows a misconception of impartiality.⁵

Human Rights Watch condemned “misguided neutrality” in their *1995 World Report*, chastising those who failed to distinguish between the impartiality needed to mediate conflicts and the humanitarian imperative to aid victims of abuse. The authors have written that “[t]o choose impartiality when both tasks must be performed is to signal a moral equivalence between victim and victimizer.”

In attempting to clarify the issue of impartiality and neutrality, Peter Hansen, under secretary-general of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs, recently issued operational guidelines regarding humanitarian actions in conflict situations. Under the heading “Respect for Neutrality, Impartiality, and Humanity,” Mr. Hansen wrote that “impartiality should be understood in the sense of providing humanitarian assistance to all in need, without discrimination and without taking sides with the victims. This in no way violates the principle of neutrality, which should be understood as in the Geneva Convention and Protocols.⁶ In short, a true humanitarian intervention will protect and sustain the victims of abuse or atrocities impartially, without regard to party in the dispute. However, the

intervening force is neither neutral nor impartial when it comes to protecting the innocents that comprise the victims of which an intervention is designed to rescue. Mr. Hansen went on to elaborate that

the United Nations may have to take action against one party to a conflict. In such cases, United Nations humanitarian operations, by virtue of their association with the United Nations military forces, may no longer be viewed as neutral and impartial, which in turn can lead the parties to react by restricting humanitarian access and endangering United Nations staff security. In these situations, some humanitarian organizations may need to distance themselves from peace enforcement activities.⁷

Undoubtedly, the under secretary-general had the current conflict in the former Yugoslavia in mind when he framed that passage. Canadian Major-General Lewis MacKenzie wrote of his experience as Commander of the United Nations protection force in the former Yugoslavia that having UN peacekeepers charged with protecting humanitarian aid convoys severely hurt both the peacekeeping mission and the separate humanitarian mission. Peacekeeping is premised on impartiality and blurring that mission with a humanitarian intervention left peacekeepers open to reprisals for taking sides. In the words of the outspoken General, "undertaking humanitarian activities makes peace-keepers built-in hostages, limiting the ability of an international force to pursue other activities such as peace-making."⁸

Perhaps the issue of neutrality best reveals the shortcomings, even the absurdity, of the concept of armed humanitarian intervention. For instance, in the case of the former Yugoslavia just cited, various parties involved in the humanitarian effort studiously avoided labelling Serbia as the primary perpetrator of human rights abuses. In fact, Yasushi Akashi, the Senior UN representative to the former Yugoslavia publicly assumed the stance that Serb atrocities equated to abuses by Muslim and Croat forces. To many international human rights observers, this represented a distortion of fact and constituted a misguided attempt to maintain neutrality at any cost. Mr. Akashi's actions, according to Human Rights Watch, was to "place accommodation with the killers above protection of their prey."⁹ Similarly, had a major humanitarian effort been launched to stop the mass murders in Rwanda during the spring of 1994, the intervening force, in theory, would have had no position as to who would ultimately rule Rwanda — the Tutsis or the Hutus. The "enemy" would have been any party who attempted to prevent or disrupt the humanitarian mission to aid displaced civilians of either party. Such neutrality, an acknowledged normative value in the concept of humanitarian intervention, seems maddeningly illogical when it was clear to the world that the Hutus were the instigators and executors of mass murder.

While critics question the utility of such a nonpolitical stance in such a desperate situation, the alternatives are fundamentally restricted to two other options: the first is to do nothing. This is often unacceptable given the United States' idealist tendencies. The second choice is to commit to a long-term solution through peace enforcement and subsequent nation-building. This was tried in Somalia

and its high price has made the middle course, armed humanitarian intervention, the best “middle” option for America in the foreseeable future.

Feeding the starving, protecting the oppressed, preventing ethnic cleansing are not impartial acts. Victims are to be protected and aggressors will necessarily be thwarted. All of this presupposes that one can distinguish between victim and aggressor and that it will be relatively clear which side needs protection. Recent events suggest that even this may prove difficult. Serbs, Bosnians, and Croats have all sought to paint themselves as victims. During the height of Rwandan genocide in April and May 1994, the Tutsi population cried out for protection from merciless Hutu murderers. However, subsequent relief efforts in refugee camps provided comfort to mostly Hutu refugees, including many of those who committed the unspeakable atrocities that created the humanitarian crisis. Finding and feeding the starving in Somalia was relatively easy. But the array of factions, unfathomable local politics, and mixed motives meant that the UN mission initially lacked any normal sense of good guy or bad guy — a concept difficult to master for a military force. Gayle Smith has written that “humanitarian principles are rarely, if ever, the priority to the parties to a conflict.”¹⁰ If American troops act as the intervening force in a humanitarian mission, they must assume their every action will be perceived as tilting the balance of power in favour of one of the warring factions. The blur between innocent victim and aggressor further complicates attempts to be perceived as a neutral, impartial third party. All of these factors mean that intervening forces must come prepared to fight — both to protect the innocent and to protect themselves.

Basic Building Blocks for Intervention

This paper is not intended to reproduce a military manual on the conduct of armed humanitarian interventions. The study and formulation of military doctrine for peace operations, to include all aspects of humanitarian intervention, is something of a “growth industry” within the United States military. Recent documents in the field include the United States Army Field Manual (FM) 100-23, *Peace Operations*, The Joint Warfighting Center’s *Joint Task Force Commander’s Handbook for Peace Operations*, and the forthcoming *Multi-Service Procedures For Humanitarian Assistance Operations* from the Air Land Sea Application Center.¹¹

Armed humanitarian missions have three basic phases. Phase one, the emergency phase, focuses on stopping or alleviating the death of innocents and comforting the victims of atrocities. Phase two is the sustainment phase which normally consists of providing local security and assisting nongovernmental organizations in administration of relief. Phase three is withdrawal of the American military or the hand-off of the mission by the United States to NGOs and more than likely, a United Nations force.¹²

Inherent in the emergency phase is an initial assessment to determine the military requirements needed to stop the immediate dying, to provide for the most pressing humanitarian needs, and ensure adequate security for both victims and the intervening force. Generalizations are difficult because humanitarian requirements vary from mission to mission. For instance, the intervening force may be required to carve out or defend a security zone as in northern Iraq; or the mission may primarily focus on conducting armed convoys through a war zone to deliver food, as in Somalia.

US joint military doctrine calls for the deployment of a Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) to conduct basic reconnaissance. US Special Operations Forces (SOF) are ideally suited for such a task. SOF units have a regional orientation (Africa, Europe, Asia, etc.), some degree of language proficiency, medical skills, specialized communication assets, area surveillance and reconnaissance abilities, trained civil affairs teams, and recent experience in peace operations stemming from deployments in Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti to name but a few. The HAST assessment should identify or determine:

- status of hostile military forces or paramilitary forces;
- nature and extent of loss of life, injury and illness; numbers of refugees; status of existing medical services; and availability of food and shelter;
- key civilian leaders and their supporters;
- local infrastructure: water, electricity, transportation, civil police, communication facilities, and resources to support humanitarian forces;
- sanitation conditions and medical supplies; and
- unique social, ethnic, or religious concerns affecting the conduct of the operation.¹³

The HAST also paves the way for the arrival of forces by coordinating with host nation agencies, private relief organizations, and US diplomatic personnel (to include officials with the US Agency for International Development — USAID).¹⁴ Obviously, this assessment is key in tailoring the composition of the intervening force, from logistics, transportation, and medical requirements, to the size and combat abilities of the force protection package.

When the US conducts a humanitarian intervention, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in USAID has the lead for coordination of the relief effort. OFDA has the experience, purse strings, and clout of the US government to bring disparate groups together and produce a coherent relief effort.¹⁵ OFDA is also responsible for the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) that coordinates military and humanitarian activities on the ground.¹⁶ Andrew Natsios, who has participated in various operations as a military officer (US Army Reserve), a high ranking USAID official, and as a senior executive for an international relief organization, recently wrote that military commanders must recognize that they are not in charge of managing the relief effort. According to Natsios:

The ambiguous situation in which the US military now finds itself requires a doctrine of cooperative engagement with humanitarian agencies in which the military contributes three key proficiencies: security, logistics, and limited, temporary assistance when humanitarian organizations are unable to cope with a life-threatening emergency event. The military should not attempt to replace or dominate humanitarian organizations, nor should it be directed to undertake nation-building activities. Recently published military documents listing lessons learned from various humanitarian interventions reinforce the need for commanders to recognize the complex nature of roles and authority in such missions. There's general agreement that all the key players in a humanitarian effort must surrender some of their autonomy, step outside their respective organizational cultures, and focus on helping those in need.¹⁷

The *Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations*, published in 1995, advises military commanders to establish a Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) as the focal point for coordination with humanitarian organizations, Department of State (DOS) representatives, USAID (which reports directly to the president's National Security Council and has informal links to DOS), OFDA, and other key players in the humanitarian effort (such as the UNHCR).¹⁸ Marine Lieutenant General A.C. Zinni wrote that "instead of thinking about war fighting agencies like command and control, you create a political committee, a civil military operations center (CMOC) to interface with volunteer organizations. These become the heart of your operations, as opposed to a combat or fire-support operations center."¹⁹

Proper Use of Force

Proper use of force can be the most contentious operational issue in an armed humanitarian intervention. FM 100-23 *Peace Operations* encourages commanders to "consider all possible alternatives to the use of force before taking action." It notes that lethal force at the tactical level may affect the long-term strategic mission, causing unintended consequences and heightening tensions. In the most visible armed humanitarian intervention to date, Somalia, the delicacy of this issue was apparent long before the mission changed from humanitarian to nation-building or peace enforcement. Indeed, lethal action by an invading force, even in a humanitarian cause, may polarize public opinion against the operation, foreclose negotiating opportunities, or escalate the overall level of violence.

