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The Policies of Mercy: UN Coordination in Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Rwanda

by Antonio Donini

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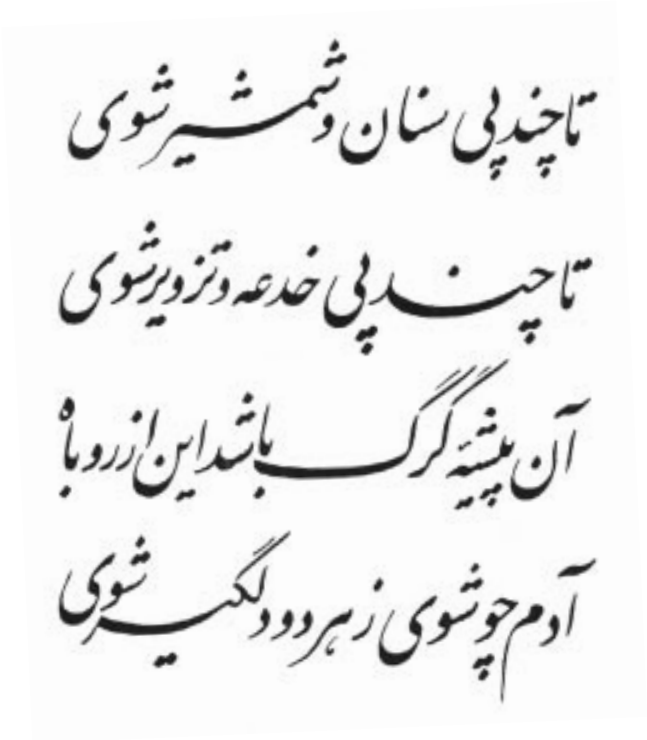

How long persist with sword and spear?
How long with fraud and deceit?
These are the ways of wolf and fox
Fully human you'll recoil from these

Khalili*

FOREWORD

Coordination of humanitarian action in armed conflicts is a hobby horse of governments, parliaments, and publics, which use its frequent absence to lambaste organizations that try to assist people in need. Yet, as one donor government aid official conceded in a recent meeting, realizing coordination as a goal is made more difficult, if not altogether impossible, by the actions of those who demand it most vociferously.

Touted by all but honored only in the breach, coordination is, in the grand scheme of humanitarian action, of anything but marginal or secondary importance. As this monograph indicates, coordination entails, beyond technical aspects that are comparatively easy to understand and address, a host of major organizational, administrative, budgetary, and political dimensions. Coordination is in sum about the optimal use of resources and accountability for them.

Coordination in its various aspects has been a recurring theme of the case studies published by the Humanitarianism and War Project over the past five years. In this study, Antonio Donini places in historical perspective the challenges reviewed earlier in such crises as the Persian Gulf, Central America, the former Yugoslavia, and the Sudan. Few readers will take issue with his thesis that as the complexity and multisectoral dimensions of crises have increased, so too has the challenge of coordination.

Humanitarian emergencies in the post-Cold War era have indeed become more politicized, more militarized, and more internal to member states of the United Nations than their predecessors of pre-Cold War or Cold War days. Consequently, coordination now requires not only orchestrating an array of humanitarian efforts but also situating them properly in relation to political and military factors and actors.

Donini examines two emergencies firmly rooted in the Cold War jousting of the superpowers—Afghanistan and Mozambique. His third case analyzes the recent eruption of the emergency in Rwanda, albeit with the international response situated firmly in the post-Cold War international political climate and affected by Somalia, Bosnia, and other recent experiences. He defines coordination and then reviews the dynamics and the results of "orchestrating the policies of

mercy" in each setting. The Afghanistan response precedes the creation of the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) in 1992; the Mozambique and Rwanda responses engaged DHA, which provided useful analytical comparisons.

The fact that he devotes considerable time to the Afghanistan experience fills a gap in existing analyses. In doing so, he confronts us with the longer-term perils of the politicization of humanitarian relief efforts, suggesting lessons that have not yet been learned, a casualty of diminished international interest as that civil war lost its strategic importance. While his treatment of the issues in Mozambique and Rwanda is more lean, he points us in the direction of other studies that provide additional information and analysis.

Publication of the study at the half-way mark in the first post-Cold War decade comes as the sequence of major emergencies continues, but with the prevailing ad hoc approach to coordination having less to recommend it. Some policymakers and practitioners certainly still approach every crisis as unique. However, more actors are persuaded that, despite idiosyncratic elements and the special chemistry of each crisis, there are recurring problems requiring more consistent and structured treatment. Certainly the broader international community has less tolerance for reinventing the humanitarian wheel with each new emergency.

The study presents the approaches taken by the international community, principally the United Nations, to coordination in each of the three settings. It seeks to identify lessons to be learned that will assist the progression from a "business as usual" approach to one more suited to the conflict-laden settings in which human need is increasingly set.

Donini's approach situates the UN's coordinating efforts principally in relation to UN organizations on both the political-military and on the humanitarian-development sides of the world organization. He highlights one of our project's recurrent findings: that the differential agendas, timetables, and personnel of UN peace operations and humanitarian activities seriously question the current penchant for integrating aid efforts into peace operations. Such integration may involve greater risks to the humanitarian enterprise than the practical benefits that accrue.

While focusing on the United Nations, Donini's analysis also accounts for interactions between the UN and the bevy of nongovernmental organizations that are a regular feature of major emergencies these days. The author does not raise the ultimate question that has surfaced in some of our other works: whether in internal armed conflicts the United Nations can be expected to serve as the focal point for orchestrating that broader constellation of humanitarian activities. That question, however, is one that readers may wish to ponder in following his review of the issues.

We are fortunate to have Antonio Donini lead us through an analysis of these three conflicts. As a United Nations official who served in Afghanistan in Operation Salam, he draws on his own personal experience as a practitioner in the 1980s. Serving more recently on the staff of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, he was able to take a closer look at Mozambique and Rwanda. During a sabbatical from his UN labors that he spent at the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies in 1994-1995, he was able to make return visits to each of the three countries. His text draws on new as well as earlier research and on dialogue with colleagues at Brown University.

As indicated at the outset, coordination is critical to effective humanitarian action. In previous case studies, the Humanitarianism and War Project has emphasized the contribution of lead agencies in orchestrating the policies of mercy. In Operation Lifeline Sudan, the United Nations Children's Fund played that role, as did more recently the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the former Yugoslavia.

The present volume offers an informed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the coordination effort in three major crises, the second and third of which placed the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs in a key role. We are pleased to share this monograph with our widening circle of readers. As with its predecessors, we welcome comments, which help to inform our ongoing reflection on the issues raised.

Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss
Codirectors
Providence
January 1996

Acknowledgments

This monograph is the product of a happy set of circumstances for which I will never cease to be grateful. After twenty years as a UN bureaucrat, I was fortunate enough to be awarded a nine-month study leave through the United Nations / Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) sabbatical leave program. The program has since been cut to three months and I was the last to benefit from the full period, which makes me feel a bit like a Mohican.

I wish to express my gratitude to the individuals and institutions that made this possible: Patrizio Civili, in the executive office of the secretary-general, who encouraged me to submit my application and agreed to my release; the joint ACUNS / UN selection committee and the UN Office for Human Resources Management for selecting me; the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies and the codirectors of the Humanitarianism and War Project, Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, who provided me with the congenial research environment and with the nickname of "UN bureaucrat in residence;" and the staff of the institute, in particular Sue Miller and Melissa Phillips.

Thanks are also due to Peter Hansen, UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, who was one of the initiators of the UN / ACUNS sabbatical program, and to his colleagues Shaukat Fareed and Ed Tsui for having given me the opportunity to travel to Rwanda and Mozambique as part of DHA "lessons learned" missions. Special thanks to Norah Niland for taking the initiative of launching these missions and for her solid advice and critical comments throughout the gestation process of this study.

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Though the responsibility for the final output is mine alone, I benefited considerably from the useful and often critical comments on the draft chapters and their revisions provided by Jarat Chopra, Cindy Collins, Chantal Lobato, Larry Minear, Barney Rubin, and Thomas G. Weiss. Larry's energy in refining the text and clarifying my often tortuous thought processes is most gratefully acknowledged. Ronnie Buenaventura helped with the typing of the draft at various stages and averted the consequences of a couple of near fatal computer crashes. Fred Fullerton and Amy Langlais saw the text through its final editing and layout.

Finally, a word of thanks to my family and especially to Violetta, who had to put up with my absences and who knows about humanitarian issues about as much as I know how difficult it is to grow up as a teenager.

Antonio Donini
New York, December 1995

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

As it struggles through the first decade of the post-Cold War era, the international community is confronted with an unprecedented increase in the number of internal conflicts and complex emergencies. With some 120 active wars and more starting each year than are ending, the world is a much less safer place than ten years ago. Never since the end of World War II has conflict-related displacement reached such levels. Fifty million refugees and internally displaced persons, or one in every 115 living human beings, require assistance. Tens of millions more do not show up on the statistics, such as the direct and indirect casualties of conflict and violent or forgotten crises. More than 90 percent of the casualties are civilians.

Respect for humanitarian norms, in particular for the fundamental right of victims to receive assistance, has in recent years been tenuous at best. However, 1994, the year of genocide in Rwanda, will be remembered as a watershed in the annals of brutality. The ruthless, sudden, and massive scale of the violence, the manner in which it was orchestrated and perpetrated, the fact that the international community was unwilling to prevent it, and that nothing has been done so far to address its causes or to bring those responsible for genocide to justice—all this has deeply affected the humanitarian community. Rwanda has challenged the very concepts of humanitarianism. The shadow of genocide is likely to have an important impact on how humanitarians look upon future crises, and perhaps even on the shape of the international institutions available to respond. Can neutrality still be the guiding hand? For many, a system that results in maintaining an equanimous impartiality between the victims and their executioners is in dire need of reform.

The end of bipolarity and the increase in the number of crises have fueled a parallel and, until recently, exponential growth in UN peace operations. The military have become a frequent feature in the environment in which humanitarian agencies operate. Working with or close to the military has not

always been easy, as cultural and operational differences have been the source of friction on both sides. This has had an impact on the activities of the UN humanitarian organizations, both at the institutional and conceptual levels, and on practical coordination on the ground. Despite efforts to reconcile political and peacekeeping goals with the imperatives of humanitarian assistance, there is still widespread concern among humanitarian agencies about the appropriateness, and the costs, of mixing soldiers and relief.

Thus, the context of humanitarian assistance is rapidly changing. The purpose of this study is to take stock, from a humanitarian viewpoint, of developments on the coordination front in complex emergencies, to analyze various models of UN coordination, to assess their strengths and weaknesses, and to identify lessons that can be learned from recent practical experience. The study draws on the experience of three discrete coordination situations, each with specific characteristics. Afghanistan is an emergency with roots in the Cold War, where there is an ongoing humanitarian program, a relatively strong UN humanitarian coordination body, and a very limited and separate UN political presence. Mozambique, also in many ways an orphan of the Cold War, saw the humanitarian coordination function as an integral part of the UN peace operation until that operation terminated, at which time the coordination function also ceased. In Rwanda, the large-scale humanitarian effort and the UN coordination mechanisms were largely separate from UN political-military presence. These three approaches should provide clues to the most effective mechanisms for orchestrating the policies of mercy, both in their own right and in relation to the political-military sphere.

Methodology

The material for this study was collected from three types of sources: a review of the recent literature on the countries and of UN documentation pertaining to the three coordination entities; interviews at headquarters and in the field with UN agency, donor, NGO, and government representatives; and field trips by the author to each of the countries. It should be

noted that while much has been written on the three countries from historical, economical, and anthropological perspectives, the literature on the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, and specifically on coordination, is very limited, particularly if one excludes internal UN and agency documents, which tend to be more descriptive than analytical.

Documentation is particularly weak in the case of Afghanistan. Journalistic accounts of travels with the mujahidin and analyses of the implications of the Soviet invasion and withdrawal abound, and scholarly publications also have concentrated on military and political issues. By and large, however, both have ignored the role of humanitarian assistance, despite the fact that this assistance was provided by western donors, first to NGOs and later through the UN, totaling several hundred million U.S. dollars a year for over a decade.[1] This gap is perhaps a reflection of the extremely politicized context in which humanitarian assistance was provided.[2] A special effort therefore was made to document the UN's coordination role in Afghanistan. This, and the author's familiarity with UN coordination in that country, where he worked in a humanitarian capacity, explains why this case study is more detailed than the other two.

The available literature on Mozambique is more balanced, perhaps because, unlike Kabul, access to Maputo always remained possible to Western researchers and journalists during the war years. The economic predicament of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) regime, which was forced to abandon its socialist ideals to secure the support of the West, the impact of donor-driven aid strategies, and the role of NGOs have been well-documented. Whether commissioned by donors or undertaken by independent researchers, studies on the peace process, the reintegration of demobilized soldiers, and the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance also have started to appear.

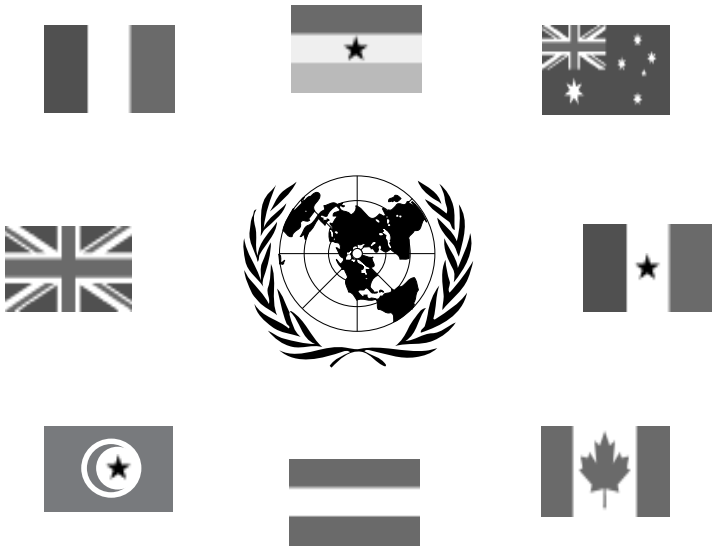
The tragedy of Rwanda has resulted in a veritable cottage industry of books and studies on genocide, its causes, and implications, but also in down-to-earth attempts to document and evaluate the effectiveness of the military and humanitarian interventions of the international community. The most ambitious of these is a multidonor evaluation study of emergency

assistance to Rwanda that is to be published in 1996.[3] The Humanitarianism and War Project also has a review forthcoming.[4] Comparing notes with the researchers involved in this and other studies was particularly helpful.

While the review of the literature provided important background information, the substance of this study stems from interviews and field trips to those countries. The author was fortunate to participate in a mission tasked to assess the effectiveness of UN coordination mechanisms in Rwanda and fielded by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations in September 1994. The mission traveled to Kigali, where it met with key UN humanitarian and political staff, government officials, UN system and donor representatives, ICRC, and several NGOs. It traveled to Beira and visited demining activities and projects for the reintegration of returnees in the southern provinces of the country. This mission resulted in an internal report for DHA.

Thanks to support from the Humanitarianism and War Project, the author was able to travel to Pakistan and Afghanistan in April-May 1995. In addition to conducting interviews with representatives of UN organizations, the European Union, donors, and NGOs in Islamabad and Peshawar, he visited Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kabul, and Herat, where he met with local authorities, UN organizations, and a cross-section of NGOs that were implementing UN- or EU-funded projects.

Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this monograph is current as of the date when it was collected, although an effort has been made to monitor developments since the visits. It should be clear, however, that the purpose of this study was to draw lessons of wider relevance to other coordination situations, rather than to provide a precise or up-to-date chronology of events in the three case studies.



Lifting Inhibitions

The context in which humanitarian assistance is being provided is rapidly changing. The wave of internal conflicts that has been unleashed, more or less directly, by the end of the Cold War and by the dissolving of the control mechanisms inherent in superpower rivalry is but one of the parameters that define the new environment where humanitarian actors are compelled to intervene. In many ways, it is intervention itself that should be seen as the new defining element in the post-bipolar world, rather than conflict, which of course existed throughout the previous era, whether in the form of wars by proxy or in resistance to superpower hegemony. Thus, recent years have witnessed a kind of double lifting of inhibitions that had been largely suppressed by the Cold War's rules of the game: the inhibition to wage war and the inhibition to intervene.

From Jaffna to Jalalabad and from Banja Luka to Butare, civilians are paying the heaviest price of contemporary warfare. They are pawns, hostages, and objects of conflict, if not the deliberate targets of violence. In such brutal internal conflicts, the traditional concepts of "military" and "civilian" tend to lose their meaning. The military often no longer take or accept instructions from political leaders. Looting is the corollary to warlordism just as violence against civilians is the corollary to the breakdown of even the smallest common denominator of the functioning of societies. The lifting of the inhibitions makes the contexts in which humanitarian actors provide assistance more volatile and unpredictable, as well as more dangerous. Armed bandits are not the best interlocutors with whom to discuss humanitarian norms and freedom of access to victims.

Humanitarians, too, have lost their inhibitions. The changed context has made humanitarian intervention, that is without taking sides (or, more precisely, taking the side of the victims), easier to advocate and more palatable for the international community (and for the purse-holders in donor countries). This context includes the frequent absence of visible or

understandable ideological stakes with which to identify it, but perhaps more importantly, it also includes the lifting of the shackles that constrained diplomacy in the Cold War era. It also has facilitated intervention of the military variety—with knights in blue armor—in support of humanitarian objectives. When major crises erupt, the issue is no longer whether to intervene but what form the intervention should take.

Thus, war and intervention in its various guises would seem to be the key characteristics of our confusing new world. Although these may well be the most visible innovations, other structural changes have accompanied the demise of the old order and the turbulent search for a new one, or at least the search for a road map for troubled times. The environment in which structural breakdown and emergencies occur, and the wider environment of North-South relations, has been radically changed.

To begin with, the international community, in its response to crises, has lifted many inhibitions concerning sovereignty. It is now clear that sovereignty is no longer sacrosanct if it ever was—in a world dominated by superpowers, respect for sovereignty was at best relative. [5] While the members of the international community have been loathe to codify criteria for intervention, in practice interventions have occurred that would have been unthinkable only a decade ago. Some interventions (as in northern Iraq) have been conducted over and above the objections of formal members of the international community; others (Somalia) simply have imposed themselves as the natural course of action in situations where the main elements of statehood had disappeared. In many ways, a taboo has been lifted: states are no longer reluctant to call a spade a spade, and the imperatives of *Realpolitik* no longer discourage the denunciation of human rights violations.

As for the market mechanism, it is debatable if it has ever suffered from any inhibitions. Its limits were dictated by ideological containment and political barriers rather than by moral qualms. It is interesting to note the increasing extension of market mechanisms to areas protected up to now: that is, North-South relations, and in particular providing humanitarian assistance. For 45 years, overseas development assistance and its junior cousin emergency aid were well within the

realm of States.[6] The end of the Cold War emboldened Western governments, and the dysfunctionalities inherent in working through governments have led to the application of Reagan-Thatcherist precepts in conducting international affairs. The invocation of privatization and of civil society often function as a smoke screen for the imposition of political conditionality. The result has been an extraordinary explosion of private sector intervention in the Third World, most visible in the provision of relief.

Perhaps the most significant innovation in recent years is how much in weak Third World societies NGOs have taken over state functions in areas such as health and education, as well as the bulk of the delivery of relief services in faltering or failed states. For better or worse, a contract culture has emerged, with media and dollar-hungry NGOs competing for the finite resources of the international community. In structural and ideological terms, "development" has ceased to function as a mobilizing myth for the Third World. The only remaining operating system is the market mechanism and for many it is the rewards of economic "trickle-down" that are mythical. In practical terms, the NGO community in the North has benefited significantly from the fact that with the end of superpower confrontation the imperative of political state-to-state support between governments North and South has all but disappeared. It remains to be seen if this is to be equally beneficial for the victims of conflict, for local coping mechanisms in crisis-affected countries, and for longer-term self-reliance.

A related trend that is shaping the environment in which humanitarian actors operate is how extensively resources and attention are being diverted from development to relief. The exponential growth of disbursements for humanitarian assistance is unquestionable: from barely $845 million a year in 1989 to close to $5 billion in 1995.[7] With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the number of claimants for development aid has increased dramatically as the Newly Independent States got in line for development assistance.[8] Donors, however, tend to focus on the short term. Funds are generally available to save lives in emergencies, but seem to be more difficult to come by for recovery and the reconstruction of livelihoods. Moreover,

the combination of privatization and diversion of development resources to relief is likely to mean more political conditionality rather than less. For the donor, the reorientation of budgetary priorities toward quick-fix emergency relief provides an easy way to be selective and flex political muscles when apportioning the residual development assistance funds. Here again, past inhibitions are gone.

As for the United Nations, for a brief historical moment, both member states and the secretariat felt free to fly. After 40 years, the heavy lid of the Cold War was lifted and the organization's *langue de bois*[9] gave way to more open forms of expression. The ideals of the founding fathers seemed to come to life after decades of formalism. During the year that preceded and the two years that followed the publication of the secretary-general's *Agenda for Peace* in June 1992, much seemed possible. Until then, UN regimes for peacekeeping, human rights, and humanitarian and development activities had been kept in separate if not watertight compartments. The Security Council, when not deadlocked by crossed vetoes, dealt with security and not with humanitarian questions. But issues suddenly refused to remain in neat compartments. The new wave of emergencies became complex, mixing the political, the military, and the humanitarian. For a brief moment, a new world order seemed within reach, leading Northern leaders to believe that crises could be treated with more or less coherent and integrated approaches to problem-solving. The interventionist approach became the new gospel; this implied that the humanitarians should jump aboard the moving train. After failure in Somalia and quagmire in Bosnia, a more sober (and even somber) approach seems to prevail, as evident from the secretary-general's *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* (issued in January 1995). The enthusiasm for peace operations peaked in 1994, when a record number of 80,000 blue helmets were deployed. Extreme caution is likely to be exercised in the future.

It is with these contextual considerations in mind that this study looks at the coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex crises. The changes for the humanitarians have been both qualitative and quantitative. The escalation of needs has provoked a quantum leap in the response capacity of the

international humanitarian brigades. But it is the qualitative changes, especially the implications of working in conflict situations, that are the major defining factor in the new environment. Under the simpler regime of the Cold War, humanitarian actors in internal conflict situations were few. Only the ICRC and a handful of NGOs were able to circumvent sovereignty and work in areas controlled by forces hostile to recognized governments. UN organizations were almost exclusively confined to government-held territory where they worked with or through the official channels. Working cross-border into rebel territory or cross-line in and out of government areas was out of the question. Working on both sides, despite the practical problems this entails, has become the norm rather than the exception, even for the UN. This has subjected UN relief organizations to many new problems, ranging from negotiating access for staff and relief commodities with warlords and de facto authorities to working with or alongside the military. Humanitarian space often has been difficult to safeguard. For UN staff, mostly unaccustomed to working outside government frameworks, the learning curve has been steep and the price paid high.

The Conceptual Framework

As already noted, this study is primarily about coordination, a term that is much used, abused, and misunderstood. Few knowledgeable persons would dispute that the effective provision of humanitarian assistance requires that duplication, waste, and competition among agencies be avoided. However, agreement on the institutional, administrative, and operational dimensions of coordination is another matter. Some observers would argue that emphasis on coordination adds a bureaucratic layer that hinders the speedy response to humanitarian needs or results in "coordination for the sake of coordination." Others call for strong leadership, clear functional responsibilities, and a "coordination as management" approach. Given the decentralized nature of the UN humanitarian system, the best that can be obtained probably lies halfway between command and consensus. For the purposes of the discussion here, we adopt the following definition of

coordination used elsewhere by the Humanitarianism and War Project:

> Coordination is the systematic utilization of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include: (1) strategic planning; (2) gathering data and managing information; (3) mobilizing resources and assuring accountability; (4) orchestrating a functional division of labor in the field; (5) negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities; and (6) providing leadership. Sensibly and sensitively employed, such instruments inject an element of discipline without unduly constraining action.[10]

In simpler times, it was axiomatic that UN agencies would coordinate their particular functional sector of competence. When crises were seen primarily as one-dimensional, there was less of a need for multisectoral coordination. If the problem was one of refugees—for instance in El Salvador in the early 1980s—UNHCR was in the driver's seat. If the problem was drought and famine—as in the Sahel—the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF bore the brunt of the relief effort. In some cases, when there was a clear need to provide leadership to a joint UN effort, one organization would be designated as "lead agency," for instance UNICEF or WFP during certain phases of the effort to provide assistance to victims of conflict in insurgent-held territory in southern Sudan.

In exceptional cases, because of the magnitude of the problem (famine in Ethiopia in the mid-1980s) or because of specific political considerations (UN relief operation on the Thai-Cambodian border) "special" coordination mechanisms were established. Although more or less effective in addressing large scale humanitarian needs, these entities were basically ad hoc, built around the specific requirements and characteristics of the crisis with minimal effort or perceived need to systematize or institutionalize procedures, either in the

given crisis or for replication elsewhere. Two good examples of special coordination entities that "reinvented the wheel"[11] are the United Nations Border Relief Operation on the Thai-Cambodian Border (UNBRO) and UNOCA, the coordination entity for Afghanistan. Two prominent UN personalities who also played a role in these examples were Sir Robert Jackson, who headed UNBRO, and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, former head of UNOCA.

The need to systematize UN coordination arrangements for the provision of humanitarian assistance started to be felt acutely only in recent years. The failure of the UN system to mount a rapid and coordinated response to the exodus of refugees from Iraq into Jordan in early 1991 triggered serious debate within the donor community, and ultimately led to the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 46/182 in late 1991 and the establishment in 1992 of the new UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs. At the same time, the realization that the international community was confronted increasingly with a new type of complex, conflict-related emergency in which humanitarian agencies began to interact for the first time with UN-supported peace operations reinforced the perceived need for coordination.

The magnitude of the problem of humanitarian coordination is illustrated by a simple comparison. In the 1970s and 1980s there were only one or two major emergencies, mainly those that were one-dimensional (i.e. drought or refugees), which needed to be addressed each year and required the establishment of a special coordination body for humanitarian assistance. Typically, in the mid-1980s, these would have been UNBRO and the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa. Ten years later, the number of complex emergencies requiring UN coordination entities exceeds 15 in most years.[12] Another telling indicator is the number of persons displaced by conflict. The tally of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased from approximately 12 million in 1983 to about 50 million in 1995.

The Coordination Package

Forging a working agreement of "coordination," as applied to emergencies requiring large-scale humanitarian assistance, has proved a complicated and time-consuming undertaking. The establishment of DHA and of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)—in which all UN agencies involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance are represented, as well as ICRC, the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the major NGO coordination bodies—has facilitated a process of policy review and clarification of roles and responsibilities. Definitions of key concepts such as "simple" and "complex" emergencies have been agreed upon as well as terms of reference for humanitarian coordinators in the field. Definitional work and policy clarification, however, are ongoing processes that are likely to continue to occupy interagency consultations for years to come. This notwithstanding, it would seem that the modalities of coordination in complex emergencies now can be identified more easily.

Generally speaking, coordination situations fall into the following broad categories:

- coordination by command—coordination in which strong leadership is accompanied by some sort of authority, whether carrot or stick;

- coordination by consensus—coordination in which leadership is essentially a function of the capacity to orchestrate a coherent response and to mobilize the key actors around common objectives and priorities. Consensus in this instance is normally achieved without any direct assertion of authority by the coordinator;

- coordination by default—coordination that, in the absence of a formal coordination entity, involves only the most rudimentary exchange of information and division of labor among the actors.

Given the present state of play in the UN system, coordination by command is currently not a realistic option. Carrots

and sticks are not acceptable elements in a coordination mechanism. Donors and UN organizations appear to be hostile to the notion that a coordination body should have at its disposal any sizable amount of unearmarked funds as well as the authority to disburse or redistribute such funds to implementing partners. As the case of the UNOCA experience in Afghanistan will show, considerable resources initially were put at the disposal of the coordination body, which was somewhat of an anomaly in the annals of coordination. The other studies will demonstrate, however, that a small, even minimal, amount of resources can go a long way in facilitating the work of coordination in the field. Coordination cannot rely solely on personalities, goodwill, and intellectual leadership. The availability of resources, and in particular of some locally usable funds, provides some much needed oil for the coordination process.

In most recent complex emergencies, DHA has exercised what has been described as coordination by consensus. It should be pointed out, however, that the quantum of consensus seems to vary over time. In Rwanda, it was high at the breaking stages of the crisis, when all actors turned to the DHA coordination office for information and advice, but started decreasing shortly thereafter as UN agencies and NGOs established their presence on a surer footing. A similar situation occurred in Afghanistan, where the need for active coordination ebbed and flowed with the fluctuating levels of insecurity in the country. In Mozambique, the strong UN political presence somewhat overshadowed DHA's coordination role in the humanitarian arena. Again, the consensus tended to shrink with time. Coordination by consensus, the studies indicate, may be a process of diminishing returns.

Probably some coordination by default would occur even if DHA or another designated coordination body did not exist. UN organizations and various NGOs would at least share information and attempt to avoid duplication. However, the case studies and experience elsewhere clearly point to the significant advantages of a common framework for identifying priorities and for agreeing on a division of labor, whether at the operational level in the field—between humanitarian partners at headquarters—or for mobilizing resources and interaction with the donor community. From this perspective,

the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), which was formalized with the creation of DHA, has resulted in a significant and visible improvement in the collective organization of the international community's response to crises.

Perhaps the best way to describe the role of DHA in the three situations discussed in this study—and elsewhere—is as an advocate and facilitator. Advocacy involves the ability to provide a global vision of the problem, intellectual and strategic leadership, and the capacity to engage in humanitarian diplomacy. At the international, national, and local levels, DHA provides the linkages and the necessary interaction with the political and, where relevant, the peacekeeping, human rights, and other components of the UN effort. Improvements are still required, especially to ensure that the various actors within and outside the UN system fully understand the mandates of the humanitarian agencies. Also, the improvements ensure in all but extreme circumstances (that is, when UN actors operate without the consent of the warring parties under Chapter VII of the UN Charter), that assistance is provided on the basis of a humanitarian consensus of all parties involved. Even under Chapter VII operations, however, DHA must ensure that the victims are the priority and that humanitarian space is safeguarded.

