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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

# THE USE OF UNITED STATES MILITARY POLICE IN MIGRANT/REFUGEE RELIEF OPERATIONS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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The US military has a long historical involvement with migrant/ refugee relief operations, both at home and abroad. These missions are resource intensive, seldom quickly resolved, and often as not, have limited success at meeting their stated objectives. While the military has often been used in the past, it is not the preferred national asset for these type operations. If the military is to continue performing these type missions in order to meet national security objectives, it is absolutely imperative we do so in a manner that is suitable, feasible, and acceptable. This paper will examine the military's involvement in migrant/refugee relief operations from a historical perspective and as they exist today. Alternatives to military responses will be reviewed, focusing on ways to bring the other elements of nation power to bear in future operations.

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# THE USE OF UNITED STATES MILITARY FORCES IN MIGRANT/REFUGEE RELIEF OPERATIONS

## Dealing with Migrant/Refugee Relief Operations

Since the birth of the United States Army on June 14, 1775, marking the formal beginning of our national defense force, military members have proudly served their country in times of war and peace. In addition to its excellent war fighting record, the US military has an outstanding history of peacetime accomplishments. These include early exploration and mapping of the developing United States; harbor development and improvement of river navigation; developing the nation's first modern weather and air mail services; civil works projects such as bridge building and road construction; construction of the Panama Canal; supervising the Civilian Conservation Corps; and numerous peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations, both domestic and foreign, in the latter part of this century.[1]

In recent times, especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the United States has been forced to revise its national defense strategy to meet the changing world order. No longer do we need to fear communist expansion and global nuclear war is much less likely. Now we face potential multiple regional conflicts and a complex array of new and old security challenges as we move forward into the 21st century.[2] While this new strategy will not require the massive force structure of the Cold War, it will require a strong and

highly versatile force, built on a strong foundation of outstanding personnel.[3]

As the national military force downsizes in response to the new threat paradigm, the obvious question is how much can we realistically expect of our newly designed military. While our current national military strategy talks of preparing for smaller wars and participating in more peacetime engagements, this does not necessarily mean less demand on the system. Recently, the Sergeant Major of the Army, Gene C. McKinney pointed out that, "in a seven year period (1989-1996) we have reduced our total force structure (active, Guard, and Reserve) by 463,000 soldiers, reduced the budget by 38 percent, closed 674 facilities worldwide, gone from 18 divisions to 10, decreased our civilian work force by 133,000 and increased our operational deployments by 300 percent."[4] This trend has also been reflected in our other military branches as well.[5]

With a low prospect of hostile conflict, but a high probability of peacetime engagements driven by the belief of the current administration that, "our efforts to advance the common good at home depend upon our efforts to advance our interests around the world,"[6] US military forces can expect to maintain their current operational tempo for the foreseeable future.[7]

The purpose of this paper then, is to examine one type of peacetime engagement, humanitarian assistance, as it applies to migrant/refugee relief operations. The US military has a long historical involvement with migrant/refugee relief operations, both

at home and abroad. These missions are resource intensive, seldom quickly resolved, and often as not, have limited success at meeting their stated objectives. While the military has often been used in the past, it is not the preferred national asset for these type operations. Performing these missions have a negative impact on unit readiness and war fighting capabilities and detract from the military's ability to perform its more conventional mission of deterring and fighting our nation's wars.[8]

Traditionally, such efforts have been the responsibility of non-governmental (NGOs), private voluntary (PVOs), and international government sponsored relief organizations. In recent years however, the number, size, and complexity of migrant/refugee relief operations have greatly over-extended the capabilities of civilian organizations. Recent trends in third world countries indicate an increase in these type operations in the future. The US military, with its unique ability to react quickly, operate in hostile or near-hostile environments, and provide flexible responses to a wide variety of possible scenarios, earmark it as a logical augmentation to other agencies' relief efforts.

If we are to continue performing these type missions in order to meet national security objectives, it is imperative we do so in a manner that is *suitable, feasible, and acceptable.* This paper will examine the military's involvement in migrant/refugee relief operations from a historical perspective and as they exist today. Possible alternatives to military responses will be reviewed,

focusing on ways to bring the other elements of national power to bear in future operations.

## Historical Perspective

### *The Military and the American Indians*

Not unlike the US military forces of today, the US military of the early 1800's often found themselves involved in operations outside the recognized realm of martial warfare. One such operation involved the Regular Army of the 1820's and 1830's. This Army, "was most conspicuously an Indian-fighting army, but as always since the days of the 1st American Regiment much of its energy was expended also in shielding the Indians, in the territories assigned to them, from the restless pressures of the whites. When the government could or would not restrain those pressures, the Army sometimes received other unpleasant duties besides outright war. In 1838 and 1839, for example, it forced the Cherokee out of its southeastern homeland-obeying Presidential orders that rested on the most dubious of legal grounds—and escorted them on the tragic march to Oklahoma which took the lives of one-fourth of their nation on the way.[9] This operation became known to the Cherokee people and the rest of the country as the Trail of Tears.