Third World nations, the most likely spots for armed humanitarian interventions, are often awash in small arms, remnants of fighting fueled by Cold War disputes. Additionally, some smaller nations have acquired "niche" capabilities — a limited number of high technology weapon systems that could match or defeat sophisticated US military armaments. Stinger missiles and modern land mines are typically cited as such threats. Even without high technology, a

determined force with dedicated warriors willing to die for their cause, could create high numbers of American casualties despite the best efforts of the US to limit the costs of an armed intervention.

Future humanitarian interventions carry the extra burden of America's legacy of tentativeness in recent military operations. The sudden withdrawal of the United States from Beirut in 1984, the announcement of a swift exit date from Somalia after the deaths of US Army Rangers in 1993, and the withdrawal of the *USS Harlan County* from Haiti's waters in 1993 all convey a lack of resolve. Military analyst, Stephen Metz, has written that when using force the United States must "cultivate a reputation for steadfastness and fierceness."²⁰

Accordingly, even in a restricted humanitarian intervention in which combat service support (CSS) units comprise the bulk of the American military commitment, appropriate measures for force protection can be expected along with Rules of Engagement (ROE) that allow troops to protect themselves. Transportation units, medical teams, water purification or supply troops are all vulnerable to attack and ROE defines when and how force may be used. Since the successful terrorist attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, security has been a top priority for American commanders. A US Army General Officer noted, "some UN military commanders don't understand our preoccupation with this issue [of force protection] because they are not faced with the same threat as US forces. They don't understand that because we are the American Army, we are an isolated target of opportunity."²¹ As intimated earlier, ROE cannot be made in a military vacuum. Rules on the use of force must reflect the direction and strategy of political leaders. This is all the more difficult in multinational operations where there is likely to be national interpretations of the ROE.

The prudent application of force should work toward the goals of limiting US involvement, avoiding undue harm to civilians, and ultimately preserving lives. Restraint in the use of force should not be confused with attempting to confront the military challenge with an inadequately armed or improperly structured force. As the United States armada sent into Haiti in 1994 demonstrated, overwhelming force is the best insurance against attacks on those carrying out a humanitarian mandate. A strong case can be made that a massive show of force at the outset preserves American lives as well as the lives of the victims.²²

Timing also plays a factor in determining the level of force needed to enter a country in the midst of conflict. Although the "just-war" concept advocates using force after all other options fail, a flash crisis like the genocide in Rwanda or the unforeseen Kurdish crisis following Operation Desert Storm puts time pressure on decisionmakers who face such moral emergencies. As a rule of thumb, intervening sooner rather than later may preserve more options and allow military forces to enter a conflict before situations deteriorate into deeper chaos. In a humanitarian crisis, intervening before the crisis turns into a full-fledged supreme emergency may save incalculable lives (although it would be more difficult to

justify a "preventive" intervention to the international community). On the other hand, it may be preferable to wait until the passions as intense as those seen in Rwanda in the spring of 1994 peak and play out before intervening. While this is morally unacceptable to some, it would probably mean the need for a smaller, less lethal intervening force and would put the international rescuers at less risk.

By mid-1995, the US Army alone had over 20,000 troops deployed to almost 70 countries working in nontraditional military roles. Still, an armed humanitarian intervention will likely be a mission for which few in an American intervening force have been fully trained. One unclassified after-action report from Operation Restore Hope noted that humanitarian missions cannot be planned and executed as traditional political-military interventions.²³ Intelligence collection and requirements differ from normal operations; tremendous effort is required to clarify roles among the military and civilian aid providers; United Nations mandates may have to be clarified in view of differing American priorities; and ethnic, religious, and cultural sensitivities must be acknowledged. A tremendous wealth of lessons learned from recent US deployments are beginning to reach the field. A major focus is on the delicate process of sustaining the humanitarian effort in the midst of fighting and with a meagre infrastructure. The following paragraphs focus on a few of the major issues likely to be found in any future humanitarian intervention.

Intelligence

Intervention forces on a humanitarian mission must have an understanding of the political, economic, and demographic issues that instigate a humanitarian crisis. Intelligence requirements surpass normal military topics reflecting the complex nature of the threat. There may be multiple belligerent parties, terrorists, or local nationals that may become hostile if the United States fails to fulfill their expectations of support or fairness. The agenda of every faction must be recognized and analyzed as to how this might affect operations. An intense, ongoing intelligence effort allows commanders to avoid obvious hostilities, prepare for the less obvious threats, adjust ROE, and decrease the chance that an isolated act of violence derail the delivery of humanitarian relief. Because the United Nations is restricted from developing an intelligence branch, the US can expect to have the lead in this area even if operating under UN command.

Sharing classified information is a thorny issue, especially in multinational settings with military forces with which the United States has no intelligence-sharing agreements. Likewise, military commanders may be reluctant to pass along intelligence to NGOs. While these issues are recognized and addressed in recent military literature, some problems defy easy solution and are likely to plague future operations as well.

Military Coordination with Civilian Care-Givers

Nongovernmental organizations or NGOs are considered the true “pros” in managing relief efforts in a humanitarian crisis. They are often present before the military arrives at a crisis and they almost certainly remain long after the troops depart.²⁴ In the United States, private voluntary organization (PVO) is the normal label given a relief group, while in Europe and the rest of the world, NGO is the accepted term. Both PVOs and NGOs are private, nonprofit organizations involved in humanitarian efforts such as relief, development, refugee assistance, and environmental, public policy or global education.²⁵ While they have no formal links to any government or agency, they function as the implementing partners for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which has primary responsibility for humanitarian assistance in virtually every global crisis. In some current humanitarian “hot spots,” the role of NGOs and PVOs has evolved to that of diplomat and even peacekeeper.²⁶

In every recent humanitarian intervention conducted by the US, NGOs and PVOs have been the vital link between a hierarchy of donor government aid agencies and needy victims. The bulk of humanitarian assistance is at the grassroots level and NGO workers frequently operate in high risk areas where UN or government agencies are hesitant to go. An experienced aid worker reported that in Rwanda the US Army produced potable water (in the midst of a cholera epidemic) but it took the NGO workers to distribute it throughout the refugee camps.²⁷

While veterans of recent military interventions speak admiringly of the courage and selflessness of NGO/PVO workers, military-NGO relations have also been the source of friction. NGOs and PVOs are numerous, diverse in their goals and approaches to problem solving, and vary in experience, capabilities, and professionalism. A major humanitarian crisis may have upwards of 50 to 100 NGOs and PVOs operating in the area, some working in concert with the UNHCR, some working at cross-purposes, a few on shoe-string budgets — little more than a few church volunteers wanting to help in a desperate humanitarian situation. NGOs and an intervening military force may share common objectives but they may experience something of a clash in organizational cultures. Styles of decisionmaking, relationships with local population, issues of accountability, and views on the use of force may differ. While military principles emphasize structure, hierarchy, and command and control, humanitarian organizations are often characterized as informal, improvisational, and egalitarian.²⁸ Further, the US military is likely to have a very different mission and time horizon than the NGOs and PVOs they will work with during a humanitarian intervention. Relief agencies are focused on the long-term needs of innocent victims; military planners, given a limited humanitarian mandate, tend to focus on short-term mission objectives. In recent humanitarian interventions, this created the perception that the military was eager to “declare victory” and go home, leaving the relatively poorly resourced NGOs and PVOs to cope with the more enduring problems.

Of supreme importance to NGOs and PVOs is independence from the political priorities of the US government, which by default are the priorities of the US military. Both US-based and international relief agencies insist that their individual identities and mandates be respected and that their relief work not be used as bargaining leverage with belligerents or various local parties. Because NGOs and PVOs are independent, their respective views vary widely on accommodating political reality and working in consonance with the military. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a long established policy of not accepting military assistance, to include armed protection and security, in order to preserve its independence and avoid any perception of taking sides in a dispute. However, even the ICRC acknowledge that their rigid view on independent action does not mean they believe the presence of the military to be counterproductive in some humanitarian crises.²⁹ In fact, the ICRC did accept military escorts for its convoys in Somalia, a reflection of the total chaotic conditions rather than a change of their operating procedures. Nonetheless, military planners may find several relief agencies reluctant to cooperate in a consolidated operation.

The United States military, on the other hand, faces constraints placed on it by its political masters. Military commanders are most comfortable when given clear national objectives which they can, in turn, translate into military objectives. One of the greatest vulnerabilities a US intervening force faces is the threat of casualties and the ensuing political fallout. The armed forces are extremely capable of protecting themselves and relief workers; and where there is fighting, the military is bound to be preoccupied with security. This may extend to military insistence on providing protection to NGOs and PVOs even when the relief agencies feel that doing so would be detrimental to the relief effort. As a result, the purpose of a humanitarian mission can be turned on its head when providing relief to the suffering becomes subordinated to the military's overriding concern for security.³⁰ Early lessons learned from Operations Provide Comfort (Iraq) and Restore Hope (Somalia) highlighted the initial fumbling of US military-NGO relations. PVOs noted some restrictions or reluctance on the part of senior military commanders to fully integrate nonmilitary resources. Civilian relief workers were sometimes excluded from the vital flow of information and military intelligence. Different agenda and mandates between NGOs/PVOs, the United Nations, and the US military created obstacles toward building a consensus on how to best aid suffering victims.³¹

Additionally, NGOs and PVOs have a home constituency that must be satisfied — those donors and influential sponsors who supply the vital flow of cash needed to resource operations abroad. Attempts to satisfy this domestic constituency can subtly influence NGOs and PVOs, indirectly affecting where or how they distribute aid, regardless of US military desires. This dependence on donations (dollars and material) also heightens awareness of the gap between military units which are relatively self-sufficient and logistically independent, and the NGOs/PVOs who may be hard pressed to carry out their mission. The Department of State

report has noted that this has created friction in past operations when some humanitarian relief agencies felt they were being replaced by the US military.