Being a facilitator implies that DHA, which normally has no direct operational responsibilities, provides a framework and a range of services (outlined below) that allow humanitarian relief agencies to operate under the best possible conditions. It does so even where it has been given operational responsibilities, as for demining and the internally displaced in Afghanistan. Wherever it functions, DHA supplies the software for coordination to occur.

The reluctance to utilize a common software has by no means disappeared, either in the wider international humanitarian community or among UN relief agencies. Individual agencies, whether UN organizations, bilateral donors, or national and international NGOs, often have their own agendas. Host governments and / or local de facto authorities may be in favor of a strong coordination function. In an ideal scenario, governments should be responsible primarily and be provided with the resources for coordination (while UN organizations

would maintain only secondary coordination mechanisms). In failed states, this is obviously not possible. Yet even in conflict situations, outside intervenors and coordinators should be aware of the need to preserve and nurture local and national coping mechanisms.

The case studies show that the roles of the coordination entity vary from situation to situation and evolve over time. These roles also are not known sometimes or deliberately misconstrued. Across different situations, some standardization of key functions and procedures is taking place (in particular through the IASC). More needs to be done, however—perhaps through the development of a "package" or "turnkey" approach to coordination—by clearly identifying the functions and services that DHA can and should provide and developing the capacity to make these available.

Based on the case studies experience, the typical coordination "package" of services entails:

(a) a clear definition of the mandate of the coordination entity and of its interactions with the other humanitarian and political actors involved in emergencies. Ideally this should be published in a booklet and widely distributed. It should summarize humanitarian policy and procedures and include the standard terms of reference of the UN humanitarian relief coordinator, of special representatives of the secretary-general (SRSGs) and other key UN players (e.g., the UN force commander), and a narrative description of how these functions interact;

(b) a clear definition of the essential services that DHA and its field offices can provide. While activities would vary from situation to situation, these might comprise:

- overall advocacy (including humanitarian diplomacy at the political and human rights level);
- leadership and strategic planning in cooperation with other humanitarian and political actors;
- the preparation of consolidated appeals for resources;

- interagency coordination at the headquarters level, liaison with donors and other actors;

- consolidated reporting on the use of funds;

- monitoring and ex-post facto evaluation.

(c) a clear definition of the "coordination package" of services to be made available in the field. Typically, the main functions and services to be performed by DHA in-country, so that the wheel need not be reinvented each time, are:

- gathering and dissemination information, preparing situation analyses;

- a capacity to remain one step ahead in understanding what is going on in the country and to ensure that the humanitarian dimension forms part of a comprehensive unitary UN approach to the problems of the country, and, when required, to the spill-over of the problem in neighboring countries;

- liaison with the government and de facto authorities at the central and local levels in order to facilitate the work of UN agencies and NGOs;

- focal point for security clearances and security information in liaison with the UN designated official for security;

- a forum for information-sharing, strategic planning, and, where appropriate, crisis management for UN agencies and NGOs;

- a forum for joint programming on specific sectoral and geographical issues;

- monitoring and reporting, e.g. preparation of consolidated reports on the evolution of the situation every three or six months;

- a network of field offices in the key areas of the country where a local liaison and coordination presence is required;

- the latest communications technology for the UN agencies and NGOs.

(d) a clear understanding of how these services can or will be provided (i.e. in-house vs. turnkey agreements with specific donors).

(e) a clear definition of the type of staff, including the mix of UN and non-UN staff, with model job descriptions for the functions and tasks to be performed on the ground.

Map by Gregory Kazarian.

PART TWO: CASE STUDIES

AFGHANISTAN: HUMANITARIANISM UNFETTERED

To Hedayatullah Ahmadi
who believed in coordination,
and Tony Bullard,
who believed in Afghan resilience.
True humanitarians,
may their memory live on.

Humanitarian assistance to the victims of conflict in Afghanistan spans the 15-year period that saw the demise of the Cold War order and the emergence of a new world disorder. The starting point is the December 1979 Soviet invasion. The bloody struggle that ensued left more than one million—mostly civilians—dead. It produced one of the largest exoduses of population since World War II, resulted in massive devastation of the physical infrastructure and social fabric of the country, and, ultimately, the near total breakdown of functioning state structures. Midway into the period, the Geneva Accords of April 1988 opened the way for the Soviet withdrawal and for the launching of an ambitious UN humanitarian assistance program. The end of the story, sadly, is still open. In 1992, the Soviet-supported Najibullah regime crumbled, riven by internal shifts of allegiance and weakened militarily. The common objective of the resistance and of its external backers had been achieved, albeit by default rather than by military victory. However, the glue that kept the various mujahidin parties and forces more or less together in an untidy alliance immediately dissolved.

Long before the term gained popular usage, Afghanistan had started exhibiting all the features of a failed state. With the fall of Najibullah, what little remained of the state of Afghanistan disintegrated. A new phase thus began in April 1992 when the *jihad* against the Soviet invaders and their local puppets gave way to a brutish struggle for power, the stake of which was the capital, Kabul. Shifting alliances, the prevalence of ethnicity over politics, and the seemingly inextinguishable

supply of weaponry have taken a heavy toll. In the last two years, more people have died in Kabul than in Sarajevo—some 15,000 deaths, mainly civilian, have been recorded. The southern half of the city has been reduced to a pile of rubble. More than 300,000 of its inhabitants have been forced to flee and seek refuge in makeshift camps near Jalalabad. Those who remain face the hardship of an intermittent economic blockade, frequent artillery and rocket assaults, and the constant dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance, which make reconstruction a perilous undertaking.

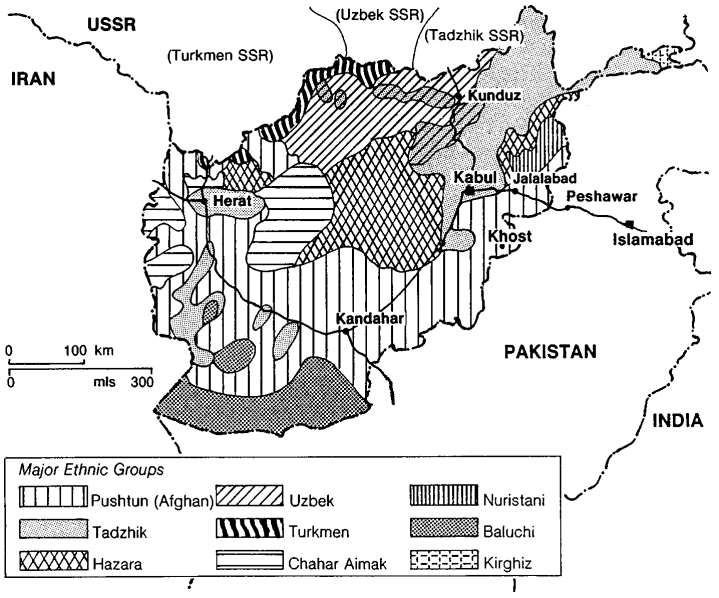
As the fighting for Kabul continues—even in failed states the "capital rule" applies—it obscures the startling reality that large parts (perhaps 80 percent) of the country are experiencing a period of unprecedented stability. Two thirds of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and a slightly smaller proportion of those from Iran, have returned to their homes. Conditions in many parts of the country are propitious for rehabilitation and recovery and much is going on, whether spontaneously with local resources or with outside help. Although a semblance of normalcy prevails in these areas, the future shape of Afghan society and of the balance of power therein is a question mark.

War is still very much on the agenda. The recent wave of bloodletting (1994-1995) is what remains of the state and its symbol, the capital, but it is also about a new deal in the distribution of ethnic cards. Indeed, fighting is mostly limited to the fault lines between ethnic groups. The relative strength of these has been altered by war and displacement. Most of the refugees in Pakistan were from the majority Pashtoon ethnic group, whose kings and leaders had ruled the country for 250 years. For them, taking refuge among their cousins on the other side of the Durand Line, which separates Afghanistan from Pakistan (see map), and which they considered largely symbolic in any case, was the logical thing to do. For the main minority ethnic groups—Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, whose geographical base is in the center and the north of the country—it was more difficult to migrate to Pakistan or Iran, where for ethnic and linguistic reasons they also would be likely to feel ill at ease. These groups therefore became numerically stronger in relative terms and took advantage of this new reality to

challenge the claim of Pashtoon supremacy in running the state.

Alliances were not stable. Sudden and opportunistic shifts have occurred, but a new picture is emerging. On the one hand, there is an increasingly fragmented tribal Pashtoon belt in the Afghan provinces neighboring Pakistan, where clan-

Ethnic Distribution in Afghanistan



Source: Olivier Roy, *The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War*, Adelphi Paper 259, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1991): 7. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

and tribe-based alliances seem to ebb and flow.[13] On the other hand, more homogeneous ethnic groupings inhabit the less tribalized central and northern provinces. Language also seems to have become an important defining factor. Kabul itself, a largely Pashtoon speaking city before the war, appears no longer to be part of the Pashtoon belt: war and population movements have turned it into a Persian-speaking Tajik and

Hazara city, (perhaps explaining why Pashtoon commanders have had little qualms about rocketing it from the surrounding hills).

The net result of this changing landscape is the possible implosion of Afghanistan as a unitary state.[14] It often has been noted that until the late 1970s Afghanistan was a tribal society in which the state was in only nominal control of the countryside.[15] However, while state structures were tenuous and control was certainly nominal, provinces were not independent principalities. Limited and increasing interaction did occur before the war through patron-client relationships, tax-collection, the gradual extension of a national educational system, and the building of roads, dams, and other infrastructure.

Fifteen years of war have changed dramatically the context of these interactions. Behind the manifest war to oust the Soviets was perhaps a more profound struggle between tradition and modernity. This was the struggle between the closed, traditional power structure of the *khans* and the *maliks* (traditional tribal leaders and landowners) who felt threatened by the Westernized and Sovietized elites of Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, and, to a lesser extent, the other cities. Before the war, the country was opening up through foreign investment, infrastructure development, and technical assistance projects. Traditional power structures and culture slowly started to evolve. The *jihad* against the Soviets and the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime papered over the dialectics of tradition and modernity. The first acts of resistance resulted in the destruction of thousands of schools and administrative buildings, and the killing of hundreds of teachers. The symbols of communism were being attacked, but one also can argue that this was fundamentally a rural revolt against urban threats to the functioning of a tribal society.

Another dimension needs to be added to this complex picture. Communism, or national-communism as it might more appropriately be called, is no longer a variable in Afghan politics and society. As a program for change, it has now been replaced by its mirror image: the quest for an Islamic fundamentalist revolution. The programs of the two opposite revolutions had much in common: a strong role for the state, a

centralized and detribalized society, a more or less coherent ideology, and even a "vanguard" party. The leaders and cadres of both PDPA and Hekmatyar's Hezbi Islami, the most radical and the most ideologically structured of the Islamist parties, come from the same socioeconomic background: detribalized, urban, middle-class, and Pashtoon.[16]

Against this background, one thing is certain: picking up the thread of development and nation building where they were left off before the war is out of the question. The traditional leadership of the rural areas—tribal aristocracy and old landowning families—has been displaced. New and competing elites are emerging: local commanders of the resistance, traditional clergy, and educated middle class activists of the Islamist parties. Moreover, language (Pashtoon vs. Persian), religion (Sunni vs. Shia), and, of course, ethnicity are powerful vehicles of segmentation of society. This bleak picture is accentuated further by the combination of the Kalashnikov culture that has now ruled Afghanistan for 15 years and the poppy culture that has thrived on the lawlessness in large parts of the country. Finally, the destabilizing effect of external involvement in Afghan affairs, not least through the provision of humanitarian assistance, needs to be understood to fully appreciate recent history and its implications for the future of the country.

The roots of the humanitarian assistance programs in Afghanistan are planted firmly in the Cold War context. Before the Geneva Accords of April 1988, UN agencies were confined to providing humanitarian assistance to refugees in Pakistan and Iran and development assistance through the Kabul government to areas under its control. The strictures of superpower rivalry did not permit otherwise because it was out of the question for UN development or relief agencies to work officially in mujahidin-controlled areas. At the time, the only agency to work quietly and officially on both sides was the ICRC, which carried out its traditional medical and protection activities. NGOs had a freer hand, however. Encouraged by western governments and by the emotional reactions of public opinion to the Soviet intervention, ad hoc committees on Afghanistan—with constituencies in countries such as France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Germany,

etc.—were established in the early 1980s and started operating cross-border from Peshawar providing assistance, (particularly medical) to mujahidin held areas. The double absence of UN agencies and of NGOs with impeccable relief or development credentials was a distinguishing feature of the beginnings of the cross-border humanitarian effort. Another unique feature was how much assistance was provided through, and to, military commanders. Thus humanitarian assistance in the early and mid-1980s was parallel to and became inextricably linked with U.S. covert operations and, to a lesser extent, of other western governments to provide military assistance to the mujahidin.[17] It is in this peculiar context that the UN initiated activities to provide and coordinate humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict.

UNOCA: A New Approach to Coordination

Soon after the Geneva Accords of April 1988, a major coordinated assistance program, Operation Salam, was launched by the United Nations. Sadruddin Aga Khan was appointed coordinator by the secretary-general and a special entity—the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA)—was established with its headquarters in Geneva. An appeal was launched for over a billion dollars. At a pledging conference in New York in October 1988, several donors made large and sometimes unearmarked pledges totaling some $900 million. The USSR surprised the international community by pledging the equivalent of $600 million in kind, while Japan pledged over $100 million. The hopeful expectation at the time was that, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, a military or political settlement would soon be in place, refugees would return, and reconstruction could begin in earnest.

Although peace remained elusive and the refugees in neighboring countries did not return, UNOCA and the humanitarian activities that it coordinated continued to attract substantial donor attention during the next two to three years. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War dramatically changed the equation, however. Afghanistan

edged off the international community's radar screen, reflecting both declining strategic interest of the country and frustration with the continuing civil war. Nevertheless, UNOCA's coordinating functions were felt to be sufficiently important and successful for this body to be maintained, despite the decline in international interest and funding.

UNOCA, or UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan) as it is now called, is currently the longest standing UN body for the coordination of humanitarian assistance in a protracted crisis situation. At the time of its establishment, it was an institutional innovation. Previous efforts in similar settings had been coordinated either by a lead agency drawn from the ranks of UN organizations or by a special UN program with direct operational responsibilities (such as UNBRO, the UN Border Relief Operation on the Thai-Cambodian border). Seven years later, UNOCA/UNOCHA, remains a unique framework that has introduced original operational concepts and modalities, and has facilitated the delivery of large-scale humanitarian assistance to a war-torn country. In recent years, as a result of the success of the demining programs that it manages, it has provided some of the preconditions that allowed for the return of over two million refugees from neighboring countries and has maintained the framework for a wide range of humanitarian and rehabilitation activities.

At the outset, the task of the coordinator was to orchestrate a massive international response to the needs of the five million refugees and over one million internally displaced persons expected to return home, and to start the reconstruction of the devastated country. The original mandate of UNOCA was:

(a) the central coordination of the various components of the action undertaken within the UN system on behalf of the secretary-general;

(b) the monitoring of operations in the context of an integrated UN program of humanitarian and economic assistance while implementation remained the responsibility of the agency concerned;

(c) discussion and negotiations with all concerned parties, when necessary, as the spokesman for the UN system;

(d) direction and organization of special tasks not within the mandate of any given UN agency;

(e) adoption of a flexible and geographically decentralized approach to meeting humanitarian and economic needs on the basis of a realistic assessment of implementation and absorption capacity area by area.[18]

The coordinator also was given a strong role in mobilization of resources. To ensure the development and implementation of a coherent relief program and the timely mobilization of resources, the secretary-general established an Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund to be administered by the coordinator. He also was entrusted with the corresponding duty to monitor implementation by agencies and to report back to donors on the use of funds.

UNOCA's task was by definition short term. UNOCA was established as an office within the UN Secretariat, with the coordinator reporting directly to the secretary-general. The initial appeal was for an 18 months period; subsequently, UNOCA was kept on a short lease of life that was never extended by the UN for more than one year at a time. Despite its temporary nature, the establishment of UNOCA, with its high-profile coordinator, was perceived as a threat in some parts of the UN system. The fact that it had, at least initially, considerable unearmarked resources at its disposal compounded distrust. Many persons, particularly in UNHCR and UNDP, felt that the appointment of a special coordinator was unnecessary and that the traditional "lead agency" approach would have been sufficient. That view was particularly strong in UNHCR, both in Geneva and in the field, and was the cause of much friction with the nascent UNOCA. Further friction resulted from the fact that Sadruddin Aga Khan, himself a former high commissioner, chose his key collaborators from within UNHCR and pressured UNHCR to release them.

UNOCA immediately ran into another problem that often has plagued ad hoc coordination bodies, as will be seen in

Rwanda: an ill-defined institutional framework. Difficulties arose with the UN administration in New York over the prerogatives of the coordinator to appoint and promote staff and to commit unearmarked funds. The staffing situation was a particularly serious stumbling block. Because of its time-limited duration, UNOCA could only offer short-term contracts to often inexperienced outsiders or rely on secondments from other UN agencies (with the individuals usually selected by the releasing agency rather than by UNOCA). The result was that often inexperienced staff in the field were trying to coordinate the work of seasoned humanitarian professionals from sister agencies. The lack of training and experience was a major handicap when setting up and administering new offices in the field. The turnover rate of UNOCA staff was also invariably high. In its first year of operation, the UNOCA field office in Kabul had at least four different heads. This did not raise UNOCA's standing in the eyes of its counterparts.

Moreover, the establishment of a UNOCA field presence was in itself a tortuous process. The initial assumption of the UN secretariat in New York was that UNOCA should have been a purely liaison and coordination entity situated in Geneva so that it could conveniently handle relations with donors and convene interagency meetings. At first, the administration opposed the idea of a field presence. When in-country presence seemed warranted, it then placed a number of bureaucratic hurdles in UNOCA's way.

In any event, there were sound political reasons for initially establishing the headquarters of UNOCA in Geneva. As in the case of Rwanda, placing the headquarters in the capital of a country at war would have given the wrong political signal for a humanitarian operation. Islamabad and Teheran were also out of the question. In reality, however, the senior management of UNOCA traveled only rarely to the field, and when they did it was mainly to Pakistan. When Benon Sevan, who was the secretary-general's political representative in Afghanistan and Pakistan, replaced Sadruddin at the end of 1990, the emphasis of coordination gradually moved to the field, and the office in Geneva assumed a liaison function. In the meantime, UNOCA offices headed by chiefs of mission had been opened in Kabul, Islamabad, Teheran, and later also

in Termez, on the border between the then Soviet Union and Afghanistan.[19]

When the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was created in 1992, UNOCA began to report to the head of DHA and no longer to the secretary-general. Although UNOCA initially remained a separate entity, it has since been progressively integrated into DHA. In 1993, its name was changed to UNOCHA. This change formalized the distinction between responsibility for the coordination of humanitarian assistance (UNOCHA) and for long-term rehabilitation (UNDP). That division of labor had become particularly nebulous at the time. UNOCA, at least formally, had retained responsibility for the coordination of economic assistance programs, a task that in normal circumstances falls within the remit of UNDP. Accordingly, subsequent UNOCHA appeals were limited to life-sustaining activities.

Institutional Relationships

UNOCA's institutional visibility evolved over time as the plight of Afghanistan occupied a smaller and smaller place on the international community's list of priorities. In 1988, when Afghanistan was at the top of the list, the coordinator was a high-profile, full-time advocate of the Afghan cause. This was particularly useful in fund-raising, but it also involved a considerable amount of advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy. In his trips to the region and to the capitals of donor governments, Sadruddin often was able to hold meetings at the head of state level. Although not always liked because of his contacts with the Kabul regime, he also commanded respect from the leaders of the resistance. His mandate precluded him from playing a direct political role, yet he was nonetheless an important political player, especially in the initial months when the concept of UNOCA had to be invented and "sold" to the political and military actors on the ground. Well aware that he could call the secretary-general on the phone at any time, the executive heads of UN agencies were cautious not to get in his way if coordination bottlenecks arose.

For the first two and a half years of UNOCA's existence, the purely political track arising from the Geneva Accords and

aimed at reaching a political settlement was kept separate from the coordination of humanitarian assistance. The secretary-general's personal representative (PRSG) operated principally from Islamabad, shuttling frequently to Kabul (and New York), while the coordinator was mostly in Geneva. There was little interaction between the two and no deliberate attempt to link the political and the humanitarian. In fact, it was deliberate policy to keep them separate: during this initial period of UNOCA's existence, the Cold War rule of watertight compartments still applied. In many ways, this policy was an advantage since it allowed UN relief agencies to develop programs on a need-driven, nonpartisan basis, an approach that has proved difficult in subsequent complex emergencies such as Bosnia and Somalia.

In 1991, after Prince Sadruddin's resignation, UNOCA and the office of the secretary-general in Afghanistan and Pakistan were placed under the authority of the same person. This obviously improved the levels of communication between the two offices, but from a substantive point of view, the two tracks continued to be separate, with no deliberate effort to incorporate humanitarian assistance as an element in the push for peace. From a humanitarian perspective, this was an advantage. Given the complicated and fractious Afghan political context, the only way for UN relief agencies to operate cross-border and cross-line and to avoid accusations of supporting one side was to stress at all times the neutral, nonpolitical, technical, and humanitarian nature of their work. Directly linking the political and humanitarian mandates would have made movements around the country and the delivery of assistance far more difficult and more dangerous.

As mentioned above, a parallel separation occurred between the humanitarian and the economic development roles of the UN. In 1988, the idea had been to link activities addressing immediate humanitarian needs to longer-term economic development programs. These are now separate. The first appeal was divided into two phases and included both immediate relief needs and longer-term reconstruction activities. The justification was that UNDP-funded activities were seen to be supporting the Kabul government and that it was therefore necessary to develop a mechanism for economic assistance

independent of government structures.

It should be noted that UNDP was ill-suited to operate in a civil war context. This was because both institutionally and in terms of the background of its staff its points of contact were with Afghan ministries in Kabul. In fact, the UNDP staff in Kabul initially viewed with great suspicion the activities organized cross-border into mujahidin-controlled areas by their UNOCA and other UN agency colleagues based in Pakistan. This suspicion reflected the lack of familiarity among the Kabul development staff with the work being done by the humanitarian agencies. Also a factor was institutional resistance to the idea that UNOCA should have wider coordination functions beyond the purely humanitarian issues. Also at work were Kabul and Pakistan biases because UN actors understandably were influenced somewhat by their relationships with their local counterparts. The suspicions eased gradually as contacts between both sets of UN colleagues increased. But the fact remains that the institutional relationships between UNDP and the humanitarian coordination structure were strained by a hazy division of responsibilities and occasional backbiting. Moreover, at least in the first years of its operation, UNOCA had considerable unearmarked funds at its disposal, while the UNDP development resources were essentially frozen, which further compounded the situation.

Such difficulties underscore the need for strong regional coordination in humanitarian crises that have a spillover effect in neighboring countries. When UN development agencies are unable to operate or their activities are dramatically reduced—as was the case in Afghanistan, and later in Rwanda—it makes sense for the humanitarian coordination body to perform such functions. This was the mandate that the international community had given to UNOCA, but it was one that the bureaucracy (both in UNDP and to some extent UN headquarters) was reluctant to acknowledge.

The security issue was an example of this. Normally the UNDP resident representative is the designated UN official for security. When cross-border missions began from Iran and Pakistan in late 1988, UNOCA was given initially the responsibility for the security clearance of missions to areas outside government control. In 1990, when cross-line missions were

initiated from government-held towns into mujahidin areas, responsibility for all missions to any part of Afghanistan reverted to the UNDP representative in Kabul. This was symptomatic of a wider issue, which was the unwillingness of the highest levels of the UN secretariat in New York, and of course in UNDP, to establish clearly UNOCA's overall coordinating mandate across the UN system in Afghanistan. While this system-wide mandate was readily accepted by the UN organizations working cross-border from Pakistan—which was also the seat of UNOCA's de facto main office—and to some extent from Iran, support among UN organizations in Kabul was lukewarm at best. Authority and leadership of a coordination entity are immediately sapped if agency partners put its role in doubt. This reinforces the need for a clear and accepted institutional framework.

An additional factor in the tension was that humanitarian agencies are more comfortable in conflict situations. ICRC in particular, but also UNHCR, are able to maintain a clear mandate and profile, as well as corporate effectiveness, whether dealing with governments or insurgents. Experience in Afghanistan confirms that UN development agencies are not institutionally at ease in working without official government counterparts. Interacting with nonstate actors—at best, de facto civilian authorities, at worst, warlords—is not something that comes naturally to UN officials who are accustomed to dealing with state bureaucracies. Kabul-based normal development programs and the emergency programs of the same agency being conducted cross-border from Peshawar or Quetta often had different reporting lines. An "us vs. them" attitude did not facilitate coordination. Sometimes Kabul-based staff were reluctant to meet or speak to their Peshawar counterparts for fear that this would jeopardize their relationship with the government. In the case of the World Health Organization (WHO), for example, the representative in Kabul reported to the WHO regional office in Alexandria, while the WHO Peshawar team reported to the emergency office at WHO headquarters in Geneva. When Geneva decided to appoint a medical coordinator to work both in government and in mujahidin areas of northern Afghanistan, the WHO Kabul representative, who did not favor working in areas

outside government control, made the life of his junior colleague so difficult that the latter was forced to resign.

Another complicating factor is that the dividing line between humanitarian assistance and development activities is not written in stone. It shifts with the nature and evolution of crises. In 1991-1992, when it seemed that peace was at hand, UNDP became more assertive in formulating and initiating rehabilitation programs. It appointed a fully-fledged resident coordinator in Kabul to replace its interim official and was poised to take over, and talks on an exit strategy for UNOCA were initiated. However, when the struggle for Kabul reescalated, and the system once again was confronted with massive needs for relief both in the city and for the exodus of the displaced persons fleeing from the fighting, the locus of coordination naturally shifted back to UNOCA/UNOCHA. With respect to the IDPs, UNOCHA at the time was even requested by UNDP and the agencies to become operational in setting up and managing camps near Jalalabad. The donors also manifested their preference. Despite pressures to transfer the reins of coordination to UNDP, they consistently chose to continue funding the emergency components of the appeals for Afghanistan such as food aid, demining, and repatriation, but were much more reluctant to respond to longer-term needs. When they did respond, it was by channeling funds through NGOs rather than UNDP. Donors indicated by their deeds rather than by their statements that a humanitarian coordination function was still required.

The Concepts

Operation Salam

In order to provide it a distinct image and a greater visibility, Sadruddin Aga Khan decided to give the inter-agency effort for Afghanistan the name "Operation Salam" (Operation Peace) and its own logo and flag with a calligraphic rendition of "Salam" in Islamic green. The UN and the agencies were not consulted on this choice, which, in fact, violated the UN flag code. Many felt that it was a mistake to shun the UN crest and UN blue. Since the Operation Salam flag also

bore a resemblance to the flags of some resistance parties, it created some confusion in the field. Despite the coordinator's wishes that they be used by all UN agencies, the Operation Salam name, symbol, and flag were rarely used in practice other than by UNOCA itself. The lack of consultation on these issues was one of the first causes of friction between UNOCA and its sister agencies. The deviation from the blue rule did not encourage a sense of ownership on their behalf. In any event, the UN has been more cautious since this experience: all subsequent coordination operations have used the UN flag, as does UNOCHA today.[20] UNOCA also tried to encourage the use of terms such as "Salam missions" for the first interagency cross-border assessment missions inside Afghanistan and "Salam Mobile Units" (SMUs) for the first attempts to establish a more durable presence in mujahidin areas. However, these terms also soon fell into disuse.

Humanitarian Consensus

This phrase was used to describe the agreement among all parties and groups in Afghanistan that humanitarian aid should be allowed to reach those in need regardless of politics and geography. During his first visit to Kabul shortly after taking office, the coordinator obtained the formal agreement of the prime minister that UN international staff would be allowed free movement in all parts of the country, including from neighboring countries, directly to areas outside government control. This was important because without such an agreement, it would have been impossible to convince the mujahidin and their political leaders to allow UN agencies to operate in their territory based on the UN's priorities and needs assessments (rather than submitting to local and political pressures as the NGOs had often done) and to move staff and commodities cross-line when it was more convenient to do so.

A significant breakthrough was achieved in 1990-1991. After much hesitation, UN teams comprising international and Afghan staff and having traveled overland from Pakistan, finally agreed to make contact with their UN colleagues in government-held towns such as Faizabad or Lashkargah.

While the latter routinely had been crossing the lines, it was psychologically more difficult for the Peshawar teams, who were suffering somewhat from "pro-muj" biases, despite the fact that the UN offices in the cities offered amenities such as warm showers and functioning toilets, luxuries unheard of in flea-ridden mujahidin bases. In any event, this reinforced the feeling among the staff and their Afghan counterparts that there was but "one UN."

Humanitarian Encirclement

The necessary complement to the "humanitarian consensus" was the principle that humanitarian assistance to landlocked Afghanistan should be delivered through all its neighboring countries. The concept was important but, for political and geographical reasons, little was delivered through Iran. The UN could use the most logical and cost-effective route, which meant that areas of Northern Afghanistan would be served by rail from Finland or Leningrad via the so-called "Salam Expresses" to Termez on the then Soviet-Afghan border and then by truck to Mazar-e-Sharif or even Kabul. There was initially considerable hostility from NGO and mujahidin quarters to the notion of assistance being channeled through the Soviet Union. This resistance weakened progressively as the UN was able to show that the northern routes were more secure and ten times cheaper than using pack animals over the Hindu-Kush mountain range. This route also ensured that areas of northern and western Afghanistan that had received very little or no assistance during the war years compared to the provinces bordering Pakistan obtained a more balanced share of resources. Indirectly, the encirclement approach also reinforced the feeling that all UN staff, wherever they were located, were all part of "one UN" program.