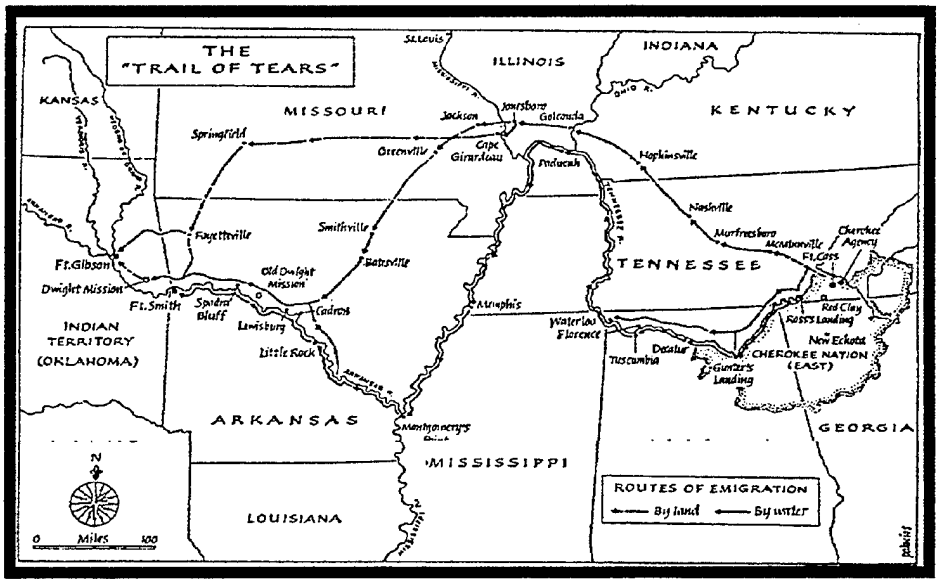
The Army's role in the Trail of Tears relocation operation is an interesting case study on military migrant/refugee relief operations. The Cherokee, by definition, were both migrants (alien workers, generally unskilled, and individuals seeking to join family members, whose presence in a given country may be legal, illegal, or

undocumented) and refugees (aliens who are generally recognized as having fled from persecution or civil strife).[10] Some of their members (the migrants) chose to migrate to lands in the west and others (the refugees) had to leave, fearing persecution from the whites.

Whether migrants or refugees, the US Army assisted their movement to what is now Oklahoma. The Army played several roles in these operations. For the Cherokee who voluntarily migrated west, the Army helped provide transportation, food, and enroute shelter. These tasks were actually a bit of "mission creep" in that the soldiers were tasked initially only with security. In 1832, the Secretary of War found the civilian contractors hired to organize and lead the Indian travel parties totally corrupt. The Army was called on to assume all movement responsibilities, to include aiding the Indians in establishing homesites upon their arrival.[11]

Beginning in 1838, for those Cherokee who chose not to leave on their own accord, the mission of the Army was a bit different. These Indians were rounded up, placed in large holding camps, and transported under guard to the Indian territory. While efforts were made to show some humanity to the sick and injured, these migrations of between 500-700 miles (depending on the route) involved from between 18,000-20,000 people, of whom about 4000 perished through hunger, disease, and exposure.[12] (see map 1)

In fact, the Cherokee Indians were not the only native Americans forced to leave their lands by the federal government. The Cherokees were one of the Five Civilized Tribes, which also included the




(Map 1)[13]

Choctaws, Creeks, Chickasaw, and Seminoles.[14] The resistance to relocation varied from tribe to tribe with the extreme being displayed by the Seminoles of Florida. By 1849 however, all were moved with the assistance of the US Army.

While there were exceptions, the Regular Army officers and men conducted themselves nobly during these operations. "In nearly all instances they devoted themselves indefatigably and sympathetically to the sad task of removing the Indians with as much expedition and comfort as possible within the provisions made by their superiors in Washington. In this they contrasted sharply with the volunteer soldiers and a large class of political, civilian employees, especially those of local attachments and prejudices, and the contractors whose purpose was to realize as much profit as possible

from their contracts, thereby excluding considerations of comfort for the emigrants."[15]

***The Military and Post-WW II Migrant/Refugee Relief Operations***

While the relocation of thousands of Indian men, women, and children was no insignificant task, the US military's efforts in these operations paled in comparison to migrant/refugee relief operations conducted by our military immediately after WW II. In the European theater alone, over 60 million European civilians were forced to move. There were over ten times as many refugees in WW II in Europe as existed in WW I.[16] Our efforts in Asia were no less dramatic. Though there were numerous movement operations, "the largest single undertaking was the mass repatriation of approximately 3,017,000 Japanese and 62,000 Koreans from Manchuria, China Proper, Formosa, and from French Indo-China, north of the $16^0$ parallel North Latitude."[17]

A logical question could be raised as to why there were so many migrants and refugees in Europe between 1939 and 1952, compared to other theaters or even other wars. This unprecedented movement of humanity resulted directly from the policies adopted by the Germans and Soviets as they attempted to maintain autarchic control over their populations.

Hitler and Stalin ruled absolutely and, feeling no compassion for their own population much less that of their conquered enemies, moved massive numbers of people for various reasons. These moves involved millions of civilians and included: flight to avoid

religious and political persecution; forced transfer and exchange of ethnic groups; flight or evacuation associated with military action; deportation for forced labor; deportation for extermination; air-raid evacuation; repatriation movement; expulsion of ethnic groups; resettlement movement; and exodus resulting from the memory of persecution and extermination, and fear of its recurrence.[16]

The US military, as part of the Allied invasion force, became involved in migrant/refugee relief operations almost as soon as they entered the European mainland in 1944[19]. The vast majority of their support, however, occurred upon cessation of hostilities with Germany.