Several of the issues described above were sore points in early US armed humanitarian interventions. Since those first deployments, the US military has made a concerted effort to address these issues. Most experts agree that "coordination and cooperation are improving rather than declining as the humanitarian relief system matures."³² Virtually all military manuals and documents on peace operations include methods and procedures to maximize military-NGO/PVO cooperation. The US Army Peacekeeping Institute regularly incorporates PVO expertise in their seminars and after-action reviews. USAID has been working with the US Army and US Navy War Colleges to ensure their respective curriculums include discussion of humanitarian operations. Most impressive is the routine inclusion of experienced PVO and NGO professionals in realistic training exercises at the US Army's Combat Training Centers. At the Joint Readiness Training (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana, soldiers on manoeuvres are likely to encounter an elaborate scenario like those found in Rwanda, Bosnia, or Somalia. In these exercises troops and commanders are tested on their ability to separate belligerents, distribute aid to refugees, deal with independent minded NGOs, disgruntled goat herders, and UN observers.³³

These strides are both commendable and rather remarkable. Several American and international aid organizations, once suspicious of US military motives and procedures have come to praise the humanitarian capabilities and abilities of the armed forces. Nonetheless, differing agendas and operational perspectives will always be a source of some friction in a crisis environment. Questions remain as to how the United States military will support NGO/PVO efforts. For instance, how much security should be provided to NGOs and PVOs? Should the US military allow NGOs and PVOs to use military transportation at the local level or transport food and supplies on military aircraft flying from Europe or the United States? Should American civilian relief workers or other NGOs be provided medical care in military facilities? Humanitarian organizations could benefit greatly from the use of military communication assets and a wider dissemination of intelligence. But these raise issues of violating operational security, long a preoccupation of military commanders.

An experienced American relief worker, remarking on her experience in Rwanda, said that European armies were willing to negotiate formal agreements in these matters as well as in operational procedures. However, praising the informal arrangement she made with the US military, she noted that the American forces refused to make any formal written agreements with NGOs. In her view, this reflected the general reluctance of the United States to establish humanitarian assistance as a "routine" mission for its military. "Essentially, the US backed into its mission in Rwanda," she said. At the same time, she made it clear that working with and through the United States, to include the US military, was much preferable to relief efforts managed through the United Nations.³⁴

Present relations between the US armed forces and the NGO/PVO community appear to be moving from a phase of reconciliation to compatibility. Role clarification and an understanding of institutional needs lie at the heart of developing solid relations between the key US government agencies (USAID and OFDA), relief organizations, and the military. All of these actors are highly principled, selfless professionals who are dedicated to working in dangerous settings for a higher ideal. Success in future operations depends on their collective ability to examine the cultural, structural, and operational differences that divide them and determine the extent to which corroborative efforts are desirable or possible.

Fundamental to this process is deciding on what authority each player has in determining plans and operations for the humanitarian mission. Training and education are underway that may well create a climate of understanding and familiarity that will resolve some of the thorny command and control issues. The strengths each key player brings to an armed humanitarian intervention can also be overlaid into a weakness. For instance, resolute, independent, and fiercely determined relief workers can hinder the overall success of a humanitarian mission if they disregard broader political and security concerns that dominate military operations. Likewise, the military must recognize that it does not control the relief effort and that preoccupation with security may undermine the humanitarian nature of the operation.³⁵ In fact, the military should be creating conditions that allow relief agencies to better perform their life-saving mission. Despite some lingering pessimism, many veterans — civilian and military — of recent humanitarian interventions express the opinion that the gap between humanitarian and military personnel may be smaller than it initially appeared.

Culture, Ethnicity, and Religion

American service men and women thrust into a humanitarian crisis are likely to find themselves on the fringe or near the centre of a “primal violence” that accompanies current ethnic, clan, religious and/or racial struggles.³⁶ Several authors have commented on the difficulty many Westerners have in comprehending these complex issues and the need for those on humanitarian missions to acknowledge inconsistencies between basic societal values. Raymond Plant has written that the West has an entrenched view that there is a “universal criteria” for political morality, responsibility, and action. But the contextualist point of view makes a strong case that no such transcultural values exist. Indeed, some in the West question the value of humanitarian intervention when it appears that Third World cultural norms will ultimately undo the relief effort once the intervening forces depart.³⁷

Just as the US military has made tremendous strides in developing procedures to work with NGOs and PVOs, it has also attempted to better prepare its forces regarding cultural awareness and its importance to mission success. Lessons learned from all recent humanitarian efforts highlight the need for understanding the social

and cultural realities of the target country and the historical nuance that often plays a role in the humanitarian crisis. Veteran war correspondent George Wilson wrote, “[i]f you don’t understand the cultures you are involved in; who makes decisions in these societies; how their infrastructure is designed; the uniqueness in their values and in their taboos — you aren’t going to be successful.”³⁸

Frederick Cuny noted the general unpreparedness of civilian and military aid givers to deal in a non-Western environment, particularly in Islamic countries.³⁹ The US Army’s summary of lessons learned from Operation Provide Comfort emphasized the need to understand local customs and mores in order to efficiently interact with the indigenous population. Training and preparations for future humanitarian interventions have included prepackaged foods that meet diverse religious dietary guidelines and training scenarios that better prepare troops to deal with cultural sensitivities.⁴⁰ Again, Special Operations Forces provide a source of soldiers with experience in past operations involving Third World peoples. SOF training emphasizes the importance of language skills, cultural awareness, and a willingness to incorporate local people and systems into relief work.

US Army Civil Affairs (CA) units have been particularly effective in humanitarian missions. Composed primarily of reservists, many CA specialists bring skills from their civilian professions that lend themselves to disaster relief. CA teams focus on working with local governments in establishing infrastructure, establishing temporary refugee facilities, and serving as a link between the military and indigenous peoples. Their expertise extends into providing commanders with advice on ethnic and religious sensitivities, local customs and social structures, and local dynamics that affect the distribution of power, resources, and wealth. CA teams have also proved to be exceptional liaison officers between civil authorities, NGOs/PVOs, and the military commanders. In the field, PVO and UN relief managers commented how well coordination worked when they dealt with civil affairs advisors rather than directly with combat commanders. In one expert’s words, “commanders could be judged negligent if they fail to integrate [Civil Affairs units] into their operational plans.”⁴¹ To compliment civil affairs activities, the Joint Task Force (JTF) commander can also employ psychological operations (PSYOPS). PSYOPS have always played a role in SOF missions but gained widespread notice in Operation Desert Storm. Particular functions that may suit an armed humanitarian intervention include leaflet drops, radio broadcasts, newspaper printing, and mobile loudspeaker teams.⁴²

With each new humanitarian intervention the American military has grown in flexibility and has acknowledged that the most effective relief corresponds to local mores, is in consonance with local values, and works toward the indigenous population accepting accountability for humanitarian actions. This approach is also reflected in President Clinton’s July 1994 National Security Strategy which stated that “[Humanitarian interventions] by the US and the international community must be limited in duration and designed to give the peoples of a nation

the means and opportunity to put their own house in order. In Somalia and elsewhere, the responsibility for the fate of a nation rests finally with its own people.”

Regional actors, whether neighbouring states or regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) can play a role in helping the United States work through cultural, social, or religious barriers. Obviously, the support of regional allies that share a cultural or religious background of the people that the US is attempting to help could be of significant value. However, regional actors almost inevitably bring real or perceived political agendas and interests that might undermine America’s attempt to portray an intervention as purely humanitarian.

Final Operational Phase: Withdrawal

Before initiating an armed humanitarian intervention, political and military planners must establish an “exit strategy” tied to clear objectives and realistic criteria for ending the operation.⁴³ Withdrawal of US forces or the mission hand-off to the UN or civilian agencies is based on achieving a “desired end state.” The end state of any limited military intervention describes the conditions that, when met, attain the strategic objectives sought. Political considerations will drive the decision to redeploy American troops, meaning military commanders must view their humanitarian mission as part of a larger political and diplomatic process that affects that region of the world.

The desired end state is ideally formulated at the strategic level before commitment of US forces, thereby providing a vision of how the situation will look at the conclusion of American military involvement. Policy guidance is then adapted and refined at the tactical level to provide guidance for troops on the ground. For instance, the United States Army’s 10th Mountain Division developed the following ten measures for their desired end state for Operation Restore Hope:

- enhanced security
- secure environment for humanitarian operations
- Somalis move freely about their country
- bandits no longer operate
- weapons not visible
- crew-served weapons in storage or confiscated
- open passage and major routes sustained
- no technicals [warlord militia]
- Somali police force established
- UN peacekeeper forces take over security mission.

Clearly, the United States would like to transfer humanitarian assistance operations to the UN, NGOs, or host nation agencies as soon as possible. To assist

political decisionmakers on when and how the American military presence can be reduced, the US task force commander will be likely to develop various measures of effectiveness that are both quantitative and qualitative. Examples might include the percent of relief supplies reaching distribution centres, the number of violent acts against NGOs, the number of attacks on convoys, the mortality rates by various categories (e.g., ages of deceased, causes of death), and the market prices of food. Some indicators may be weighted or adjusted to reflect changing political or military realities. Obviously, it is important to choose the correct indicators and have consistent methods of measuring them.

