

SESSION II

What Is the Military's Role in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies?

Although military involvement in complex humanitarian emergencies attracts national attention, the relief community is frequently involved in humanitarian crises long before military forces are deployed to the conflict zone. And relief organizations often remain behind after the military completes its specified mission and departs. Although it is generally agreed that the military comes in to support the relief community in these crises, the relief community and the military generally hold different views on the military's role in complex humanitarian emergencies.

Session II explored the diverse viewpoints among the military and relief communities on appropriate roles for the military. The session consisted of two panels. The first panel comprised military officers with experience in complex humanitarian emergencies:

- **Rear Admiral William H. Wright, IV**, USN, the Assistant Deputy to the CNO for Plans, Policy, and Operations, was the commander of the USS *Wasp* Amphibious Task Group during Operation Uphold Democracy.
- **Major General J. A. MacInnis**, Commander, Land Force, Atlantic Area (Canada), is the former Deputy of UNPROFOR in the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

Ms. Christine Fox, the Director of the Operational Policy Team at the Center for Naval Analyses, coordinated this session. The rapporteurs were Ms. Sandra Newett and Mrs. Karen Smith, both research analysts at CNA.

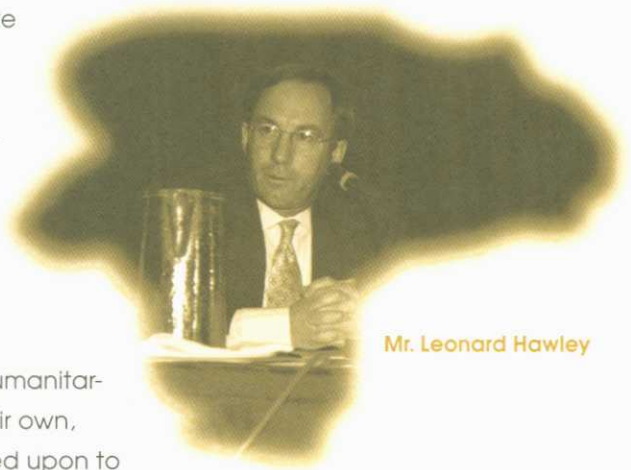
- **Mr. Leonard Hawley** is the Deputy Director, Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Policy, United States Department of Defense.
- **Colonel (Brigadier General (select)) W. C. Gregson, Jr.**, USMC, is the former Deputy Operations Officer of UNITAF.
- **Dr. Enid C. B. Schoettle**, National Intelligence Officer for Global and Multilateral Issues, National Intelligence Council, moderated the panel.

The second panel featured prominent players in the relief community:

- **Mr. Staffan de Mistura** is the Director of the Division of Public Affairs, UNICEF.
- **Mr. Andrew Natsios** is the Vice President, World Vision, U.S., and Executive Director, World Vision Relief and Development.
- **Mr. Angelo Gnaedinger** is the Delegate General for Western and Central Europe and the Balkans, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- **Mr. Howard Roy Williams** is the Deputy Director of Operations, the International Rescue Committee.
- **Mr. Jonathan Dworken**, CNA's representative to III Marine Expeditionary Force, and former CNA representative to the joint task force in Somalia, moderated the panel.

What Is the Military's Role in Humanitarian Emergencies?

The relief community has a long history of providing aid in humanitarian emergencies. In recent years, however, humanitarian operations have become more complex as military forces have been asked to respond to humanitarian emergencies stemming from internal political conflict and civic crisis. When the situation is too dangerous for relief workers, already responding to the humanitarian crisis, to cope with on their own, military forces often are called upon to help stabilize the environment and safeguard the flow of aid. The panels addressed the question of whether the military can and should have a role in these crises.



Mr. Leonard Hawley

Most of the participants on both panels agreed that the military has a role to play in some complex humanitarian emergencies. But they also agreed that the international community should be selective in involving military forces in complex humanitarian emergencies. Len Hawley referred to the criteria for U.S.

involvement in these emergencies, as outlined in Presidential Decision Directive 25, the Clinton Administration's policy on reforming multilateral peace operations:

- Involvement supports U.S. interests, and the international community is interested in addressing the problem.
- Peace and security are threatened.
- The mission is understood.
- Means to conduct an operation are available.
- The consequences of inaction have been weighed and are unacceptable.
- Objectives are clear and the end state realistic.
- Both the public and Congress support the defined end state.