Due to the foresight of Churchill and Roosevelt, international assistance to support refugees (civilians not outside the national boundaries of their country who needed assistance to go home), and displaced persons (civilians outside the national boundaries of their country by reason of the war, who also required assistance to go home) began in the early 1940's. In August 1942, a consensus was reached between the US, England, Russia, and China on the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).[20]

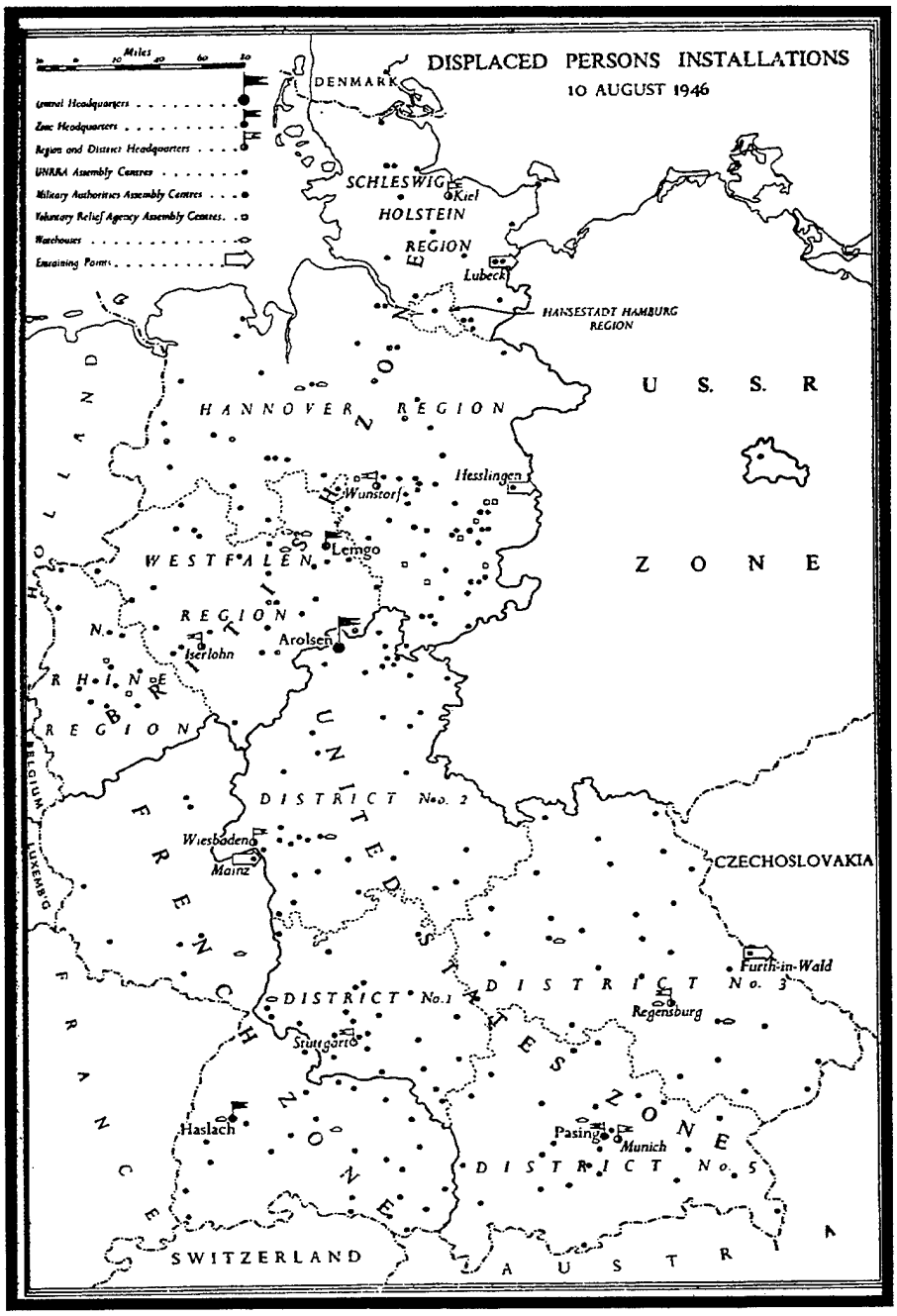
UNRRA's European Regional Office and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), though not always in agreement, worked together to develop the SHAEF Plan for refugees and displaced persons. This plan, finalized on 3 June 1944, became the overall civil/military plan for dealing with refugees and displaced persons

anticipated in conjunction with the invasion and conquest of Germany.[21]

At the conclusion of hostilities, Germany was divided into zones of occupation. Within the US zone of responsibility (see map 2), UNRRA and the Commander, US Forces European Theater specifically divided up the refugee/displaced persons mission support. US forces were responsible for law and order support; basic supplies and logistical support; accommodations; fiscal services and control; employment for displaced persons; communications; maintenance service for UNRRA personnel; and files and records; UNRRA was primarily responsible for the tracing of missing persons and resettlement operations.[22]

In general, the US military received high marks for its support to European refugees and displaced persons at the close of WW II. However, it should be noted, their efforts at meeting the needs of the non-repatriable displaced persons in the US sector has been criticized as ranging from unenthusiastic to inhuman.[23] In their defense however, the US military's initial tasking was that of a short duration repatriation mission. They were not prepared, nor was the international community for that matter, to deal effectively with long term/permanent support of the non-repatriables.[24]

As mentioned earlier, there were vast numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the Chinese theater as well. While the mission dealt with millions of Japanese, thousands of Koreans, and a small




(Map 2)[25]

number of German Nazis, the US military's role was small compared to that in Europe.