As in any military operation, a thorough transition or termination plan is essential. If United Nations forces accept the follow-on role as is often the case, a lengthy transition may be needed to allow a new multinational staff to gel and learn to work with each other. NGOs, PVOs, and host nation agencies will need sufficient warning to determine how they will cover expected gaps in coverage that will occur when US forces leave. Finally, thorough after-action reviews and "lessons learned" forums must be planned to capture key points that must be incorporated into future operations.⁴⁴

Unique Capabilities: Myth or Reality?

In August 1994, US troops flew 9,000 miles nonstop to Goma, Zaire aboard mammoth Air Force C-5 cargo planes, to aid thousands of afflicted and dying Rwandan refugees. At the time, *US News and World Report* speculated on the rationale for yet another US armed humanitarian mission. According to the magazine article, the Clinton administration wanted to keep America engaged without having to respond to every global humanitarian crisis. The administration's solution was to limit humanitarian interventions to the use of "unique capabilities" the US military brings — globe trotting cargo planes, instant communications systems, rapid command and control in a chaotic situation.⁴⁵

Rwanda and other recent crises reveal several problems in the current international relief system — slow response, poor coordination, and conflicting agendas among relief operators, limited logistics capabilities, and uneven, inadequate funding.⁴⁶ It is little wonder that the US military that so effectively executed Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm seems like an attractive option in a crisis situation. Nonetheless, the US has now opted for a more selective and prudent exercise of its military. Future interventions are likely to be limited to humanitarian emergencies that dwarf the ability of normal relief agencies to respond, and where urgent, timely relief is likely to come only from US military assets. When response time is critical, no other civilian organization and few other nations can match US forces' logistics, transportation, command and control, and communication abilities. Nor can many duplicate the disciplined, trained soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines that come with the equipment. The Pentagon prefers quick

but effective use of America's military for humanitarian interventions as a stop-gap measure, with a swift hand-off to UN forces, relief agencies, or others that can do the job.

One recent US Department of Defense study listed the broad areas of military capability that the US government would consider providing on a case-by-case basis:

- Strategic Airlift or Sealift
- Logistics, including Logistics Headquarters Support
- Strategic Communications Support
- Medical Support
- Civil Affairs Support
- Psychological Operations Support
- Coalition Support
- Engineer Support
- Information (Intelligence) Support
- Contracting and Contract Management Services
- Personnel Support for UN Headquarters Staff Functions⁴⁷

Added to this Pentagon list might be satellite or aerial photography which could be used to track and respond to refugee movements, ordnance disposal, and electrical power generation. Long-range capabilities include meteorological information to help relief agencies better predict weather impact in areas of drought and famine.

Most people can quickly grasp the tremendous operational reach the US military brings along with the ability to sustain people and equipment, often unconstrained by feeble local and geographical transportation networks. But few may recognize the deeper dimensions that a cohesive military force creates. Civilian organizations cannot approach the totality of the military capabilities. Finding individuals with the skills to operate equipment (e.g., cargo plane pilots) or to perform certain tasks (e.g., water well diggers) is relatively easy. The difficulty is in collating groups of tasks to provide functions (e.g., air cargo service or water production and distribution). Even more difficult is taking groupings of functions and converting them into true capabilities (e.g., a complete logistical operation including airfield management, strategic airlift, air space control, warehousing, ground transportation, and distribution of commodities). Developing such sophisticated networks in areas where little infrastructure exists has historically been the hallmark of successful armies in the field.

Counterpoint: It's Not the Military's Place

There are small but important impediments that sometimes make the use of armed forces a poor choice. In financial terms, the US armed forces "do not come cheap."

If the UN or other organizations are faced with funding America's presence, they may find generally equivalent services from cheaper sources. NGOs also cite the "overkill" of military land, sea, and air transport. In some recent situations, equipment was "too sophisticated" for local transportation networks. Additionally, military crews, well-disciplined in rigorous safety and servicing standards, could not or would not operate equipment under conditions professional relief workers readily accepted. In short, NGOs and PVOs unfettered by traditional military bureaucracy, can often move quicker in a crisis, improvise more readily, and accept risks that the military may be forced (for political reasons) to avoid. They can also operate on a shoestring budget and gain access to some areas where the military would have to fight in order to enter. Obviously, the military brings an array of weaponry unavailable to police forces or other agencies. However, armed humanitarian missions may require the discrete use of force rather than overwhelming firepower (although this is not always the case). Hence America's sophisticated high technology weapons systems may be inappropriate in some situations. Armies from a variety of nations might easily accomplish security tasks associated with humanitarian missions, such as port protection and convoy escort.⁴⁸

Private contracting companies have also become a source of support capabilities once thought to be unique to the military. In both Somalia and in the Rwanda refugee camps, private firms (as opposed to nonprofit NGOs) bid for and receive contracts to provide services ranging from construction, power supply, and sanitation, to water purification and trash removal.⁴⁹ In recent humanitarian emergencies, the UN even contracted the use of huge cargo planes that once comprised part of the Soviet Air Force. The trend toward contract services is likely to grow.

Internationally, the United Nations (specifically UNHCR and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations - DPKO) is continuing its contingency planning with donor states for standby military capability. For instance, the UN has standby arrangements with the Swedish military for portable housing, the Russian military for transportation, the Danes for Military Police support, and the Belgian Air Force for pilots on 72 hours notice. The UN's military planning staff has ballooned from just 23 civilians and six military officers in 1992, to a staff of 350 with 116 military officers from 35 countries in 1995. Logistically, the UN now maintains a large storage facility in Brindisi, Italy to better support short notice humanitarian and peacekeeping missions.⁵⁰ Much attention has been given to the UN's attempts to arrange for a rotating commitment among donor countries for a brigade-size combat force which could be called on for short notice deployment in support of a Security Council resolution. In fact, the United States intends to provide information on its own military capabilities which could be added to a UN database.⁵¹

The question then, is whether America's military capabilities are truly unique. Third World armies can provide basic security to humanitarian missions: contractors and NGOs/PVOs show an increasing sophistication in organizing and operating

relief operations under dangerous conditions. Several Western nations, long-time participants in humanitarian operations, can provide much of the same military sophistication associated with US forces. UN planning continues to improve. The only truly unique capability the United States brings to a humanitarian crisis are American troops — uniformed men and women that represent the unmatched combat ability of the United States and the commitment of the most powerful country on earth. In some desperate situations, US military presence may be the catalyst for stimulating a relief effort if not the key for beginning longer term steps to end a humanitarian crisis.

The Price of Military Humanitarian Intervention

As General Colin Powell retired from the military in 1993, a sizeable US force was on the ground conducting a humanitarian mission in Somalia. Part of the general's departing advice was to keep the US military's focus on war fighting. In his final press conference in uniform, the general said:

Because we are able to fight and win the nation's wars, because we are warriors, we are also uniquely able to do some of these other new missions that are coming along — peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, disaster relief — you name it, we can do it ... but we never want to do it in such a way that we lose sight of the focus of why you have armed forces — to fight and win the nation's wars.⁵²

General Powell's emphasis was not surprising. He presided over the military at the peak of America's enthusiasm for humanitarian interventions and operations other than war. At that time, there were frequent calls for changing the image of the US military from "that of a destructive force to that of a constructive force."⁵³ Even the former secretary of defense, Dick Cheney, talked of the need to prepare for military missions into the Third World. As recently as the spring of 1994, military analyst Andrew Krepinevich described the United States as facing a "threat trough" of sorts making peace operations the logical focus for Pentagon budgets and training priorities.⁵⁴

By 1995, the American military seemed to have found a degree of comfort in preparing for and conducting MOOTW, to include armed humanitarian interventions. Virtually all of the highest ranking uniformed leaders talk of such missions "as a given." Even more telling, the services now devote precious budget dollars and training resources to prepare for various missions associated with humanitarian interventions as well as peacekeeping. Still, many believe that the US armed forces are institutionally unprepared for such missions and accuse the US military of being culturally predisposed against involvement in "murky or ambiguous conflicts" that require extensive political-military integration.⁵⁵

If the critics are correct and the Pentagon is insincere when it claims to embrace new nontraditional roles, it may be because military planners fear the costs

are too high for conducting such missions. As shown below, the price the US military may have to pay goes beyond money and readiness ratings.

Moral Costs

One of the more astute observers of the political-military debate is author and combat veteran retired US Army Colonel Harry Summers. During testimony before the Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights, of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives on 21 September 1993, he voiced concern that overemphasis on humanitarian interventions and related peace operations worked toward corrupting the Army and weakening the warrior ethic. In a prepared statement, Colonel Summers stated that "the main purpose of a peacetime military establishment is to prepare for the day when armed forces might have to be used against a first class enemy."⁵⁶ Peace waging, according to the colonel, should be left in the hands of government agencies whose mission is just that.

Summers believes that as the military strays from primary war fighting tasks and soldiers come to view themselves as relief workers, policemen, health-care providers, or politicians, the traditional American civil-military relationship becomes corrupted. In the end America will suffer from the loss of a true professional military. He has said that "growing out of civilian academic conceits that one can change the world with the tools of social science, this wrongheaded notion that political, social and economic institutions can be built with the sword flies in the face of not only our Vietnam experience, but also the centuries-old American model of civil-military relations."⁵⁷

Summers conceded that America has a role to play in alleviating the terrible pain and suffering now afflicting various parts of the world. But it is his contention that the country, not just the military, pays too steep a price if it allows the American armed forces to designate peacemaking and humanitarian relief as primary military missions. In a world full of high technology weapons systems, the United States armed forces have little time to devote to nontraditional roles. According to Summers, to see themselves as anything but warriors puts American troops at risk.