Zones of Tranquillity

In 1989-1990, when continuous fighting in many parts of the country limited the areas to which UN staff could travel, the coordinator promoted the idea of "Zones of Tranquillity" (ZOTs) to describe those areas that appeared to be safe for UN

staff to work there. The concept was not particularly well-accepted by UN agencies who resented that UNOCA should declare where they should work and was derided by the NGOs. The publicity involved in declaring an area tranquil was sometimes sufficient for it to become the target of unnecessary attention, igniting a flare-up of fighting. The concept was dropped quietly and replaced by a more flexible and effective approach to sectoral and especially provincial joint planning coordinated by UNOCA.

Adapting to Change

UNOCA/UNOCHA's coordination role ebbed and flowed. At the outset, given the profile and visibility of the coordinator and the respect he commanded in and beyond the UN system, UNOCA's role was much more than coordination by consensus. The coordinator had significant carrots at his disposal: direct access to the highest levels in the UN and the system; support from both superpowers and from the major donors; support from the Kabul authorities; benign acceptance by the mujahidin leaders; and continuing interest from the media. Above all he had resources, thanks to unearmarked contributions and from the Soviet contribution in kind, to an extent that has not been repeated since—perhaps purposely. Donors and agencies were wary of coordination entities that appeared to be too strong. In his first year in office, there were great expectations on all sides and the coordinator was the key actor. His prominence overshadowed even the profile of the political UN. This encouraged a certain arrogance of UNOCA staff vis-à-vis their agency colleagues and the NGO community. Relationships soured from time to time and were undercut also by the apparent aloofness of the coordinator, who seldom traveled to the field. This was tempered to some extent by UNOCA's ability to be ahead of the other organizations in the information and intelligence curve. The coordinator had made it a point of surrounding himself with some of the best experts on Afghanistan, including those with extensive experience and personal contacts in mujahidin areas, whom he deployed to lead the first "Salam Missions" to Afghanistan. For several years UNOCA's capacity to "break new ground"—

that is, to develop local contacts in areas as yet untouched by UN assistance—was an asset to the system as a whole. No other agency could fulfill this function.

However, as the presence and programs of UN organizations became more structured and as its resources shrunk, UNOCA started to lose its function of indispensable interlocutor. Some contributions to activities of individual UN organizations started bypassing the consolidated appeal process. Many European NGOs began receiving direct contributions first from the EEC and later the EU. In some sectors, in particular health, the EU became the de facto coordinating body, particularly for NGO activities conducted from Peshawar. UNOCA or UNOCHA, as it had then become, accordingly shifted the emphasis of its role to advocate and facilitator on general issues and to direct coordination of programs for which no other agency had a mandate (such as demining) or was unwilling to assume responsibility (the internally displaced). It also continued to provide important service functions such as a framework for the consolidated appeal and for reporting, the management of the UN aircraft, a 24-hour radio watch, and a network of staff houses around the country, etc.

Coordination in Action

Prior to opening the UNOCA office in Islamabad in October 1988, there was no field coordination of UN activities in Afghanistan beyond what the UNDP office in Kabul was able to do and that was limited to development activities within the shrinking continues of government-held areas. NGO cross-border activities from Pakistan (there were none from Iran) were self-coordinated, if coordinated at all. Many projects were implemented and monitored by remote control. Accountability was low on the priority list of most NGOs and their Western backers. Furthermore, there was no structured humanitarian interface for working with the resistance. Unlike other insurgent movements, for example the Eritrean and Tigrean liberation fronts that had relatively competent relief professionals and sophisticated structures for the provision of assistance through which the NGOs and even the ICRC had to

deal, the resistance parties and fronts based in Peshawar had no "humanitarian wing."[21] The first attempts of UN agencies to work cross-border grew out of their refugee programs. For example, after the Geneva Accords, UNHCR started to test the waters inside Afghanistan by mounting data collection missions and very small-scale rehabilitation projects implemented by NGOs in priority areas where it was expected that refugees would return.

The establishment of UNOCA provided a boost to these fledgling activities and raised considerable expectations. High profile interagency Salam Missions led by UNOCA were mounted to various parts of Afghanistan. These were followed by more technical missions where one could undertake detailed needs assessments and identify potential local implementing partners. To a large extent the UN agencies relied on UNOCA's capacity to identify appropriate contacts and open up new areas to UN assistance. The planning process and prioritization of areas to be covered and activities to be undertaken were by no means rational: as always much in Afghanistan depended on security, logistics, and access. Nevertheless, UNOCA established a forum, within which to act as an advocate and facilitator, to discuss sectoral and geographic priorities, often prodding some of its more reluctant UN sister agencies. In addition to the habitual functions of a coordination body—the convening of regular interagency meetings, briefings for donors and NGOs, networking with local authorities, the preparation of consolidated appeals and reports, the collection and dissemination of information on local conditions, etc.—UNOCA was able, especially in its early years, to play a more proactive role in the shaping of the overall humanitarian response than has occurred in similar situations. This was due primarily to its access to unearmarked resources.

The most distinguishing features of UNOCA's role are described in the following paragraphs.

The Soviet Pledge

The Soviet Union pledged 400 million rubles in kind to UNOCA. This was a sizable amount, valued somewhat artificially at the time at $600 million. The Soviet Union had never

before made such a large contribution to a UN operational program. Once the pledge was made, it became clear that the Soviets did not have a very clear idea of how they would fulfill it.[22] Commodities were released in Termez for dispatch to Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul, and elsewhere on the basis of negotiations between the Soviet government and UNOCA. The list was impressive: items ranged from heavy bulldozers and water pumps to powdered eggs and galoshes. Items in high demand, such as heavy duty trucks, blankets, or stoves, which could be absorbed easily by the relief effort, were sometimes delivered at an incredibly slow pace presumably because they were also in high demand at home. Other items, often unusable, arrived unannounced. The most useful commodities were those that could be monetized, such as large consignments of sugar and smaller amounts of wheat and diesel oil. These were sold by UNOCA to the Afghan government. The currency generated by these transactions gave UNOCA-Kabul the much needed flexibility to finance local projects. An interagency project committee was established to oversee their disbursal that was often combined with WFP food for work projects.

By the time the USSR ceased to exist, goods valued at only 150 million rubles out of a total pledge of 400 million had been received. However, this contribution and the innovative use of it provided a much needed balance to the contributions of the U.S. and Japan in particular, which initially could be used only cross-border from Pakistan, i.e. in the mujahidin-held areas. There were no such restrictions attached to the Soviet commodities. Had UNOCA not existed, the imbalance in international assistance favoring insurgent-held areas would have been even more pronounced.

An important drawback of the utilization of the Soviet pledge was the difficulty in maintaining accurate financial records. Commodities would arrive in Termez without accompanying documentation. Sometimes it was difficult to determine if the consignee was the Afghan government or UNOCA. Controls in the warehouses in Mazar were inadequate. UNOCA and agency staff distributed commodities as they saw fit, sometimes without even informing each other. Later it proved difficult to reconcile the records. The Soviet

pledge also was the source of protracted and animated exchanges with the UN financial services in New York that insisted that the contributions be recorded as income and centralized controls be exercised over their use. This led to more administrative hassles that culminated in allegations of mismanagement that were leaked to the press.

Despite these problems, the responsibility for managing the Soviet in-kind contributions enabled UNOCA to break new ground in northern Afghanistan. This was true both in terms of access to new areas and in devising innovative projects such as the "food for bazaar" scheme that involved releasing wheat from warehouses in government-held towns to private traders who made equivalent amounts available at an agreed subsidized price in mujahidin areas with a food deficit. The local funds generated by the scheme would then be used for community rehabilitation projects. For many months, well before WFP and the other UN agencies appeared on the scene, UNOCA had been delivering food aid cross-border from the Soviet Union and cross-line from Mazar to areas with a food deficit, which had seen little or no foreign assistance for over a decade.

A significant feature of the Soviet pledge was the provision that goods from the Soviet Union or from third countries could be transported through Soviet territory free of cost. UNOCA, with help from WFP, organized "Salam Expresses" that carried wheat and other relief commodities from Europe. As a senior official involved in this effort noted: "It is hard to imagine UNDP or UNHCR in a lead agency capacity shipping large quantities of food through the Soviet Union directly to mujahidin areas of northern Afghanistan." UNOCA's office in Termez on the border with Afghanistan was the first UN office ever in the USSR to be headed by a non-Soviet citizen. The same observer concluded that "It may not be an exaggeration to say that this operation, combined with a unique joint project to tackle a plague of Moroccan locusts, may have averted a serious famine in parts of the north."[23]

Afghanization

When the UN humanitarian effort got under way at the end of 1988, the only available implementing partners for the UN were government departments in the cities and a diverse assortment of expatriate NGOs based in Peshawar. One characteristic of these NGOs was their tendency to employ highly paid internationals to perform tasks that could have been carried out by Afghans. Because of the highly politicized environment and fears of undue pressure from mujahidin parties, it was also difficult for Afghans to become senior managers in NGOs. UNOCA therefore made it a policy to encourage and facilitate the development of Afghan NGOs. In 1992, it started registering Afghan NGOs as a service to UN agencies and also encouraged the establishment of an Afghan NGO coordination body, whose objective was to encourage local capacity-building.

Although the record has been checkered, the wisdom of promoting the development of local implementing partners became evident when many of the international NGOs started leaving for other theaters. In addition to the NGOs involved in demining already mentioned, large parts of the rehabilitation activities of the UN's Office of Project Services (OPS), FAO, and the food for work projects of WFP are now implemented by Afghan NGOs.

The direct UN encouragement to the creation of indigenous NGOs that were not fully "dedicated," i.e., exclusively funded by UN sources, led to the establishment of many semiautonomous hybrids. Some NGOs were deliberately established by UNOCA and later UNDP to act as implementing partners in humanitarian programs. Others were simply encouraged to come into existence to compete for UN resources. Others still tended to germinate spontaneously. UNOCA's policy of "Afghanization" resulted in the rather generous distribution of resources (cash, vehicles, office equipment) to nascent groups that were to act as implementing partners. This was done partly to encourage local self-reliance and a shift toward civilian reconstruction rather than military pursuits, and partly to undercut the hold that external NGOs had on certain areas. The idea was that the provision of such seed

resources was the ticket to be paid to enter areas where access for the UN was difficult and where humanitarian needs were not being met. This policy often ran into trouble because some of these nascent groups were "briefcase" or "vest pocket" NGOs with little or no implementing capacity. Others were not true NGOs at all but mere fronts for military / political entities. Institutional support to one group in one valley was naturally perceived as divisive and contentious by groups in the neighboring valleys. This situation was by no means unique to Afghanistan.[24] The record of Afghanization is mixed. While UNOCA developed creative ways to extend relief delivery, some of the mechanisms for doing so ultimately mirrored the politicized international NGOs. This was the exact opposite of what had been sought.

Demining

The fact that UN headquarters agreed that it should deal directly with the issue of landmines, which fell outside the mandate of the other UN agencies, was a godsend for UNOCA's visibility. More importantly, it led to the establishment of a unique and innovative program that is generally regarded as highly successful. The demining program transformed UNOCA into a major actor in cross-border operations and added credibility to it's overall coordination role. Moreover, thanks to the mine awareness training for refugees in Pakistan and to the visible evidence that minefields were being cleared in priority areas for refugee return, the program had a direct and positive impact on repatriation.

Given the impossibility of setting up a national or government structure to address the mine problem in a fragmented and war-torn country, UNOCA first set up facilities to train Afghan deminers in Pakistan. This was done with the help of military experts provided by several donor countries and with logistical support of the Pakistani army. The initial concept was that large numbers of Afghans needed to be trained so that they could clear their land and villages when they repatriated. Several thousand deminers—mostly former mujahidin combatants—were trained. The courses were taught by military experts provided by France, Turkey, the United States, Italy,

and other Western nations, and interpreted by the members of the Pakistani army. The initial community-based approach was revised later in favor of a more professional one where tightly supervised and disciplined teams would clear mines as part of a structured plan.

Rather than employing these deminers itself, which as a coordination body it was not mandated to do, UNOCA drew up the terms of reference and created from scratch several dedicated Afghan NGOs to implement the program. These organizations were fully funded by the UN and staffed by Afghans with a small number of expatriate consultants, mainly for planning, monitoring, and quality control purposes. Overall coordination was provided by UNOCA's demining program officers. This resulted in the creation of a Mine Clearance Planning Agency, which decided on the areas and the priority tasks to be performed and provided essential quality control. Several regionally-based mine clearance agencies followed, each responsible under the supervision of the planning agency for deploying mine clearance teams on the ground. Training in Pakistan started in February 1989. The first mines were cleared from Afghan soil in 1990 and work expanded rapidly. In 1991, as civil war still raged in parts of the country, the UN employed more than one thousand Afghan deminers through the dedicated NGOs it had established. By mid-1995, this figure had risen to over three thousand. The overall cost was in the order of $20 million annually.

UNOCA's mine awareness campaigns followed a similar approach. International NGOs initially were contracted to develop a strategy, publicity materials, and training modules. The emphasis was on raising the awareness of potential returnees in refugee camps. The program was subsequently "Afghanized," with several regionally-based organizations providing training and deploying mine awareness teams throughout the country. In government-held areas, this was done through the Afghan Red Crescent Society, but using a common methodology.

The demining program that continued as of late 1995 was still managed by UNOCHA from Pakistan. For various reasons, the Iranian authorities were reluctant to have mine clearance training activities conducted in their country. In

1994, an agreement was finally signed with the government of Iran for the establishment of mine awareness programs for refugees preparing to repatriate from Iran. Without a viable and acceptable government structure, the overall coordination of the program was provided by UNOCA/UNOCHA, with the understanding that this would be transferred to the government when conditions so permitted. This complex, ongoing, multimillion dollar program represents an unique effort to address a dramatically real problem and encourage as much national self-reliance as local conditions could carry. By and large it is considered a success story, whose luster is enhanced by the slowness of the UN to mount similar efforts in other conflict and post-conflict settings. It is the component of the UN Afghan program that the donors have funded most consistently and generously.[25]

Relationships with NGOs

When UNOCA arrived on the scene in Pakistan at the end of 1988, it found a flourishing cottage industry of cross-border programs implemented by a bewildering number of NGOs financed by a maze of bilateral grants from donor countries. This was an outgrowth of the massive involvement of NGOs in providing relief to refugee camps in Pakistan, often, but not exclusively, under contract with UNHCR, WFP, and other UN bodies.[26] Many NGOs started with refugee programs and then extended their operations to areas inside Afghanistan.[27] Most of these activities were carried out under a veil of secrecy both for security reasons and because it was technically illegal to cross the border. Some activities were the work of a shady cast of characters. Peshawar, and to a lesser degree Quetta, were rife with spies, adventurers with privileged inside connections, go-betweens claiming to represent mujahidin commanders, and resistance leaders anxious to convince well-meaning NGOs to come and work in their areas.

Cross-border activities suffered from a number of peculiar and sometimes negative characteristics that, to be fair, were often an extension of problems that had plagued refugee programs in Pakistan. First, the context was extremely politicized. The competing political agendas of the mujahidin parties

resulted in competing pressures on humanitarian programs. Assistance, even if it was labeled humanitarian, often supported the military effort of the mujahidin and was provided to or through military fronts. Delivery was conditional on the agreement of local Pakistani authorities who controlled border access and their counterparts in the Pakistani army intelligence (ISI) who chose the beneficiaries. It was difficult for an NGO to work without the sponsorship of a party or commander (and ISI decided which resistance parties should get what share of military, and, indirectly, humanitarian assistance).

An NGO working in valley A under the control of a commander belonging to party X was in a certain sense a hostage to the commander. Should the NGO decide to shift to neighboring valley B under the control of party Y, where perhaps the needs were greater, it might face expulsion, hijacking of commodities, death threats, or worse. NGOs also were often jockeying for position to get into the "good areas" under the "good commanders" who might be more effective as implementing partners or have access to a good public relations network extending beyond Peshawar to Paris, London, or Geneva. The result was all but transparent. NGOs sponsored (or were sponsored by) particular areas and specific commanders.[28] NGOs, even the most reputable ones, were heavily infiltrated by resistance party agents (and by the ISI). Most agencies concealed this, although it was understood by all that there was a kind of unofficial quota system for the hiring of Hezbi-Islami and Jamiat staff in particular.[29] Thus, cross-border assistance projects and the offices of the NGOs in Pakistan suffered at a minimum from political pressures and often from what can best be described as "Mafia terror tactics" as well.[30] Such pressures led to frequent "tribal" squabbles among NGOs. As one commander put it, mirroring what the NGOs said about the resistance parties, "It's so hard for the mujahidin to deal with the NGOs, because there are so many different ones. They are so fragmented, and they are always fighting among themselves."[31]

Second, accountability was sketchy at best. Donors were not particularly concerned with cost-effectiveness since one of the major objectives of their support was to assuage public

opinion back home and embarrass the Soviets. Certain countries, the U.S. in particular, prohibited their citizens from traveling inside the country, and some donors discouraged cross-border missions. These were difficult to organize and sometimes dangerous, given the risks of land mines, internecine mujahidin conflicts, and Soviet or Afghan army offensives. As a result, project activities were seldom monitored, and when they were, it was often by Afghan staff. Delivery was affected by conflicts among groups and by widespread corruption both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Food aid, medical supplies, and agricultural equipment often were looted or hijacked for ransom. One observer estimated that "less than half of the overall assistance designated for Afghanistan is believed to have gotten through to the intended recipients."[32] While this figure may be high and impossible to verify, it is true that the complicated web of complicity that united resistance party leaders—the ISI, Pakistani border guards, bona fide mujahidin and nondescript bearded bandits—resulted in siphoning off large quantities of commodities, especially food aid, which was easier to "monetize."[33] This writer can attest that spot checks in Kandahar province in the summer of 1989 showed that several education projects financed by a very major Western donor existed only on paper.

Relief agencies often kept quiet about abuses, fearing a backlash from donor governments and retribution from local groups or individuals. The situation improved somewhat when the UN agencies started working or contracting NGOs to work cross-border. UN international staff could visit project sites, but more importantly, since an increasing number of NGOs were relying on the UN for funding, it was easier to impose more transparent criteria for selecting projects, monitoring, and accountability. UN agencies themselves also were not immune to political pressures from resistance parties and Pakistani authorities to give priority assistance to a particular group or area. Refusing to comply often meant that access to priority areas would be denied. Hence, there was reluctant acceptance that certain entry "tickets" had to be paid.

Third, because the overwhelming proportion of refugees in Pakistan originated from the Pashtoon belt in the southeastern and eastern provinces bordering Pakistan, and because

their leaders (and their Pakistani godfathers) had a vested interest in supporting these areas and access was easier, the Pashtoon provinces received a disproportionate share of humanitarian assistance. It is within these provinces that NGOs developed their privileged relationships. It also was difficult for NGOs, and later the UN agencies, to extend assistance to areas such as Badakhshan (a mainly Tajik province that borders what is now Tajikistan) or the central provinces of Hazarajat. Despite the fact that these were chronic food deficit areas where needs were always high, they were inaccessible due to logistical and political obstacles. Even when UN aid agencies adopted a strict "no-leapfrogging" approach (i.e. moving from area A to area C without catering to the real or perceived needs of the commanders in area B), Pashtoon parties and commanders were not keen to see aid directed to their Hazara (Shia) or Tajik (Persian speaking) counterparts. This led to overserving some Pashtoon areas and to the emergence of a culture of dependency. Even routine tasks, such as cleaning irrigation canals or karez (underground canals), which normally would be undertaken spontaneously by the whole village, were left undone while "waiting for the Comiteh to come" (i.e. the NGO).[34]

It is against this background that UN agencies appeared on the scene at the end of the 1980s. Given the implementing capability of the established NGOs and their knowledge of local conditions, UNOCA and also UNHCR, which had initiated small-scale reconstruction projects in areas of potential refugee return, had little choice but to encourage UN agencies to work through them. At the same time, UNOCA strived to professionalize these implementing partners by insisting on more transparent criteria and procedures and by providing limited assistance to NGO coordination mechanisms.

These mechanisms among the NGO community and the UN have become more structured in recent years as a result of mushrooming complex emergencies and of the parallel growth in the number of actors involved in them. In complex emergencies and in situations of internal conflict, there is often no established government or its geographical coverage is limited. A variety of NGO coordination arrangements have been tested over the years. In some situations, the chemistry and

composition of the NGO community allow it to take the lead in coordinating its own activities and in providing a framework for interacting with the UN. In other situations, as in the case of Rwanda, the UN can provide a forum for UN/NGO coordination.

In the case of the cross-border programs relating to Afghanistan, there were 150 or so international and local Afghan NGOs operating out of Pakistan that developed a structured coordination framework with two regional bodies. These were the Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) for programs originating from the northwest frontier province and the Southwestern Afghanistan and Baluchistan Agency Coordination (SWABAC) for NGOs operating out of Baluchistan. There was also a coordination mechanism for Islamic NGOs, the Islamic Coordination Committee (ICC), but these agencies were weakened greatly when funds from the Arab world largely dried up after the Gulf war. The burgeoning Afghan NGOs soon established their own coordination mechanism, the Afghan NGO Coordination Body, or ANCB. Despite the great variety of these indigenous organizations—which ranged from vest pocket, to private contractor, to a few reputable groups—the work of ANCB never developed beyond the basic exchange of information.

ACBAR, however, was much more than a forum for exchanging information. There was a paid secretariat, a number of geographical and sectoral committees such as health, agriculture, and education, which to some extent ensured a better division of labor, and some coherence in procedures and standards such as local salaries. Many NGOs did their own thing, however, and the Islamic NGOs tended to ignore ACBAR altogether. Yet, when UNOCA appeared on the scene, it found a reality that it could not ignore and it did not attempt to take over responsibility for coordination of NGOs aggressively. In specific sectors, it even worked within frameworks established by the key NGOs. For example, in the agricultural sector, one NGO, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, had far more competence and staff, including former senior government technicians and managers, than the UN agencies whose staff were considered to be the new kids on the block. Although much of the funding came from EU and UN sources,

the Swedish Committee successfully mounted and coordinated a multimillion dollar locust and sunn pest control program in the provinces of northern Afghanistan, a task the UN was initially unable to do or even to monitor.

It is widely held that the appearance of UNOCA as a funding body resulted in some improvements in the quality of NGO cross-border activities. UN funding of NGO projects was conditional on some degree of professionalism and accountability. Transparent criteria for selecting projects were developed, and a UN interagency committee for reviewing project proposals was instituted. This made it easier to refuse requests from "truck-by-night" organizations and to insist on proper monitoring. UNOCA also held regular meetings with the NGO coordination bodies and gave them some institutional support so that they in turn could encourage more professionalism among their members.

Another factor that indirectly fostered a higher degree of professionalism was the appearance on the Afghan scene, after the Soviet withdrawal, of an increasing number of NGOs that were not particularly committed to taking sides in the Afghan conflict. Oxfam, for one, which had stayed away from Peshawar, sought contacts in Hazarajat and Badakshan where very few NGOs were working. It became the first NGO to put into practice UNOCA's notion of humanitarian consensus by accepting to fly into and work out of government-held towns under UNOCA's sponsorship. Oxfam was also the first to establish an office in Kabul in the spring of 1991 and to maintain good working relationships with both the government and the opposition. There was a hue and a cry among the Peshawar NGOs. But the merits of using the UN logistics in northern Afghanistan for storing commodities or releasing food, or traveling on a UN plane rather than spending weeks on bad roads or crossing the mountain ranges with convoys of donkeys, soon became self-evident. For some NGOs, working cross-line under UNOCA auspices provided an opportunity to distance themselves from the Peshawar biases and the web of conditionalities that Pakistan-based activities entailed.

The relationship between the diverse NGO community and UNOCA and other UN agencies was never easy. At first, the UN was accused of propping up the Najibullah regime,

then of having a Big Brother attitude when it became an important source of project funds. Reciprocal accusations of amateurism and lack of understanding of the complexities of Afghan society were rampant. There was fierce competition for resources among NGOs. Despite serious efforts to harmonize salaries for local staff, NGO salaries for Afghan project personnel operating out of Pakistan were often three to four times higher than the salaries the UN paid local staff recruited and working inside Afghanistan. Aid agencies and their staff were always on the lookout for competent staff and better jobs.

After the fall of Najibullah in the spring of 1992, when the enthusiasm of the first few weeks gave way to increasing despondency because the war had not ended and seemed unlikely to do so, the situation changed somewhat. Funding started to dry up for Western and some Islamic NGOs. UNOCA was able to raise new funds only for areas such as demining in which there was little room for foreign NGOs or for very specific programs such as the Kabul emergency program or running the camps for the internally displaced in Jalalabad. By the end of 1993, the U.S. had decided that Afghanistan was no longer of strategic interest and abruptly left the scene, creating formidable problems for its NGO implementing partners. As an example, USAID had been supporting hundreds of health clinics throughout rural Afghanistan. Supplies and some training were being provided by Management Services for Health (MSH), an agency that functioned more as a private contractor than as an NGO. This created a real emergency: supplies dried up, salaries were no longer paid, and activities no longer could be sustained. UNOCHA, UNICEF, and WHO were strapped for cash and in no position to pick up the slack. Disaster was averted only because European NGOs appealed successfully to the European Union for funds.

The point here is that in those areas where donors were supporting their national NGOs—especially in health, education, and agriculture—it was very difficult for the UN to raise new money. UNOCHA had lost its coordination edge in these sectors. Indeed, the local EU office in Peshawar took on a discrete role in coordinating the work of NGOs, particularly in the health sector, which was supported by UNICEF, WHO, and the governmental authorities. In this instance, even an

effective UN coordination mechanism was unable to cope with a sudden and sharp reduction in resources.

Working for Peace in Afghanistan?

Looking back on the past seven years of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan provided largely under UN auspices, and to the previous six to eight years of bilateral cross-border assistance implemented by NGOs, it is legitimate to ask: what has been the impact of this assistance, worth billions of the international taxpayer's dollars, on the country and on the society? Has humanitarian assistance, misguided or not, worked for peace or fueled the war?

At the beginning of this chapter, we noted that Afghanistan's future as a unitary state was by no means a foregone conclusion. Most observers would agree that increased fragmentation of Afghan society has been a tangible product of the war. Has humanitarian assistance played a role in this process, and has UNOCA / UNOCHA fueled or moderated it? The fact that NGOs often worked under the thumb of a particular commander undoubtedly has resulted in varying degrees of fragmentation at the local level.[35] Often NGOs, and subsequently UN agencies, failed to see, or chose not to see, the way in which relief activities were manipulated for political motives. Working with a commander or local *shura* (council) inevitably lent legitimacy to the local counterpart. The identification of the best counterpart or of the most representative authority in Afghanistan is a particularly difficult process in times of peace, let alone in times of war, when traditional elites and emerging warlords are fighting for power at the village or district level. NGOs and UN agencies could fill pages with examples of how apparent authorities were really only the first line of defense for the hidden ones, and of how easy it was for the organization eager to disburse its funds to settle for less watertight local implementing arrangements.

A graphic example demonstrates the point. To encourage return of refugees, the UN had identified repairing and cleaning irrigation systems as a key priority. Canal or *karez* cleaning projects therefore had a good chance of being funded. In one district of Paktika province, the UN, with NGOs as implementing

partners, had funded for two to three years of food for work projects for the cleaning of several dozen *karezes*. This program had been worked out through innumerable meetings with the local *shura*. Everything seemed in order until one day a group of angry—and armed—villagers stopped two UN vehicles and forced the unfortunate occupants to a protracted "tea-break" in which they were interrogated and threatened. According to the villagers, only one tribe's *karezes* had received attention, since the visiting aid workers had bothered to deal only with the *shura* of that tribe. Indeed, when the karezes were plotted on a map with the help of a GPS system, this turned out to be the case. Assistance had fueled discord in the community, but the coordination body and the implementing agencies were often slow in understanding this.

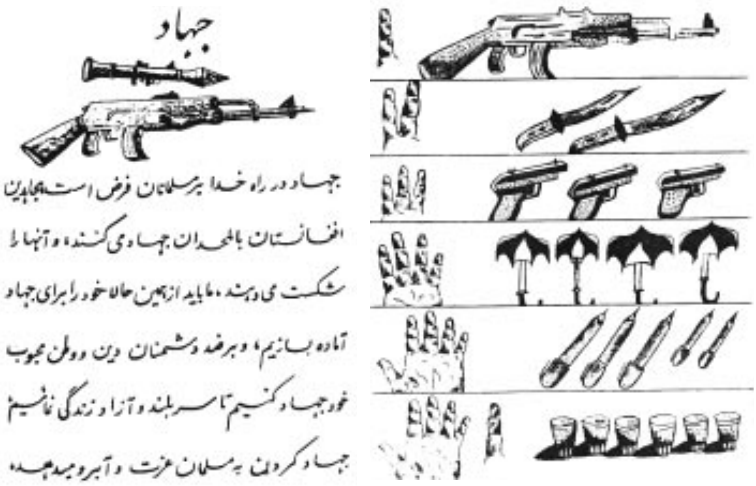
The politicization of humanitarian assistance has always been a strong factor in Afghanistan. However, its fungibility has not been sufficiently stressed. The provision of humanitarian assistance to military actors, in Afghanistan as in other civil war situations, frees resources that would otherwise need to be utilized to support the civilian population.[36] Food or medical assistance provided by the international community frees commanders to concentrate on "other" matters. Food aid, in particular, lends itself to manipulation since it involves a commodity that can be easily monetized or consumed by combatants. The liberal distribution of U.S. wheat to resistance commanders encouraged a disrespect for a commodity that is normally valued highly in Afghanistan. Strong pressures often would be put on UNOCA and WFP to provide food aid in response to needs that were debatable or directly linked to the war effort. On several occasions, the UN was asked by USAID or the ISI to preposition food in areas surrounding government-held cities such as Kandahar or Khost to lure the civilian population out of these cities so that the offensives against them could be stepped up. The UN invariably declined or at least resisted, but there was often a fine line to tread since the implicit message was "if you don't help us in Khost, we won't let you into Hazarajat," where the needs were greater.[37] Of course, the government was equally manipulative. Despite the fact that the UN had made it clear that assistance would be provided only on the basis of its own needs assessments, there

was often pressure to address the unassessed needs of certain groups in government-held towns if free passage was to be allowed for deliveries to mujahidin areas.