Under the Shanghai Repatriation Plan (later the Repatriation Plan for the China Theater--6 February 1946), drafted in October 1945, the US military forces in China had responsibility to aid and

assist the Chinese government in the repatriation of all foreign nationals from China. The Army's mission was mainly that of safeguarding the refugees to the repatriation ports which were, for the most part, secured by Marines. The Navy provided ships to assist in the transport of the repatriated Japanese, Koreans, and Germans to their respective homelands. All totaled, about 500 Army and Marine personnel were employed in the land effort. The Navy's Seventh Fleet, using China Task Force 78, reached a total of only 3 troop transport ships, 13 Liberty ships, and 69 captured Japanese ships of different sizes.[26] While many of those repatriated suffered greatly due to shortages of food, clothing, and transit shelter, the US military was noted for its highly successful operation and proved to be a great aid to overall mission accomplishment.

## Modern Day US Military Migrant/Refugee Relief Operations

### ***Who Really Owns This Mission?***

The US military performed admirably moving Cherokees across the southeastern United States in 1838, and again, assisting millions of European refugees and displaced persons at the close of WW II. Even more recently, we did an excellent job conducting migrant relief missions in Cuba (Operation GITMO) and in Panama (Operation Safe Haven). These successful operations however, do not necessarily designate our military force the "Force of Choice" for all future migrant/refugee relief operations the US government may elect to become involved with in the future.

There are numerous "players" in these type operations. Such efforts have traditionally been the responsibility of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), e.g., the International Committee of the Red Cross; private voluntary organizations (PVOs), e.g., the Oxford Famine Relief Agency; and international government sponsored relief organizations, e.g., the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Working closely with the UNHCR, NGOs and PVOs have provided the majority of the efforts to deliver food, shelter, water, sanitation, health care, and education to migrants and refugees world-wide.

The UNHCR, established at the end of WW II, led the way in migrant/refugee relief operations. With its global reach, the UNHRC channels more than two thirds of all international migrant/refugees relief assistance to those in need. Though the UNHRC has a staff of over 2,700 representatives in over 80 countries, with annual operating expenses of over one billion dollars, it suffers from structural and organizational problems. These shortfalls include, but are not limited too, "resources (dependence on voluntary contributions to carry out its programs) and planning limitations, the ambiguity of international law and norms, the restricted base of its state membership, and the chronic tensions that exists between the humanitarian tasks of UNHCR and the political context in which it has to work."[27]

While the UNHCR may have lost some credibility in recent years, this is not the case with NGOs. NGOs are recognized in the

international community as not only an appropriate type structure to provide humanitarian relief, but perhaps even the most appropriate type organizational structure for these operations. This is especially true in the case of emergency relief situations, such as those faced in migrant/refugee relief efforts.[28]

There are three different and unique types of NGOs. The first, is the operational agency which performs the in-country, on-site field work necessary to provide relief support. The second type is referred to as the public education agency, dedicated to public edification and fund raising. The last concentrates on influencing public policy by dealing directly with governments and other actors in the public arena.[29] NGOs can operate both locally and internationally. Some NGOs have characteristics of all three types and operate both at home and in other nations.

PVOs have very unique capabilities also. PVOs are most often smaller than NGOs, and are noted for having a more focused agenda. PVOs traditionally rely on persuasion and determination to enter a country where help is needed. Often they are not afforded the protection of the law, and are viewed as naïve meddlers by the local authorities.[30] Their strength lies in their small bureaucratic overhead, which allows them to get close to the people and focus their aid at the local level where it is most needed.

While international government sponsored relief organizations, NGOs, and PVOs have made a tremendous contributions to worldwide refugee/migrant relief operations, a problem has surfaced in recent

years. As Gil Loescher notes in a contemporary study on global refugee problems, "Over the past decade and a half, the number of refugees in the world has increased alarmingly. The total rose from 2.8 million in 1976 to 8.2 million in 1980 to nearly 18 million at the end of 1992. It is likely that the number will exceed 20 million during this decade."[31]

Not only have the numbers increased, but many of these relief operations involve on-going hostilities, unimproved and hazardous environments, and often occur in areas of the globe not conventionally held to be within the strategic interest of the United States. Rwanda is an excellent example of this: "It would be difficult to locate a place less strategically important to the West than Rwanda---except perhaps for Burundi. One of the world's poorest, most overpopulated countries, Rwanda possesses no minerals or unique products. Its people are primarily subsistence farmers, producing potatoes, beans, and bananas."[32] Yet, in recent years, the US and other Western nations, for humanitarian reasons, have spent significant time and resources in Rwanda trying to stabilize the nation and help feed the people.

As was the case prior to and during WW II, there are many reasons for migrant and refugee displacements in our contemporary global community. In recent years, people have voluntarily (migrants) or involuntarily (refugees) left their native country to improve their economic standard of living; escape political or religious persecution; avoid wars and rebellions; and to thwart the genocidal

efforts of their enemies. For whatever reasons these people transmigrate, it is becoming more frequent. NGOs and PVOs are being overwhelmed by the monumental size and the inherent danger of conflict associated with these type commitments and the United Nations is struggling to meet the world-wide demand for the required humanitarian assistance.