Readiness Factors

Combat proficiency is largely a factor of tough, constant realistic training. For the United States military, which depends on an array of high-tech weapons systems that even the common foot soldier must operate, repetitive training is essential. In the military vernacular, combat skills are perishable; continuous training is the key to victory. And training for modern warfare is not cheap. Unit rotations through

the Army's Combat Training Centers, for instance, are programmed months or years in advance and cost thousands of dollars.

While training exercises and programs are meticulously budgeted for, contingency operations such as armed humanitarian operations, are not programmed. As a consequence, when the services deploy troops and units on such missions, the planned budget execution cycle is necessarily disrupted. As the result of recent humanitarian missions such as Operation Restore Hope, the military services have postponed or cancelled operational training exercises and delayed executing planned programs.⁵⁸ US Department of Defense and service officials have publicly voiced concerns that the continued expenditure of training and infrastructure funds for missions like humanitarian interventions could degrade unit combat readiness and have an adverse impact on readiness in the future.⁵⁹

On the other hand, according to a 1995 US Government Accounting Office (GAO) report, recent American humanitarian interventions and other peace operations have benefited the military with valuable experience in joint and coalition operations. Some military units also exercised the same missions they would perform in a war. However, the report goes on to cite the drawbacks of US involvement in nontraditional operations. These include prolonged deployments from home bases exceeding recommended standards, the strain of consecutive deployments for selected personnel and units, missed training for primary military functions, increased maintenance on equipment, and cannibalization of aircraft. Mentioned as an example were the strains on specialized aircraft and the extended time air crews were on temporary duty, exceeding guidelines issued by the Air Force's Air Combat Command. The GAO report concluded that:

The extent to which a unit's combat capabilities are affected by participating in peace operations depends on several factors, including length of participation and the mission performed. According to Air Force and Navy officials, aircrews can lose proficiency in some combat skills through prolonged participation in peace operations because the missions may not require the entire breadth of combat capabilities. Skills not practiced could include, for example, night and low-level flight operations, night intercept maneuvers, and other air combat maneuvers.⁶⁰

Army officials echoed the concerns of the Air Force. As Congressional analysts found in 1994, "[Operations other than war] may degrade unit combat readiness because of the inability to practice individual and collective war fighting skills. In addition, DOD officials noted that soldiers require reorientation when shifting from a [peace operation], which requires restraint in the use of force, to a traditional war fighting role."⁶¹ The Congressional report goes on to say that even where troops exercised their normal wartime skills, such as in the field of supply and distribution of material, "logistics training being provided in operations such as Restore Hope does not substitute completely for the training that would result from a prepared training exercise. In the latter, the combat support and combat service support elements would work with combat forces as they would in high intensity combat operations."⁶²

Readiness issues have also highlighted policies regarding Reserve Component (RC) units and personnel (the RC is made up of two elements: reserve forces under federal control and the national guard of each of the 50 states. The president has the authority to federalize national guard units). After the Vietnam War, the services and the Army in particular, restructured the armed forces, placing certain key military capabilities in the RC. The intent was to make it extremely difficult to commit US fighting forces to a major conflict or crisis without a call-up of the RC. It was thought that inclusion of citizen soldiers (the RC) in a conflict would ensure broad public support and thus avoid a wrenching societal split that characterized much of the Vietnam War. However, presidential selected call-up of reserve forces raises sensitive domestic political and foreign policy concerns making such a decision difficult.

Today, many of the support capabilities most needed in a humanitarian intervention reside predominantly in the reserves. Particularly important are specialized units such as water purification teams, civil affairs teams, psychological operations units, transportation companies, and special engineering organizations. In fact 97 percent of all civil affairs units, 75 percent of all psychological operations units, and 76 percent of all quartermaster units are found in the RC. In the Air Force, specialized aircraft found mostly in the Air Guard and Air Reserve include the EC-130E Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center, the E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System, and the F-4G Wild Weasel (for suppression of enemy radars).⁶³

Despite this RC "imbalance," the only recent mission with a humanitarian component in which the president activated the reserves was for Haiti in 1994. Without activation of key RC units, active duty units and soldiers with special support skills have faced a dramatically increased operation tempo ("optempo"), the result of recent humanitarian interventions and other peace operations. The Defense Science Board issued a report on readiness in June 1994, which noted that increased deployments have placed new strains on personnel and military families. The report speculates that this will adversely affect morale and in particular, retention of skilled service members.⁶⁴

To ease the strain on active duty forces, and at the same time avoid a presidential activation of RC units, the Pentagon has relied on individuals in the reserves and national guard to volunteer to come on extended active duty. However, this practice is now coming under fire for a variety of reasons, some related to readiness. A March 1995 Congressional report noted that the Army found RC volunteers in Somalia helpful but often lacking in the specific capabilities, equipment, and training required for the environment.⁶⁵ Another drawback is the difficulty of training and organizing individual volunteers to perform as a cohesive unit. Repeated Army studies have pointed to cohesion as the key element for a high performing unit in combat. However, it is unlikely that volunteers will have the benefit of collective unit training before they find themselves performing their duties in a remote and possibly dangerous area. In some cases, entire units are formed from

RC volunteers. In Somalia, a postal unit was created in this manner. However, the process proved to be time-consuming, taking one month to form a small 49-person detachment.⁶⁶ One recent *Army Times* article voiced the concern of some reserve officials who said, "these citizen soldiers have chosen to be citizens first and soldiers second.... You can't go to the well too often."⁶⁷ Most reservists have commitments to families, employers, or customers that preclude short notice prolonged deployments. Indeed, civilian employers expect a full-time employee who occasionally misses work for an average of two weeks a year. In 1995, the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve reported an increase in the number of employers inquiring about the laws governing reserve military obligations; this despite a limited number of involuntary call-ups.

Presidential activation of the RC raises other readiness issues. Retired reserve Major General Roger Sandler noted that the DOD is advocating cancelation of annual training for some reserve units in order to have them relieve active duty units performing humanitarian or similar type missions. But as General Sandler stated, readiness would suffer because troops assigned a specific task on a deployment would not be exercised in the full range of military skills they would normally perform in wartime or in annual training. As a result, the Reserve Officers Association is now lobbying Congress to pass specific guidelines to limit the frequency of involuntary call-ups.⁶⁸ The DOD, on the other hand, has proposed legislation to make it easier for the secretary of defense to gain access to reserve units for small-scale operations similar to the humanitarian intervention to Rwanda in 1994.⁶⁹

Impact on Strategic Readiness

Although the precept is openly challenged by some in Congress and in the press, the current United States National Security Strategy calls for maintaining a "two-war" force, or the ability to conduct two major regional conflicts (MRC) nearly simultaneously. Extended participation in armed humanitarian interventions and other similar or concurrent peace operations could affect the ability of some forces to respond quickly to a MRC. Of particular concern are those unique specialized units employed in humanitarian interventions but also factored into contingency plans for fighting a more serious MRC. A 1995 GAO report stated, "[c]ontrary to the DOD bottom-up review's assumption, it could be difficult to quickly disengage these assets from a peace operation and redeploy them to an MRC."⁷⁰ The GAO report convincingly notes that some of the forces essential in the early days of an MRC, such as port handlers, air and sea movement controllers, and petroleum handlers, would be tied down facilitating the redeployment of key military forces from the peace operation. The report notes that in the Somali humanitarian mission the US Army used 100 percent of some of the contingency forces earmarked for the first 30 days of a MRC.

Second, airlift desperately needed in the initial stages of a MRC would have to pick up personnel and units from the humanitarian intervention location. This could conceivably add hours or even days to the flow of forces into the MRC theatre.

Finally, the GAO report notes that forces working in a sparse, intensely demanding environment associated with a humanitarian mission would need training, supplies, and equipment before deploying to a MRC. Citing Somalia as an example:

once 10th Mountain Division personnel returned from Somalia, it took approximately 3 to 6 months to bring some units' skills back to a level acceptable for combat operations, according to Division officials. The extensive use of certain equipment combined with the effects of harsh environments ... required that the equipment undergo extensive maintenance.... Also, equipment and supplies off loaded from prepositioned ships for use in a peace operation, as was the case in Somalia, would not be immediately available for use in an MRC.⁷¹

In a written response to the GAO's conclusions, assistant secretary of defense, Edward Warner agreed that disengagement from a humanitarian mission or other contingency in order to redeploy to face a MRC threat would "cause additional challenges." However, he stated that such a situation would not impede a quick response to the MRC because substitute units or capabilities could be employed such as use of host nation support or civilian contractors. Warner cited the ability to launch 20,000 forces for the occupation of Haiti while simultaneously deploying heavy forces to Kuwait on Operation Vigilant Warrior to deter potential Iraqi aggression. Warner also challenged the GAO findings regarding Air Force capabilities. In his estimate, the degree of Air Force commitment to peace operations would not dramatically affect the ability to respond to a major regional conflict.⁷²

The Department of Defense does agree that the heavy reliance on specialized support units for operations other than war puts particular strain on Army structure, readiness, and morale. The Army would have to make significant trade-offs and weigh some risks to remedy the problem. It could, for instance, reduce its combat forces and place more of its active duty structure in combat service support units in expectation of more and more MOOTW missions. Some suggest "civilianizing" selected military jobs, thus freeing more people in uniform to perform tasks required in support of military operations. Somalia saw the extensive use of civilian contractors to provide critical services in a humanitarian mission. As a result, the US Army asked a contractor to develop a worldwide logistics civil support plan, with an eye toward future humanitarian interventions. The Army is currently conducting a thorough review of these and other options as part of Total Army Analysis 2003 (TAA 2003) which was due to be completed in mid-1995.

