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President

**Talking Points on UN Coordination of Peacekeeping,
Peace Enforcement and Humanitarian Missions**

Conference on Multilateral Responses to Humanitarian Crises

Meridian International Center

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Stories of the lack of coordination in UN humanitarian relief efforts, particularly when these result from ongoing or simmering conflicts, have been circulating for so many years as to suggest that these difficulties are endemic to multilateral responses to humanitarian emergencies. The roots of the difficulty are readily apparent in the highly decentralized nature of the UN system. Not only do UN responses tend to be less than the sum of their parts, but efforts to address this problem have generally been frustrated by the same phenomenon, that is the lack of strong central authority and accountability within the UN system.

The intergovernmental decisionmaking structure is far more coherent and imposing on the security side, with the relatively small Security Council able to make decisions binding on all member states as well as the secretariat, than on the social and development side of the organization, where ECOSOC is both too large and too enfeebled to mandate more than minimal strategic coordination among key components of the system. Neither the creation of UNDRO, the UN disaster relief organization, or more recently the Department for Humanitarian Affairs, has made more than a small dent in the problem. The basic problem can only be addressed through a fundamental restructuring of the "soft" side of UN operations, something that might well entail Charter amendment and sharp North-South differences.

When the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, under the leadership of Under Secretary General Jan Eliasson, was created less than two years ago precisely to address the kinds of difficulties being addressed in this conference. In a typical bureaucratic compromise, however, the office was given neither the staffing nor the leverage to bring together the various players in the system. His office does serve as a bully pulpit to remind publics and member states alike on the importance of humanitarian assistance, but it represents little more than a band-aid on top of a gaping wound.

Only in recent years has the Security Council begun to address humanitarian relief as an important component of its work and mandates. In some ways, of course, this development has added a legal authority that was previously lacking in this area. Dramatized by television, "human security" is moving to the front burner of international politics and domestic public perceptions. With the end of the Cold War, humanitarian factors are beginning to replace ideological considerations in security debates.

The mix between security and humanitarian assistance, however, has created new coordination problems even as it has brought fresh attention to the humanitarian agenda. A critical factor here seems to be whether the humanitarian operation is coupled with traditional peacekeeping under Chapter VI (or VI.5) or under Chapter VII military enforcement measures. Recent experience suggests that humanitarian relief may work relatively well in tandem with true peacekeeping, or even nation-building, missions. This seems to have been the case in Cambodia, El Salvador, Namibia and hopefully now in Mozambique. None of these operations has been a model of efficiency, since they are all subject to the general coordination problems involved in any multilateral or UN undertaking. In each case, however, the effort to build a more stable, secure and predictable environment required both peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts working together side by side. Because they are based on carefully negotiated texts, that were respected by most of the parties most of the time, a fair degree of local cooperation with the humanitarian component of the mission could be expected. Moreover, the use of military power by the UN was restrained and largely passive, with the UN military presence generally seen as impartial and as part of the healing process.

In this kind of a situation, humanitarian assistance reinforces political reconstruction and peacekeeping forces tend to cement the relationship. Each piece tends to assist the next, with a reasonable balance between the military and humanitarian components. In these cases, moreover, there had not been a complete collapse of civil order and the civil conflict had taken on more of a political and less of a military air. The humanitarian conditions, while far from ideal, do not resemble the kind of emergency situations characterized by a number of other civil conflicts today.

Enforcement actions, on the other hand, present an entirely different picture. Enforcement necessitates either taking sides or being perceived as having taken sides in the ongoing conflict. They take place in an uncertain and insecure environment in which the parties have not yet reached sufficient political understanding and still seek to achieve their

ends through military rather than political means. Cooperation among the local parties is likely to be spotty at best. With UN forces in harm's way, moreover, military considerations inevitably must dominate economic and humanitarian ones. In such cases, the military command structure will provide the locus of decisionmaking (though clearly military command and control under the UN remains an unsettled issue). The depth of the humanitarian emergency is also likely to be that much greater in an enforcement situation given the continuing fighting. Relief in such a situation may become a highly-charged item politically, seen as a strategic commodity to benefit one side or another.

The UN has estimated that in Bosnia and Somalia, for example, there is a ten to one ratio between the costs of securing relief shipments compared to the amount of assistance provided. Similar ratios could be expected in Angola, Liberia, and Afghanistan. Economic sanctions under Chapter VII such as in Haiti and Iraq, moreover, may well work against humanitarian objectives in the short run, just as does the application of military force.

For these reasons, it is very important that the Security Council be completely clear about the nature of local conditions before mandating a partnership between humanitarian assistance and either peacekeeping or peace enforcement. In Bosnia, the member states have only been willing to undertake peacekeeping efforts in a situation in which only military enforcement could ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need. In Somalia, on the other hand, the United States has committed major military resources under a Chapter VII mandate, but Congress and the American public were led to believe that it was a Chapter VI peacekeeping and humanitarian mission. In both cases, the result has been not only a lack of coordination within the UN system, but also the inability to sustain the political, financial, and military commitment to see the operations through to their successful completion.