In any civil war, it is difficult to insulate humanitarian activities from partisan politics and the war effort. This was especially difficult in Afghanistan since a large part of the "humanitarian" community—most of the NGOs and their bilateral supporters—had in fact taken sides. Although the civilian population in the government-held cities suffered from the effects of the war, none of the NGOs based in Peshawar felt a humanitarian imperative to provide aid to these innocent victims.[38] Only the ICRC and, later, the UN agencies were consistently present on both sides. Indeed, spurring the UN agencies to be operationally impartial was a key function and success of UNOCA / UNOCHA. Many expatriate old hands employed by NGOs had "gone muj" in appearance, dress, demeanor, and even values. UN staff were not immune from a certain penchant to indulge in mujahidin war stories or occasional sessions of target practice.

More fundamentally, however, there was no conscious and substantial effort by the humanitarian organizations to promote a culture of peace. Because of the politicized environment, the humanitarians usually operated in a political space instead of actively promoting humanitarian space and respect for humanitarian values. While this course of action may have been understandable but not excusable during the years of the Soviet invasion, the absence of a peace discourse remained a distinguishing feature of the Afghan scene well after the Soviet departure. NGOs and to some extent the UN did not make reconciliation and confidence-building a manifest objective of their humanitarian strategies. The emphasis was on assistance to meet the basic needs of the victims or at best recovery and reconstruction. Priority went to physical infrastructure and the rehabilitation of the economic base, which are obvious prerequisites for a return to normalcy. But assistance stopped there.

In fact, there seems to be a kind of lingering taboo among humanitarians about raising the issue of peace. As far as this writer is aware, there has been only one attempt in the aid community to address the issue directly. In April 1994, at the initiative of the Norwegian Refugee Council and one of its



Afghan staff, an NGO seminar on peace and reconciliation was convened. The subject was felt to be so controversial that many NGOs declined to attend. The UN itself was represented at a low level.[39] The initiative, in the Afghan context, was undoubtedly positive and courageous, but has had little practical results. Another telling example of the permanence of the culture of war can be found in the primary school textbooks currently in use in Afghanistan.[40] The page reproduced below is representative of many others conveying the same message and thus needs no comment other than to point out that these textbooks were provided by the USAID-financed project of the University of Nebraska at Omaha and paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

Humanitarian activities have played into the fragmentation of Afghanistan society rather than promoting reconciliation, representing a failure of the UN system and of the international community as a whole. The Cold War had shaped the context of cross-border assistance, but this does not explain why, half a decade after its end, humanitarian actors have been unable or unwilling to tackle the consequences of this original sin. Aid organizations were equally not self-critical about human rights issues, including women's rights.[41] NGOs tended to apply double standards, chastising the Kabul government for its "massive violations of human rights" and sparing nothing to document them, but they remained largely silent

about the atrocities committed by the mujahidin—whether against government soldiers, fighters of rival groups, or innocent civilians. The problem was compounded by the official UN human rights machinery, which, with biannual trips of the special rapporteur to the region, did not seek any real interaction with the humanitarian agencies (or with the political UN).

Often NGOs—and occasionally even the UN—went out of their way to be accommodating on women's rights issues, accepting, without even testing it, the conventional wisdom that it was not possible to go against the grain of tradition in an Islamic society. In areas where the little education available was limited to boys, relief agencies felt that they could not do much to promote girls' education. Bans on expatriate women traveling to certain areas often were accepted at face value. In most cases, when the UN made it clear that it could not accept such discriminatory behavior and that women colleagues were just as essential in delivering humanitarian assistance as their male counterparts, the bans were lifted. Indeed, expatriate women often were considered "honorary men!" UN agencies and NGOs were similarly spineless in confronting the issue of poppy cultivation: the tacit ground rule was that it should not be explicitly raised. Although all UN-funded project agreements with NGOs contained a "poppy clause"—i.e. assistance would be withdrawn should there be evidence of poppy cultivation—it was seldom invoked.[42]

With the benefit of hindsight, the spinelessness of UN organizations and the lack of leadership in human rights issues by the UN coordinating body appears as a striking example of Cold War tunnel vision. Fortunately, UN coordination entities recently have become more aggressive on human rights issues in other theaters[43] as well as in Afghanistan.[44]

Other less visible changes are taking place. A three week visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan in the spring of 1995 by this writer confirmed how much freer the humanitarian actors felt to confront some of the issues mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. NGOs in particular were more open about the manipulation of humanitarian assistance. Four major international NGOs, without prompting, commented on how difficult it had been to sanitize their organizations from infiltration of resistance party activists and more generally from the rackets and threats of various external godfathers.[45] Enthusiasm for

the "muj cause" has definitively been weakened by the continuing infighting inside the country. Some of the more militant "pro-muj" NGOs had withered away for lack of funding. Generally speaking, the NGOs seemed to be a more professional community, with strengths and weaknesses similar to those that one would encounter in other emergency settings. UN agencies also appeared less defensive when discussing the impact of humanitarian assistance. Even government authorities and local leaders were much more candid in discussing the dangers and complexities of the situation.

This new reflective spirit was summed up by a senior government official who began by lamenting that both the political and the humanitarian UN were keeping the Kabul authorities at arms' length for fear of legitimizing them, and resisting calls to strengthen the presence of UN humanitarian organizations in the city despite the relative calm that prevailed. He concluded that such an approach had serious ramifications. "We Afghans need to be watched. We cannot be left to settle our problems alone" (alluding to allegations of human rights violations by government forces) "The UN has to be present here, even if it does not work directly with the government, it can work at the local level and promote peace at the local level."[46]

Positive examples of indirect peace building also deserve to be highlighted. Demining is an obvious success story. It has facilitated a return to normal conditions in many parts of the country and signaled that the time had come to return to peacetime occupations. Thanks to UNOCA's mine clearance and mine awareness programs, travel in many parts of the country has become easier and safer; large tracts of agricultural land have become safe to cultivate; innumerable irrigation systems are now in operation; and hundreds of thousands of houses in villages and towns have been declared free from mines and safe to reconstruct. Moreover, the physical evidence that demining was taking place in potential refugee return areas and the mine-awareness campaigns in the refugee camps were potent elements in the decision of refugee families to return home. The constant collaboration between UNOCA / UNOCHA and UNHCR on this matter contributed to the return of close to three million refugees to their country. Finally, because the program is run by Afghans, it can be

handed over easily to a national organization when the time comes. Moreover, all involved can be justifiably proud of the program, which is an additional important psychological ingredient in an eventually emerging culture of peace. In the minds of the ex-mujahidin who constitute the bulk of the 3,000-strong demining force and whose livelihood depends on finding and destroying mines, and in the minds of much of the civilian population around the country, *jihad* (holy war) against the Soviets has been transformed into *jihad* against mines.

Other indirect examples of "working for peace" also should be mentioned. The provision of improved seed and fertilizer as well as other agricultural needs, particularly pest control, had an obviously beneficial impact on life in the villages and eased the dependence on and tutelage of military commanders. The patient work undertaken by UN/OPS to identify and often create *shuras* at the district level, and to act as overseers and implementing partners for rural infrastructure rehabilitation projects, also had a similar effect, especially in areas where there was a total breakdown of civilian administrative structures.[47] Another example is the immunization campaigns that were coordinated by UNICEF and implemented by NGOs and local partners. These campaigns were predicated on a humanitarian consensus that the vaccinators could get through to target areas, regardless of politics, and that, if needed, a cease-fire would take effect so that they could carry out their work.

Peace, however, has remained elusive. One may ask whether the cause of peace could have been advanced by a more direct synergy between the political and the humanitarian UN. This is a difficult question and not only because the UN efforts to bring peace to the country have not been successful. In the wake of the Geneva Accords of April 1988, which had been the result of the work of the secretary-general and his special envoy, Diego Cordovez, a separate coordinator for humanitarian and economic assistance to Afghanistan was appointed. This reflected the prevalent understanding in the Cold War climate that the political and humanitarian tasks of the UN basically should be kept separate. These were brought closer together in a situation of proximity rather than integration when, after Prince Sadruddin's resignation in December 1990, the secretary-general put Benon Sevan in charge of both

the political and the humanitarian tracks. The offices remained separate and there was little cross-fertilization between the two components beyond basic exchange of information.

For the humanitarians, being associated with the rather distant UN peace process was more of a nuisance than an asset. It was often a painstaking process to convince mujahidin commanders, little versed in the subtleties of international diplomacy, that UN humanitarian agencies had to operate in a neutral and impartial manner and that their largesse would not be distributed according to political needs (for instance, as U.S. food was distributed). UN humanitarian staff were under instructions (to be fair, not always respected) not to talk politics with their mujahidin or government counterparts, despite frequent requests to do so. "Integration" of aid activities into the UN's political negotiations was not really an option. Being too close to the political negotiations would have hindered the movements of humanitarian staff and assistance cross-border and cross-line. Movement was possible only because all sides usually recognized that UN aid was being provided on the basis of a "humanitarian consensus."[48]

This is perhaps the fundamental lesson of UNOCA/UNOCHA. Much can be achieved in addressing humanitarian needs in conflicts if the humanitarian space in which the assistance is provided is clearly defined and purposely safeguarded. Entering into a political discourse with belligerents is a risky exercise for humanitarians. Negotiations on access to victims or the assessment of needs in conflict situations are best conducted by humanitarians based on humanitarian consensus rather than by UN political staff that may be perceived as having ulterior motives, i.e. the manipulation of humanitarian assistance to achieve political goals. Indeed, UNOCA/UNOCHA's ability to safeguard such humanitarian space throughout its seven years of existence may well be its single most positive achievement. Of course, the humanitarian agencies fully understood that the context was eminently political and that arm-twisting was to be expected, but it was important for the humanitarian UN to be seen as capable of resisting such pressures. Tying the delivery of assistance to support to the various incarnations of the UN peace plans would have altered fundamentally the delicate balance on which the provision of humanitarian assistance was predicated.

United Nations Map No. 3706, November 1992.

MOZAMBIQUE: HUMANITARIANISM UPSTAGED

Until the lions have their historians,
History will always be written by the hunters.

African proverb

Humanitarian assistance has been a fact of life in Mozambique since the early 1980s. During the early post-independence years, the FRELIMO government launched an ambitious program of modernization in pursuit of a socialist model of development. Despite some initial successes on the social and economic fronts, the government soon found itself hard beset by the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) insurgency[49] and devastated by unusually severe spells of drought.

The destabilization strategy of RENAMO and its external supporters took a massive toll. An estimated one million people died from the combined effects of war, famine, and displacement. Ninety-five percent of the victims were civilians. The infrastructure, including facilities such as schools and clinics, was deliberately targeted and shattered. More than 70 percent of all schools and 50 percent of all clinics were destroyed, forcing teachers and medical personnel to flee from the rural areas,[50] where much was reduced to extremely primitive conditions. Isolated settlements eked out a living without trade or modern manufactured goods, sometimes even without clothing, education, or health services, and suffered from constant insecurity.[51] The war involved widespread violence against the civilian population. Indiscriminate killings and mutilation of civilians were central to RENAMO's strategy of terrorizing the local population in order to force it to leave contested areas. Systemic rape of civilian women by RENAMO combatants have been documented.[52] Government forces were also responsible for indiscriminate violence, albeit on a less systematic scale.[53]

The combined effect of war and drought (1982-1983) led to the near collapse of the agricultural sector. Food became a

scarce or nonexistent commodity in large parts of the country, with the majority of the population bordering on famine. The destruction of rural society, the forced displacement of population, the requisitioning of food and labor by the warring parties, and the blocking and looting of relief supplies created a "wholly artificial food crisis" that persisted for the best part of a decade. Natural causes, such as drought and floods, played only a "secondary role in the calamity."[54] As a result, close to one third of Mozambique's 16 million inhabitants were uprooted, 4.2 million were displaced internally, and 1.5 million became refugees in neighboring countries. Mozambique had become one of the poorest countries in the world. In addition to the terrible cost that this represented for its population and economy, the crisis spilled over into the front-line states. The spillover was caused by the direct burden of the influx of refugees and their impact on the economy and the environment, and by the disruptions and lost opportunities for development caused by the war in Mozambique.

Faced with insurgency and economic collapse on the internal front, dwindling foreign aid from the Soviet bloc, and outright hostility from its southern neighbor, the FRELIMO government had little choice but to abandon progressively its socialist objectives. As of 1982, it started seeking the political and economic support of the West. Both were granted on condition that the government move toward a market economy. Mozambique joined the World Bank and the IMF in 1984; the process culminated in 1987 in a debt rescheduling agreement and the adoption of a structural adjustment program.

By 1991, when it was again suffering from a severe drought, Mozambique had become one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world.[55] Foreign aid accounted for an astronomical 78 percent of the GDP, or $57 per capita, in a country where the per capita GDP was only $80. In 1991 its debt burden was $4.7 billion, more than four times the country's GDP.[56] Some 60 percent of the population were living in absolute poverty and needed food aid,[57] while Mozambique produced less than 10 percent of its food requirements.[58]

Throughout the 1980s, various attempts were made to stop the war and end the suffering of the Mozambican people. South Africa and Mozambique signed in 1984 an agreement

terminating Pretoria's support to RENAMO in exchange for Maputo stopping all assistance to the ANC. While Mozambique complied, it seems that South Africa did not: RENAMO stepped up its campaign threatening large tracts of Tete and Zambesia provinces in 1985 and 1986. By 1987, as the war became more destructive, it was increasingly clear that neither side was in a position to win.

In the late 1980s, the first tentative steps toward a negotiated settlement were taken. With the help of neutral mediators, a series of preliminary contacts resulted in direct talks in July 1990 between the government and RENAMO in Rome. The Community of St. Egidio, an Italian Catholic NGO, offered the venue, the nonthreatening atmosphere, and the mediation that allowed the talks to come to fruition. A partial cease-fire was announced in December 1990, and in October 1991, the first protocol of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) was signed. Additional protocols provided the basis for a transition to a multiparty state, demobilization, and UN supervised elections. The final round of negotiations, with UN participation, led to the ratification on October 4, 1992 of the GPA by both parties.[59] On October 15, 1992, Aldo Ajello, the newly appointed SRSG arrived in Maputo, the first step toward the establishment of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the deployment of UN peacekeepers.

Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance: The 1980s

The international aid community had been involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance to Mozambique since the early 1980s. As the war widened, external relief actors dominated both the policy and the mechanisms for relief distribution. The number and influence of NGOs, which acted primarily as subcontractors for major donors, increased substantially. In 1970, there were seven NGOs operating in the country; by 1985, the number had grown to 70, and to 180 in 1990. It has continued to increase since.[60]

As the involvement of external humanitarian actors increased, the government's ability to control the content and form of their activities declined. Government structures had been established in the early 1980s to combat floods and

drought: the Department for the Coordination of Natural Calamities (DPCCN), which was part of the National Planning Commission, was responsible for preparedness, planning, and coordination of relief. However, as external funding increased, the struggle to control and influence its use intensified. This resulted in an aid war in which agencies fought to gain a dominant position and to use their funding as leverage on government policy.

The mushrooming relief program prompted reorganization on several fronts. In April 1987, the ministry of cooperation outlined a new structure for handling the crisis. Designed to avoid a division between relief and development activities, the National Executive Commission for the Emergency (CENE) included the ministries of agriculture, health, transport, trade, and defense and was chaired by the minister of cooperation. Day-to-day coordination was organized through the emergency operations committee, a forum that met weekly. It included donors, UN agencies, and NGOs, and was both a decisionmaking and troubleshooting mechanism.

A coordination forum was established within the United Nations system in 1984 under the responsibility of the UN resident coordinator. In February 1987, a more formal structure was set up. The UN resident coordinator was appointed UN Special Coordinator of Emergency Relief Operations and the office of UNSCERO was created. This new mechanism was staffed by UNDP personnel and was perceived as a UNDP entity. Like its predecessor body, it suffered from intense interagency rivalries that did not allow for consolidated planning, as each agency insisted on a lead role in its particular sphere of activity. The relief programs of both WFP and UNICEF, for example, had grown considerably and neither agency was anxious to acknowledge that UNDP, best known for its development credentials, could assume a coordination function. UNSCERO did, however, provide a forum for the coordination of relief and negotiation of access to RENAMO-held areas as the peace negotiations unfolded. In the months preceding the establishment of ONUMOZ (from July to December 1992), UNSCERO convened weekly meetings with the government, RENAMO, ICRC, and WFP representatives to review relief distribution schedules and related issues.

A review of the literature and interviews in Mozambique in December 1994 leave the lingering feeling that, during the years that preceded the peace accords, the extensive and deliberate use of external NGOs by donors as an alternative to government structures had greatly weakened such structures and, more generally, the indigenous capacity to cope with emergencies. Furthermore, the creation of parallel structures, many of which were temporary and ad hoc mechanisms, added to a level of dependency that would later complicate the difficult process of regenerating civil society and providing a social and economic environment conducive to development.

Donor concerns about corruption and disagreements with FRELIMO policy and political orientation were obviously part of the equation. These concerns were reflected in the donor community's concerted determination to be in charge and to ensure that the government adopted laissez-faire economic policies. The importance of ensuring that relief effectively meets the needs of intended beneficiaries is obviously a paramount consideration for donors. Effectiveness, however, is also linked to the long-term impact of relief activities. In the Mozambican context, political considerations shaped the process because the Cold War was not yet over. The systematic weakening of indigenous structures appears to have been one of the main features that accompanied peace consolidation. The establishment of UNSCERO, which the government did not favor since it felt that the existing government structure, CENE, should have been strengthened, was a relatively minor element in this process compared to the establishment of ONUMOZ. The various committees created by the GPA gave the donor community an unprecedented and active role in the management of the peace process and in policymaking. The "Group of 5" (France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, Portugal, and the OAU—Germany joined the group later) functioned, in the SRSG's own words as a "Standing Committee,"[61] which, through its weekly meetings, "managed the peace process." The role and functioning of the humanitarian component of ONUMOZ, i.e. the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination (UNOHAC), should be seen in this context.

UNOHAC's Establishment: A Tortuous Process

The talks in Rome emphasized political issues; they did not include a humanitarian window. It was July 1992 before both parties agreed to a "Declaration of Principles" on providing humanitarian assistance. The principles, which were developed with the assistance of UNHCR, WFP, and ICRC, stipulated that the provision of humanitarian assistance would be impartial, without discrimination, and that both parties would respect the safe passage of humanitarian goods and personnel. RENAMO and the government also agreed not to seek a military advantage from humanitarian operations.

Elements of the peace agreement that were of direct and immediate concern to the humanitarian community included the repatriation and return of refugees and of the internally displaced, the launching of a demining program, and the reintegration of demobilized soldiers. The return of those uprooted by war was closely linked to the issue of mines, which were a constant hazard to relief convoys and therefore to the return of displaced persons, and which delayed the opening up of RENAMO-held areas. The reintegration of war-affected groups also was linked to demining and how much basic services and infrastructure could be regenerated particularly in areas affected by returnees. In mid-December 1992, a special donors' conference was held in Rome, at which some $300 million was pledged for humanitarian activities.

From the outset it was clear that progress on the different elements of the peace agreement could not be achieved in isolation from one another. The need to maintain forward movement on all fronts was essential to the overall success of the mission. In October 1992, DHA dispatched an assessment team to Mozambique to determine modalities and requirements for humanitarian action and their linkages to the larger peace package. Other options besides the integration of UNOHAC into ONUMOZ were considered at the time, i.e. the establishment of a separate body for the coordination of humanitarian assistance, as had been done in Afghanistan or Angola. The decision to integrate was made ultimately in New York at the political level. The fact that UNSCERO was perceived as part of UNDP and the need for the recently constituted

DHA to establish its image may have been factors in the decisionmaking process.

Given the existence of UNSCERO, the need to reorient the bulk of humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation and longer-term development, and the relatively short life-span of ONUMOZ (initially one year at the signing of the peace accords), there are many people who felt that it would have been far more effective to strengthen UNSCERO and enlarge its mandate to incorporate the new elements of the peace process. A competing school of thought held that there was much to be gained from being an integral part of ONUMOZ, that it was difficult for those who had been in-country a long time (and working directly with the government) to suddenly begin working with RENAMO, and that UNSCERO was unable to overcome a long history of interagency rivalry.

With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that the advantages of integration were far smaller than the disadvantages, as we shall see below. Actually, integration existed only on paper: UNOHAC was treated as a distant cousin by ONUMOZ. Resources and services seemed to be poorly shared (for example, UNOHAC had trouble in getting access to ONUMOZ flights and office space outside Maputo, and was never provided with walkie-talkies or radio equipment). More fundamentally, ONUMOZ was institutionally and culturally a political operation that had little time for and little understanding of humanitarian issues and of the contribution of these to the peace process.

UNOHAC Objectives, Structure, and Staffing

UNOHAC was established in December 1992 and was immediately operational in the sense that it had a budget, core staff, and facilities, and was able to commence planning its overall program. UNOHAC described its task as "to oversee the international humanitarian effort called for under the General Peace Agreement..." and saw itself as "distinct from other UN agencies operating in Mozambique."[62] Its functions were:

- coordinate, with the government and RENAMO, emergency activities and humanitarian programs of UN agencies, bilateral donors, and NGOs;

- ensure speedy delivery of emergency commodities and eliminate duplication of effort;

- gather, evaluate, and disseminate information on humanitarian programs and provide regular updates of unmet and additional needs;

- maintain a comprehensive database on donor contributions, commitments, and expenditures and track the progress of programs;

- advise on the use of humanitarian aid with special emphasis on the reintegration of returning refugees, the internally displaced, demobilized soldiers, and vulnerable groups; and

- manage trust funds established by the UN for demobilization, demining, and for RENAMO.

With a staff of 24 international professionals in Maputo, 10 field officers and a number of UNV field assistants, together with 15 support staff, UNOHAC's organizational structure was not lightweight. It included an Assessment and Planning Unit, an Information Management Unit, a Field Unit that comprised the staff posted in the provincial capitals, separate units for Mine Clearance and Reintegration of Demobilized Soldiers, and the Director's Office, which dealt also with the management of trust funds. In addition, several organizations, including UNHCR, WFP, and WHO seconded staff members to the UNOHAC office.

While some functions performed by UNOHAC appeared to be well accepted and understood, such as the preparation of statistical information and regular situation reports on humanitarian activities, the coordinating and facilitating role of the majority of its field offices and other aspects were more contentious. As one observer put it, "The UN humanitarian

assistance program was dogged by controversy."[63] The very need for UNOHAC was challenged by many in the UN, donor, and NGO communities. Some people perceived the program as arrogant, overstaffed, bureaucratic, and ineffective. It also was seen as incapable of developing good working relations with the other players with little information exchange, few meetings, and decisions taken without consultation. The degree of animosity was unusual.

UNOHAC appeared to be over-staffed, compared to similar DHA operations elsewhere. This was perhaps due to the unusual fact that some 16 professionals posts were funded from the ONUMOZ budget (that is from assessed contributions, while normally humanitarian coordination offices are financed from extra-budgetary resources on which donors have a tighter control), a reality that will be difficult to repeat elsewhere. The secondment of agency staff to UNOHAC was also the cause of considerable problems since there was a basic misunderstanding as to their role. In UNOHAC's view, these staff were to become integral parts of the office structure rather than simply be liaison officers. The agencies resented this loss of control over *their* personnel. The individuals themselves were caught in the middle and placed in a very uncomfortable position. Decisionmakers need to take a more critical look at the criteria for the staffing and the functions to be performed by UNOHAC-type offices. In addition, they need to look at the recurring problem of the quality of staff, given the difficulties for temporary offices to attract the best available talent, which is often working for established UN agencies.

UNOHAC and Coordination

One of the most striking characteristics of the international community in Mozambique at the end of the ONUMOZ era was how much it was divided against itself. The one area of UN activity that was not persistently criticized by non-UN actors was the SRSG and his role in keeping the political process on track. The acrimonious nature of the aid community contrasted dramatically to the good will and openness of Mozambicans who had suffered a brutal war and incredible hardship. Their enthusiasm for peace and capacity for

reconciliation was a major factor in the many achievements for which the international community takes credit.

It was difficult after the event to determine why relationships within the aid community, and particularly among UN system entities, were so divisive. Also, what were the respective roles of personalities and of institutional issues in this? Clearly this situation had major implications for the way in which programs were organized and coordinated. This, in turn, had major implications for Mozambican authorities and the country's indigenous capacity. Not only did national planning authorities have to contend with an unruly aid community that had the leverage to define how resources would be utilized, they also often found themselves assuming responsibility for events that the government had a minimum part in shaping.

UNOHAC set about defining its task and organizing its program in a manner that indicated its awareness of the importance of capacity-building and moving out of an emergency-driven program as quickly as possible. The first months of UNOHAC were devoted to ascertaining the status of existing programs, additional requirements, the amount of funding available, and the intended use of pledged funds. As noted by UNOHAC's first director, consensus was needed "on where to draw the line between humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation along the development continuum."[64] Relief was defined as the distribution of food and nonfood relief items (such as clothing, shelter items, and household utensils) and rehabilitation as activities falling under the rubric of reintegration, which essentially meant the restoration of basic infrastructure and services. This definitional work resulted in the publication of the Consolidated Humanitarian Assistance Programme (CHAP), covering the period April 1993 to May 1994.

The extent to which meaningful impact on capacity-building could be achieved in one or two years as the country was undergoing a radical transformation is questionable. However, it was obviously important not to diminish existing capacities and to ensure that programs took account of post-UN peace mission realities when the level of external interest and support was likely to decline. A difficult balance between

short-term relief and longer-term rehabilitation had to be found. The perception by many people (donors in particular) was that especially in the initial months, UNOHAC spent excessive and precious time focusing on long-term needs rather than in addressing immediate needs related to consolidating the peace process. This preoccupation with development was perhaps due to the personal background of the first director of UNOHAC who had served previously as a senior UNDP official. In the words of the SRSG, "UNOHAC was too involved in the elaboration and planning of medium and long-term programs...(it) went beyond the scope one might consider appropriate, given UNOHAC's mandate and in the context of the time-bound plans for the implementation of the peace accord."[65]

Donors, multilaterals, and NGOs had a long history of operating in Mozambique, and from all accounts had little enthusiasm for a coordination entity that was generally seen as superficial and unnecessary and was resented for the overarching role it wanted to assume. Also, programs were somewhat conditioned by donor pledges at the Rome conference in December 1992. The activities that fell under the UNOHAC umbrella were those outside established mandates and regular agency activities, namely demining and reintegration of the demobilized combatants and IDPs. UNOHAC recognized the need to expand operations in RENAMO areas and to integrate and unify services as one of its important responsibilities. As in Afghanistan, however, donors picked and chose from items identified in the consolidated appeal. Certain sectors were more fully funded than others. The sectors in which UN organizations, UNHCR in particular, received priority attention were those that had clear-cut responsibilities and those in which the donors wished NGOs to be the main implementors, especially health. The impression is that UNOHAC was left with the residual sectors and meager funds to manage. The lack of consistency in the allocation of resources in emergencies is obviously not peculiar to the Mozambique setting.

Although UNOHAC literature strongly emphasizes reintegration and highlights the importance of regenerating basic services and agricultural production, the bulk of actual

programming in the sense of identifying and defining needs and formulating project activities was the direct responsibility of the agencies concerned. WFP considered itself responsible for all food aid requirements and maintained its own coordination arrangements with the relevant authorities. It is standard practice for WFP and UNHCR, for example, to develop a joint understanding of their respective roles in terms of the food component of a repatriation scenario. Similarly, much of the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure was undertaken by UNHCR through the organization of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). These were generally implemented by NGOs, with little or no involvement by UNOHAC in identifying needs and allocating resources.

In other words, coordination expectations were not met. Joint planning and coordinated programming regarding collective review by UN agencies of needs and allocation of resources to areas with the most acute need did not occur in Mozambique. By and large, agencies decided unilaterally on the shape and content of their programs in line with their immediate objectives. QIPs, for example, focused on areas with a high concentration of returnees, although the end product was designed to benefit entire communities.

It was difficult to establish why UNOHAC's role was perceived so differently from all sides. A universal theme among bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, and the NGO community was that UNOHAC had become an entity unto itself, particularly at the central level. UN agencies and donors repeatedly indicated that UNOHAC tried to usurp the role of existing mechanisms as if it were an agency with superior powers of authority vis-à-vis entities that, in their eyes, had the mandate and expertise to do what they had been doing and would continue to do after the demise of UNOHAC. Many parties felt that the role of such a short-lived coordinating mechanism should have been to act as a facilitator in bringing the various parts of the aid community together, to share experiences, and to develop common strategies for a program that was greater than the sum of the individual inputs.

Institutional Problems

The establishment of ONUMOZ at the end of 1992 was the first signal that Mozambique was finally emerging from a decade of devastation. Peace was within reach at last and it was clear to all actors that swift and effective action on the humanitarian front was an important element in the peace-building process. Such action was based on a clear understanding and commitment to common objectives and on the UN's leadership in mobilizing all the players toward the common goal. In Mozambique, as elsewhere, coordination by command in a humanitarian community—where mandates are sacred covenants and the prevailing organizational culture does not put a premium on working together—was not a workable proposition particularly in the absence of any significant carrots. Leadership and the capacity to orchestrate activities could be attained realistically only through facilitation and the performance of service functions for the UN system as a whole. As experience in Afghanistan and Rwanda indicates, the best form of facilitation occurs when participants feel that they are part of the process and have some sense of ownership.