The Fiscal Price Tag

In a twist on the old adage that in matters of war, amateurs discuss strategy, professionals discuss logistics, it might now be said that the real “pros” discuss budgets. The strain recent humanitarian interventions has placed on Defense Department budgets has begun to receive increased attention. Since the Pentagon cannot budget for unforeseen emergencies such as the mission to Rwanda in 1994, it must “borrow” money from other accounts. Generally, these funds come from operations and maintenance appropriations of the various military departments (Army, Navy — to include USMC — and Air Force). These represent vital training and daily maintenance dollars for the four military services. In addition to reallocating funds from various programs, the services have in the past borrowed against future quarterly budget allocations.⁷³

The services have been reimbursed for costs associated with recent humanitarian interventions. Main sources of reimbursement include Congressional supplemental appropriations, allocations from a Defense Emergency Response Fund, transfers from other agencies such as those within the State Department which receive DOD services, or from the United Nations. However, experience shows that it can take up to two months to catalogue and report such expenses and then six to eight months delay before Congress approves supplemental funding or the UN provides reimbursement.⁷⁴ One US Army division commander has noted that “any diversion of funds will undermine a commander’s [training and maintenance] program, even if the funds are reimbursed later; without timely reimbursement, the ability to perform critical training or infrastructure support tasks is permanently lost.”⁷⁵

The monetary costs for humanitarian intervention missions can be substantial. For example, during the early stages of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, before the United States added nation-building as an additional mission, \$692.2 million had been obligated from the Defense Department budget as of the end of April 1993. These obligations included relief supplies such as food, water, and fuel, and deployment costs for troops and equipment. By the end of US involvement in Somalia, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) reported total costs exceeding \$1 billion. More recent and modest humanitarian efforts have also carried considerable price tags. Costs for fiscal year 1994 (1 October 1993 through 30 September 1994) were estimated at \$428 million. These included the follow missions or portions of missions which the Pentagon classifies as humanitarian operations:

- Bosnia \$77.2 million
- Northern Iraq \$29.2 million
- Rwanda \$106.7 million
- Cuba \$106.8 million
- Haiti \$108.1 million

Figures for Bosnia and Haiti reflect only costs of humanitarian relief such as air drops of food or handling refugees/migrants, lease of roll-on and roll-off ships, rations and water, clothing, etc., and are incremental costs. Costs for Cuba include ship operations, sealift, cost for setting up camps for migrants, temporary additional duty, supplies and maintenance, permanent change of station costs, and family separation and housing costs. For FY94, Somalia was not considered a humanitarian operation, but rather a peace enforcement operation, since the mission had substantially changed. In light of these costs, Congress approved almost \$300 million in supplemental funding in 1994. If UN peacekeepers are withdrawn from key areas in the former Yugoslavia, OSD officials speculate humanitarian expenses for that region could rise sharply.

The Government Accounting Office has also noted hidden costs associated with humanitarian interventions and humanitarian relief missions. Between 1986 and 1993, the US Defense Department donated over 57,000 supplies items deemed "excess" to foreign countries through the humanitarian assistance excess property program. Transportation costs for shipping these items has risen from \$15 million in 1992 to approximately \$28 million in 1993.⁷⁶ This practice came under Congressional scrutiny when it was revealed that DOD did not report the value of excess property donated or the costs of some humanitarian projects it had undertaken.⁷⁷ In a slightly different vein, the US military provided on a non-reimbursable basis large stocks of equipment and weapons to the Somali police force in 1993. This included small trucks, 5,000 M-16A1 rifles, 5,000 .45 caliber pistols, ammunition for these weapons, and a variety of law enforcement items such as batons and handcuffs. Authority for such a transfer came from a presidential determination dated 30 September 1993, allowing for drawdown of DOD stocks in the event of an unforeseen emergency, not to exceed \$25 million. In the case of Somalia, the full \$25 million allocation was exhausted.

It might also be noted that as US forces departed Somalia, the United States leased combat equipment to the United Nations for use by the Pakistani contingent of UNOSOM II. This included 80 armored personnel carriers from stocks in Europe, 30 M-60A3 tanks from the US, and 8 Cobra attack helicopters from the Hawaii National Guard. According to DOD officials, These leased items were to be returned in serviceable condition and paid for, with no expected impact on US readiness.⁷⁸

The DOD has obviously taken note of Congressional concerns regarding loaned and donated equipment. A NGO worker reported that when US forces departed from their mission to Rwandan refugee camps in late 1994, they took absolutely everything; nothing was left behind, much to the disappointment of NGO relief workers.

DOD is also taking steps to improve budgeting. First, the Pentagon will request emergency supplemental funding earlier in the fiscal year to cover humanitarian operations already under way. Second, DOD has requested authority from Congress to deal with contingencies not funded by a supplemental before

the third quarter of a fiscal year. This “readiness preservation authority” would, in theory, preclude the need for the various services to modify training and maintenance in order to finance a contingency operation. However, as this paper was being prepared in April 1995, the US Congress failed to pass an emergency military funding bill by the 31 March Pentagon deadline to cover unbudgeted humanitarian missions. The secretary of the army called it “an emergency for the Army” and declared that if the supplemental bill did not pass immediately, training would be drastically curtailed.⁷⁹

Undoubtedly, the Defense Department will become more efficient in managing humanitarian interventions fiscally, as well as finding creative methods to preserve readiness and training standards. However, the highest price to pay for such operations is a mortal one and this cost is the most difficult to quantify.

The Value of One Life Lost

In a letter to the assistant comptroller general of the US General Accounting Office in 1994, Under Secretary of Defense Walter B. Slocombe wrote that “[t]he DOD agree that the price tag on operations in Somalia has been high, possibly over \$1 billion. The benefit in terms of the mission — saving lives threatened by starvation — has been large as well — numbering in the hundreds of thousands.”⁸⁰ Slocombe does not mention American lives lost — 44.⁶¹ Forty-four deaths compared to “hundreds of thousands” saved seems like a reasonable price to pay if one is a dispassionate observer (figures are not available for Somalis killed in action by American combat troops). However, not all observers are dispassionate. In a letter written to US Congresswoman Jane Herman and reprinted in the *Congressional Record*, one father offered this view of the sacrifice involved:

My son Sgt. James Casey Joyce, was one of the US Army Rangers killed in the October 3 Somalia ambush in Mogadishu.

Even though I served two combat tours in Vietnam, I could rationalize Bill Clinton’s protesting the war in Vietnam. Now, I’m struck by the irony of his opposition to American policy in Vietnam and his support of a similar policy for US involvement in Somalia. It’s similar at least, in its vagueness, its politicization and its misguided use of the military. My son opposed my support for Bill Clinton. His death in Somalia — brought about by weak and indecisive amateurs in the Clinton Administration — confirms my son’s wisdom and my naivete.

Americans, especially the casualties and their families deserve answers.... The young men and women who serve in the defense of our country are a national treasure. In the future, let’s ensure they get proper direction and support they need and deserve no less.

Larry E. Joyce to Congresswoman Jane Herman, 22 October 1993⁸²

Perhaps it is unfair to judge the value of American intervention from the view of a parent whose son or daughter paid the ultimate price. But a proper question

might be did this humanitarian intervention, and by extension, will those undertaken in the future benefit America more than harm it? Will the country's institutions and values be strengthened by the humanitarian mission or will they be diminished? Will the humanitarian if not political interests of the American people be properly served? General Colin Powell has stated:

We have a mission: to fight and win the nation's wars. That's what we do. Why do we do it? For this purpose: to provide for the common defense. And who do we do it for? We do it for the American people. We never want to lose sight of this basic underlying principle of the Armed forces of the United States.⁸³

Notes

1. General Colin L. Powell, "US Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs* 71, 5 (Winter 1992/93): 38.
2. The *Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations* defines Peace Operations as activities encompassing peacekeeping operations, peace enforcement operations, and other military operations conducted in support of diplomatic efforts to establish and maintain peace. *Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations* (Fort Monroe, VA: Joint Warfighting Center, 1995), p. EX-1, (hereafter cited as *JTF Commander's Handbook*).
3. It is interesting to note that the US Army chose to include these "Providence Principles" in Field Manual 100-23, *Peace Operations*. The summary shown in this paper is taken from Thomas G. Weiss and Larry Minear, "Humanitarian Values," in their book *Humanitarianism Across Borders* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), p. 4. Elaboration of each principle can be found in Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Actions in Times of War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), pp. 18-37.
4. Richard K. Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* 73, 6 (November/December 1994): 20.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-22.
6. Peter Hansen, "Protection of Humanitarian Mandates in Conflict Situations," Rev. 13 April 1994, to Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), from under-secretary general for Humanitarian Affairs, New York: United Nations, p. 6.
7. *Ibid.*
8. General Lewis MacKenzie "The Perils of Humanitarian Intervention," *An Agenda for Peace Update*, United Nations Association in Canada, 4 (June 1994): 2.
9. Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Watch World Report 1995: Events of 1994* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1994), p. xvii.
10. Gayle Smith, "Relief Operations and Military Strategy," in *Humanitarianism Across Borders*, ed. Weiss and Minear, p. 98.
11. Primary sources for information and current unclassified military manuals and documents include the Army and Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict, Langley