To that end, many players in the international community feel strongly the United Nations has serious professional shortcomings when it comes to coordinating humanitarian assistance operations involving large scale military forces. There are those who believe, "that the United Nations does not have an inherent capacity for such professional military management. In fact, the UN is inherently anti-professional in the military sense; at best, it is suited for managing only quasi-military and very limited operations such as observation missions and small, traditional peacekeeping missions."[33] When significant military presence is required to ensure migrant/refugee relief operations, the United Nations may be more of a bureaucratic stumbling block than an effective command and control headquarters.

The shortcomings of the UN aside, the US has chosen to offer up its military forces to assist in recent migrant/refugee relief efforts when it has decided it was in our national interest to do so. The military brings much in the way of capabilities to these operations. Its ability to quickly move vast amounts of food and supplies by air and sea, operate in hostile and unimproved

environments, and provide flexible command and control over vast operations under chaotic conditions, makes it an idea supplement to the civilian and governmental relief organizations. In these type "humanitarian conflicts"[34] relief could simply not be provided without the aid of our national military assets.

In the final analysis, who "owns" the mission is not quite as important as who has the capability of getting the mission accomplished. In the next two sections I will discuss our military's involvement in two such relief efforts: Operation Provide Comfort—support for the Kurds in northern Iraq and Operation Support Hope—the refugee assistance operation in Rwanda. For each operation I will give a brief overview of the mission and why our military became involved in providing assistance. I will then discuss the strategy for US active participation and whether I thought it met the "suitability, feasibility, and acceptability" test for American military force involvement. At the conclusion of my discussions on these operations I will provide a few broad recommendations for alternates to US military involvement and discuss some general thoughts on how to involve our other elements of national power (information, political, and economic) when dealing with future relief operations.

### *Operation Provide Comfort in Northern Iraq*

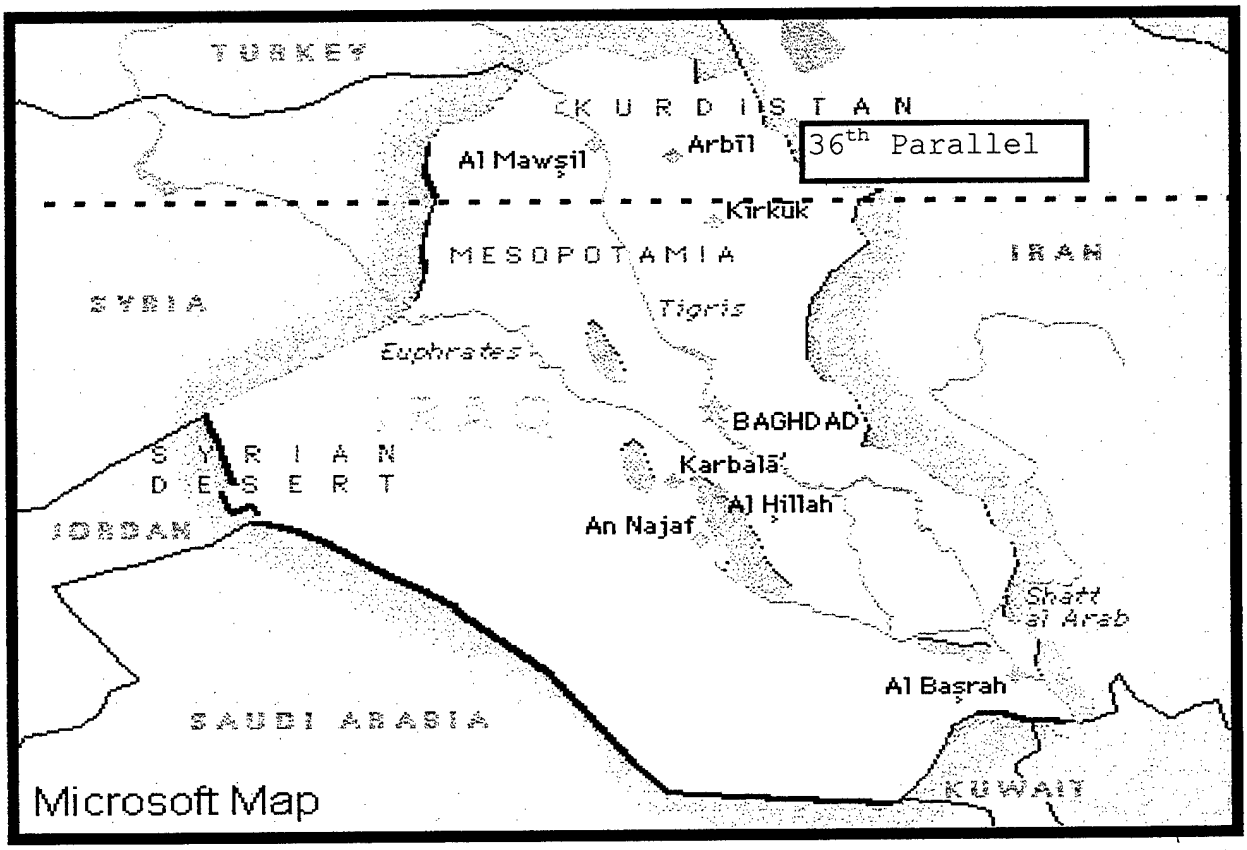
In 1991, President George Bush, in press statements after the Desert Storm victory, made reference to our support to the Iraqi Kurds' effort to overcome the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein in

the northern provinces of Iraq. These statements, followed up by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) clandestine radio station announcements from Saudi Arabia, gave the Kurds the impression the US would support their overthrow of Saddam Hussein. When the US declared neutrality regarding the internal conflict in Iraq, 3 million Kurds were forced to flee into the northern mountains and tens of thousands died of cold, hunger, and Iraqi war efforts.

