Classical Humanitarians are painfully aware of how susceptible humanitarian assistance is to incorporation into the war strategies of belligerents. Among the negative consequences of that incorporation is the contribution to, rather than amelioration of, suffering among non-combatants, as well as the prolongation or "fuelling" of war through the diversion of relief inputs. Moreover, in their efforts to gain access to vulnerable populations, Classical Humanitarians may have ignored human rights violations towards, perhaps, the most vulnerable.

The solutions being suggested to counter these problems include the strengthening and enhancement, of the principles of neutrality, impartiality and consent of the parties. From the Classical Humanitarian perspective, if all third-party actors in the field abided by the ICRC Code of Conduct, then there would be fewer incidences of harm to relief personnel and less swapping of access to vulnerable groups in exchange for relief inputs.

Outside criticism toward Classical Humanitarianism begins with this solution. Certain signatories to the ICRC Code of Conduct confess that they agree to the principles in theory, but they do not adhere to them in practice. Their agreement to sign the Code of Conduct is partly a public-relations ploy. Donors may be more willing to give funds to those who are signatories than to those who are not. Those who have worked in the field with signatories also note a dissonance between theory and practice and have commented on the Code's inability to monitor and enforce compliance by its signatories.

It is also argued that adherence to the Code will not increase consent to access. Various case studies have revealed that the ability to gain access to populations in need has most to do with the political/military/economic objectives of the authorities who control them, and secondarily to do with the personality and professional skills of the relief aid negotiator. Criticism is rampant regarding the failure of humanitarian agencies to hire and train appropriate individuals for sensitive positions. Instead, institutional politics, rather than professionalism, determines who will be the belligerent's interlocutor.

Without question, the strongest outside critique toward Classical Humanitarianism is its refusal to abandon its non-political "blinders." Whenever resources are applied to a resource-scarce environment, someone is being empowered and the dynamics of war are being altered. Critics who hold this position include those who support an Ownership Agenda and those who are in favour of Aggressive Solidarity.

Within the broad label of Ownership Agendas is a subset of distinct positions. They include Justifiable Isolationism, African Solutions for African Problems, and the Revolutionary Political Contract. Justifiable Isolationism desires to contain the conflict from spreading and to have the warring parties "burn themselves out" without having to involve itself directly. Isolationism criticizes Classical Humanitarianism for fuelling war by allowing relief inputs to be diverted, by protecting militia inside relief camps, and by assisting noncombatants in leaving a conflict environment as refugees (that is, not force the parties to deal with the vulnerability of noncombatants themselves).

African Solutions for African Problems argue that the non-political position of Classical Humanitarianism ignores the impact of aid on state and regional politics. The provision of relief aid by Classical Humanitarianism also interferes with the formation of African social and political contracts, particularly over issues of state responsibility and accountability toward civil society. And although Classical Humanitarianism professes to be the guardian of international humanitarian law, it uses such law to protect the rights and privileges of the humanitarian agencies themselves at the expense of the rights of non-combatants.

The Revolutionary Political Contract is slightly different from African Solutions. Both agree that any external involvement, however well-intentioned, almost inevitably damages the search for local solutions. But whereas African Solutions chides Classical Humanitarianism for not giving humanitarian funds directly to African governments to control relief operations, the Revolutionary recommends that funds also be directed toward local *progressive* organizations with *progressive* social agendas, and which would engage with government in a form of popular struggle toward a political contract. For African Solutions, the transfer of funds and humanitarian functions from third-party Classical Humanitarians to African governments is a far cleaner and quicker transfer of power and authority than that suggested by the Revolutionary.

Aggressive Solidarity is perhaps the most severe critic of the professed "non-political" nature of Classical Humanitarianism. Solidarity argues that the actions of Classical Humanitarianism are counterproductive in that they are temporarily life-sustaining, inadequate and can exacerbate the root causes of war by supporting indirectly human rights abuses and further political marginalization. It argues that in order to build local capacity for humanitarian action and human rights, third-party intervenors must challenge sovereignty claims; that is, they must be political in action and force governments and/or *de facto* authorities to be accountable. For example, some solidarity agendas suggest that donors and aid agencies form a united front in setting conditions by which all humanitarian assistance and aid be withdrawn should basic human rights violations continue or agreements to access populations be dishonoured.

How seriously should Classical Humanitarianism take these critiques of its continued "non-political" stance? Without exception, all alternative models of humanitarian agendas include a final qualifier of their critique: When there is no local political authority, no local political contract, and no political desire by a foreign power to intervene, the presence of Classical Humanitarians is critical for the survival of noncombatants. And although there have been clear failures in the implementation of humanitarian action according to principles of neutrality and impartiality, there are also advantages to the maintenance, if not further entrenchment, of these principles. Non-political NGOs use extensive communication channels and media partnerships to induce UN agencies and governments to provide assistance; they deter certain acts of violence by their presence and monitoring; they mobilize the international community to adopt and comply with international humanitarian law; and they can act as neutral intermediaries between warring parties.