- Air Force Base, VA; US Army Peacekeeping Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA; Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, KS; and US Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, VA. The Rand Corporation in Santa Monica, CA has also produced several applicable documents. The Joint War fighting Center at Fort Monroe, VA is also preparing a CD-ROM entitled "Peace Operations Database," which will be issued in the fall of 1995, as part of the Joint Electronic Library.
12. Brigadier General William Nash, foreword to "Operations Other Than War; Volume 1, Humanitarian Assistance," Newsletter no. 92-6, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), Fort Leavenworth, KS, December 1992. Hereafter cited as: CALL, "Humanitarian Assistance."
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 2; and "Multi-Service Procedures For Humanitarian Assistance Operations," final draft, Air Land Sea Application Center, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, March 1994, pp. 3-4. Hereafter cited as "Multi-Service Procedures."
 14. Andrew S. Natsios, "The International Humanitarian Response System," *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* 25, 1 (Spring 1995): 78.
 15. *Ibid.*
 16. USAID is responsible for coordinating the humanitarian relief effort among the various Cabinet level agencies within the US government. OFDA coordinates the total US response in the target country, procures supplies, services, and transportation, and administers government funds that are normally channelled to NGOs and PVOs. OFDA provides continuity and a repository of lessons learned as military and NGO/PVO participants may vary from mission to mission. See *Multi-Service Procedures for Humanitarian Operations*, pp. 2-6 and 3-6.
 17. *Ibid.*
 18. *Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations*, Fort Monroe, VA, Joint Warfighting Center, 28 February 1995, p. 23.
 19. Lieutenant General A. C. Zinni quoted in *ibid.* In recent US humanitarian interventions the United Nations has established a Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) as the primary nerve center of the entire relief effort. The HOC acted as the first point of interface between the military, UN, and NGOs. The CMOC is normally collocated with the HOC. See also Michael Burton, "A Shotgun Marriage of Convenience; The US Military and NGOs in Humanitarian Assistance: Implications for Peace Operations," Mershon Center for International Security and Military Affairs, Ohio State University, 1994, pp. 55-56.
 20. Stephen Metz, *Disaster and Intervention in Africa: Learning From Rwanda* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1994), p. 48.
 21. Major General W.H. Yates, *JTF Commander's Handbook*, p. 54.
 22. Richard N. Haass, *Intervention: The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World* (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994), pp. 91-92.
 23. *Multi-Service Procedures*, p. J-5.
 24. Some recent military publications have attempted to distinguish NGO (an international term) from PVO (which refers to US groups). However, in most literature and even among those in the humanitarian assistance community, the distinction is

superficial and is only a way of distinguishing domestic and international organizations. Additionally, some organizations prefer the term PVO, believing the term NGO has come to assume pejorative connotations (from the author's discussions with PVO and NGO workers).

25. *Multi-Service Procedures*, p. 1-2. Internationally, the number of NGOs exceeds 4,000 of which 1,003 have been granted consultive status with the United Nations. In the United States, over 350 relief agencies are registered with USAID, although of that number, only about 150 are registered with InterAction, a prestigious clearinghouse for PVOs (author's interview with InterAction officials, 14 November 1994).
26. Hugh Winsor, "Can Anyone Help Rwanda," *The Globe and Mail*, 18 March 1995, p. D4.
27. International Rescue Committee, interview with the author, New York City, 20 December 1994.
28. Weiss and Minear, "Military Force and Humanitarian Action," in *Humanitarianism Across Borders*, p. 66; and United States Department of State Conference Report, "Improving Coordination of Humanitarian and Military Operations," Washington, DC, 23 June 1994, p. 1, hereafter cited as Department of State Conference Report.
29. United States Department of State Conference Report, p. 3.
30. Burton, "A Shotgun Marriage of Convenience," p. 59.
31. *Multi-Service Procedures*, pp. J-1 thru J-7.
32. Natsios, "International Humanitarian Response," p. 79.
33. InterAction, "PVOs Help Military Train for Humanitarian Operations," *Monday Developments*, 5 September 1994, p. 7.
34. Interviews with InterAction officials Washington, DC, 14 November 1994 and the International Rescue Committee, New York City, 20 December 1994.
35. Burton, "A Shotgun Marriage of Convenience," p. 92.
36. Metz, *Disaster and Intervention*, p. 46.
37. William J. Olson, "The New World Disorder: Governability and Development," in *Gray Area Phenomena: Confronting the New World Disorder*, ed. Max G. Manwaring (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p. 25.
38. Wilson, quoted in *Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook*, p. 29.
39. Frederick C. Cuny, "Humanitarian Assistance in the Post-Cold War Era," in *Humanitarianism Across Borders*, ed. Weiss and Minear, p. 157; Cuny notes that in 1990, 75% of the world's refugees were Muslim, yet the vast majority of relief workers were from non-Islamic countries.
40. InterAction, "PVOs Help US Military Train," p. 7.
41. Natsios, "International Humanitarian Response," p. 80.
42. Jonathan T. Dworken, "What's So Special About Humanitarian Operations?" *Comparative Strategy* 13 (1994): 391-99.
43. Presidential Decision Directive-25 (PDD-25), p. 5.

44. For a check list of transition considerations, see *JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations*, Section 3-4.
45. Bruce B. Auster, "A US Hand," *US News and World Report*, 15 August 1994, p. 14.
46. US Department of Defense, "DOD Response to Presidential Review Directive-50 (PRD-50)," 6 March 1995, p. 1. PRD-50 is entitled, "Emergency Humanitarian Relief." Hereafter cited as "DOD Response to PRD-50."
47. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
48. David C. Miller, "Beyond the Cold War: An Overview and Lessons," in *Gray Area Phenomena*, ed. Manwaring, p. 159.
49. United States General Accounting Office, *Peace Operations: Withdrawal of US Troops From Somalia*, GAO/NSIAD-94-175, June 1994, p. 8. Hereafter: GAO, *Peace Operations: Withdrawal From Somalia*, June 94.
50. Major Joseph F. Napoli, "Current UN Bashing trend is Way Off Base," *The Army Times*, 10 April 1995, p. 31.
51. Interview with Lt. Col. Rich Roan, US military mission to the United Nations, 19 December 1994. The United States Government (USG) supports current UN plans to operationalize arrangements for standby forces which could be called upon from UN member states. Indications are that the USG does not, however, favour formation of a permanent standing UN military force, an idea championed by the respected Sir Brian Urquhart. The Netherlands is in fact pursuing development of such a standing UN force (conversation with Lt. Col. Roan and with Major Joseph Napoli (US Army), executive officer to the military advisor to the secretary-general of the United Nations, New York 20 December 1994); and lecture by Ambassador David Malone of Canada, at the Royal Military College of Canada, 12 April 1995. See also Adam Roberts, "Proposals for UN Standing Forces: History, Tasks and Obstacles," paper presented at the International Conference on United Nations Rapid Reaction Capability, Montebello, Quebec, 7-8 April, 1995.
52. Stephen J. Cimbala, "Military Persuasion and the American Way of War," *Strategic Review* 22, 4 (Fall 1994): 36.
53. Gregory D. Foster, "America and the World: A Security Agenda for the Twenty-First Century," *Strategic Review* 21, 2 (Spring 1993): 27.
54. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., "The Clinton Defense Program: Assessing the Bottom-Up Review," *Strategic Review* 22, 2 (Spring 1994): 17.
55. Frank G. Hoffman, "'Decisive Force': A New American Way of War?" *Strategic Review* 23 (Winter 1995): 23.
56. Harry Summers, "US Participation in UN Peacekeeping Organizations," a statement given before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Human Rights of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives, 21 September 1993, reprinted in *Strategic Review* 21, 4 (Fall 1993): 70.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
58. United States General Accounting Office, *DOD Budget: Analysis of Options for Funding Contingency Operations*, GAO/NSIAD-94-152BR, April 1994, p. 2. Hereafter: GAO, *DOD Budget: Contingency Operations*, Apr 94.

59. United States General Accounting Office, *Peace Operations: Cost of DOD Operations in Somalia*, GAO/NSIAD-94-88, March 1994, p. 5. Hereafter: GAO, *Peace Operations: Cost in Somalia*, Mar 94.
60. GAO, *Peace Operations: UN Activities*, Feb 95, p. 35.
61. GAO, *Peace Operations: Cost in Somalia*, Mar 94, p. 19.
62. Ibid.
63. United States Government Accounting Office, *Peace Operations: Heavy Use of Key Capabilities May Affect Response to Regional Conflicts*, GAO/NSIAD-95-51, March 1995, p. 23. Hereafter: GAO, *Peace Operations: Heavy Use of Key Capabilities*, Mar 95. There are roughly 200 Civil Affairs soldiers on active duty with approximately 4,000 in the US Army Reserve.
64. GAO, *Peace Operations: Heavy Use of Key Capabilities*, March 95, pp. 50-51.
65. Ibid., p. 23.
66. Ibid., p. 24.
67. William Matthews, "Too Much of a Good Thing?" *The Army Times*, 27 March 1995, p. 22.
68. Ibid.
69. GAO, *Peace Operations: Heavy Use of Key Capabilities*, March 95, p. 63.
70. GAO, *Peace Operations: UN Activities*, February 95, p. 36.
71. Ibid., p. 37.
72. GAO, *Peace Operations: Heavy Use Of Key Capabilities*, March 95, p. 53.
73. GAO, *Peace Operations: Cost in Somalia*, March 94, p. 17.
74. "DOD Response to PRD-50," p. 9.
75. Ibid., p. 17.
76. United States General Accounting Office, *Department of Defense: Changes Needed to the Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Program*, GAO/NSIAD-94-57, November 1993, p. 4. Hereafter: GAO, *DOD Changes to Humanitarian Assistance*, Nov 93.
77. Joseph E. Kelley's testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, US House of Representatives, released 19 April 1994, printed by the US General Accounting Office as "Department of Defense: Weakness in Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Programs," GAO/T-NSIAD-94-158, April 1994, p. 1. Mr. Kelley was director-in-charge, International Affairs Issues, National Security and International Affairs Division, US GAO.
78. GAO, *Peace Operations: Withdrawal From Somalia*, June 94, p. 7.
79. *The Army Times*, "Emergency Funding Bill Fails," 10 April 1995, p. 2.
80. Walter B. Slocombe letter to Mr. Frank C. Conahan, assistant comptroller general, US General Accounting Office, dated 10 February 1994 as reprinted in: GAO, *Peace Operations: Cost in Somalia*, March 94, p. 28.
81. Figures cited by the DOD Public Affairs Information Office, the Pentagon. The American involvement in Somalia from 1992 through 1994 involved three phases. US Casualty figures for each phase are as follows: Restore Hope, killed in action 4,

nonbattle deaths 4, and wounded 15; UNOSOM II, killed in action 26, nonbattle deaths 10, and wounded 160; and United Shield, none.