When asked by Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), for US assistance, President Bush, feeling a moral responsibility to act, responded on 5 April 1991, by ordering US forces to begin relief efforts to the endangered Kurds. This effort became known as Operation Provide Comfort. To ensure non-involvement of the Iraqi military with the support effort, UN (to include US) forces began to patrol a safety zone north of the 36th parallel in northern Iraq[35] (see map 3).

The Operation Provide Comfort objectives were straightforward, if not rather ambitious. The immediate objective was to stop the dying and suffering and to stabilize the population. After our first abortive attempts to airdrop supplies, it was clear the mission was going to have to be expanded to include ground and coalition support. Once this was established, great success was made in achieving this objective.[36]

The midterm objectives were to resettle the population at temporary sites and to establish a sustainable secure environment for the Kurds and those attempting to provide relief to them. This was




(Map 3)[37]

accomplished with the assistance of over 45 NGOs and PVOs, the UNHCR, approximately 11,000 coalition security forces from twelve different countries, and approximately 12,000 US forces from all four services.[38]

Operation Provide Comfort I ended with the withdrawal of forces from Iraq on 15 July 1991. Provide Comfort II ended in September when the US transferred command of the mission to the UN. The last objective, a long term one at best, was to return the population to their homes. While many of the refugees did eventually return to their villages, most of their homes had been destroyed or looted as a result of the Iraqi occupation. A tremendous amount of

assistance was still required and is still being provided under the UN lead Operation Provide Comfort III.

While not supporting a *vital* or *important* US interest, Provide Comfort did involve a *primarily humanitarian* interest, thus meeting the National Security Strategy (NSS) criteria for deployment of our armed forces.[39] While DOD assets are still involved to some extent, much of the operational activities have been transferred to civilian aid organizations, and in October 1995, responsibility for funding transferred to the US Agency for International Development (USAID).[40] This hand off of mission responsibilities from military to civilian relief agencies, although at times quite disjointed, was in line with current UN and US recognized humanitarian assistance operational procedures.

The presidential decision to involve our military in Operation Provide Comfort met the test for a sound strategic decision. It was a *suitable* mission for our forces. The desired effect was articulated in the mission objectives for the operation. The use of our military forces, in conjunction with other international military forces and civilian agencies, met these objectives most convincingly.

This was also a *feasible* mission for our military. At least initially, they were the only ones able to meet the rapid response requirements and the only ones with the ability to sustain the operation until the organization of the civilian relief effort. The

mission requirements were clearly within the capabilities of our military, as has been demonstrated numerous times in the past.

Lastly, the mission was *acceptable*. While the overall operation was expensive, the monetary cost was fairly shared with our European NATO allies. Yes, the US did have to send US forces into harms way once again, but this operation was an excellent example of coalition cooperation and unity of effort and saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Operation Provide Comfort is a model for NATO humanitarian assistance, and if applied, the lessons learned will help avoid costly mistakes in other missions which will inevitable occur somewhere in the world in the near future.

***Operations Support Hope in Rwanda***

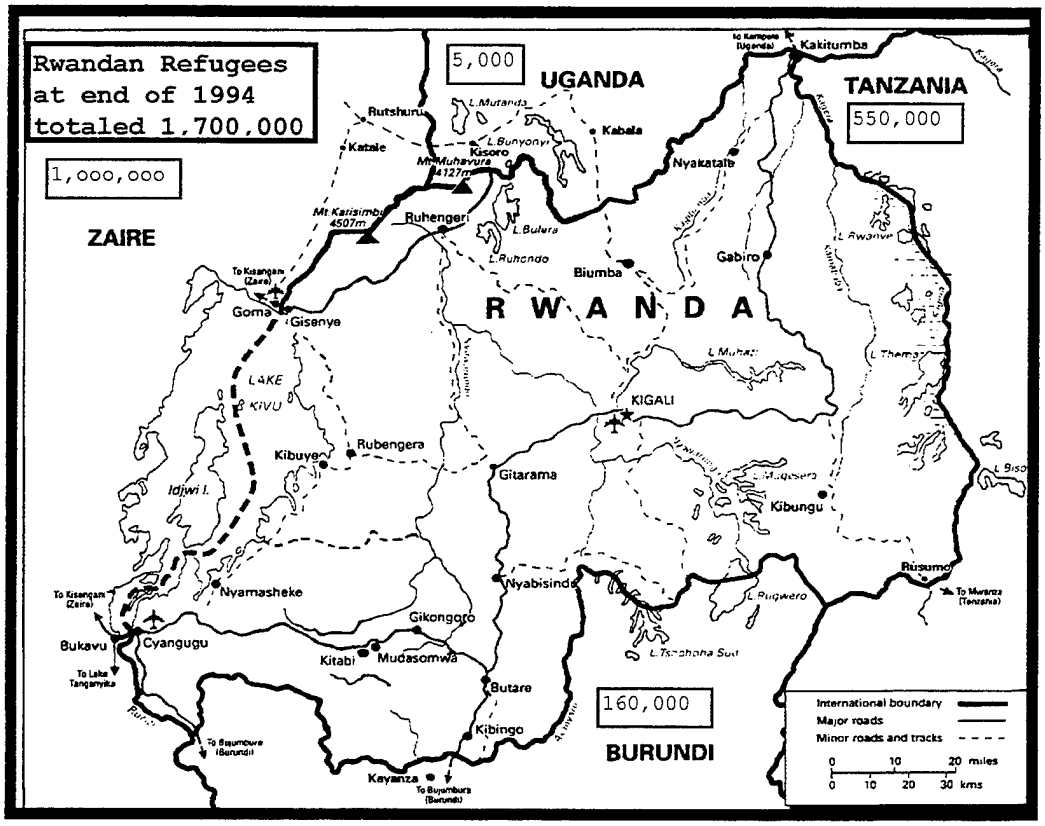
A direct correlation can be drawn between the actions of the US, and most certainly President Bush, and the tragedy which befell the Kurds in northern Iraq. As a result, Operation Provide Comfort was not an excessively hard sell to the American Congress or the US public. This however, was not the case with Operation Provide Hope in Rwanda. We had nothing to do with causing Rwanda's internal problems and neither Congress nor the American public had any desire to put its military service members in harms way, especially given the results of our intervention in Somalia in 1993.