Relief-to-Development-and-Democracy Approach

While the Relief-to-Development-and-Democracy Approach criticizes Classical Humanitarianism for favouring short-term solutions, Classical Humanitarianism and other agendas argue that modern humanitarianism has exceeded its limits and must become more modest in its ambitions and expectations. The humanitarian concept within Classical Humanitarianism is based on the will to provide for the well-being of others when circumstances render self-help difficult, if not impossible. Conceptual stretching of humanitarianism has led to the incorporation of all third-party activities into a grand agenda designed to bring a society back to equilibrium and prevent future conditions in which emergency relief must be applied. The concepts used most frequently in relation to the RDD Approach are "civil society" and "capacity-building." The RDD Approach seeks to strengthen civil society by capacity-building the social systems (kinship networks, hierarchy of elders, gender relations), economic systems (markets, insurance, credit, infrastructure), and political systems (local councils, traditional authority and decision-making, democracy, peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms). In the most severe situations, the RDD Approach goes so far as to recommend that the UN serve as a surrogate government in situations where there is no existing central authority.

The above activities, whether coordinated or independently strategized and implemented, are elements of the RDD Approach. UN agencies are representative of actors that have adopted this approach, which is loosely structured and resistant to a single over-arching authority. Multiple actors are involved in multiple objectives, such as relief, development, conflict resolution, democratic processes, market-oriented skills development, judiciary reform, and infrastructure rehabilitation. A "humanitarian" marketplace in which NGOs tend to adopt a functional specialty and then compete with other specialists for donor dollars now exists. Activities within this approach are donor-driven, rendering the Approach susceptible to gaps in certain relief functions while others are over-funded.

Relief is a small part of the RDD Approach and intentionally so. Emergency relief, it is argued, should not undermine other preventive, rehabilitative or development activities. Emergency operations receive too large a proportion of third-party resources, use fewer local institutions than other activities (that is, they do not "capacity build"), and create dependency cultures.

Criticisms against the RDD Approach are plentiful, beginning with its development component. As one author notes, the same aid workers and volunteers who once tried (and largely failed) to teach farmers to grow things are now fanning out and sowing the seeds of 'civil society' across the world. First,

development efforts largely failed, in a wide swathe of the South, during the Cold War. In some countries, the evidence shows more of a development-to-relief continuum than vice versa. And as another author notes, development in some instances contributed to ethnic violence. The Rwandan genocide, for example, is summarized as an extreme outcome of the failure of a development model that was based on ethnic, regional and social exclusion. Second, the new development model focuses on the concept of civil society, but agencies that have adopted the RDD Approach design projects to strengthen "civil society" with little basic knowledge of the subject. Political scientists, after decades of attempts to identify the factors that comprise and strengthen civil society, as well as to understand the relationship of civil society to political authorities, have few answers themselves. Third, the term "civil society" implies that such a thing exists separate from the state and can be strengthened to counter poor and unaccountable political authority. Critics argue that in relatively permanent predatory environments, there is no distinction between state and civil society--all are politicized. And even if there was a distinction, how would humanitarian agencies know which groups within a territory represent a nascent and "good" civil society to capacity-build?

Each of the schools of humanitarian thought attack the RDD Approach from different angles. Classical Humanitarianism argues that those who adopt the RDD Approach state prematurely that an emergency period has passed. Declaring an emergency over before its time is facilitated by measuring a state of emergency in terms of crude mortality rates rather than the traditional use of wasting and malnutrition statistics. Thus, changes in the primacy of certain emergency indicators rearranges the primacy of development, rehabilitation, and democracy-related components of the RDD Approach over continued relief activities. Abusive regimes have benefited from the sensitivity of the RDD Approach's desire to move quickly beyond an "emergency." In the case of Sudan, for example, the emergency was declared over, despite ongoing hostilities. And the Government of Sudan now permits international organizations to register only for rehabilitation and development activities even though there are vulnerable populations in great need of emergency relief.

Classical Humanitarianism also expresses great concern over the shift in focus from people to processes, particularly when the processes are without criteria for measuring their own success. For example, how long must third-party actors remain actively involved inside a territory before they feel comfortable that the democratic system they've helped to construct will "hold"? How will third-party actors involved in the development component measure their success if the economy they are attempting to assist has limited potential to compete in the global economy? As mentioned, a critique of Classical Humanitarianism is that it absorbs too many donor resources without contributing to the longer-term well-being of local institutions. Is this a fair critique given that there is no guarantee of the long-term sustainabilty of other components of the RDD Approach?