82. As cited in United States Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, *The Impact of Peacekeeping on Army Personnel Requirements* [HASC NO. 103-28, 27 October, 1993] (Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 85.
83. General Colin Powell, as quoted by Summers in Congressional Testimony, *Strategic Review*, p. 69.

4. Conclusion

We field an army, not a Salvation Army. But under certain conditions the use of our armed forces is appropriate. First if we face a catastrophe that dwarfs the ability of normal relief agencies.... Second, if the need for relief is urgent.... Third, if the response requires resources unique to the military.... And fourth, if there is minimal risk to American troops.

Secretary of Defense William Perry

Debate surrounding the future of armed humanitarian intervention reflects the continuing struggle between two streams of American thought that have continually vied for ascendancy in the twentieth century — idealism and realism. These two different ways of viewing history and politics have created diverging expectations on the use of America's armed forces in a world in which ethnic violence has created horrendous humanitarian disasters. While Americans have grown accustomed to human evil, they have shown throughout history that the United States can and will act on its sense of moral indignation. The United States went through a period of introspection on the role and function of its military in the early 1990s and this process continues today. At the same time, the international community established a new precedent for violation of territorial sovereignty in support of multilateral armed humanitarian interventions. Much of the Western public seems prepared, in principle, to employ armed force to rescue or defend the oppressed in the name of a higher morality.¹ For the present, the scope and pace of multilateral humanitarian actions will hinge in a large degree on American leadership.² However, as under secretary-general of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs, Peter Hansen has indicated it is now time for the world to consider what it can do without substantial American involvement. Reflecting on Rwanda, Mr. Hansen said, "without US leadership, we ought not to be so helpless."³

Ethnic conflicts which have created so much human suffering in the 1990s pose few direct threats to US security. Without clear or tangible national interests

at stake, the United States is unlikely to become deeply committed to stopping a war or to wade into the middle of bitter feuding factions. However, Americans are likely to be willing to do their fair share in relieving the plight of innocent victims around the globe when the costs and sacrifices are minimal. More importantly, when human suffering reaches the scale of a "supreme emergency" as described by Michael Walzer, the United States must either take some action to alleviate suffering abroad or turn its back on America's founding principles. If the US and the international community have the moral courage to declare that a supreme emergency represents a case of "genocide," the US and other signatories of the Genocide Convention are obligated to act. But the US will always resist legal formulas that *dictate* military action. The United States is more likely to act on a less binding moral calling deeply felt by its citizenry than it is to cite a 50-year old treaty written in diplomatic jargon.

Some Americans and others abroad may find the future US response to humanitarian crises to be inadequate. As morally painful as it may be, any likely American military operations, even in the case of genocide or mass murder, are apt to be constrained by practical considerations. Although armed humanitarian interventions are not designed to enhance America's national interests, the results of an intervention gone awry could well cause harm to US strategic and political concerns. Further, the cost of such interventions cannot be underestimated. Major General (retired) William Stofft and Dr. Gary Guertner recently wrote, "[m]oral commitments cannot multiply while military resources decline."⁴ With a full range of strategic interests and a finite military capacity, selective and limited military interventions will likely characterize America's future response to humanitarian crises in peripheral areas. President Clinton's National Security advisor, Anthony Lake stated, "We will never compromise military readiness to support [peace operations]."⁵ America must know how to say no to intervention despite the emotional demands for quick action in the face of human misery and preventable suffering. Further, the US must encourage others, including the United Nations, to be selective in the employment of force for humanitarian ends.

When the United States chooses to conduct an armed humanitarian intervention, speed and freedom of action may well dictate a unilateral operation with UN sanction, rather than a multilateral approach. The US mission to Rwanda will likely serve as the model for future American humanitarian interventions — rapid deployment to alleviate the immediate suffering of innocents and a quick exit once humanitarian objectives are met. The United States will almost certainly elect a multilateral approach to the more substantial tasks of peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or nation-building. While these type of missions may follow or run concurrently with a humanitarian intervention, issues of neutrality and impartiality dictate that the operations be kept separate and distinct to the extent possible.

Despite persistent accusations that the US military is reluctant to embrace any type of military operations other than war, the services and the Pentagon continue to produce policy, plans, and doctrine for the conduct of humanitarian and other

types of so-called peace operations. In fact, the March 1995 version of the "National Military Strategy," which guides Pentagon policy, explicitly affirms that principle missions for the military include war fighting and deterring aggression as well as peacekeeping and other nontraditional roles.⁶ Nonetheless, military leaders will resist any attempt at major restructuring or diminishing the war fighting ethos of the American armed forces in order to conduct MOOTW. As the current US chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General John M. Shalikashvili has stated:

The Profusion of Operations Other Than War has elicited a stream of ideas about how to restructure or reorient our forces specifically for this purpose. This would be wrong. *We cannot become confused about the fundamental purpose of our armed forces* [original emphasis]. That purpose is their readiness to fight and win our nation's wars. No other purpose is as vital to our security. As we reshape and train our forces, it must be for this purpose above all others.⁷

The Army and Marine Corps devote valuable training time to prepare for unforeseen MOOTW emergencies and an extraordinary level of coordination and cooperation has marked military relationships with professional humanitarian relief agencies. However, looming in the background is an unresolved gap between the Clinton administration and the 104th Congress regarding the efficacy of the use of US forces in humanitarian and peacekeeping missions. The executive branch may vote for a UN intervention but in the United States, Congress controls the purse strings. President Clinton and his key policy advisors have signalled a more selective approach to accepting such missions. Until the strategic direction for the United States becomes clearer, there is bound to be a degree of tentativeness in military budgeting and preparation for MOOTW.

Armed humanitarian interventions do require a set of skills and unique operational directives that make proper preparation vital. Like peacekeeping, humanitarian interventions demand a sophisticated military approach in dealing with ethnic and cultural problems, gathering intelligence, cooperating with NGOs and PVOs, and understanding the strategic political link to the humanitarian mandate. Unlike traditional peacekeeping, forces conducting a humanitarian intervention are not invited by the belligerents, do not have the peacekeeper's mandate to remain neutral, and can therefore expect to fight. But, as noted earlier, fighting and losing American lives in peripheral areas such as sub-Saharan Africa where humanitarian crises are likely to flare, is an option American decisionmakers will almost always avoid. The United States has instead emphasized its tremendous logistical, transportation, and command and control capabilities as a means of contributing US troops and American political backing to an international humanitarian effort. In many ways, these particular assets are hard to match when speed is needed to intervene in desperate humanitarian emergencies. However, more and more civilian contractors are seeking to supplant military logistics functions and the US will be more than happy to reduce its role in order to limit military involvement.

Although the United States is likely to minimize its risks by conducting humanitarian missions that are restricted in scope and duration, such missions will always subject soldiers to considerable danger. Further, whenever American troops are injected into a volatile situation the political stakes increase for the United States and all the parties involved. America's intervention into the affairs of another country, even for the purest humanitarian motives, should and must be a painful decision for the country's leaders. However, the United States cannot afford to ignore completely the horrendous human suffering that accompanies much of today's ethnic strife. David Clinton wrote in his book, *The Two Faces of National Interest* that there is for every nation a constant overall interest that goes to the heart of society's self-definition. It rests on what makes that society distinctive as a nation and it reminds the states of the world of their respective differences on questions of transcendent importance. For the United States of America, humanitarian interests share a place with more obvious material interests in defining the nation. The degree of commitment America shows in responding to a humanitarian crisis, the risks the country is willing to undertake for a humane cause, will undoubtedly play a role in distinguishing American character as it enters the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Andrew Kohut and Robert C. Toth, "The People, the Press, and the Use of Force," Washington, DC: Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, August 1994, p. 1.
2. Ernest W. Lefever, "Morality versus Moralism in Foreign Policy," in *Ethics and World Politics: Four Perspectives*, ed. E.W. Lefever (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 2; Stephen Metz, *Disaster and Intervention in Sub-Saharan Africa: Learning from Rwanda* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1994), p. 17.
3. Peter Hansen, under secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs, interview with author, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 20 December 1994.
4. William Stofft and Gary Guertner, "Ethnic Conflict: The Perils of Military Intervention," *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* 25, 1 (Spring 1995): 37.
5. Anthony Lake quoted by Stofft and Guertner, *Ibid.*, p. 41.
6. Washington Post Service, "Pentagon Affirms Importance of Noncombat Roles," *International Herald Tribune*, 10 March 1995, p. 3.
7. General John M. Shalikashvili, quoted in *Policy Letter Digest*, March 1995, (published by Air Force News), p. 3.

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