The US was severely chastised for our lack of early involvement in Rwanda however. In testimony to the US Senate, the US Committee for Refugees (USSR), a PVO dedicated to defending the rights of refugees worldwide, stated, "the core failing of the US policy-makers

from the beginning was that they failed either to comprehend or acknowledge that genocide---in the strictest legal and moral sense of the term---was occurring in Rwanda."[41] The USCR went on to say the US failure to get involved early on was "a shameful moment in the annals of American foreign policy."[42]

The same dynamics which brought about the migration of refugees in Iraq, and a rapid US military response, produced much the same results in Rwanda, but with almost no official acknowledgment by the US government. The Kurds escaped oppression and genocide by fleeing into the mountains of northern Iraq; the predominately Tutsi refugees fled the harsh dictates and genocidal efforts of the Hutu ethnic majority, which dominated the national government, into the neighboring countries of Zaire, Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda (see map 4).[43] The negative impact on regional stability, coupled with the massive deaths brought on as a result of approximately forty years of civil war and the genocidal effort of the Hutus toward the Tutsis in 1994, lead to international intervention. The US government agreed to provide assistance only after the world press and the African lobbies petitioned the US Congress, pleading for humanitarian aid.

Operation Support Hope was really a follow on operation to the French Operation Turquoise (a UN Charter Chapter VII Peace Enforcement mission) and the UN Operations UNAMIR I and II (United Nations Advisory Mission in Rwanda). The UNAMIR operations were Chapter VI peace observer missions. The US, soured by our




(Map 4)[44]

involvement in the Chapter VII Somali operation, emphasized our humanitarian assistance role and our absence of combat forces. Because of our position, our involvement was described as a Chapter Zero operation.[45] What should be kept in mind is that the US aid, no matter what it was called, was desperately needed.

A Joint Task Force (JTF) became the US military command and control headquarters for Operation Support Hope. It was given a very clear mission statement for the operation. The tasks included: the establishment and operation of water distribution and purification systems in Goma; the establishment of an airhead and cargo distribution capability at Entebbe; the provision of round-the-clock airfield services at Goma, Kigali and other sites; the establishment

of logistics management in support of the UN and other nations; and the protection of the force. Its specific essential task were: to stop the dying; assist in the return of refugees to Rwanda; support stability; hand over the mission to UN agencies; and to redeploy the force.[46]

The US was extremely efficient, in their opinion, regarding the execution of their mission. This opinion was not shared by everyone however. Despite what LTG Dan Scroeder, the US Joint Task Force commander, stated to the contrary, others felt that, "despite all the rhetoric, it must be said that they achieved much less than they were capable of achieving. The US government was not alone in having no intention of seeing the problem through. Operation Support Hope had been an exercise in visibility, not in creating an impact of long-term significance."[47] Current events reported almost daily testify to the continued suffering of hundreds of thousands of refugees in camps in all border countries and continued disruption of civil processes within Rwanda due to inefficient or totally absent civilian governmental services.

The question as to whether the US was successful or not in Rwanda will be debated far into the future. Another more interesting issue is that of our decision to get involved in the first place. Not unlike the assistance mission to support the Kurds in northern Iraq, the Rwanda relief mission did not involve either a *vital* or *important* US interest. Since we viewed it as a *humanitarian* interest however, our involvement, reluctant as it was, did meet the NSS

criteria for deployment of our armed forces. Once again, our ability to conduct highly complex operations under very austere conditions, coupled with our strategic lift capabilities, make us a valued asset in any such operation.

Whether or not the mission was a *suitable* tasking for our military is debatable. Could the US forces achieve the desired effect as articulated in the JTF's mission statement? Certainly this appeared to be the case. By the end of FY 94, the US had flown over 1,200 airlift sorties moving over 15,500 tons of humanitarian assistance supplies. We provided hundreds of US military personnel for weeks on end, rebuilding infrastructure and providing health care to hundreds of thousands of Rwandans. While we may not have met the expectations of other global players, to include the UN, we not only made a significant contribution to the relief effort we were the only nation in the world that could have provide that level of support within the established response criteria.

The issue as to whether or not this was a *feasible* mission for US military forces depends on your perspective. The JTF met the tactical and operational requirements of the mission. Our short term, tightly focused mission statement ensured success by providing measurable objectives and goals, that were clearly within the capability of the deploying forces, and specified a clear cut exit strategy prior to the beginning of the operation. This is not to say we "fixed" the strategic problems of Rwanda however. Our efforts were not directed at making the Hutus and Tutsis like each other, or

even work together toward solving their nation's many problems. Our task was to address immediate life support needs and help set up the infrastructure for future internal healing. A review of the available after action reviews leads me to the belief we made creditable progress to that end.