This does not seem to have been the case in Mozambique. Consultation, quite apart from ownership, was a rare occurrence. For the most part, UNOHAC was seen to operate in an ivory tower and did not consult or contact agencies unless it needed information. At the central level, it appears that even though various attempts were made at the outset to institute formal consultative mechanisms between UNOHAC and the main UN humanitarian players, such as technical working groups and a Project Approval Committee, these were discontinued. It is difficult to ascertain why UNOHAC was unable to galvanize the humanitarian community in Mozambique around its mission. Unlike the normal practice in the Afghanistan, Rwanda, and in virtually all recent complex emergencies, there were no regular interagency coordination meetings and little formal or informal contact among colleagues. Moreover, there were neither regular meetings with donors nor with key NGOs, although such meetings had been regularly convened under the UNSCERO regime. At times it seemed that there

was a situation of reciprocal, deliberate, and not necessarily benign neglect between UNOHAC and the rest of the humanitarian community.

Things were smoother at the provincial level. The Provincial Humanitarian Assistance Committees (HAC), which met regularly and were chaired by the UNOHAC field officers, were one area of collaboration and consultation that was widely appreciated. Some actors felt that the HACs should have been in place before the organization of CHAP; others that the quality of the HACs varied. Nevertheless, there was much positive commentary on the role of HACs in trouble-shooting, identifying priorities, organizing a division of labor, and bringing the government and RENAMO into consultation at the operational level with the aid community. In this sense the HACs performed a most useful indirect peace-building function. In the provinces, relations appeared to be much more cordial than in Maputo. The reason for this was perhaps because the UNOHAC officers were younger, or because they were often much more experienced in Mozambican affairs than their "greener" agency counterparts. UNOHAC officers seemed to perform effective coordination and "focal point" functions. For once, there also seemed to be universal agreement on this among relief actors in Mozambique.

The need for close interaction between the humanitarian and the political-military aspects of the GPA were a major part of the rationale for making UNOHAC an integral component of ONUMOZ. However, as already mentioned, relations between UNOHAC and ONUMOZ did not appear to have benefited greatly from either the institutional linkages or the physical proximity of their offices. In the opinion of the wider UN and NGO community, UNOHAC was unable to exert influence on ONUMOZ nor extract additional benefits for the humanitarian actors that normally would have been made available elsewhere. Being completely overshadowed by the size of ONUMOZ and the prestige of the SRSG, UNOHAC was unable to push the humanitarian agenda onto center stage. As humanitarian needs were more ongoing than the immediate peace process, this had implications (as we shall see later) on the exit strategy of the humanitarian presence and on long-term recovery prospects. Within ONUMOZ, the perspective

that UNOHAC did not appreciate fully the facilitating role of humanitarian assistance in the overall peace process was quite prevalent. From the ONUMOZ perspective, UNOHAC was bureaucratic, too involved in paper work, and did not appreciate the need to accommodate the high political content of the ONUMOZ mission. The two entities seemed simply to coexist side-by-side: the SRSG did not appear to need or wish to bring UNOHAC senior management into the ONUMOZ internal decisionmaking process. UNOHAC was unable or was reluctant to avail itself of the prestige and visibility of the SRSG. Both parties probably would agree that there was very little synergy between the two components but would disagree on why this was the case.[66]

Both the government and RENAMO registered cautious satisfaction with UNOHAC while expressing concern about the long-term outcome of UNOHAC-initiated activities. One minister was especially vocal on this. He commented that "rivers of money were being spent to pay for outsiders" in the wake of the peace process. He regretted that UNOHAC was not more active in explaining the government's policies and concerns on the dependency issue to the donors. Another high-ranking government official expressed similar views: NGOs were being utilized by the donors "as an alternative to the government." It was going to be very difficult to "get these programs back." He felt that UNOHAC could have played an important advocacy role on this issue, but it had not. These comments must be seen in the context of the government's prevailing view of ONUMOZ as an overpowering political and military machine that had forced it to abandon some of its national prerogatives in the pursuit of peace. It felt particularly hurt because this process was predicated on the legitimization of RENAMO, which the government viewed as a movement of "armed bandits" rather than as an indigenous political force, and on the acceptance of a number of conditions for the running of the elections that were imposed from outside.

An example of a failed opportunity in which UNOHAC was unable to set the appropriate institutional stage and provide much needed leadership was the demining program. Unlike Afghanistan, where, as we have seen, the UN was

firmly in the driver's seat both in the conception and in the management of an original and extremely crucial program, in Mozambique the demining effort was plagued with conceptual, managerial, and administrative ills. Despite the fact that everybody recognized the magnitude, the high priority of the issue, and its direct bearing on the peace process, very little happened on the ground for many months. Without first demining, refugees and internally displaced would be reluctant to return, and it would be difficult to instill a sense of peace and normalcy. UNOHAC was unable to express a sense of urgency and leadership, but ONUMOZ did not seem interested in taking over the function. Bureaucratic delays and turf battles between the various concerned UN entities in New York and in Maputo compounded the problem.

The subcontracting process was tortuous. This involved moving trust fund monies from DHA in Geneva to UNDP in New York and selecting implementing partners, whether they were private companies such as Lonhro or NGOs such as Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) or the British charity Halo Trust. This took over a year. It was widely held that improprieties in the bidding procedures occurred.[67] The environment in Mozambique was complicated by the need to get both the government and RENAMO "on board" through protracted discussions in the cease-fire commission. It is also true that on this, as on many other issues, the donors were most opinionated: while UNOHAC favored the creation of a government entity that eventually would take over the program, the donors wanted at all costs to avoid the establishment of "another corrupt parastatal" reminiscent of the command structures of the previous Marxist era. They preferred to advance the cause of their NGOs and private companies who were vying for lucrative contracts. The net result was a major embarrassment for all concerned and increased risk for the population on the ground. Even the SRSG had to admit, repeatedly, that the mine clearance program had been a "disaster."[68]

It was not possible in the short time spent by the author in Mozambique to look in depth at the interactions between the humanitarians and the military. It did seem, however, that an opportunity for synergy had been missed. The UN military presence was both overpowering and narrowly defined.

Interviews with the field commander and his staff and observations on the ground indicated that the military appeared to be in a separate world, mostly well-protected in massive compounds with little interaction with the humanitarian community or the local population. When incidents occurred, such as the regular instances of criminal behavior by demobilized soldiers in the Beira corridor, they tended not to intervene or only within the strict confines of their mandate, with little sensitivity toward humanitarian needs. The UN civilian police component (CIVPOL) was in theory the one with the most potential for interaction with the humanitarian organizations because its role was to patrol and create a sense of normalcy particularly in the rural areas. There was, however, near unanimity concerning its ineffectiveness in terms of its ability to interact with the local populace, its problem-solving role, and its unwillingness to go out of its way to investigate alleged political or human rights violations.

Relationships with NGOs

In Mozambique—and the same is true to a lesser extent in other countries where major UN peace consolidation operations have been organized—the government was obliged to surrender temporarily elements of sovereignty as a condition for the peace process to come to fruition. As we have seen, the donors and the relief community were quick to fill the vacuum. The policies, with a particular emphasis on privatization and the market, were set by the donor consortium, and implementation was deliberately placed in the hands of the myriad NGOs. Government entities, such as the CENE trucking fleet for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, were deliberately bypassed because they were perceived as corrupt. They were being replaced by private companies, including companies from industrialized countries. Relief agencies, and especially NGOs—some with larger programs than those of the largest bilateral donor—became the chief providers of public welfare and an important source of employment.[69] Health care outside the capital and the main cities became largely an NGO monopoly. The same applies to a lesser extent to other social services such as care for unaccompanied minors, war widows, and the disabled.

While the shift from government ministries to private implementors or service contractors may well be part of a world wide trend toward the privatization of aid delivery,[70] the situation in Mozambique seemed particularly problematic to the outside visitor in December 1994. Interviews with government officials and even some NGO representatives confirmed the deliberate policy of the donor consortium. As one observer put it, privatization was "the price the government had to pay" to be saved from the RENAMO insurgency. Although the privatization of relief and emergency aid is not an unusual occurrence, how much this affected the development process in Mozambique certainly is. Several authors have described how this process was affected in the 1980s.[71] The process has progressed to the point that it is likely to have a durable negative impact on the prospects of national self-reliance in the foreseeable future.

In the short term, one of the immediate manifestations of this process is how much government structures had been weakened directly by the siphoning off of the remaining competent government professionals, from deputy ministers to drivers, attracted by the lure of the higher and dependable salaries paid by the outsiders.[72] In a country where civil servants are irregularly paid salaries averaging $10-$12 a month, they cannot resist the call of the new missionaries and their contract culture.

The situation seemed more serious at the provincial than at the national level, perhaps because the payment of salaries was more intermittent there. Provincial offices and commissions for development planning, rural services, and relief distribution in some cases had shrunk to the point of nonexistence. Their technical capacity and ability to maintain government priorities when discussing project proposals with the outsiders was limited. For an already overstretched government, to keep tabs on the myriad activities of NGOs represented an onerous burden. When it failed to do so, NGOs could fault the authorities for having lost all control and move into the vacuum. Senior government officials at the central and provincial level expressed serious concern about this issue. Even some NGO representatives recognized that the expatriates were "arrogant" and that some NGOs were "running amok in the most extraordinary way."[73]

In developing countries, NGOs obviously can play an important role in the delivery of services. Many seek to avoid the difficulties mentioned above and make it their policy to promote only activities that are sustainable in the long term. Nevertheless, the situation in Mozambique was characterized by what seemed to be a deliberate attempt of the donor community to weaken the government rather than to promote a healthy balance between state and civil society activities. If NGOs were directly implicated in this process, so, too, were the governments that provided them with the necessary resources.

What was the role of the UN, particularly its coordinating mechanism, in all of this? Did it advocate and promote self-reliance in its dealings with the government and with the donors? Regrettably it did not, by all accounts. Long-term issues were discussed early in the life of UNOHAC, but were scarcely a consideration for ONUMOZ that had by definition a shorter horizon. As the traditional advocate of national planning and institution building in developing countries, UNDP saw its role overshadowed by the political preeminence of ONUMOZ. More specifically, the UN system in Mozambique seems to have caved in to the formidable pressures of the donors and of the NGO lobby in-country and at home. Instances in which funds pledged to the UN relief effort by bilateral donors were in effect tied to implementation by the NGOs of the relevant donor country were common. Some, like the Italians, had no qualms about this creative use of multilateral funds. Others were more discreet. But the pressure to disburse funds through NGOs was the overriding consideration and relegated issues such as accountability and impact to secondary status. UN organizations, in particular UNHCR with its QIPs, were not immune from this process: rapid disbursement through expatriate NGOs often seemed to take precedence over longer-term sustainability. The bolstering of local talent, whether in the government or in the fledgling indigenous NGO sector did not appear to receive high priority.

UNOHAC apparently had not attempted to cultivate a relationship with the NGO community to influence it or at least to discuss program priorities. Meetings were not held regularly in Mozambique. This contrasted to Afghanistan and

Rwanda, where coordination meetings with the NGO community were frequent and where NGOs contributed directly and indirectly to the overall humanitarian effort, for example, through consultations and even joint programming that resulted in a healthy interchange on what needed to be done and how. Some exchange of information occurred and this was fed into the consolidated reporting done by UNOHAC.

Much more interaction took place between the local HACs and the NGOs active in the province. However, there was little or no policy dialogue between UNOHAC and the NGO community. Interviews with NGO staff indicated that the levels of interaction with UNOHAC and the basic knowledge of its functions were minimal. While UNOHAC's role in the provinces was generally recognized as useful, especially in offering a framework in which NGOs could make contact with RENAMO, several commented on UNOHAC's lack of foresight with respect to the transition to the post-ONUMOZ phase. The feeling was that the UN political process had allowed the initiation of a number of projects and coordination structures that then were abandoned lackadaisically. Certainly, UNOHAC did not have the reputation of being a champion on self-reliance issues, either with the NGOs or with the government.

Moreover, with about 250 members on the ground in late 1994, the international NGO community was a diverse and fractious universe. Attempts to organize NGOs through a coordination body had gone through ups and downs over the years.[74] By all accounts the current entity, Link, provided only very basic services to its NGO members. Not all NGOs were members, and few considered its small secretariat as anything more than a letter-box. Certain NGOs, such as the MSF Federation in the health area, had stronger sectoral coordination mechanisms. It should be emphasized that some NGOs were quite critical of the general impact of the community on longer-term development prospects and that others also worked with the government to strengthen local and national capacities. But these self-critical NGOs were very much in the minority.

The Exit Strategy

As part of ONUMOZ, UNOHAC's purpose and existence was tied to the election calendar. After the elections were held successfully, ONUMOZ quickly started to disband. Apart from the problems that this created for the economy and the people of Mozambique, ONUMOZ did not seem to have an exit strategy other than "vote and forget." As the German ambassador to Maputo put it: "ONUMOZ did not have an after-sales service."[75] Tens of thousands of Mozambicans derived their livelihood directly or indirectly from the UN peace operation. The sudden departure of the reassuring presence of the many hundreds of white UN vehicles, aircraft, fortified compounds, and attendant clientele added to the existing climate of uncertainty. The lack of a UN political presence to support the peace consolidation process may have had a similar negative effect. The impact of the sudden withdrawal of the ONUMOZ humanitarian component needs to be discussed briefly.

The implicit contradiction between UN political and humanitarian mandates exists somewhat in all UN peace operations, and Mozambique was no exception. The political mandates derive from the Security Council's decisions, and represent the political consensus of this body when they are made. The Security Council's vision is necessarily time-limited and short-term. UN humanitarian mandates theoretically are shielded from the political process: they derive from the imperative to provide succor in emergencies, a process more connected with a country's ongoing need to rebuild its own capacity and shape its own future. In the case of Mozambique, emergency humanitarian needs preceded the creation of ONUMOZ and were addressed, albeit imperfectly, through UNSCERO. Although they may have evolved over time, such needs still existed after the departure of ONUMOZ, since recovery and rehabilitation are long-term processes that extend far beyond the election calendar. Ideally, emergency and rehabilitation activities should have folded, more or less seamlessly, into normal development programs.

As the SRSG himself said, "the culture of peacekeeping" aims at getting the job done in a short period of time; this is

quite the opposite to "the culture of development which has infinity as its target date."[76] The justification for an exit strategy distinct from the peace process could not be more clearly stated. While reputable development planners set specific goals for realization short of infinity, the SRSG is accurate in noting a fundamental difference in political and humanitarian time frames. The integration of UNOHAC into ONUMOZ and linking the former's calendar to the latter's were strongly criticized by government officials and by some of the UN agencies. Donors, however, seemed to be less concerned with the issue.

UNOHAC's life span was so short that its more durable activities were exceedingly vulnerable to its abrupt termination. Three specific problems in the impact of a politically dictated exit strategy on emergency and rehabilitation activities deserve attention:

- UNOHAC itself did not seem to be on top of the problem: no strategy was prepared beforehand for a smooth handover. Such a strategy would have required extensive discussions among all concerned. At the time of the visit in December 1994, major loose ends remained. These included the uncertain future of the database and sophisticated information system that UNOHAC had established (the spoils of which the government, the World Bank, and UNDP seemed to fight over), the future of the demining program, and the abrupt disappearance of UNOHAC's field presence that was strongly valued by the government, UN agencies, and NGOs.

- From a longer-term perspective, ONUMOZ in general and UNOHAC in particular seem to have given little thought to the extremely sensitive nature in Mozambique of any strategy to move from relief to rehabilitation to development. An early and unplanned withdrawal is tantamount to saying that "the emergency phase is over, so now back to development as usual." Emergencies are not "aberrations" on the linear highway to development: they are part of the society—the economy and the social fabric—of the places where they occur.[77] While peace may

have prevailed in Mozambique, the state, and the civil society, national and local coping mechanisms had all been affected seriously by the war and the ensuing peace process. By taking over some governmental functions, ONUMOZ itself was seen as weakening sovereignty. Donor-driven projects implemented by myriad NGOs were dangerously weakening national and local capabilities. Consequently, it might have been wiser to maintain a UNOHAC presence post-ONUMOZ, or at least to ensure that whichever UN body would take over its residual functions had a proper strategy and capacity for dealing with such institutional and dependency issues.

- In a more general sense, the Mozambique experience demonstrates the need for humanitarian activities—i.e. the humanitarian component of a multifunctional peace operation—to be the subject of more careful planning from the outset rather than being considered as a mere afterthought by UN political planners. This lesson has special relevance in the context of the current interdepartmental efforts to improve coordination among the UN's political, peacekeeping, and humanitarian departments. Since Mozambique was not a breaking emergency, there is no reason why careful planning could not have taken place. A better situation analysis of the conditions in the country might have shown that existing national structures possibly could have been strengthened, rather than imposing a skewed delivery system for humanitarian activities and their coordination that was time-limited and heavily influenced by the agenda of donor governments. Lacking this analysis, the description of the Mozambique experience as "humanitarianism upstaged" seems appropriate.

The Question of Integration versus Insulation

As already noted, UNOHAC and the humanitarian activities it was mandated to coordinate did not seem to benefit from the association with ONUMOZ. UNOHAC also seems to have suffered from the fact that ONUMOZ—like other UN peace-

keeping operations—had a heavy military bias. The various legal instruments under which ONUMOZ operated (e.g. the Status of Forces Agreement), and that regulated its relations with the government, did not take into account the humanitarian tasks of UNOHAC (e.g. relations with NGOs, tax exemption for the importation of vehicles, and commodities for humanitarian needs, etc.). There were also cultural tensions or incompatibilities between the peacekeepers and the humanitarians. In Mozambique, as elsewhere, the UN military forces tended to protect themselves in fortified bases surrounded by razorwire with heavily restricted and tightly controlled access. Being part of ONUMOZ, the UNOHAC provincial offices were naturally placed in these compounds. This is not the best environment for offices whose tasks require that they interact and generate a dialogue with the humanitarian players, NGOs, other elements of the civil society, and local authorities.

The SRSG attributed ONUMOZ's success to its "political flexibility," and "[r]ules and procedures were adapted to the reality in the field and appropriate decisions taken on the spot." However, "the same freedom was not given to UNOHAC."[78] At the time of the visit, the senior management of UNOHAC had little interaction with the SRSG and his inner circle. More fundamentally, however, tying UNOHAC to ONUMOZ's short-term political mandate obfuscated the fact that the humanitarian calendar was much more long-term. This became especially evident in the winding-up phase, and arguably that a better transition should have been calculated at the initial planning stage. The integration of UNOHAC within the ONUMOZ structure also reinforced the perception, which was nearly universal in Maputo outside ONUMOZ, that the "political UN" was not sensitive to the longer-term perspective of the "development UN." The SRSG's sights were consistently on the political process. Taking away UNSCERO from UNDP created widespread resentment since it was perceived as having at least the merit to initiate indirectly the reconstruction process by helping to open up RENAMO areas to humanitarian assistance. The arrival of the SRSG was perceived as the imposition of a "viceroy" on the UN agencies and on their preexisting activities. No institutional role was foreseen for the resident coordinator in relation to the SRSG. As

one UN official said, "neither the resident coordinator nor any of the agency representatives were given first fiddle functions vis-à-vis the SRSG. They were all treated like junior bottlewashers."[79]

Conclusions

All observers agree that ONUMOZ was a success. Elections were held. War was replaced by politics. The vast majority of refugees and IDPs returned to their homes. Above all, there was a manifest and strong desire in the leadership and among the elite of the country, as well as in the population at large, to turn the page on the war years and on the culture of war. These changes are no small achievement. Unlike Afghanistan, where war is still very much on the agenda of the many leaders fighting for power, the overwhelming sensation in Mozambique is that the war is over. Unlike Rwanda, where as we shall see the peacekeeping component of the UN's effort was a failure, the UN military forces in Mozambique by and large carried out their tasks successfully.

The challenges of rehabilitation and reconstruction now lie ahead. It is difficult so soon after the conclusion of the ONUMOZ / UNOHAC experience to assess the impact of the UN's humanitarian efforts in support of the peace process. At the time of writing, many demobilized combatants were still receiving monetary subsidies as part of the ONUMOZ assistance package. When the subsidies run out after a period up to 18 months, there is a potential danger of destabilization and rekindled conflict.[80] Already there are reports that highway banditry is on the increase. As long as ONUMOZ peacekeepers patrolled the main roads, the situation was under control. The wider effects of the UN's humanitarian programs, and those of bilateral organizations and NGOs working outside the UN framework, on the rehabilitation of Mozambican economy and society will become apparent only in the years to come. Perhaps after the passage of time, the impression of a major opportunity slipping through the interstices of ill-conceived coordination mechanisms will be confirmed.

It is apparent already, however, that a major weakness of UN coordination in Mozambique during the crucial peace

consolidation period was its inability to promote national and local self-reliance as a policy objective. It was unable to act as a broker between donors and the government so that all actors could identify with and support a strategy geared to augmenting national capacities. The "political UN" did not factor this dimension into the peace consolidation process and the "humanitarian UN" failed to be an effective advocate for the transition process. As a coordination body, UNOHAC should have been more proactive on this issue. Moreover, it should have worked in close collaboration with UNDP, which would in any case "inherit" the transition process and the soured relationship with the government upon the departure of ONUMOZ. Despite considerable hand-wringing, the UN remained on the sidelines as the People's Republic of Mozambique was being transformed into what has been termed the "Donors Republic of Mozambique."[81]

United Nations Map No. 3717 Rev. 2, June 1994.

Men are accomplices to that which leaves them indifferent.

George Steiner,
Language and Silence[82]

The Cruelest Months

The coordination of humanitarian assistance in Rwanda is marked by the shadow of genocide. Unlike Afghanistan and Mozambique where the emergency was protracted, if not creeping, the Rwanda crisis was sudden, violent, and overwhelming for the international humanitarian community. From April to July 1994, the people of Rwanda suffered a tragedy of unprecedented magnitude.[83] In terms of the number of victims, the suddenness with which it occurred, and its lasting consequences, the crisis is not comparable to any other calamity in recent memory. The humanitarian needs it generated have tested severely the capacity and resourcefulness of the relief community. The Rwandan crisis also has raised important questions—as yet unanswered—on the root causes of the conflict, on the long-term impact of humanitarian assistance, and on the manner in which relief is provided.

In a terrifying three-month period a significant proportion of the minority Tutsi population and many Hutus perceived as moderates were massacred. The estimates of the combined death toll of genocide, war, and displacement range from 500,000 to one million—an unprecedented proportion—and perhaps as many as 95 percent of the victims were civilians. In addition to the physical violence and destruction, the collective trauma of genocide has rent the social fabric. It haunts the families of the victims as well as the hundreds of thousands of people who participated voluntarily in, were coerced into, or haplessly witnessed mass killings.

In the months following the establishment of the new government, there have been periods when a thin veneer of calm presented the illusion of a slow return to normalcy. There also have been outbursts of brief and sudden violence, affecting in particular the internally displaced, which are reminders of the volatility of the situation. It is unrealistic to assume that Rwandan society can be patched together simply through the provision of assistance by the international community to overcome the physical devastation of warfare and to revive the preexisting economy. Rehabilitation of essential facilities and a functioning government are definitely a priority. However, a viable process of recovery and reconciliation seems impossible until the reality of genocide and its effects on society have been addressed.

For the outsider, what has occurred in Rwanda defies explanation in conventional terms. Civil society has been shattered and the very possibility of the coexistence of its diverse elements still seems in jeopardy. The forces that bound the social fabric together—all too imperfectly, as events painfully demonstrated—have been severely eroded if not completely destroyed. At the time of writing 18 months after the genocide, it is difficult to see how a culture of peace can emerge in the near future if the societal mechanisms that made the tragedy possible are not understood and addressed from within. Whether the causes of the conflict are traced to ancestral fears, power, class, identity, ethnicity, or a subtle mix of these, or to the economy and a struggle for resources, there is an obvious need to identify the underlying sources of tension and the realities that exacerbated them. For the international community, this means answering some difficult questions about the ways in which development—the external appearances of which were clearly visible and measurable by conventional standards in Rwanda before the war—was a factor in not mitigating, or worse in contributing to, the catastrophe.

Given the violent political culture that continues to thrive in the refugee camps and in certain segments of the population inside Rwanda, the apparent lack of a sense of guilt on the one side and, understandably, of an unwillingness to seek a political compromise on the other, no one can rule out further outbursts of violence. Acts of retribution and the inclination to

take the law into one's own hands have spread. The risk that this will become unspoken policy cannot be excluded, especially if formal judicial procedures that demonstrate that genocide is unacceptable and that those responsible will be held accountable are not introduced. Acts of violence by the Rwandan military against the internally displaced (witness the tragic incident at Kibeho in April 1995), the forceful appropriation of land and property, and the miserable state of Rwandan prisons are flashpoints that signal the possible future deterioration of the situation.

The aftermath of the genocide has major implications for the United Nations and for the manner in which humanitarian assistance is orchestrated. The Rwandan government is in a precarious position. At this writing, it seemed to rely increasingly on its military arm to maintain control and to protect itself from incursions from the guerrilla breeding grounds in the refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania. A massive destabilization of the country, and of the whole region, cannot be ruled out if the Zairian authorities trigger a sudden and chaotic movement of refugee return. The government has called, so far with scant success, for the mobilization of the international community both for the investigation and documentation of the genocide and for the monitoring of the human rights situation on the ground. Unfortunately, not much has been done and the credibility of the United Nations—in the eyes of the government, the NGO community, and the public at large—is dangerously low. Human rights monitors have been deployed belatedly, but their work and the parallel work to collect evidence and document the genocide has not yet reached the critical mass required to demonstrate that the international community is serious in addressing the issue. The government is also keen to show its legitimacy and sovereignty over the national territory and is increasingly concerned that the presence of UN troops may present a threat to both. Accordingly, it has asked the Security Council for and has obtained agreement on troop reduction. At the end of 1995, the remaining 1,800 UNAMIR troops may be withdrawn altogether.

Moreover, the government has not received the means to establish its authority. Indeed, the international community

still seems to be in a quandary about whether to give the Rwandan regime some legitimacy through the provision of technical and financial assistance. Human rights violations by government troops against internally displaced persons and individual acts of violence against returnees are likely to further dampen the enthusiasm of traditional bilateral donors. The European Union is not inclined to go beyond purely humanitarian assistance. The other main donors have balked for many months.[84] The only structured force, with some resources and capacity to administer and control territory, is the battle-hardened army. Failure by the international community to support the formation of a functioning administration at the central and at the local levels and to support the regeneration of civil society adds to the risk of authoritarianism.

The former Rwandan leadership is still essentially intact and is endowed with important assets. It also controls a captive refugee population through a combination of administrative structures and sheer terror tactics, which obviously affects the evolution of the situation. Despite encouragements in this direction from the UN, donors, and human rights groups, the authorities in Kigali have been unable or unwilling to enact confidence-building measures that are essential if repatriation is to occur. Moreover, how the humanitarian community provides assistance and protection to the refugees and the strategic choices that are made concerning the displaced may have dramatic implications on the evolution of the overall situation. The question is whether to continue to provide them with assistance in camps or shift the focus of the relief effort toward their areas of origin in order to encourage a flow away from the camps.

The United Nations Response to the Rwanda Crisis

The international community—more specifically the UN and the relief agencies—faced a cruel dilemma in Rwanda. In a matter of months, a country many people considered a model, with good performance on the main development indicators, turned into a bloodbath. Genocide was followed by one of the largest and potentially the most destabilizing displacements of population the world has witnessed in recent

times. After initial and unforgivable delays and disorganization, and spurred by the "media effect," the operational might of the West and the gritty determination of the humanitarians swung into action. Despite the cholera epidemic in Goma, succor was provided, and refugees and IDPs were fed and provided with basic assistance. The dying stopped.

The knee-jerk reaction was to provide a quick fix, and it was a costly Band-Aid at that: more than $1 billion and perhaps as much as over $2 billion were spent on humanitarian assistance and on using military assets to support the effort during the first year of the crisis.[85] The root causes of the problem were glossed over. The root consequences of the response—i.e., the type of assistance provided and its effects—were not considered. The illusion that Goma was a qualified success, at least from a purely operational and technical point of view, resulted in the sense that assistance met the immediate needs of the Rwandan refugees. From a longer-term point of view, it now has become clear that only the symptoms of the problem were addressed. The international community responded to the obvious need of providing food and shelter to refugees in the predictable manner, by fixing the population in camps. The response was refugee-driven and the modalities were basically logistical. Critics have challenged since the pertinence of a response that ignored the causes of the problem and did not even distinguish between needy refugees and their unrepentant, armed, and heinous leaders.[86]

It is not practical to attempt an analysis of the decisions of the international community, as expressed in various Security Council resolutions, not to take action to stop the genocide as the situation in Rwanda deteriorated in April 1994. A strong perception persists in many NGO and some United Nations circles that the international community, and therefore the UN, failed Rwanda and its own values by letting genocide occur. This original sin has had a lasting effect on the way the UN humanitarian coordination effort was established and was perceived. While the immediate needs of the refugees and the internally displaced were undoubtedly met—in part under pressure to avoid a second failure—it is legitimate to ask whether the UN system overall has addressed coherently the Rwanda crisis in terms of institutions or operations.[87]

As in other complex emergencies, the humanitarian dimension of the Rwandan crisis was linked inextricably to the political and military dynamics that shaped it. Responding to the humanitarian imperative in this context posed particular challenges. Developing a response that safeguarded the humanitarian space essential for the provision of relief assistance in a contested and volatile situation was no easy task. From the outset, humanitarian assistance in the Rwandan context suffered because the dimensions of the response overshadowed the incapacity of the international community to prevent the tragedy or even meaningfully to consider its causes and consequences. Humanitarian assistance, however effective, cannot be a substitute for action necessary to address the root causes of conflict. One is left with the impression that relief became an end in itself, and perhaps contributed to a stalemate that ultimately worked against a process of healing and reconciliation.

The downing of the plane that killed the presidents of Burundi and Rwanda on April 6, 1994 unleashed a wave of terror that put Rwanda at the center of the world's headlines. However, while this constituted an unexpected turn of events that effectively derailed the Arusha Peace process, it needs to be noted that, in terms of crisis management, a limited UN humanitarian response capacity did exist in-country or was being built-up as the crisis unraveled. A Humanitarian Unit was in place at UNDP in Kigali; a Disaster Management Team had been initiated under the chairmanship of UNDP; and UNHCR had offices in Kigali and Goma, where limited prepositioning of relief supplies had been organized in anticipation of an inflow of up to 50,000 refugees.