Those who favour Justifiable Isolationism are critical of the development component as well. The failure of the Development Decades should not be forgotten just because of more recent failures in humanitarian operations. Some who support the RDD Approach are operating from the assumption that there has been a "trade-off" between donors' provision of funding for emergency versus development projects. This assumes that once emergencies subside, donor dollars will return to development. One U.S. AID official remarked that such thinking is erroneous; the U.S., for one, is deeply committed to allowing the market (and IMF restructuring) to lead to development and has no intention of increasing development aid in the future. The drop in U.S. development funds to Africa (annually, from $1.3 billion in 1994 to $700 million today) will not be reversed.

African Solutions to African Problems argues that third-party actors are unprofessional, behave unethically, and are driven by donor agendas. And the imposition of an elite external service corps is in many cases deeply resented and often sabotaged in ways totally counterproductive both to hosts and to donors. Unless Africans are given the resources necessary to design and implement their own response to meet humanitarian needs, they must continue to accept and be humiliated by the agendas of their benefactors. As one author notes, for Africans to meet the conditions of foreign assistance, business investment, and be granted the resources to design and administer their own humanitarian operations, they must accept and work within "good governance" frameworks from five different perspectives: external governments, external enterprises, external cause groups, domestic elites, and ordinary people.

The Revolutionary Political Contract is also highly critical of the RDD Approach, which requires a

marketplace of NGOs to implement the projects. Problems with NGOs are that anyone can create one, professional standards are unenforceable, and assessments of their performance are not made public. As for the UN, for those who espouse the Apolitical contract@ position, there is still an absence of accountability; there is little attention to waste and corruption within the UN system, which will continue to grow with the expansion of RDD components; there is no regulation of professional standards; disagreements within the system are left unresolved; and there are no enforcement measures attached to "lessons learned." Finally, the existing international humanitarian system remains unaccountable to its recipients for the negative consequences resulting from its presence. There are no mechanisms in place for recipients to judge the behaviour of their "benefactors" without being punished by the withdrawal of all external assistance.

The Aggressive Solidarity approach mirrors the RDD Approach toward capacity-building, but is highly critical of its loose structure, which defies coordination and a commitment to a single over-arching objective such as protecting human rights. The state-centric nature of the UN system prevents it from boldly shaming abusive governments. The political and competitive nature of UN agencies prevents agency cooperation in developing and implementing a unified strategy. And the donor preferences and organizational survival of the UN and unregulated NGOs create incentives to continue to provide inputs regardless of belligerent behaviour and negative consequences to vulnerable populations. In sum, there are too many third-party actors in the field that are resistant to coordination and conditions placed upon their operations and funds.

An additional critique of the RDD Approach comes from those who offer an alternative understanding of conflict environments. The RDD Approach relies upon a clear dichotomy between war and peace--a dichotomy that may be delusional. The structure of the international political economy has changed. There is less optimism about the ability of certain regions of the world to develop and compete in the global market. These regions have thus developed economic systems built primarily upon parallel and grey markets; social welfare systems dependent on external third-parties; and systems of political power in which there are many sources of political authority, each with their own set of followers, and all competing in a predatory environment for power and resources. This conceptualization is of a relatively permanent conflict environment; there is no process that can be introduced by the RDD Approach that can possibly overcome the grand structural problems of the world system. In a sense, this scenario has been accepted by Justifiable Isolationism, in that some believe that there are certain regions that are a waste of donor resources. It is implicitly accepted by some who support African Solutions and who believe that they must get control of third-party resources before their political competitors steal them through relief diversion. It is also implicitly accepted by the advocates of the Revolutionary Political Contract, who believe that a long political struggle is the only way to overcome the absence of government accountability and populations' own lack of will to collectively organize against famine and repression. The presence of third-party humanitarians and the application of resources according to the agendas of those who live elsewhere only perpetuate human vulnerability to famine and personal harm.

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The greatest challenge to the existing international system appears to come from the proponents of Ownership Agendas, who deliver a message that both developed and developing countries want to hear. For the potential donor government, if the sole responsibility for providing humanitarian relief rests with the host government, then there is a clear sovereignty-based excuse for the donor to remain uninvolved politically, militarily, and now humanitarily. Donor governments' financial and technical support to African regional peacekeeping is one example of the growing popularity of Ownership Agendas. To Classical Humanitarianism, however, surrendering to Ownership Agendas is a surrender to international indifference. To those who support Aggressive Solidarity, it is a surrender to expanded human rights violations and the continued vulnerability of those who are politically marginalized. And to those who support the RDD Approach, the dominance of Ownership Agendas would represent a "disempowerment" of UN agencies and NGOs far beyond that which these institutions now fear from organized cooperation with each other.

It is imperative that there be a clear demonstration that the existing humanitarian system is becoming more operationally and financially efficient, and its personnel and agencies are becoming more accountable, professional, and cooperative. If the prevailing doubt remains that the existing system is

incapable of "learning lessons," then it is critical that all now begin contemplating and constructing additional mechanisms, grounded in international law, to ensure future international engagement in the lives of the world's vulnerable and to protect against the humanitarian and human rights violations perpetrated by governments and authorities against their people.

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