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Michael J. Toole serves as a medical epidemiologist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, where he coordinates CDC assistance to refugees, displaced persons, war-affected, and famine-affected populations overseas--specifically in Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Turkey, northern Iraqi, the Russian Federation, Somalia, and Bosnia. Previously, he gained significant experience in rural hospital and community health programs in Laos, Thailand, and Somalia. He received his medical degree from Monash University in Melbourne, followed by a post-graduate diploma in tropical medicine and hygiene from London University, and has published extensively on refugee health issues in international medical journals.

Stephen Hess has been a Senior Fellow in Governmental Studies at the Brookings Institution since 1972. Previously, he served as National Chairman of the White House Conference on Children and Youth, US representative to the UNESCO General Conference, consultant to President Carter for Executive Office reorganization, and editor-in-chief of the National Republican Platform in 1976. He has lectured in 26 countries overseas, and has taught at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, The University of Southern California, and UCLA.

John Hirsch is a senior Foreign Service Officer, and is currently a visiting State Department Fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations (New York City office). Formerly he has been the POLAD to the Commanding General of UNITAF, the DCM under Ambassador Oakley for Project "Restore Hope," DCM in Embassy Mogadishu (Somalia) 1984-86, and Consul General in South Africa from 1990 to mid-1993.

Arthur E. Dewey is a consultant to OFDA and the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Previously he served as the director of USAID's Office of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance, working on emergency medical and humanitarian assistance to the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. This office dispatched the first assessment teams into the NIS to review the medical and food security situation there. He also served as the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 1986-1990, during which time he introduced the UN's first comprehensive professional training program for international staff. From 1981-1986, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Refugee Programs. He graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1956, and holds advanced degrees from Princeton and from the Graduate Institute for International Studies in Geneva. His military career included command of an aviation battalion prisoner rescue raid into Cambodia, as well as service as director of operations for the US relief effort for civilian victims of the Nigerian civil war.

Larry Minear is co-director of the Humanitarianism and War Project, a joint policy research initiative undertaken by the Watson Institute for International Studies of Brown University and the Refugee Policy Group of Washington, DC. This project concentrates on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians in situations of armed conflict. He has been involved in international development issues since 1972, when he joined Church World Service as its representative in Sudan. Subsequently, he represented Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief in activities related to the UN World Food Conference, including directing the two agencies' Office on Developmental Policy in Washington. He holds graduate degrees from both Yale and Harvard, and was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Marburg in Germany.

Frederick C. Cuny is founder and President of INTERTECT Relief and Reconstruction Corporation, a professional disaster management consulting firm specializing in the provision of technical assistance, research, and training services to voluntary agencies, governmental agencies, and international organizations involved in disaster relief and recovery. He has participated in numerous major relief operations since 1969, concentrating on refugee camp planning and administration, emergency management, damage and needs assessment, reconstruction, and mitigation activities. He was an advisor to the US military on protection of Palestinians in Kuwait, senior civilian advisor to the allied force protecting the Kurds following the 1991 Gulf conflict, and since 1993, senior advisor for the UN's water supply and heating facility program in the Balkans.

Edward C. Luck is President and CEO of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA), which is the nation's leading center for policy research and public outreach on the UN and multilateral issues. The UNA performs a wide range of policy studies, international dialogues, publications, and educational programs for the public, students, media, and government officials. Before his election as UNA President in 1984, he served as Executive Vice President and Vice President for Research and Policy Studies. He also has served frequently as a media commentator on such issues as arms control, national security policy, Soviet foreign policy, and multilateral diplomacy. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and Columbia University.

Dennis Gallagher founded the Refugee Policy Group (RPG) in 1981, and has served since then as its Executive Director. RPG is a center for policy research and analysis on refugee and related humanitarian issues. Among other refugee issues, he researched a case study of humanitarian aid in Somalia on behalf of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. RPG, in conjunction with Brown University's Watson Center for International Studies, cosponsors the Humanitarianism and War Project. He previously served as special assistant to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare concerning the Refugee Act of 1980. He also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Jamaica and as a program officer with the Ford Foundation field office in New Delhi, India. He holds advanced degrees from both the University of California at Berkeley and Syracuse University.

Jessica Tuchman Mathews, currently Deputy to the Counselor, and served from 1982 as Vice President of the World Resources Institute, a policy research center concentrating on issues of global significance concerning management of natural resources and the environment. From 1977 through 1979, Dr. Matthews was the Director of the Office of Global Issues on the National Security Council staff, responsible for nuclear proliferation, conventional arms sales policy, chemical and biological warfare, human rights, and international environment. She also served on the editorial board of The Washington Post, where she covered energy, environment, science, technology, health, and other physical resource issues from 1980-82. She is a graduate of Radcliffe College and the California Institute of Technology.

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