The levels of street violence in Kigali and the direct attacks against UN peacekeepers in the immediate aftermath of the plane downing led to the withdrawal of UN agencies, with the exception of the core UNAMIR military. Agencies such as ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) maintained a presence in Kigali throughout. Even though operational activities were severely constrained by fighting, these two organizations decided not to evacuate in order to maintain a sense of succor and external concern during the most terrifying days of violence.

The decision of DHA to reestablish a UN humanitarian presence in and around the country as early as April 9 was a welcome development. Yet it is justifiable to ask why options, such as "digging in" within the relatively secure UNAMIR compound, were not considered to avoid the necessity of withdrawing staff, only to immediately commence negotiations for their return. In any event, DHA's stimulus response was a vast improvement over previous situations. The first interagency meeting in Geneva to deal with the Iraq/Kuwait refugee crisis was convened three weeks after refugees started pouring into Jordan.[88] In the case of Rwanda, DHA started coordinating three days after the presidential plane was shot down. Staff were quickly on the scene and the DHA on-the-ground coordination mechanism, the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office (UNREO), was formally established on April 18. After consultation between DHA and UN system relief agencies, a humanitarian coordinator was appointed.[89]

In terms of field level coordination, it was decided initially to make Nairobi the hub of operations while maintaining a rotating presence of UNREO/DHA staff in Kigali, where mobility was severely constrained for security reasons. The UNREO presence in Nairobi as a backup to and channel of communication with Rwanda greatly facilitated the development of a consensus on priorities among donors and the humanitarian community. As in the case of Afghanistan, there were significant advantages in not locating the central coordinating office in a capital or geographic area dominated by one of the warring parties in the civil war. The opening of several UNREO field offices facilitated cross-border and cross-line communication and the provision of assistance. Also, as in Afghanistan, the Rwanda experience indicates that a balanced field presence had obvious advantages not only in terms of facilitating day-to-day operations, but also in safeguarding the image and concept of impartiality of the coordination body.

Most observers agree that the UNREO coordinating structure was effective in generating a consensus on an overall plan of action and its implementation. However, the original division of labor between the humanitarian coordinator for Rwanda and the UNHCR special regional envoy was unclear. Originally,

it was envisaged that this would be one structure, i.e. that the UNHCR regional envoy would double up as DHA regional coordinator. Unfortunately, this merging of the coordination functions did not occur. Once the UNREO office moved to Kigali, the reality of a somewhat artificial division of labor between an internal (DHA) and external (UNHCR) coordination structure produced a looser framework and tunnel vision on both sides. This division of responsibilities worked against a comprehensive and coherent UN response. The need for unity of purpose in the coordination of the overall UN effort was not well served by the looseness of the DHA-UNHCR relationship in the early weeks of the emergency. With the benefit of hindsight, it is regrettable that a humanitarian coordinator was not appointed at the outset of the crisis to oversee all aspects of the Rwandan emergency, including the exodus to neighboring countries. UNHCR appeared to be solely in charge outside Rwanda, which reinforced the impression that the response was "refugee-driven" and worked against a region-wide approach to the crisis.[90]

The UNREO Framework for Coordination

An intriguing feature in Rwanda in the first months of the emergency was the lack of understanding among UN system organizations of the role of DHA, the parent UN Department of UNREO. Many interviews revealed that while the role of UNREO was perceived as positive and even essential, there was a general impression that this was more the result of local realities, a happy mix of personalities in UNREO and in the humanitarian agencies on the spot, than of a clear mandate and terms of reference. Some of the most extreme examples of conceptual confusion were within UNREO itself: several staff members were unaware that UNREO was part of DHA. A comparison with the more established UN relief agencies in the Rwandan context, especially UNHCR and UNICEF, only reinforces this point: DHA clearly lacked a visible profile and a recognizable brand name. UNREO itself was clearly visible, however, but more in its own right than as part of DHA.[91]

More importantly, the perceptions and expectations of what the UNREO office was or should have been doing varied

widely. There was no clear or common understanding of what "coordination" meant. Coordination relied very much on flexibility and improvisation, which in itself is not necessarily a bad thing, provided the ground rules are understood by all and the coordination body is seen as operating as a team. This sense of overall direction seemed to be lacking at times, and the staff on the ground seemed more preoccupied with getting on with whatever they perceived as the most urgent task at hand than with reflecting on the nature and finality of their work.

Three main factors appear to have put the UNREO office at the cutting edge of coordination and helped maintain it there during the most acute phases of the emergency (April-September 1994):

- the personality of its key staff member who managed to "anchor" the NGO community, and to some extent the UN organizations, around the UNREO office. His leadership, strategic thinking, and positive interaction with all the actors, including UNAMIR and government officials, effectively provided the backbone for the coordination effort;

- the role of the office in providing general and strategic information on the evolution of the humanitarian situation in the country and its ability to mobilize the international resources around specific objectives (e.g. the successful containment action in the southwest to prevent further movements of displaced persons across the border into Zaire at the time of the withdrawal of Operation Turquoise); and

- the turn-key communications facilities and logistic support provided by the Swedish Support Team (SST) to UNREO itself as well as to NGOs. This proved to be an important and most visible asset that became operational the moment it got off the plane. The resources available to the Swedish Team—staff, vehicles, communications, basic office supplies, even food and medical support—offset DHA's lack of resources and cash. Without the SST, UNREO

would have been crippled and the entire humanitarian effort would have suffered accordingly.

Coordination by command was out of the question in the Rwandan context. Moreover, UNREO had few resources at its disposal that would have allowed it to impose coordination. But UNREO, as advocate and facilitator in the crucial months of the crisis, was able to have an important leadership role in shaping the response of the international humanitarian community. Its role can be defined best as a successful example of coordination by consensus. Situations requiring coordination, however, rarely remain stable over time. Needs change as an emergency moves from a breaking phase, where massive assistance is needed and the means are mobilized, to a more routine delivery and consolidation phase. During the first months of its existence, UNREO was at the crossroads between diverse and sometimes conflicting interests and priorities. Most of the NGO traffic and a significant quantity of the UN traffic stopped at UNREO to collect information, especially information on traffic conditions on the roads ahead. By September 1994, however, some of the actors in Rwanda were starting to perceive UNREO as a bottleneck or a traffic jam. The value added might no longer be worth stopping for. In fact, the construction of alternative routes by the key UN organizations who had beefed up their staff and their information gathering mechanisms was well under way.

As in other coordination situations, the DHA office in Rwanda was viable and effective as long as it remained "ahead of the curve" in terms of access to better information on the conditions in the country, contacts with the political leaders at the central office and especially at the local level, and capacity to be an advocate vis-à-vis the donor community, NGOs, or the media. Inevitably, as crises stabilize or are resolved, coordination activities need to respond to an evolving situation. The questions that the coordination body and the UN system must ask are: when is the point of diminishing returns reached? And at what point does a structure such as UNREO become neither necessary nor viable? In deciding to maintain a DHA presence in Rwanda beyond the acute phase of the emergency, this consideration was apparently weighed with another that

was equally important: what level of contingency presence should be kept in place in case the situation deteriorated either in Rwanda and its spillover areas or in Burundi?

Institutional Problems in Coordination

Unlike Mozambique where, in theory at least, the humanitarian coordination function was fully integrated into the peacekeeping operation. Yet, as we have seen, integration occurred with little meaningful cooperation between the players. In Rwanda, the UNREO office was separate but not insulated from the SRSG's office and UNAMIR. The relationship between the humanitarian and political arms of the UN in Rwanda evolved over time and was fraught with institutional uncertainties. However, despite the lack of clarity in the definition of the various mandates (or perhaps because the fuzzy definition of roles allowed more flexibility on both sides), the nature of the interaction between these key players was generally good.

Role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Rwanda provides a typical example of institutional confusion and lack of clarity on the roles of and the relationship between the humanitarian-development and political-military arms of the UN. The human rights component in Rwanda was more clearly defined, but the slow pace of deployment, lack of visible action, and the negative implications of this for Rwanda's overall recovery also pointed to the need for stronger linkages and synergy between the various components of the overall UN effort.

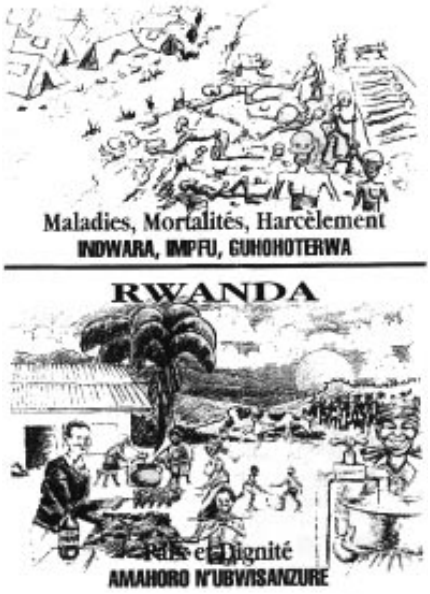
The SRSG theoretically has overall responsibility for UN action in a given country. However, in Rwanda he was the titular head of an operation that was not grounded in any clearly defined institutional framework that would have given him the authority to decide on a particular course of events. While he enjoyed greater prestige and leverage than the DHA humanitarian coordinator, he did not have the clout of UNHCR that has a well-established mandate, history, capacity to generate the resources necessary to meet its responsibilities, and

momentum provided by its operational presence. In any setting, the lack of clearly defined parameters is debilitating and frustrating for an SRSG. In the Rwandan context, this was compounded by a lack of understanding by the SRSG himself of how the UN system operated and by the obvious need to forge ahead quickly and generate the conditions vital for peace.

Some of the confusion can be attributed to the rapid evolution of events between early April and late July 1994 and to the fact that UNAMIR's mandate did not keep pace with events during this period. Originally set up as a peacekeeping operation and then dramatically reduced when the events of April and renewed hostilities overtook its mandate, UNAMIR assumed an important role in providing protection to a small but significant number of besieged people and in assisting in the provision of relief.

Massive population movements, including refugee flows to neighboring countries, the launching of Operation Turquoise, and the cessation of hostilities in mid-July directly affected the role of UNAMIR. The effective disintegration of the Arusha Accords essentially annulled the SRSG's role in shepherding a fragile peace process to fruition. Relief activities, however constrained, were a major preoccupation during the April-July period. But as the humanitarian dimension of the crisis moved center stage and the reality of a victorious army minimized the significance of political negotiation, the role of the SRSG became increasingly unclear.

The office of the SRSG seemed to be best suited to nurturing the political process, as generally defined by the Security Council, and lacked the capacity and operational authority to identify and prioritize needs or to oversee the allocation of resources in spheres of activity beyond the immediate political arena. The SRSG also could play an important role in ensuring harmony between the different components of a peace-consolidation package and could use the influence of his office to push for prompt action on key programs. Examples of such positive interaction between the political, military, and humanitarian efforts in Rwanda included the collaborative effort of all in the southwest, with the departure of French forces, to avert further population movements into Zaire. Examples of



unilateral and uncoordinated action that had a negative impact on other UN programs included the airdrop by UNAMIR over refugee camps around Goma of leaflets recommending refugee return without prior consultation with UNHCR or DHA.

The Rwandan experience highlights the importance of clearly defined terms of reference and full familiarity with UN system mandates and capabilities on the part of the SRSG. Conversely, humanitarian agencies must know when and how the SRSG and his office can be called upon for operational assistance or political and institutional support.[92] In this connection, it is important that the SRSG is aware of the specific mandates of individual agencies, the type of advice and support these agencies can provide to his office, and the need to safeguard the integrity of humanitarian agencies. To the extent that SRSGs play an influential part in political and diplomatic negotiations, safeguarding integrity is important.

The issue of how much the SRSG and his office should be involved in the day-to-day coordination of humanitarian activities was the source of some confusion. As stated already,

the SRSG, as the most senior UN official in the country, can be a powerful advocate on humanitarian as well as human rights issues. He can play a useful role in humanitarian diplomacy and flag emerging issues to UN headquarters and the Security Council. A primary function of the SRSG in the relief sphere is to ensure that humanitarian considerations receive equal billing with political and military concerns and, conversely, to ensure that humanitarian assistance is not manipulated politically. Humanitarian practitioners in Rwanda, as in Mozambique, felt that the SRSG and his office should not be involved operationally in the day-to-day functioning of the humanitarian coordination office. Indeed, there are distinct advantages in maintaining the DHA identity operationally separate from that of the SRSG. It is understood that on policy issues involving the UN as a whole, the SRSG should act as the secretary-general's spokesperson.

Moreover, while the placement of UNAMIR humanitarian liaison officers in the UNREO office and the regular participation of the UNREO deputy coordinator at UNAMIR briefings served a useful purpose, the same cannot be said for the Humanitarian Cell in the SRSG's office. The rationale for having half a dozen civilian humanitarian officers in the SRSG's office is not self-evident, given the high risk of duplication or of giving conflicting signals. Precisely this kind of duplication occurred in September 1994 when the SRSG's office undertook to prepare a Rwanda Emergency Normalization Plan (RENP) with little or no consultation with UNREO and other relevant UN organizations. Conversely, the personal participation of the SRSG in coordination meetings, whether interagency or with NGOs, was seen by all as positive. It ensured not only that he was perceived as the overall UN leader in the country, but also that his concern for humanitarianism and for joint strategic planning was backed up in practice.

Interaction with the Military

The UNAMIR presence in Rwanda was an important feature in the day-to-day life of the humanitarian community. The military provided essential services to UN agencies, bilaterals, NGOs, and even to the media ranging from security

to logistics (transport of humanitarian commodities, fuel, communications, medical support, and free access to UNAMIR air services). In addition, the military shared information and provided direct delivery of assistance. While UNAMIR's contribution was generally appreciated, there were mixed feelings in the humanitarian community about the profile to be adopted and the degree of operational intimacy to be maintained in dealing with the UN military. The prevalent feeling was that extreme caution should be exercised by humanitarian organizations in placing themselves under a military umbrella except when overwhelming security considerations dictated otherwise. Another view argues that it is to the military's advantage to keep their profile and image distinct from those of the humanitarian agencies.

For cultural and institutional reasons, the military in Rwanda and elsewhere is not the best suited to deal with civil society. UNAMIR, as with all military establishments, tended to cut itself off from society by setting up heavily fortified compounds wherever it went. Razor wire and bunkered installations conveyed a message and image that were inescapably tied to security (i.e. "don't mess with us") and were very different from that which humanitarian agencies projected or would have liked to project. Therefore, too close an association or a shared location with the military is likely to impede information gathering and the development of fruitful relations with civil society, especially those sectors of society that are most vulnerable. The military also have their own established procedures and sometimes cultivate their aloofness.[93]

Conversely, the military should do their job and not impinge on the humanitarian sphere unless there is a clear understanding of what has to be done and how. This would have avoided undertakings such as the "psyops" initiative to drop leaflets on Goma, encouraging the return of refugees without prior consultation with UNHCR or DHA. In sum, the distinct roles and mandates of the UN military and humanitarian components should be clearly understood. DHA should take the initiative in ensuring that SRSGs and UN field commanders are fully briefed on the specificity of humanitarian mandates (priority to the victims) and that this is widely disseminated and respected along the chain of command.

While the role played by UNAMIR was undoubtedly useful to the humanitarian agencies, UNREO's coordination mandate did not extend directly to the tasks with humanitarian implications undertaken by UNAMIR. Because exchange of information appeared to be good, thanks in part to the presence of UNAMIR liaison officers in the UNREO office and cordial relations, the military and humanitarian lines of command and control were basically separate. This contrasts greatly with the coordination functions performed by UNHCR in Zaire vis-à-vis the several military contingents providing humanitarian assistance to refugees.

In addition to interaction with UNAMIR itself, the humanitarian agencies in and around Rwanda often were involved in innovative forms of partnership with the military. While the deployment of French troops under Operation Turquoise was a more classical political / military intervention, the service packages negotiated by UNHCR, with several national military contingents to provide specific kinds of assistance to refugees in the camps around Goma, however, broke much new ground. These included instances where military assets were placed under the direct control of humanitarian agencies. For example, uniformed British troops from the corps of engineers were assigned to UNHCR to set up water and sanitation systems in the Goma refugee camps. In another example, Irish military engineers (clad in NGO T-shirts) were performing similar functions under the command and control of an Irish NGO, Goal.

In many ways the Rwanda experience was a kind of laboratory for military intervention.[94] A wide range of approaches were implemented at different times that entailed new types of relationships, and in some cases partnership with the humanitarian organizations. This in turn created new challenges for coordination, both for UNREO inside Rwanda and for UNHCR in and around Goma.

UNAMIR was deployed initially in support of a peace process with no direct humanitarian role. After April 1994, and especially after July, this changed drastically when the UN blue helmets' main role became the provision of security and logistical support to the multifaceted humanitarian effort in Rwanda. They provided a reassuring presence to some

extent but had no peace to keep. When confronted with serious security incidents and human rights violations as in Kibeho, UNAMIR was unable or unwilling to intervene. Operation Turquoise did not have a humanitarian mandate. In fact, its mandate was unclear from the start and seemed to respond primarily to geopolitical considerations. It did, however, have a direct impact on the humanitarian situation in the southwest, injecting stability and averting further refugee exodus to Zaire. The U.S. Operation Support Hope, which arrived a full month after the French troops, was explicitly humanitarian. Distinct from both UNAMIR and Operation Turquoise, Operation Support Hope aimed directly at alleviating the plight of refugees in Zaire and was fully under U.S. control. It was successful in saving lives, but the cost—inflated by sophisticated water purification systems, airlifts, and the like—was inordinately high (estimated by some at more than $1 billion).[95]

By comparison the service packages arranged by UNHCR with a variety of national contingents, which included airport services, road repair, site preparation, sanitation, water management, and provision and distribution of fuel, appear to have been more cost-effective. These involved relatively small contingents from Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands, Ireland, Israel, and Japan that worked under the coordination of UNHCR, the lead agency for assistance to refugees, outside the ambit of UNAMIR. As Minear and Guillot conclude in their analysis,

> The fact that governments exercised the option to pick and choose among elements of the United Nations to support in this particular crisis made it arguably more difficult for the world body to attract the full range of assistance needed. Weighing peacekeeping functions in volatile settings against humanitarian support roles, fewer governments committed troops to the tougher security assignments, opting instead for the lower risk, higher visibility, and undiluted command and control arrangements the service packages afforded.[96]

Coordination between UN humanitarian organizations and the military took several different forms in the Rwandan context. Inside Rwanda, UNREO basically coexisted with UNAMIR. The chains of command were separate and interaction was limited to exchanging information, logistical support, and delivery of humanitarian commodities. Outside Rwanda, UNHCR's coordination role was much more proactive, especially as far as the service packages were concerned. Even in the case of Operation Support Hope, the U.S. military, after some initial confusion, became part of the UNHCR-orchestrated response.

The broader question here is whether the use of troops in humanitarian settings should be seen as something truly exceptional, justifiable only as a stopgap measure in the most extreme circumstances. In this case, cost is not a primary concern, nor whether the military are destined to become a regular feature in the world's humanitarian regime and their presence should be factored therefore into UN coordination mechanisms. Experience in Rwanda highlights the unwieldiness of the military to function as a humanitarian instrument when troops or military assets do not fit into the overall plan of a humanitarian effort. From a humanitarian point of view, there is an inherent risk in the militarization of humanitarian assistance[97] and, as in Somalia, for the relief agenda to be driven by extraneous considerations whether they are military or political. Rather than using the military for tasks for which they are not mandated and not trained, and for which they often lack the cultural sensitivity, should the international community not provide the humanitarians with the wherewithal to do their job?

The UNDP Factor

As explained above, when Kigali was overpowered by violence in early April 1994, the United Nations development organizations and their coordinating body, UNDP, quickly left the scene. A few days later, the humanitarian agencies appeared, first with brief missions or a rotating staff presence and then with the establishment of UNREO and with more permanent offices in Kigali and in various field locations.

Naturally enough, development work ground to a halt. UNDP and the development agencies only started reappearing in earnest in September. However, this is not the place to discuss whether the functional separation between relief and development roles (which often results in a kind of revolving door syndrome) is the most appropriate response to complex emergencies, and particularly to complex emergencies of a longer duration. It also should be noted that the cultures of development and relief are very different, and more importantly, the skills required of emergency practitioners are not normally possessed by their developmental counterparts.[98]

The tensions played themselves out in Rwanda in selecting the humanitarian coordinator. As in other settings, the process proved contentious, involving difficult negotiations at the highest level in New York between UN and UNDP, as well as with the key humanitarian actors. To avoid such confusion, it is important that the coordinator positions have clearly defined terms of reference that reflect the nature of the task to be accomplished. For example, coordination requirements vary depending on whether a UN or regional peacekeeping mission is involved and on whether the humanitarian situation is "silent" or "violent." Although generic terms of reference for humanitarian coordinators have been agreed upon in the IASC, it is as yet unclear if there is sufficient consensus for their practical application on the ground.

In any event, coordination of a major emergency is a full-time job requiring specific expertise. The Rwandan crisis illustrates the impossibility of combining coordination functions with other responsibilities. It is unrealistic to expect the humanitarian coordinator of a complex emergency to assume also the functions of a UNDP resident representative. Combining the two functions is also difficult. In the transition phase, the focus moves from acute emergency to rehabilitation and capacity-building. While emergencies are often understood in terms of phases, these generally do not occur in a sequential manner. There are often stops and starts in the transition to rehabilitation, and new problems as they arise are invariably time-consuming.

There is also the problem of primary organization of allegiance. UNDP, which does not have a long tradition in

coordinating relief, is perceived by many people as being primarily committed to its development role. This may have negative implications for the day-to-day coordination of humanitarian programs. Indeed, this was the case in Rwanda: as soon as the "breaking phase" was over, the resident representative, who was still also the humanitarian coordinator, was seen as concerned primarily with the UNDP agenda. In addition, UNDP headquarters, through the emissaries it sent to the field, made it very clear that the UNDP profile should be raised. Also, a concern was the perceived lack of visibility of UNDP on the ground, where vehicles with UNREO logos outnumbered those with UNDP logos.

In Rwanda, DHA and UNREO benefited from UNDP's considerable support in which it provided premises and vehicles as well as financial and administrative support. Some of the key UNREO staff held UNDP contracts, at least in the initial months. The first humanitarian coordinator, himself a UNDP staff member, was often caught in delicate reporting conundrums as he was at the same time the UNDP resident representative. This was especially true when UNDP decided that it should start asserting its development profile. Agreement between DHA and UNDP remained elusive upon the departure of the first humanitarian coordinator—despite DHA's insistence that the same individual, with documented experience in coordination of emergency assistance, should continue to hold both positions. DHA therefore appointed one of its own staff as humanitarian coordinator, and UNDP subsequently appointed a resident representative.

Thus the situation in Rwanda was brought in line with that in Afghanistan and Mozambique, where the DHA (emergency) and UNDP (development) coordination mechanisms were distinct. Many people argued that the positions should be merged and that there should be only one coordinator. Indeed, the UN interagency agreements stipulate that this normally should be the case (with the UN resident coordinator acting as humanitarian coordinator and reporting to DHA on humanitarian issues).

The experience in the studies of the three countries shows for various reasons that especially in large scale on the sudden onset of emergencies, UNDP officials with development

credentials are not the best suited to carry the heavy and demanding role of coordinators. In many cases, UN and non-UN humanitarian agencies have expressed their preference for the appointment of a humanitarian figurehead to the post. Consequently, the institutional tug of war between humanitarian and development coordinators is likely to continue. Occasionally, as happened in Rwanda upon the appointment of the second humanitarian coordinator, it can become unpleasant. UNDP cut off its support to UNREO and relations became temporarily strained.

Relationships with NGOs

UNREO was universally acclaimed as having constituted an extremely important and useful mechanism for the NGO community, both in facilitating NGO action and in enabling these agencies to coordinate their activities with the UN and other bodies. Logistical and other support provided by UNAMIR, and UNREO's role in facilitating this, also appeared helpful and eased the coordination task.

Regular biweekly coordination meetings, to which all NGOs, bilaterals, and UN agencies were invited, were convened by UNREO. These were well-attended, often with standing room only. The pleasant and business-like atmosphere was a welcome departure from more turbulent or fractious gatherings witnessed in other humanitarian emergencies. These meetings went well beyond information sharing. Priorities were discussed and to a large extent informal decisions were made concerning load sharing and possible future areas of concentration.[99] The local relationship between UNREO provincial offices and NGOs seemed to be equally productive.

The UNREO coordinating structure was appreciated by NGOs that viewed it as supportive and participatory "light" rather than an authorization approach. The facilities (meeting place, rendezvous point, bulletin board, pigeon holes for all NGOs, and access to satellite communication equipment) and welcoming atmosphere of UNREO were also major factors in generating a positive relationship and facilitating a collective humanitarian endeavor. Such facilities, support, and leadership-through-consensus were appreciated doubly in the acute

eye-of-the-storm period when resources were scarce and prompt action was required to save lives and avert further catastrophe.

The location and accessibility of the UNREO office was key to its success. Some UNAMIR personnel indicated that it might have been preferable to have all UN emergency-related offices in one location. However, the open-house ambiance of the UNREO office probably would have been difficult to maintain in the heavily guarded UNAMIR compound. Physical distance from UN military compounds also helped in safeguarding the humanitarian identity of relief agencies.

The effectiveness of the UNREO coordination role vis-à-vis NGOs is suggested by the fact that NGOs themselves did not feel the need to establish their own coordination body. While the creation of such a body was considered when an ICVA mission visited the area in August 1994, most NGOs were not interested. Instead, an international NGO staffer was seconded to UNREO. Over time, UNREO structures and coordination mechanisms played a less significant role for NGOs as the transition was made from acute emergency to ongoing care and maintenance and initiation of rehabilitation activities.

As a number of NGOs (more than 120 were recorded during the peak period) departed the scene as funds dried up, it was probable that the services and facilities provided by UNREO would be less in demand by those NGOs that remained. Because the need for coordination would continue, larger NGOs would rely increasingly on their own resources and develop stronger linkages with UN agencies as they focused on particular sectoral and geographic areas.

While the overall contribution of NGOs to the humanitarian effort in and around Rwanda appears to have been unquestionably positive, notwithstanding a few instances of "cowboy" or "media-hungry" agencies, the longer-term impact of the delivery of an overwhelming proportion of humanitarian assistance through external NGOs needs to be better understood. Like other relief actors, NGOs have varying degrees of professionalism and capacity. The commitment of less well-established agencies is often vulnerable to media and public opinion shifts back home. This creates problems of continuity and sustainability, especially as emergencies move into the rehabilitation and development phase.

Moreover, as in the case of Mozambique, the multiplicity of humanitarian (and development) actors creates a burden for fledgling government structures and breeds dependency, if proper safeguards are not introduced. Given the overwhelming nature and scale of the problems to be addressed, this was less evident in Rwanda than in Mozambique. In emergency situations, NGOs often have a free hand and cut corners, which in most cases simply means bypassing the government in deciding what to do and how to do it. Inevitably, the point comes when the government will want to rein in the NGOs. In Rwanda, the moment came in March 1995, when the government issued guidelines for working with NGOs.[100] These guidelines were met with hostility by some NGOs who resented the fact that they should be required to register, have transparent budgets, and pursue identifiable activities. Some threatened to leave. There is no easy answer to such problems. There is, however, a role for the UN, both in the coordination body and through UNDP, in advocating that issues of self-reliance in the broadest sense are not pushed aside in complex emergencies.

The Evolving Challenge of Field Coordination

It was not easy to ascertain how UN agencies actually perceived the role of DHA or how much they found the UNREO coordinating structure useful. There was at all levels much polite reference to the importance of coordination and appreciation of the role played by DHA. Such comments often were coupled with statements on the need to ensure that DHA did not become another layer in the larger UN-system decisionmaking process. In general, it appears that during the Nairobi-based phase of the operation, UNREO was better-positioned to generate an overall consensus on a collective and mutually-reinforcing response. During the early days of the Goma crisis, DHA presence and capacity to facilitate communication and provide an overall perspective was greatly appreciated.

As UN agencies reestablished themselves, they naturally tended to be very much focused on their particular programs and mandates and less inclined to subordinate agency priorities to an overall coordination structure. There was an automatic

tendency for each agency to assume a coordinating role in its particular sector or sphere of influence. This is not surprising, given the need for more detailed planning as programs become more structured. The challenge for the coordinating body is to be aware of the changing realities, while simultaneously ensuring that decisions and strategies fit into an overall recovery plan. As already mentioned, coordination seems to be governed by the law of diminishing returns. If the coordination body is perceived as hanging on when coordination needs are greatly diminished, it will loose its credibility and be seen as only an additional layer in the UN organizational stratification.

Even in the acute period of emergency, while agencies participated actively in information-exchange meetings and on security and other issues of common concern, there was little joint planning on the humanitarian front within the UN system. This was at best coordination by consensus in that agencies informed one another of what they were planning. In Rwanda, as elsewhere, instances of agencies taking initiatives that affected the work of others without prior consultation often occurred.

Conclusions

The first lesson of Rwanda is that complex emergencies are precisely that: extraordinarily complex. Most observers probably would agree that DHA's response to the Rwandan crisis was commensurate to its complexity. Also, despite some lapses in management and in its internal chain of command, DHA was, broadly speaking, on top of things. This is especially the case if its performance is compared to that in other emergencies.

However, such examples point to the second major lesson: DHA's managerial and institutional grip on the coordination of humanitarian activities in Rwanda could have been stronger. UNREO's strengths resided in its leadership and in the services it was able to provide to the NGO community in particular. Internal management was another story. Reporting lines to DHA's headquarters and the respective roles of DHA in New York and DHA in Geneva were not clear.

UNREO suffered from the absence of a rule book, covering such basic administrative tasks as hiring and deploying staff, the management of funds, reporting requirements, and simple office procedures (such as registry, filing system, secretarial support, rules for the use of vehicles and internal travel). Consequently, much was left to improvisation, resulting in the impression that UNREO staff were dedicated and relatively effective but amateurish, especially if compared to those UN agencies (such as UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP) that have well-oiled and time-tested procedures for rapid deployment in emergencies.