RAdm. William H. Wright, IV

Hawley added four considerations for deploying forces:

- The purpose, objective, and end state are clear.
- The relief situation is in a state of crisis, and the relief community cannot respond adequately.
- The resources needed to resolve the situation are unique to the U.S.
- The costs and risks equal the national interests.

Other panelists focused on the more specific capabilities the military can bring to an emergency response:

- Logistics
- Security
- Transportation
- Airfield management
- Engineering
- Frameworks to facilitate coordination
- Stabilizing force
- Political statement.

Admiral Wright, the skeptic in the group, raised a fundamental question: Is the U.S. military involvement in complex humanitarian emergencies a paradigm shift or a temporary flirtation? Wright believes that the military is involved in complex humanitarian emergencies now because it has forces available, inflated stocks of such supplies as foodstuffs, and a mobile command structure. Complex humanitarian emergencies serve as a "roles and missions extender." The "CNN factor" also can lead to sudden, reactive involvement, based on political pressure from public opinion, rather than a clear-eyed assessment of the situation and what the military can or cannot bring.

Humanitarian Operations as a Surrogate for a Political Solution

In warfighting operations, the military is often used as a political instrument to change an unacceptable situation—"politics by other means." Yet panelists wondered whether the military is always a fitting and effective instrument for complex humanitarian operations.

Angelo Gnaedinger stated that a military response is appropriate when it addresses the underlying problem, as was the case in Operation Provide Comfort. He viewed Provide Comfort as comprehensive and successful; in effect it was a military occupation. Andrew Natsios agreed that the military successfully made a political statement. The operation prevented the Kurds from going into Turkey and encouraging others to revolt. This had profound geopolitical implications.



Mr. Angelo Gnaedinger

General MacInnis and Gnaedinger declared that the operation in Bosnia has been unsuccessful to date. They concluded that the situation in the Balkans does not have a humanitarian solution, although humanitarian action was the international community's approach to the problem. This approach reflected a lack of political will to face up to a situation that required much more than humanitarian relief. The failure to address directly the underlying political aspects of the tragedy meant that the humanitarian operations were highly politicized and thus limited in what they could accomplish.

Relief organizations can and should take a stance regarding what needs to be done to resolve the core problem. Roy Williams agreed that relief organizations can be used as a surrogate for a political solution. However, most relief organizations do not see themselves in this position. They must become aware of this reality because of the political stakes and risks in complex emergencies. The relief community is almost always involved; thus it plays a political role. The relief organizations can help determine the political situation, but a broader evaluation is needed to determine how they can help effect change.



MajGen. J. A. MacInnis

Staffan de Mistura also recognized that relief organizations and military forces often may be used as surrogates for a real political solution. However, he asserted

that this is irrelevant. There is a humanitarian agenda that needs to be addressed. Humanitarian aid is first and foremost.

Culture

The theme of culture—“the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought...the expression of a particular period, class, community, or population”—ran through the presentations and discussions at the conference. In particular, two different aspects of culture are important when responding to complex humanitarian emergencies: culture in the more traditional sense of a place and a people; and the newer sense of the term when applied to organizations, such as the military or the non-governmental organization (NGO).

In his keynote speech, General Zinni emphasized the importance of understanding the culture of the conflict area. It is particularly important, and often difficult, to understand who makes decisions and how. In his comments, Wright also noted the importance and difficulty of figuring out whom to trust. Both suggested holding forums—“gatherings in the sunshine”—in the area of the intervention to sort out the situation and hear all voices.

Andrew Natsios pointed out the failure of the military to comprehend the economic and social effects of its actions. Better understanding of the local culture would help the military make decisions that would account for those effects. Colonel Gregson said that military personnel on the ground must learn to cultivate “intuitive” cultural sensitivity. He stressed the importance of talking to the locals and working things out.



Mr. Andrew Natsios

Gnaedinger and de Mistura also spoke of the need to understand the larger context; Gnaedinger mentioned the economic, political, military, and humanitarian dimensions of a crisis, and de Mistura observed that “you can’t make Somalia into Switzerland.”

General MacInnis extended the need for understanding and respect to all members of the partnership, including NGOs and coalition military forces. Both groups span a wide range of professionalism and ability, and awareness of these differences is needed to work effectively together. MacInnis spoke of the need to know the rules, principles, and values of all involved—in other words, to know their cultures. In the former Yugoslavia, problems arose at the grass-roots level, in a clash of cultures, when untrained or uninformed military officers interacted with “idealistic, but frightfully naive NGO officials.” Williams asserted that the military is ahead of the NGOs in learning about each other.