The *acceptability* of this mission for our military is also debatable. While Secretary of Defense Perry stated the operation came in under budget and ahead of schedule, the question remains as to whether what we did had any real impact on the overwhelming problems of Rwanda—the ones they continue to deal with today.[48] In light of our limited objectives, and that the operation did not cost American lives, I see the cost as reasonable. Having said that however, given the enormous humanitarian needs of that region, I strongly feel Operation Support Hope was only a drop of water in a very large bucket. Our reactive "band-aid" approach to humanitarian crisis intervention must be replaced with a synergistic proactive global plan designed to prevent these incidents before they occur.

## Recommendations

There are a number of initiatives currently being studied in an effort to move the global community from a reactive posture to a more proactive mode with regard to future migrant/refugee relief operations. This is especially the case in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is the region most often thought of regarding future operations of this nature. However, Africa is not the only potential trouble spot.

There are also on-going or festering activities in Cambodia, South Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and Cuba, as well as many others regions and countries. The UN is actively engaged worldwide in either monitoring potential problem areas or coordinating support to migrants and refugees who suffer as a result of manmade or natural disasters.

The key to successfully handling migrant/refugee relief emergencies lies in the ability to detect the potential for such disasters and attempting to deal with the causal factors before they lead to, or bring about, the types of human tragedy witnessed in such places as northern Iraq and Rwanda. Numerous organizations, such as the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the US Committee for Refugees monitor potential hot spots and either recommend action for international participation or take direct action, as in the case of PVOs and NGOs, within the limits of their resources.

The US will continue to be involved in these type relief operations in the future. Our National Security Strategy calls for us to remain engaged with the rest of the world, pushing for the development of more market democracies while at the same time deterring and containing a wide range of threats to our country and our interest worldwide. The regional political disruptions and human suffering brought about by massive migrations of tormented people is a threat to our humanitarian interest, and under certain conditions, we will employ military forces to address the situation.

We recognize the military is not the force of choice for these operations but are often employed when civilian international organizations are not equipped to meet unique situational requirements (the mere size of the operation dwarfs their capabilities or hostile activity is present or anticipated). While the military may in fact possess the tools to deal with the crisis, the mere cost of using military assets is a limiting factor in future operations.[49] We must find a more cost effective way of doing business, limiting the use of military assets to only the most extreme of situations.

The US has other elements of national power that can be brought to bear in these situations. In the first place, the US does a very poor job educating the often times apathetic public as to the real issues involved in migrant/refugee emergencies. Trying to convince a middle aged farmer in central Kansas we have a "national interest" in Bosnia or Rwanda may be a hard sell, but it is an important one. The American public is an educated public, but they will often times respond to an emotional appeal, even if totally misleading. We must do a better job explaining to the Kansas farmer he will make more money selling wheat to a thriving market democracy than to giving it to starving migrants and refugees from a failed state. Public education is the key and I see this as the role of the Departments of Commerce and the President of the United States.

The economic strength of the US far exceeds even its global military power. Since NGOs and PVOs are recognized worldwide as being the most effective organizations for dealing with this type

disasters, the US should use its economic strength to help them achieve their objectives. Much of what they do is proactive or preventative, but is severely limited by the amount of financial assets and backing they possess. The US should assist more in financially empowering these organizations, allowing them to provide more extensive support to current and potential trouble spots. In this way we will get a better return on our dollars than when we send in the military after a preventable situation has gone bad.

The only way we, as a nation, can anticipate future global problems and react to them in a peaceful manner, will be to stay actively engaged with the world community through diplomatic efforts. However, the Department of State is having the same budgetary problems as the Department of Defense and, as a cost-saving effort, has closed a number of embassies and consulates worldwide. We should be doing just the opposite. We should be developing more contacts and opening more doors with our global neighbors in an effort to work closely with them in a peaceful dialog to further mutual interests. Sending in the military to assist in a humanitarian crisis we could have prevented is an indication of failed diplomacy. We must not allow this to occur.

My last recommendation applies to those situations when we do have to use our military forces to aid in humanitarian assistance operation. Our military forces need to know more about the relief organizations we are working with and the people we are trying to assist. Military leaders need more training on how international

government sponsored relief organizations, NGOs and PVOs are organized, equipped, and resourced so we can better integrate them in to our planning and execution. We need a better understanding of the cultural factors involved in providing aid to needy people to avoid the negative effects of well-meaning but misdirected assistance. The best way to do this is to expand our current foreign area officer program and ensure those involved in this program are equitably rewarded for their efforts.

## Conclusion

The intent of this study has been to review the role of the US military with regards to assisting in migrant/refugee relief operations. I have attempted to provide the reader with a broad understanding of why these incidents occur and what our historical involvement has been. I have also provided a brief introduction to some of the key global players, and made a few general recommendations to consider for future operations. It was not my intent to review all proposed "solutions", but rather, to provide guidance we must consider at the national level prior to providing relief in future operations.

Regardless of who "owns" the mission, the US military would be well advised to prepare itself. Without a clear overwhelming military threat to deal with, our armed forces have too many assets desperately needed in these type crisis. As has been the case in the past, we will not be able to predict or prevent such future opera-

tions. However, we can be assured our unique skills will be called on again to provide humanitarian relief for those in need.

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