The Rwanda experience teaches that DHA should not attempt to compete with the more battled-hardened agencies of the UN system. This is not DHA's role because by definition it is not operational. As advocate and facilitator, it should provide the software that enables the humanitarian community to function better than if its constituent parts operated in isolation. However, and this is the third lesson, coordination cannot be effective without a minimum of resources for the coordination entity. A functioning office or provincial office cannot be established without vehicles, radios, walkie-talkies, and petty cash for hiring translators, cleaners, or watchmen, if required. It is irresponsible to expect, as was the case in some of the UNREO provincial offices, that inexperienced staff totally new to the UN system should open an office single-handedly and cover such expenses from their own pockets.

Specific recommendations made elsewhere include the need for a package approach encompassing the main elements of coordination; the need for a task force to guide and monitor the coordination function from DHA headquarters and to ensure interaction with other UN departments; transparent job descriptions for the main actors; and a quick deployment mechanism for staff.[101] An additional area that requires immediate attention is that of the management of DHA's own resources. Flexibility and creativity are required, and the management culture needs to change to work toward the common objective of one DHA—one pool of resources. A de facto managerial separation seems to exist between the DHA staff and resources assigned to natural disasters and those for man-made disasters. In the Rwandan context, this resulted in

the reluctance to deploy experienced professionals and radio and telecommunications equipment to service the needs arising from the latter in Kigali and Goma. More probably could have been done in Rwanda if the concept of the pool had been understood and implemented earlier. Staff and other resources need to be concentrated rapidly where they are most necessary to meet the breaking needs of crises.

Given the extraordinary amounts of money that the international community has devoted to the Rwanda crisis—over $2 billion during the first 18 months alone—the importance of accountability and learning from this experience is self-evident. Seminars and studies on Rwanda are very much a growing industry. This is borne out by the many studies on the Rwanda emergency already cited. The major multidonor evaluation study, coordinated by a steering committee made up of agency representatives, and costing over $1.5 million, is due to be published in early 1996. The report's results are likely to shape future humanitarian responses to humanitarian crises. It is important for UN agencies and DHA to capitalize on their Rwanda experience. It is to be hoped that such an unprecedented attention to the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance will result in the identification of lessons to be learned and, more important, to be applied. Given the magnitude of the devastation and of the humanitarian effort of the international community in Rwanda, the least to be expected is a better understanding of the dynamics of complex emergencies and greater accountability of those whose job it is to intervene in them.

Whither Rwanda?

One would like to think that peace is within reach in Rwanda and that the combination of UN humanitarian and peacekeeping activities has been an essential component in this process. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this paper, the warning lights of further violence are still flashing. Moreover, while it is obvious that international assistance has met most of the needs of the refugees and the internally displaced, such assistance has been delivered through the leadership and the administrative structures of the defeated regime, but in the

refugee camps this assistance has not been an element of reconciliation.

In the rush of the exodus from Rwanda, there were perhaps no alternatives to the operational choices made by UNHCR, and the massive manipulation of humanitarian assistance by the remnants of a genocidal regime is certain to have long-term effects. The refugee crisis itself was largely the result of a deliberate manipulation. This was important in the sense that the exodus, perhaps for the first time in history, was organized and planned on the assumption that the international community would rescue the refugees so that the genocidal leadership and the population it controlled could avail themselves of the fundamental human right to humanitarian assistance. Similarly, inside the country, the failures by the UN system and the international community at large to address the issues of genocide, of the reconstruction of the judicial system, of human rights monitoring, and of providing some level of support to extremely weak governmental structures do not bode well for peace and reconciliation. A large and expensive Band-Aid has been applied to Rwanda, but the wounds are still festering beneath it.

Thirty years of efforts by external experts and untold millions spent in technical assistance and development aid have left the root causes of conflict untouched. Contrary to the oft quoted maxim, peace, development, and democracy did not go hand in hand in Rwanda. Given the fact that the international community was unable to prevent genocide, the least it could do is ask itself why this happened and if the manner in which international development aid was provided and manipulated by a narrow-based regime did not exacerbate divisions in Rwandan society and contribute to the problem.

It is difficult for the concerned observer and certainly for anyone who has been involved in providing humanitarian relief not to feel very strongly that the moral imperative of compassion must extend beyond the mere provision of assistance to the victims of genocide and displacement or to kick-start the economy so that Rwanda can return to development as usual. As a minimum, the international community must ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. As

maximum, durable, sustainable, and regional solutions to the problems created by the politics of hatred must be sought. Root causes must be addressed and the more profound ethical issues cannot be ignored. Humanitarian assistance alone will not solve the problems of failed states or of failed development. Raising the issue of root causes will inevitably lead to questioning other paradigms of the global system. Is there a collective international responsibility for the functioning of this system? If so, how can this responsibility be separated from the issue of justice? Will it apply both in the strict sense of punishing perpetrators of genocide and other heinous crimes and in the larger sense of the quest for a just approach to the problems of violence and poverty in areas of the world that seem to be increasingly marginal, strategically, economically, and politically? If emergencies are not aberrations in a linear process but internal to the social, economic, and political structures of societies, can we afford to remain indifferent vis-à-vis these structures? Is neutrality compatible with solidarity?[102] In this context, some experts have argued convincingly that after Rwanda it is no longer possible for humanitarians to maintain an equanimous impartiality between victims and executioners.[103]

Putting the Victims First

The Rwanda crisis, like many other post-Cold War complex emergencies, has shown once again how difficult it is for humanitarian concerns not to become pawns in a larger political game. The lack of consistency of the international community in addressing crises, whether political or humanitarian, and the institutional complexity of the United Nations system are realities with which humanitarian agencies have to struggle and work. Relief agencies often find themselves at the crossroads between politics and victims. Coordination plays a crucial role at this intersection. It must ensure that the humanitarian traffic is not held up by politics. While the brazen law of politics will sometimes overrule, humanitarians must nonetheless make certain that the voice of the victims is heard. When political mandates change or are incompatible with humanitarian objectives, it is incumbent on the humanitarians and on DHA as custodian of humanitarian principles in the UN system to point this out.

The three coordination case studies presented in this monograph illustrate three distinct facets of the relationship between humanitarian assistance and politics. The nature and intensity of the crises is undoubtedly different—and the magnitude of Rwanda overshadows the others—but a common thread runs through them: the vulnerability of humanitarian work to political demands and outright manipulation.

When crises are sudden and violent and when humanitarian needs are massive as in the case of Rwanda, it is particularly important to ensure that humanitarian principles, and the humanitarian space in which the victims and the relief agencies interact, are protected. This is a key priority for UN coordination. In particular, DHA should ensure through active lobbying and dissemination of information that the specificity of the mandates of the humanitarian agencies of the UN, but also of ICRC and the NGOs, is understood perfectly by all actors, whether at the Security Council level or at the level of the local warlord. In other words, while the quest for coherence and unity of purpose in the UN response to complex

emergencies is a sensible objective, DHA should see to it that humanitarianism is not utilized as a wedge to achieve political goals.

Direct advocacy of humanitarianism is of course easier said than done. Relief agencies are aware that they are operating in an eminently political context. Moreover, "raising the flag" of the humanitarian imperative too high may defeat the purpose if it impedes access to victims. In Goma-like settings, difficult decisions with long-term implications have to be made in a rapidly changing environment. The point here is awareness. Issues should not be brushed aside. Humanitarian agencies—and their coordination body is on the front line in this—have a responsibility to the victims to discuss and to learn and hopefully to improve their effectiveness.

This responsibility goes beyond daily survival. For humanitarianism to be effective, policymakers and practitioners must make it a point to be aware of the implications and potential consequences of their work. In this sense, coordination is a much more complex and delicate undertaking than orchestrating the response. While generating consensus is of course essential, the policy of mercy, that is humanitarian coordination in the broader sense, extends upstream into preparedness and policy development and downstream into the reflective processes by which organizations learn from experience and apply this knowledge in the future.

There are also indirect approaches to the coordination policies that need to be cultivated systematically: training of UN and NGO as well as country staff on the specificity of humanitarian mandates, studies documenting success stories and abuses of humanitarian aid, and the elaboration of policy guidelines on how to operate in conflict situations. There is a practical agenda here and addressing it will help in disseminating a humanitarian culture and ethos. If the humanitarian actors are not convinced that it is necessary to push this agenda, it is unlikely that they will be able to convince others to do so. The formulation and implementation of guidelines on do's and don'ts on such issues as negotiated access, use of armed guards, negative implication of inappropriate assistance, and delivery methods will help to advance the cause of humanitarianism. The frank discussion of such issues "in

theater" with implementing partners, sister agencies, UN political representatives, and local authorities will be a powerful expression of the UN's determination not to compromise (or to do so only when the trade-off benefits the victims).

Another area deserving attention is the involvement of the victims in the decisionmaking concerning their situation and the best mechanisms to alleviate it. Too often it is taken for granted that the outsiders know best, and coordinators are no exception here. Local coping mechanisms are disregarded or not systematically supported. This adds to the risk of fostering dependency and long-term unsustainability of programs. Unlike the development strategies of the 1970s and 1980s that promoted, or at least paid lip service to, self-reliance, the knee-jerk reaction of the humanitarian community often results in a rapid disbursement syndrome in which donors and implementors are complicit. The availability of funds and the eagerness of agencies—in particular, NGOs—to tap into them are all too often the force that drives relief programs.

From Afghanistan to eastern Zaire, the contract culture is thriving. Projects and funding cycles focus on the short term. In narrowly focused programs, victims tend to be treated as objects, as a caseload that needs to be fed, institutionalized in camps, or moved. The terminology stresses the passive characteristics of victims rather than their role as active subjects with more or less sophisticated survival strategies, forms of social organization, and rational decisionmaking processes. The three countries studied all offer examples of how relief—and the modalities of its distribution—carried the risk of creating dependency. In all three, and in many other settings, it can be argued that aid has weakened local coping mechanisms or that the massive and sometimes unthoughtful intervention of humanitarians has generated a culture of expectation.[104] Also, the UN coordination mechanism and, more generally, DHA as custodian of humanitarian principles and as advocate for the long-term perspective must ensure that program planning takes into account the larger context within which humanitarian assistance is provided and that a balance is maintained between outside intervention to meet life-saving needs and the capacity of local populations to cope with crisis. This is vital in the transition to recovery and development,

as Mozambique demonstrates. A sense of ownership and ultimately of self-reliance is essential. Recovery, the healing of society after conflict, can only succeed if it is "illuminated from within."[105]

The Three Cultures

The issue of how much intimacy humanitarian activities should maintain with the political processes of the international community on the one hand, and with the development agencies on the other, has cropped up repeatedly in this study. Following the demise of the old order and with the emergence of complex crises, the temptation to integrate the responses of the international community has been strong. The experience in Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Rwanda, however, indicates that complex issue linking and "integration" run into theoretical and practical problems. From a theoretical view point, while nobody would disagree that a coherent or unitary response to crises makes eminent sense, the subordination of the humanitarian imperative to political/military considerations is clearly unacceptable. These considerations derive their legitimacy from Security Council decisions, which represent the best available political compromise at a particular time and which, where the banner of Chapter VII is hoisted, result in the abandonment of a cardinal principle of humanitarianism—neutrality. The humanitarian imperative is non-political and categorical: the obligation to provide assistance to victims. The mandates of humanitarian agencies, especially the protection mandates of ICRC and UNHCR, cannot be mixed with or subordinated to politics.

This does not deny that conflicts are messy, contexts political, and humanitarian actors subject to manipulation from warring parties or from the condominium of powers that want to push for peace and utilize humanitarian assistance with this in mind. Humanitarians are not naïve about believing that they can be insulated effectively from political or military processes. Indeed, the case studies provide a number of practical examples of positive or negative synergies between the various components of UN activities in the three countries. Mozambique is a practical demonstration of the

problems resulting from the integration of the coordination of humanitarian activities within the command structures of a UN peace operation. Rwanda points to the advantages of a separate identity for the humanitarian effort. The level of interaction between the humanitarian coordination body in Rwanda and UNAMIR was generally good in the sense that it was provided with equal billing within the overall framework supervised by the SRSG. In Afghanistan, the two tracks were almost completely separate and the case is made that this in fact facilitated the provision of humanitarian assistance in a war-torn environment.

There are also valid institutional reasons for not mixing UN politicos with relief and with development. Peacekeeping missions are short term by definition. Their motto is "assist and forget." This is sometimes their strength, as in Mozambique, because the time-limited approach helped to push the peace process to fruition. Humanitarians—and even more so the development set—are in for the long haul. While it is essential for the three cultures to understand each other's mores and values, placing them into one mold is tantamount to a *reductio ad absurdum*.

This being said, it is necessary that the relief and development cultures should intermingle more not only because ultimately one has to hand over to the other, but also because the task of reducing vulnerability to crises demands that those who are most adversely affected are enabled to overcome the root causes of their suffering. More importantly, misconceptions relating to the nature of complex emergencies need to be lifted. Such crises are not aberrations in the linear process of development. Internal conflicts that result in the breakdown of the social order and preexisting coping mechanisms are often struggles over resources, while the economy and society themselves harbor the roots of conflict. It is to be hoped—and here again there is a role for DHA—that humanitarians and development activists will put their heads together to understand better not only the requirements of the transition from relief to post-conflict reconstruction, but also how the development strategies of the past, as in Rwanda, may have contributed to the genesis of the crisis and to a downward spiral from development to conflict to relief.

Is Coordination Really Necessary?

It has been argued in the past (and to be fair, some in the UN system still argue) that the institutionalization of UN coordination entities for humanitarian assistance adds a bureaucratic layer to a process that is basically self-regulating. In other words, once agencies have clear mandates and the turf problems between adjoining sectors are ironed out, humanitarian agencies should get on with the job of providing assistance. Information exchange and the fact of being neighbors in the same operational theater will ensure that sufficient coordination-by-default will occur.

This is a short-sighted view, if not a self-serving one. The experience from the three case studies in this monograph, and from many other settings as well, point to at least two fundamental reasons why coordination must be actively (some would say aggressively) pursued. Reasons include the volatility of crisis environments and the multiplicity of actors. Post-Cold War crises are no longer simple affairs of single cause or single response. The political, military, human rights, and humanitarian dimensions, as well as the economic and development implications, now all come together like an accordion. Someone must ensure that all the actors—the traditional UN agencies, the ICRC, the myriad NGOs, and the local authorities—know how to read from the same sheet music, even if they do not necessarily dance to the same tune. Put differently, a coordination entity is essential to orchestrate the management of the various inputs and programs so that all the actors can fit into a coherent and effective response. As the experience of Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Rwanda demonstrates, this is a task that no single agency or lead agency can undertake. Moreover, the increasing realization that effectiveness and accountability go hand in hand is an additional argument for a nonoperational entity that sets standards and guidelines while eschewing vested interests in program implementation.

The fundamental lesson of Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Rwanda is perhaps that more rather than less coordination is required. In thecontinuum from coordination-by-default to coordination-by-consensus to coordination-by-command, the Afghanistan experience ranks closest to coordination-by-

command. This resulted from strong leadership and the availability of some unearmarked resources, at least in the initial years, which allowed UNOCA/UNOCHA to do more than simply plead for consensus among humanitarian partners. A coherent program and consistent priorities were actually shaped. Leadership, personalities, knowledge of the terrain and of the local actors, and a small carrot, i.e. a small amount of catalytic funding, made this possible.

The Rwandan coordination experience was one of strong consensus (but minimal, if any, command), at least during the first six months of UNREO's existence. As UN agencies became more organized, the level of consensus decreased, which was a factor that contributed to the decision to close the UNREO office and to transfer residual humanitarian coordination functions to the resident coordinator at the end of October 1995. Unlike Afghanistan, UNREO's responsibility was limited to humanitarian needs inside the country and did not cover the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the three neighboring countries, and, consequently, also weakened its consensus building efforts.

Mozambique ranks lowest on the scale among the three case studies, that is, somewhere between coordination-by-consensus and coordination-by-default. Because UNOHAC was overshadowed by ONUMOZ and because its existence was never really accepted by some of its UN agency counterparts, it was never able to generate strong consensus in the humanitarian (and development) community in Mozambique. As an integral part of ONUMOZ, UNOHAC is related to its failure to achieve coordination-by-consensus. This is an important lesson for future reference.

The UNOCA/UNOCHA coordination mechanism was the strongest of the three, but is not presented here as a model. UN humanitarian coordination entities must be adapted to circumstances, and these will differ from emergency to emergency. Moreover, the present institutional setup in the UN humanitarian system is by no means carved in stone. Essential as it may be in theory and in practice, DHA is still somewhat a concept in search of a commitment. The donor community has yet to make up its mind as to the best possible shape of the UN humanitarian enterprise and is holding back on measures

that would allow DHA to achieve strong consensus and some command in orchestrating a coherent response to complex emergencies.

The only possible and as yet untested alternative to the present setup is the consolidation of the main elements of the UN relief system—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and DHA—into a single agency. Although this has been advocated in different quarters, the implications of such a change have not been worked out. These implications are likely to be wide-ranging especially for those organizations—UNICEF and WFP in particular—with dual development and relief mandates.[106]

Some Recommendations to Strengthen Coordination

Sweeping reform in the UN humanitarian system is unlikely in the short term. Thus, increasing the effectiveness of the existing coordination capabilities becomes more urgent. A key lesson of the country studies is that the nature and magnitude of the crises that confront the international community require some systematization of humanitarian coordination mechanisms. Amateurism and adhocracy—i.e. reinventing the coordination wheel at every new crisis—is as disrespectful to the victims as it is bad management. The components of a package approach to coordination have been described already in Part I. There are encouraging signs that this mission in a box concept is gaining wider currency in the UN system. Problems, however, remain.

Regrettably, a culture that puts a premium on a shared approach to problem solving is still lacking in the UN system. As advocate and facilitator, DHA should take the lead in pointing out to its partners, including donors, the synergies that result from joint action and the repercussions of "going it alone." The issue of the appointment of humanitarian coordinators and particularly the cumbersome process of getting the key agencies and UNDP on the same wavelength is an example of unnecessary irritant, which should be solved.

This leads to another lesson, repeatedly stressed in this monograph, that coordination in the three case studies has been mainly by consensus. DHA and the humanitarian coordinator can provide the software but they cannot force the

agencies to use it. DHA's credibility would be well-served by a limited dose of coordination by command, both in terms of some unearmarked funds and in terms of leadership and authority on the ground. It is recognized that this is a particularly difficult and contentious area, but the donors (and the general public) cannot forever claim that the UN is ineffective in coordinating emergencies, while at the same time refusing to give it the means and resources to do so. A crippled coordination body lacking leadership and the respect of the other actors defeats the purpose of coordination.

There follows another major lesson: DHA cannot be expected to coordinate effectively if it does not have access to a modicum of its own resources to hire local staff, open field offices, make local purchases, and even engage the services of implementing partners in a limited way. DHA cannot rely on UN bureaucracy. It should be granted the flexibility that only UNHCR and to some extent UNICEF have in the UN system, but also that flexibility that many organizations such as ICRC, some bilateral agencies, and countless NGOs have outside it. Such flexibility allows agencies to quickly divert personnel and funds (including cash) to breaking emergencies, move supplies and equipment, recruit staff locally, and sign letters of understanding with implementing partners, all with a minimum of bureaucracy. DHA needs to lobby for and obtain a similar capacity based on post-facto controls rather than on the fetishistic respect of outdated rules and regulations. More important, as mentioned above, DHA needs a carrot, however small, to act as a catalyst and generate momentum on specific policy initiatives.

In a post-conflict scenario, the UN system obviously has an important role to play in both facilitating interaction with government and local authorities, while also assisting the government to develop the capacity to launch rehabilitation programs and other activities essential for peace and stability. Given the lead time required by development agencies to commence operations, and their inclination to focus on capacity-building programs that do not necessarily address the immediate needs of dislocated and vulnerable groups, there is a role for a coordination mechanism that facilitates a transition and maintains momentum on a recovery trajectory. The presence

of an operational peacekeeping force providing security, logistics, or other support for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the need to ensure harmonious interface between the military and the humanitarian community, also underlines the continuing need for an impartial coordination body.

In terms of lessons that can be derived from recent experiences, it is important that the coordination body and DHA are aware of and respond to the changing requirements of the humanitarian community as a crisis evolves; structures and mechanisms that were useful at the peak of the crisis will need to be phased out or adapted as their utility decreases or becomes redundant. The three case studies demonstrate that effective coordination obeys the law of diminishing returns. The transition process is not necessarily linear: the motto of the coordination entity should be "adapt or die."

There is much unnecessary and unhelpful discussion among UN agency representatives in the field as to whether or not the coordinating entity is or should be "operational." It is unclear what is understood precisely by this term, but it appears that much of the concern and discussion centers around the fear that DHA will start encroaching on the mandates and will duplicate the activities of existing UN "operational" agencies. DHA's inability to articulate its role and to clearly define the nonpassive nature of its coordinating function partly explains the hesitation and distrust of sister agencies. Given the types of tasks DHA is required to perform to meet its responsibilities, it should be able to explain the necessity of activities such as monitoring and data collection, which are essential to its coordinating role and that it is normally not directly involved in the actual implementation of specific projects. In other words, it is operational in so far as the coordination of complex emergencies is a dynamic activity, but it is not an implementing arm of the UN in the sense that UNICEF or WFP are.

Given the present state of play in the UN system, it is unreasonable to expect that DHA will become a major implementor of programs. As we have seen above, instances in which DHA has become operational are limited to areas where no other UN body had a mandate and a capability such

as demining in Afghanistan, and to exceptional situations where it was expressly requested by sister agencies to take on an implementing role such as with the internally displaced persons in Jalalabad. As a rule, the more DHA operational functions in the field are perceived as a service to the entire humanitarian community (for example, the 24-hour radio watch and operating the UN airplane in Afghanistan) or to the population at large (demining), the more they will be accepted. Treading on the turf of others, or worse, telling them how to run their programs, will only raise the adrenaline levels both in the field and at headquarters.

DHA's ability to have a positive impact is partly linked to its image and the confidence it inspires within the humanitarian community and the larger UN system. It needs to develop a profile that is consistent throughout all operations for which it performs a coordinating function. This includes utilizing a standard acronym and logo that is easily recognizable (e.g. DHA-Rwanda or DHA-Afghanistan).

As in all emergencies, the three case studies in this monograph indicate that a high proportion of aid workers and media personnel are brand-new to the relief scene and have minimal understanding of how the different components of the UN function. From this perspective alone, it is important that DHA has an identity that explains its role and facilitates its task of coordination both at the ground level and globally in the sense of advocating the humanitarian agenda (e.g., a total ban on landmines) vis-à-vis public opinion.

It is equally important that DHA should operate as one program and that it projects the same message and image at all levels of activity. The fact that some UNOCHA, UNOHAC, and UNREO staff were unfamiliar with DHA's constitution and the tasks it is required to perform at the interagency (IASC) and international level is disquieting. As a first step, as mentioned in Part I, DHA should put together a concise, but brief, information package that should be handed to all staff members, however short-term. Such an information kit also could be used to brief personnel and colleagues not familiar with DHA but who interact with it.

The studies also have stressed the crucial importance of information and analysis. In each case, the coordination office's

capacity to be ahead of the curve in terms of understanding fast-changing events and country contexts was greatly valued. In Afghanistan, the coordinator made it a point to tap the best available academic talent, including historians and anthropologists, to guide his first steps. In Mozambique, the UNOHAC office had a team of experienced old Mozambique hands that prepared situation and other reports. In Rwanda, UNREO might have benefited from the presence of a Rwanda specialist or an anthropologist. In the initial months the information collected and distributed by UNREO was crucial for the overall shaping of the humanitarian effort.

Many other coordination and housekeeping issues are raised in the case studies. Most are self-explanatory and need not be referred to here. However, a few of the most important lessons deserve to be recalled:

- When a crisis has a cross-border or regional dimension, DHA should, as a rule, set up a regional coordination structure. This is most important to avoid differences of perception or biases among the relief community. As experience in Afghanistan and Rwanda shows, a "good UN—bad UN" syndrome can easily set in. That is, local authorities in one location, and even UN staff, may look with diffidence or suspicion on activities conducted by UN agencies from other locations, especially if there is a political or military demarcation in between. As indicated, there are also advantages in not placing the main office of the coordination body within the territory of one warring party at least during the phases when the emergency breaks or until a humanitarian consensus develops.

- The quality of staff working in humanitarian emergencies is uneven. Many do not have relevant prior experience. Serious problems arise with staffing coordination offices that are by definition short term. It is important to have the right mix of staff at the right place and at the right time. In addition to a cadre of experienced humanitarian coordinators, DHA would be wise to invest in training staff for the key support functions in coordination offices such as the administrative and financial officer, information officer,

NGO liaison officer, and senior secretary. A system needs to be developed that emphasizes both quick deployment and quality. Skills, competence, prior UN field experience, and good judgment must combine into one—that rare bird, the facilitator. Trained and competent staff will make the difference between a happy-go-lucky coordination outfit and a coordination mechanism that is at the cutting edge of the response to complex emergencies.

- DHA, being part of the UN secretariat, suffers from a culture of bureaucratic control that impedes rapid deployment, flexibility in using funds, and handling cash. Routine tasks such as renting offices, hiring local staff, translators, or security guards, which must be done quickly when a coordination presence has to be established in an emergency, must be simplified. DHA must be given the same flexibility that UNHCR, UNICEF, and countless NGOs already have. A culture of accountability, built on delegation of authority and retroactive controls, needs to be fostered.

- The crucial importance of information gathering, analysis, and dissemination already has been mentioned. The need for proper reporting, specifically consolidated reporting on the use of funds, but also reporting on the evolving social and economic conditions of the areas of concern, is also essential. Feedback to donors is crucial for continuing support to the evolving needs of a coordination office.

- Coordinators should not lose sight of another lesson: ultimately their objective is to work themselves out of a job. An exit strategy should be developed early so that it can be carried out smoothly and understood by all actors. DHA should capitalize on its strengths—the services that it can provide to the relief community and local authorities at the field level as well as to the international community, including donors—and not on its weaknesses, i.e. the perception that it is a redundant layer in the response system.

- The final lesson relates to evaluation. It is worthwhile in the early stages of a complex emergency to build an evaluation study into the planning of the operation.[107] In fact, it may be necessary to plan for two distinct studies: a process or management review to be conducted a few months after the emergency phase of a crisis begins (and subsequently if the crisis is long-term) and an in-depth, ex-post evaluation. DHA also should advocate the systematic collection of evaluation materials, ranging from the completion of routine end of mission reports by all key staff involved in a coordination exercise to the preparation of structured questionnaires to elicit assessments from DHA, agency, NGO and local beneficiaries, and the constitution of a data bank of interviews and videos documenting specific coordination situations. Mechanisms for the constructive use inside and outside the organization of the wealth of material arising from humanitarian and peacekeeping operations also need to be developed. A research program on the memory of complex emergencies, using such materials as video interviews of key actors or write ups of their experience, could provide the basis for the work of researchers and historians for years to come. Such a project might well be undertaken by outside research institutions.

Thus, DHA should take the lead in documenting, and in encouraging others to document, the strengths and weaknesses of the humanitarian response to complex emergencies. This is key to charting the road ahead, which is likely to be a troubled one, given the growing disparity between escalating humanitarian needs and the finite resources of the international community. In this sense, DHA has the potential of becoming a reflective institution. Practical insights are needed on what works and what does not in the orchestration of the response. Comparative analyses of the challenges confronted in different settings can be particularly useful in learning how best to guarantee access to victims, to safeguard humanitarian space, and to shield victims and practitioners from partisan politics and manipulation. Moreover, DHA can help in ensuring that humanitarians do not lose sight of the forest because

of the trees. Improving effectiveness of the response is an essential task. It can be a thankless one if more is not learned about the root causes of conflict and if more is not done to tackle these causes.

The Calculus of Pain

This study has attempted to highlight, on the basis of an analysis of three distinct humanitarian settings, the importance of coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies. The extent to which such coordination has become an essential fixture of the international landscape is a sad reflection on the state of the post-Cold War world. With the collapse of ideologies, alliances, states, and societies, internal resource wars are inflicting an increasing toll on the civilian population of large tracts of the Third and of the former Second World. The nature of warfare is also changing. While in the past technological innovation and numbers of casualties seemed to be positively correlated, the relationship is now being reversed. Relatively simple and cheap weapons—the assault rifle and the antipersonnel mine—are wreaking greater havoc. It is paradoxical that the genocide in Rwanda, comparable in this century in violence and intensity only to the Holocaust, was achieved through the use of a simple agricultural implement—the machete. Simple, silent, but nearly equally as deadly, scorched earth policy, or the manipulation of famine as a tool of war, has made a tragic come-back.

In a sometimes unholy alliance, the ethics of solidarity and hard-nosed *Realpolitik* contribute to shaping the response of the international community to internal conflicts and resulting humanitarian needs. Indeed, response is the operative word. Development, the lost paradigm of the Cold War decades, contained in its very essence a design for structural change. Humanitarian assistance, the defining paradigm of our cowardly new world, is fundamentally reactive, if not altogether passive. The gray sun of humanitarianism is but a dim light: reliance on humanitarianism as the sum total of our response to a plague of suffering bodes ill for the future.

Coordination is ultimately about saving lives. The effectiveness of humanitarian assistance is judged by the quantity

of mercy and the amount of suffering averted. The humanitarian imperative dictates that all victims have the same fundamental right to assistance. *Realpolitik*, however, imposes triage: the quality of mercy extended to Sarajevo is fundamentally different from that provided to Kabul. Too often humanitarian assistance is a fig leaf for political inaction, a Band-Aid on a festering sore, a costly recipe for the containment of crises. Too often it borders on appeasement. Until the root causes of crises are tackled, there is little hope that such imbalances will be redressed.

The quality of mercy *is* indeed strained, and will remain so unless we meet the challenge of the coming decades. We need to question the conventional wisdom and naïveté of the knee-jerk response to crises. It is necessary to look beyond the horizon of humanitarianism, to reappraise root causes of crises and the nature of North-South relations in their evolving complexity. Issues of justice and solidarity, however difficult to raise, must not be avoided. It will be necessary to take a hard look at the strategies and at the very concept of development. Complex emergencies and development policies are not unrelated, but the linkages between the emergence of the former and the failure of the latter have yet to be explored seriously. The North and South are complicit in this failure, which is perhaps the starting point from which to unravel the knot of root causes.

As unsatisfactory as this situation may be, we must not lose sight of the humanitarian imperative that nonetheless remains categorical. The importance of safe-guarding *humanitarian space* and nurturing the conditions that will allow it to be maintained, whether in conflict situations or in the face of political pressure, cannot be overemphasized. Not to ensure such protection is to become a party to the calculus of pain. The fact that there has been much erosion and that relief programs are usurped for partisan purposes ought to provoke greater, not lesser, commitment on the part of those convinced of the value of humanitarianism and to carve out the space necessary for it to operate. Power politics will not disappear. Until the international community gives itself the means to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and underdevelopment, which often combine in lethal internal resource wars, humanitarian

assistance will continue to be required to alleviate the suffering of victims and to staunch the flow of events that further suffering will exacerbate.

There is no reason to believe that pain should be the inevitable burden of the human condition. The provision of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies is not an end in itself. Its moral justification must extend beyond the mere tasks of keeping victims well-fed and protected. It must encompass the search for justice and durable solutions. This is a tall order. Progress will be slow and tortuous, but humanitarians are not believers in the inevitability of suffering. "It is necessary to cultivate the quiet art of disbelief. It is necessary to act quietly and disbelievingly, out of that compassion which is the only credible motive for any actions to change the world."[108]

Notes

[*]From Khalilullah Khalili's *Quatrains* (Sausalito, Calif.: Afghan Cultural Assistance Foundation, 1989). Ustad Khalili was Afghanistan's master poet and man of letters from the mid-twentieth century to his death in 1987.

[1]The main sources utilized are quoted in the respective chapters.

[2]This author has been able to identify only one source, a 15-page article published in 1990, that deals specifically with the question of humanitarian aid and its impact (Helga Baitenmann's article on the politicization of humanitarian assistance quoted in note 27). There are, of course, several hundred sources on Soviet intervention and withdrawal, the Soviet-backed regime, the resistance, the fragmentation of the country, etc.

[3]Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, *The International Response to Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience* (forthcoming).

[4]Larry Minear and Philippe Guillot, *Soldiers to the Rescue: Humanitarian Lessons from Rwanda* (Paris: OECD, forthcoming).

[5]See Jarat Chopra and Thomas G. Weiss, "Sovereignty Is No Longer Sacrosanct: Codifying Humanitarian Intervention," *Ethics and International Affairs* 6 (1992), 95-118.

[6]Such aid was even within the realm of the head of state. As General de Gaulle noted, France's relationship with Africa was his *domaine reservé* much in the same way as the country's nuclear policy.

[7]See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, "Strengthening the Coordination of Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance of the United Nations," document A/50/203, June 14, 1995, para. 23. The figure for 1995 is projected.

[8]For a review of the claims of Georgia on international humanitarian assistance, see Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Shenfield, *Armed Conflicts in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping,* Occasional Paper #21 (Providence, R.I.: Watson Institute, 1996).

[9] "Bureaucratese" would be the best approximation with which to translate this term, unless the Orwellian "newspeak" is preferred.

[10]Larry Minear et al. *United Nations Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis,* Occasional Paper #13 (Providence R.I.: Watson Institute, 1992): 3.

[11]UNOCA's structure and procedures were partly derived from those of the special UN Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA). Some key staff had worked in both offices.

[12]Major complex emergencies with DHA-supported coordination offices in 1994 were Afghanistan, Angola, Rwanda, Mozambique, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, Haiti, Northern Iraq, and former Yugoslavia

(where UNHCR performs lead agency functions). "Minor" complex emergencies requiring lighter coordination structures (often working out of UNDP offices or from UN "political" offices) were Azerbaijan, Abkhazia, Tajikistan, Burundi, and Sierra Leone.

[13]It is too early to tell if the Taliban movement, which has overrun a large swath of Pashtoon territory from Herat to the outskirts of Kabul (in the spring and summer of 1995), is a durable phenomenon or whether inter-Pashtoon rivalries and tribal allegiances will again prevail.

[14]See Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan. State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

[15]The cardinal work on Afghan history and society is Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, first edition 1973). For the anthropological perspective of traditional society, see Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Démont, *Et si on parlait d'Afghanistan? Terrains et textes 1964-1980* (Neuchâtel: Editions de l'Institut d'Ethnologie; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1988). Among the many works on Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion, the best introductions to the underlying currents of war and resistance are Olivier Roy, *L'Afghanistan: Islam et modernité politique*, (Paris: Seuil, 1985). Translated as *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), and Barnett Rubin's book quoted in the previous note, which also contains an exhaustive bibliography.

[16]Hezbi Islami has a "Leninist structure." See Olivier Roy, *The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War*, Adelphi Papers 259 (London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1991): 57.

[17]Soviet-made weapons were delivered through third parties (China, Egypt, Israel) to the Pakistani ISI (military intelligence), which controlled the pipeline to the resistance parties. This was done to maintain "plausible deniability" of any U.S. involvement. See Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, chapter 9. See also Roy, *The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War*, 31-32.

[18]From Operation Salam (UNOCA), *First Consolidated Report* (Geneva: United Nations, September 1988): 10-11.

[19]A recurrent theme of the findings of the case studies of the Humanitarianism and War Project has been that basing humanitarian operations in the capital cities of countries experiencing internal conflict has undermined the UN's ability to provide impartial assistance on all sides. A recurrent recommendation, as in the project's studies in Liberia, Georgia, former Yugoslavia, and the Sudan, has been that humanitarian operations be therefore based outside the conflict area.

[20]There is one exception to this: in Somalia at the height of the

Chapter VII operation, UN relief agencies, notably UNICEF and WFP, fearing they would become targets of pro-Aidid militias decided to distinguish themselves from the UN flag by reversing it and printing their agency logos in blue on a white field.

[21]On the coordination role of these liberation fronts vis-à-vis NGOs, see Mark Duffield and John Prendergast, *Without Troops and Tanks. Humanitarian Intervention in Ethiopia and Eritrea* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1995). The UN was largely absent from the cross-border scene.

[22]In the original breakdown of the pledge, 50 out of 400 million rubles were identified as the value of 14 military camps to be handed over to the UN upon the departure of the Soviet troops. It later became clear that the Soviet government had failed to consult its Afghan counterpart on this idea, which was just as well, since it was difficult for the UN to find a way to use these run-down facilities.

[23]Martin Barber, Director UNOCHA, personal communication with the author, May 1995.

[24]In Somalia, the UN also tended to "spawn" colonies of clients. It has been noted that in Mogadishu in 1994 there were an estimated one thousand "local NGOs set up by Somalis to channel foreign funds into worthy projects....By the end of its mission, the UN was easily the biggest employer in Somalia...supporting, according to some estimates, a hundred thousand people in Mogadishu," William Finnegan, "Letter from Mogadishu. A World of Dust," *The New Yorker* (March 20, 1995).

[25]UNOCA / UNOCHA's mine clearance and awareness programs have been evaluated independently several times, in particular by the UN itself and the EU, and generally have recognized their effectiveness. In terms of costs, demining in Afghanistan also compares favorably with other UN efforts elsewhere. The cost per mine destroyed is approximately $220, according to an interview with the UNOCHA demining program manager in Islamabad in May 1995.

[26] An observer noted that there were 75 foreign NGOs with offices in Peshawar at the end of the 1980s—among them, 43 from Europe and 14 from North America. In addition to the expatriate staff, these NGOs employed some 6,000 local Afghans and Pakistanis. See Marvin Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan, Resistance and Reconstruction* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994): 59. In 1991-1992, when the NGO presence peaked, their total number was well above 150, including Islamic and Afghan agencies. On the basis of a survey, Helga Baitenmann concluded in 1989 that 265 NGOs had been directly or indirectly involved in the Afghan crisis. Helga Baitenmann, "NGOs and the Afghan War: the Politicization of Humanitarian Aid," *Third World Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (January 1990).

[27]Refugee camps were controlled by Pakistani camp managers

who interacted with refugee camp leaders, or *maliks*, for the running of the camps and the distribution of relief goods. Both sets of players were widely held to be corrupt. The Afghan camp leaders "were often called 'ration-maliks' for their ability to get people on their ration lists and to offer other favors." These lists were grossly inflated as maliks often controlled several hundred pass-books. See Weinbaum, Pakistan *and Afghanistan*.

[28]A map showing the location of NGO projects—e.g. health centers—and their concentration over the years would easily bear this out.

[29]In 1989-1991, this was not a subject NGOs would discuss, even if prodded.

[30]Hedayatullah Ahmadi, a young Afghan staff member in the UNOCA Peshawar office, to whom this chapter is dedicated, was a victim of this violent climate. He "disappeared" in 1989.

[31]Nawab Salim, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's spokesman, in a personal communication from Barnett Rubin.

[32]Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan*, 70.

[33]In early 1990, after evidence emerged that ISI officials had siphoned off wheat deliveries, the U.S. food aid program—valued at $30 million annually—was suspended.

[34]Before the war, *karez* cleaning was "like an annual feast in which the whole village participated," observes Nancy Hatch Dupree in a personal communication with the author in April 1995.

[35]"NGO funds have often exacerbated tensions among rival parties...since each party has tried to lure them towards the areas under their control, NGOs have often been drawn into the power battles of the parties," Baitenmann, "NGOs and the Afghan War," 73.

[36]NGOs "willingly or unwillingly supported a U.S. strategy of low intensity conflict, supporting anticommunist forces with nonlethal aid. The cross-border NGOs have been strengthening the base of the insurgency, enabling it to feed and legitimize the rebels with their presence. Their funds not only help support a relatively stable population that can feed the rebels, but also strengthen the commanders in the area," *ibid.*, 73.

[37]The UN answer to such pressures was that it would only deliver food on the basis of needs assessment conducted by its staff. This writer participated in one such assessment close to the besieged city of Khost in late 1989. The evidence showed only a few displaced families, which was unconvincing so that the UN agreed to deliver only a symbolic amount of wheat. Faced with stronger pressures elsewhere, agencies sometimes paid larger entry "tickets."

[38]See Baitenmann, "NGOs and the Afghan War," 70.

[39]See Sultan Barakat, Mohammed Ehsan, and Arne Strand, *NGOs and Peace-Building in Afghanistan, Workshop Report, 3-7 April 1994,*

published by Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid, and Post-War Reconstruction and Development Unit, University of York, 1994. On the workshop and its wider implications, see the report by Mary B. Anderson, *Afghanistan/Pakistan Project: Case Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Collaborative for Development Action, Inc., 1995).

[40]These textbooks were in use in the schools at the IDP camps near Jalalabad in April 1995. The Kabul government has now agreed to change the curriculum. Given the state of the country, this will be a lengthy process.

[41]A rare example of soul-searching by NGOs involved a series of discussions in the mid 1980s to review the politicization of humanitarian action during the Cold war. This was sponsored by InterAction, the US-based professional association of NGOs. See Larry Minear, *Helping People in an Age of Conflict* (New York: InterAction, 1987). The Afghanistan experience is recapped at pp. 17, 28, 49, and 72.

[42]One of the most visible impacts of the UN drug abuse control program (UNFDAC) in Afghanistan is the appearance along some of the main roads of metal signs with an anti-drug message in Pashto, Farsi, and English. Sometimes, as on the Jalalabad-Torkham road, these signs are in full view of blooming poppy fields.

[43]In southern Sudan, for example, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) staff working in rebel-held areas are actively promoting respect for the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and other basic human rights instruments. The political-military authorities are in fact required to sign a document containing the "ground rules" for the delivery of humanitarian assistance that is based on the convention's guidelines. Local "monitoring committees" also ensure that the distribution of humanitarian assistance is in consonance with the provisions of the convention (Interview with Philip O'Brien, OLS Coordinator, October 1995).

[44]After some initial hesitation, UNOCHA and the other UN agencies have taken a strong stand vis-à-vis Taliban attempts to curtail the employment of women and girls' education in areas under their control (November 1995).

[45]Interviews in Peshawar and Kabul, April-May 1995.

[46]Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kabul, May 4, 1995.

[47]See Mary Anderson, *Afghanistan/Pakistan Project*.

[48]The lack of synergy between the two processes is reinforced by the situation at the time of writing this paper. The peace process is now completely separate from the humanitarian and rehabilitation track. There are now three UN offices with functions that overlap to some extent and that compete for the visibility of being the UN "supremo" for Afghanistan: the Office of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan (OSGA) that deals with the political process, UNOCHA, and UNDP. All three are operating by remote control from Pakistan, with only

skeleton staffs in Kabul (or in Jalalabad in the case of OSGA).

[49]The Mozambican National Resistance (MNR), subsequently known as Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana, was created in 1977, only two years after independence from Portugal. It was the brainchild of the Smith regime in former Rhodesia, supported by Portuguese businessmen and later backed and trained by the South African military.

[50]Shaun Vincent, "The Mozambique Conflict (1980-1992)," in Michael Cranna (ed.), *The True Cost of Conflict* (Guilford: Saferworld, 1994): 82.

[51]Human Rights Watch, *Conspicuous Destruction. War, Famine and the Reform Process in Mozambique*, Africa Watch Report, July 1992, 3.

[52]Vincent, "The Mozambique Conflict (1980-1992)," 82.

[53]*Ibid*.

[54]*Ibid*., 5.

[55]Africa Recovery Briefing Paper, "Mozambique, Out of the Ruins of War," United Nations Department of Public Information, no. 8 (May 1993): 16; also World Bank Development Report, Washington, D.C., 1993.

[56]*Ibid*.

[57]Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique, Who Calls the Shots*? (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1993): 38.

[58]William Finnegan, *A Complicated War, the Harrowing of Mozambique* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992): 119.

[59]For a discussion of the events leading up to the GPA and the role of St. Egidio, see Cameron Hume, *Ending Mozambique's War. The Role of Mediation and Good Offices* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute for Peace, 1994).

[60]Hanlon, *Mozambique, Who Calls the Shots*?, 64.

[61]Interview with Aldo Ajello in Maputo in December 1994.

[62]Interim Report and Hand-over Notes of the first Director of UNOHAC, 1994.

[63]Chris Alden, "The UN and the Resolution of Conflict in Mozambique," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33, I (1995).

[64]*Ibid*.

[65]Aldo Ajello, "The Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in Mozambique in the Context of ONUMOZ," in Jim Whitman and David Pocock (eds.), *After Rwanda. The Coordination of United Nations Humanitarian Assistance* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

[66]To be fair, ONUMOZ itself was fraught with controversy: "Bureaucratic wrangling, involving everything from in-fighting over 'turf' issues to paralysis over procedures, played a significant part in the character of ONUMOZ," Alden, "The UN and the Resolution of Conflict in Mozambique," 115.

[67]Interviews with donor representatives and NGOs, Maputo,

December 1994. See also Alden, "The UN and the Resolution of Conflict in Mozambique," 123; and Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Landmines in Mozambique* (Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Watch, 1994): 80-83.

[68]Interview with Aldo Ajello, Maputo, December 1994; Alden, "The UN and the Resolution of Conflict in Mozambique," 123. See also Ajello, "The Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in Mozambique in the Context of ONUMOZ," "the mine-clearing project was labeled a bad failure by both parties to the conflict and the international community."

[69]In 1994, World Vision became the single largest aid agency in Mozambique with a yearly budget of $65 million, excluding food aid.

[70]For a discussion of this trend, see Antonio Donini, "The Bureaucracy and the Free Spirits: Stagnation and Innovation in the Relationship between the United Nations and NGOs," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (September 1995). See also, Nicholas Stockton, "NGOs, Subcontractors or innovators in unstable situations?" discussion paper presented at the international seminar on "Aid under Fire, Redefining Relief and Development Assistance in Unstable Situations," Wilton Park, Sussex, U.K., April 7-9, 1995.

[71]In addition to the works by Finnegan and Hanlon already quoted, see Reginald Herbold Green and Maria Mavie, "From Survival to Livelihood in Mozambique," *IDS Bulletin* 25, no. 4 (1995).

[72]For a critical analysis of the role of the "new missionaries" in Mozambique, see Hanlon, *Mozambique, Who Calls the Shots*?

[73]Interviews in Maputo in December 1994.

[74]This process is difficult in the best of circumstances. The task has been compared to "herding cats" in Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss, "Pluralizing Global Governance: Analytical Approaches and Dimensions," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (September 1995).

[75]Statement at an international seminar on Mozambique organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in New York on March 27-28, 1995.

[76]Statement by Aldo Ajello at the above-mentioned seminar; similar views were expressed in interviews in Maputo in December 1994.

[77]Mark Duffield, "Complex Emergencies and the crisis of Developmentalism," *IDS Bulletin* no. 25 (October 1994), a special issue on Linking Relief and Development.

[78]Ajello, "The Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in Mozambique in the Context of ONUMOZ." He adds: "In the implementation of our mission, we often had a tall man to cover and a short blanket available." On the political side, when problems arose, "we managed to change the blanket; on the humanitarian side we had to cut the man because we did not have the authority to do otherwise."

[79]Interview in Maputo in December 1994.

[80]For a discussion of the demobilization process see, Joao Paulo Borges Coelho and Alex Vines, *Pilot Study on Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Mozambique*, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, 1995.

[81]Finnegan, "Letter from Mogadishu," 176. Alden, "The UN and the Resolution of Conflict in Mozambique," 115, remarks that "The structures created by the Rome Agreement continued to give international donors an unprecedented and direct role in the conduct, management and policy-making of the country."

[82]George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1967): 150.

[83]It is assumed that the chronology of the crisis in its broad phases is known to the reader. A detailed chronology is included in Minear and Guillot, *Soldiers to the Rescue.* Numerous books and studies have been published in the wake of the genocide. The most thorough account of the massacres so far is the report issued by African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance,* (London, September 1994). Numerous studies on the humanitarian response to and the implications of the Rwanda crisis also have been issued. Among the latter, see Rony Brauman, *Devant le mal. Rwanda, un génocide en direct* (Paris: Arlea, 1994); Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda, essai sur le génocide* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1994); Colette Braeckman, *Rwanda. Histoire d'un génocide* (Paris: Editions Fayard, 1994). Amongst the former, the most relevant for the discussion in the present chapter are: Guy Vassal-Adams, *Rwanda. An Agenda for International Action* (U.K. and Ireland: Oxfam, 1994); Antonio Donini and Norah Niland, *Report on the Coordination of Humanitarian Activities in Rwanda* (New York: UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, November 1994); the study by Minear and Guillot quoted above; and the major multidonor evaluation of the effectiveness of the international community's response to the Rwanda crisis which is due to be published in early 1996. Study I of the four studies that it will contain deals with the historical background and the context of the events leading up to the crisis and includes a detailed bibliography. For a succinct introduction to the complexities of Rwandan society, see Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi," and Claudine Vidal, "Situations ethniques au Rwanda," both in Jean Louis Amselle and E. M'okolo, *Au coeur de l'ethnie* (Paris: Editions la découverte, 1985).

[84]In September 1994, a World Bank mission visited the country when the government was in a most precarious position. To release $240 million of project funds, which had been frozen because of the civil war, the bank asked the government not only to pay $4 million (which had grown to $5.5 million by the end of 1994) of arrears in loan reimbursements immediately, but also to present a budget and a

stabilization plan with numerous other conditions.

[85]The multidonor evaluation of Rwanda cited above places the total cost at $1.4 billion in 1995 alone.

[86]Recent studies have shown that the response in some cases was technically inappropriate and not cost-effective. For instance, sophisticated water purification systems were installed by the U.S. military for the refugee camps around Goma. These were expensive to run and clearly unsustainable since they relied on bowsers for the distribution of the water to the camps. Cheaper alternatives were locally available (e.g. the water from the lake, a bucket, and a few drops of chlorine). Similar points have been made with respect to the medical response or the cholera epidemic.

[87]What follows is based on information collected during a field trip to Rwanda in September 1994 as part of a DHA mission to assess the coordination of UN humanitarian activities (see report quoted in note 5). Where possible, the information has been updated.

[88]See Minear et al., *United Nations Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis.*

[89]For the breaking period of the emergency this position was held by a UNDP staff member who also doubled up as UNDP resident representative. In October 1994, he was replaced by a DHA official.

[90]This point was vocalized by some NGOs, in particular Save the Children (U.S.).

[91]UNREO's visibility did not please everybody. Visiting dignitaries from UNDP headquarters complained that the UNDP logo was nowhere to be seen, despite the fact that UNREO was housed in the UNDP premises and was borrowing its vehicles.

[92]Randolph Kent, the humanitarian coordinator in Rwanda from October 1994 onwards, while deploring the "lack of institutional clarity" of the UN political/military and humanitarian roles, notes that "the UN Humanitarian Coordinator who, although not part of UNAMIR, was ultimately responsible to the SRSG, accrued no institutional benefits from the SRSG's structure," Randolph Kent, "The Integrated Operations Centre in Rwanda: Coping with Complexity," in Whitman and Pocock (eds.), *After Rwanda.*

[93]As Randolph Kent put it, "The principally military-oriented UNAMIR had its own standard operating procedures that ran essentially in a self-contained way; there was a planning office and established chains of command and, generally speaking, these did not incorporate procedures for external consultations," *ibid.*

[94]The various roles performed by the military in Rwanda and in the refugee camps in Zaire are analyzed in detail in Minear and Guillot, *Soldiers to the Rescue.* Mention should also be made of Study III of the forthcoming multidonor evaluation. See also Major General Romeo Dallaire, "The Changing Role of Peace-keeping Forces: The

Relationship between UN Peacekeepers and NGOs in Rwanda," in Whitman and Pollock, *After Rwanda.* On the humanitarian / military problematic, see also Hugo Slim, "The Continuing Metamorphosis of the Humanitarian Practitioner: Some New Colours for an Endangered Chamaleon," *Disasters* 19, no. 2 (June 1995).

[95]Minear and Guillot, *Soldiers to the Rescue*, chapter 6.

[96]*Ibid.*, chapter 7.

[97]On the militarization of humanitarian assistance, see Hugo Slim, "Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping: An Agenda for Peace?" and Antonio Donini, "Surfing on the Crest of the Wave until it Crashes: Intervention and the South," in *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, University of Cambridge (U.K.), both articles posted electronically in September 1995 (http: / / www.gsp.cam.ac.uk / jha.html).

[98]Slim, "The Continuing Metamorphosis."

[99]These meetings (the venue of which was later shifted from UNREO to the Ministry of Cooperation and the frequency reduced to once a week) were a must for visiting dignitaries such as the heads of UN agencies and NGOs, ministers from donor countries, and the like. At least one head of state, the president of Ireland, is known to have attended.

[100]Kent, "The Integrated Operations Centre in Rwanda," notes that "the Government felt very uncomfortable with the number of NGOs that had descended on Rwanda at the end of the conflict." The text of the legislation governing the activities of NGOs in Rwanda and a discussion of the role of NGOs are contained in Edward A. Adiin Yaausah, *An Analysis of Domestic Legislation to Regulate the Activities of Local and Foreign NGOs in Croatia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda,* (Oxford: the Refugee Studies Programme and the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford, 1995).

[101]Donini and Niland, *Report on the Coordination of Humanitarian Activities in Rwanda.*

[102]Duffield and Prendergast, *Without Troops and Tanks*, concludes that "The notion of neutrality requires thorough critique. Solidarity rather than neutrality has to be the guiding hand."

[103]See *Populations in Danger 1995. A Médecins sans Frontières Report*, MSF, 1995; also Alex de Waal and Rakiya Omaar, *Humanitarianism Unbound,* African Rights, 1995.

[104]In Afghanistan local groups were adept at learning "Aid speak." When it became known that UN agencies (and NGOs) would not work with military commanders but only with "shuras" (councils) of local elders or "grey beards," shuras started sprouting like mushrooms in every district. Local "Aid speak" specialists were most artful in generating project documents. When word spread that shuras were no longer sufficient and that independent local reconstruction bodies

were the appropriate partners, these conveniently appeared. As one observer in Jalalabad put it: "all the metal signs of local NGOs and reconstruction bodies in town would go a long way in covering the roofing needs of the internally displaced...."

[105]Peter L. Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice. Political Ethics and Social Change* (London: Basic Books, 1974): 216.

[106]See Erskine Childers with Brian Urquhart, *Renewing the United Nations System* (Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 1994), where the authors argue for a consolidation of the UN system relief agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF) into one single entity. Similar proposals have been made by Gareth Evans, *Cooperating for Peace* (St. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1993); Oxfam in a paper circulated in January 1995 (and now reposted in the electronic *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, Cambridge University, http://www.gsp.cam.ac.uk/jha.html), and in a nonpaper distributed by the U.S. delegation at ECOSOC in July 1995. A more radical proposal for the internationalization of ICRC, or for the creation of a separate, non-UN organization, for the provision of emergency relief was made by James Ingram, former head of WFP, "The Future Architecture for International Humanitarian Assistance," in Thomas G. Weiss and Larry Minear (eds.), *Humanitarianism across Borders: Sustaining Civilians in Times of War* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1994).

[107]It is noteworthy that military institutions often acquit themselves better in this regard than do civilian agencies. The U.S. troops participation in the NATO force deployed in December 1995 to guarantee the Bosnian peace agreement included in their ranks a number of military historians.

[108]Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice*, 256.

Acronyms

ACUNS	Academic Council on the United Nations System
ACBAR	Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief
ANC	African National Congress
ANCB	Afghan NGO Coordination Body
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CENE	National Executive Commission for the Emergency
CERF	Central Emergency Revolving Fund
CHAP	Consolidated Humanitarian Assistance Program
CIVPOL	Civilian Police
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPCCN	Department for the Coordination of Natural Calamities
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EEC	European Economic Commission
EU	European Union
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPA	General Peace Agreement
HAC	Humanitarian Assistance Committee
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
ICC	Islamic Coordination Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
MNR	Mozambican National Resistance
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MSH	Management Services for Health
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OEOA	Office for Emergency Operations in Africa
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan

ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
OPS	Office of Project Services
OSGA	Office of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan
PDPA	Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PRSG	Personal Representative of the Secretary-General
QIP	Quick Impact Project
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
RENP	Rwanda Emergency Normalization Plan
SMU	Salam Mobile Units
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SST	Swedish Support Team
SWABAC	Southwestern Afghanistan and Baluchistan Agency Coordination
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda
UNBRO	United Nations Border Relief Operation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan
UNOHAC	United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination
UNREO	United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office
UNSCERO	United Nations Special Coordinator of Emergency Relief Operations
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
ZOT	Zone of Tranquility

About the Humanitarianism and War Project

Day in and day out, from Yugoslavia to Somalia, Chechnya to Rwanda, Angola to Haiti, civil strife inflicts widespread human suffering. Even where bloodshed has abated, as in Cambodia, El Salvador, and Mozambique, tensions and the awesome task of rebuilding war-torn countries remain.

How can the international community better protect those caught in national and regional conflicts? How can it more effectively assist nations to turn the corner on violence and become productive societies? Can aid become an effective force for the resolution of conflicts? Must humanitarian action await the request of warring parties or, with the ebbing of East-West tensions, can humane values form the new cornerstone of international relations?

These are questions being addressed by the Humanitarianism and War Project. The initiative is an effort by an independent team of researchers based at Brown University and drawing on the expertise of scholars and practitioners from around the world to assist the international community chart its course in the post-Cold War era. The co-directors of the project are Thomas G. Weiss, Associate Director of the Watson Institute and Executive Director of the Academic Council on the United Nations System; and Larry Minear, Senior Fellow at the Watson Institute and the Project's principal researcher.

During the first phase (1991-1993), the project was co-sponsored by the Refugee Policy Group (Washington, D.C.), and support was provided by two dozen practitioner organizations and interested foundations. These included four governments (Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, and France); six intergovernmental organizations (UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNDP, DHA/UNDRO, and the UN Special Program for the Horn of Africa); ten nongovernmental organizations (Catholic Relief Services, Danish Refugee Council, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development [Canada], International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam-UK, and Save the Children Fund-UK); and three foundations (Pew Charitable Trusts,

Rockefeller Foundation, and Arias Foundation).

The second phase (1994-1996) of activities has financial support to date from: four governments (Australia, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States); eight intergovernmental organizations (UNICEF, UNDP, UN Volunteers, United Nations University, International Organization for Migration, OECD Development Centre, European Commission Humanitarian Office, and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs); seventeen nongovernmental organizations (American Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, Danish Refugee Council, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Orthodox Christian Charities, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, Nordic Red Cross Societies [Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish], Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children-US, World Vision, and Trócaire); and three foundations (Pew Charitable Trusts, McKnight Foundation, and U.S. Institute of Peace).

To date the project has conducted field research in the Horn of Africa, the Persian Gulf, Central America, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Rwanda, Georgia, Haiti, and Chechnya in order to publish a series of case studies and policy recommendations. In addition to journal articles and op-eds, the project has also published four books: *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (1995); *Humanitarian Politics* (1995); *Humanitarian Action in Times of War: A Handbook for Practitioners* (1993, also available in Spanish and French); and a volume of collected essays by practitioners, *Humanitarianism Across Borders: Sustaining Civilians in Times of War* (1993). The project has also prepared a training module which is currently in use by UN organizations.

During the present three-year phase, the project will carry out additional field research; complete a practical guide for the media and humanitarian action; share findings and recommendations in conferences and training events; and continue an extensive array of publications.

About the Author

Antonio Donini has worked for the United Nations at its headquarters in New York and in the field for more than 20 years. He is chief of the Lessons Learned Unit at the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), which prepares independent studies that assess the effectiveness of international relief efforts in complex emergencies. Before joining DHA, he worked in the UN Joint Inspection Unit and in the executive office of the secretary-general. He has served in and around Afghanistan from 1989 to 1992, where he was deputy chief of mission in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCA) in Islamabad and chief of mission of UNOCA in Kabul. In 1995, he was awarded a sabbatical at the Watson Institute for International Studies, which allowed him to prepare this occasional paper. He is the author of several studies and articles on humanitarian and UN coordination issues.