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Comfortable with chaos: working with UNHCR and the NGOs; reflections from the 1999 Kosovo refugee crisis

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Summary

The end of the Cold War has seen an alarming increase in the number of complex emergencies around the world. Intra-state and ethnic conflicts have erupted on the fringes of Europe, and throughout Africa and Asia. Together with responses to natural disasters around the world, these conflicts have resulted in historically high levels of military commitment, and in UK military commanders working ever closer with non-military organisations and agencies. The deployment to Macedonia/Albania/Kosovo, Operation AGRICOLA, was but one example of this, with 101 Logistic Brigade leading the NATO/KFOR response to the humanitarian crisis that developed in the spring of 1999 in Macedonia, and in assisting the UN/NGOs in Southern Albania and Kosovo.

Having summarised the brigade's key events during the period January-August 1999, this paper looks at the nature of the humanitarian agencies – the NGOs, the international and governmental organisations – and the psychology that underlies the individuals who work for them, setting it against the military ethos and psyche. Their strengths and weaknesses are then assessed, before some thoughts on the value of these deployments to the UK military and the need to develop a 'Joined-Up' doctrine are outlined.

Significant differences do exist between the military and humanitarian agencies, both in structure and approach. These reflect their respective missions, expectations, values and perceptions, but above all their psyche and professional ethos. These differences will not disappear, but the tensions that result should be viewed as creative, not disruptive. This is not, or at least should not be, a battle between 'bloody hands' and 'bleeding hearts.' Both sides have weaknesses, and both bring real strengths to bear. The trick is to understand and accept the differences, bring together the positive strengths and focus them on overcoming the crisis, be that man made or natural. The UK military have much to offer in this area. Complex emergencies not only provide valuable operational experience, but allow the UK to make a significant contribution to the relief of suffering. But there is work to be done, particularly in the areas of education, training and doctrine. DFID, the FCO and the MOD must, together, develop a 'Joined-Up' doctrine to better orchestrate and execute more effective action. The Joint Doctrine Centre, Civil-affairs Group and the Logistic and Engineer Brigades, the latter preferably brought together under a divisional level "Support Command," should be the military focus, developing an integrated training and exchange programme. Through understanding and patient leadership, strong relationships can and should be developed; working together, the two sides of the humanitarian coin have the potential to be a very strong and effective team.

Introduction

By the mid-90's, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)¹ judged that the human costs of conflicts and disasters of one sort or another were overwhelming the world's ability to respond. There were 56 conflicts in progress at that time, most reflecting the move away from both territorial disputes between states and wars of decolonisation, to what some now call 'Wars of Identity'.² Conflict has always been essentially tribal but increasingly individuals seem to identify more with their ethnicity and perceived nationality than with their ruling governments; many seem prepared to fight for that identity. Sandwiched between the globe and the individual, the tribe or ethnic group loom larger.³ The demise of the Soviet Union and with it, ironically, the relative safety of the Cold War, has certainly liberated those who had previously been constrained by Super Power politics, and the results have been catastrophic. In the mid-90's, whilst numbers vary from source to source, there were a conservative 17 million refugees and 26 million internally displaced homeless people (IDPs) around the world. Some conflicts, like those in Bosnia, have been very apparent to us; others, like that in Tajikistan, where the civil war resulted in an estimated 50,000 deaths, 500,000 economic émigrés and 600,000 IDPs, went on almost unnoticed.⁴

Events over the last five years have only served to strengthen the ICRC's concerns. At the turn of the millennium, the Russian army mounted fresh assaults on Chechnya and 200,000 refugees fled to the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia; many still struggle to survive in makeshift shelters and old railway carriages. In Indonesia and East Timor, around the Great Lakes of Central Africa, in Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone and the Sudan,⁵ conflicts rumble on and millions more suffer and die. And, of course, operations continue in the Balkans, with Kosovo taking centre stage for most of 1999. The percentage of civilian, as compared to military, casualties has increased from 1 in 20 (5%) 100 years ago to 9 in every 10 (90%) today; around 5 million civilian lives have been lost in the last decade alone.⁶ Refugees, says Robert Fox, are now part of the

¹ ICRC is an International Organisation whose mandate is to "help victims of war and internal violence, and to promote compliance with International Humanitarian Law".

² From 1991-94, 79 out of 82 significant conflicts were intra-state. See Whalley, David J., "Improving UN Developmental Co-ordination within Peace Missions," *International Peacekeeping*, Summer 1996, Vol. 3, p.107.

³ There is an emerging sense that in the age of globalisation individuals will increasingly feel a need to express their uniqueness; globalisation leads people to ask "Who am I"? Most states are made up of more than one nation, which are themselves cultural entities of language, history etc., and these nations seem to want recognition, whether that be Scotland or Kosovo. See Edward Moxon-Browne, *A Future for Peacekeeping*, Macmillan Press, 1998, pp.199/200, and Samuel Huntington, "Clash of Civilisations?", *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, pp.22-49.

⁴ Figures from Vladimir Goryayev, Department of Political Affairs at the UN Secretariat, during discussions at Stanford University, 26/27 May 2000.

⁵ The list is a long one. According to the *International Herald Tribune*, 6 June 2000, "Asian and Pacific countries are watching with concern as ethnic rivalries and violence blossom in an arc stretching through Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Fiji ... there is widespread concern that a successful insurgency would encourage other rebels who want to overthrow democratic governments."

⁶ See Speth, G.J., "Why the UN is essential to successful Development Co-operation (and vice versa)", *UNDP*, New York, 17 January 1996, p.4.

culture of the criminality inherent in intra-state conflicts,⁷ and women, children and the elderly will continue to be indiscriminately and deliberately targeted by ‘rebel’ movements as part of the asymmetric threat to unstable governments.

Over the years of my service, I have served on UK operations in Northern Ireland, with the UN in Cyprus, the “Allies” in the Gulf, and NATO in Bosnia. Operation AGRICOLA, the deployment to Kosovo in 1999 was, however, the first time that I have come face to face with a large-scale humanitarian crisis. It was a challenging and demanding deployment for me, professionally and personally, but it was nonetheless “simply” another in a series of operations where UK Armed Forces have been faced with humanitarian action. Rwanda, Angola, East Timor and Sierra Leone involved armed conflict, Mozambique and elsewhere, natural disasters; all created widespread human suffering. On the evidence of the 1990s, such deployments are on the increase. Amongst many challenges that they bring with them, the one that struck me the hardest was working alongside, and indeed for, large numbers of civilian agencies. These agencies can be international, like the UNHCR and WFP, governmental, like the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), or NGOs like the ICRC, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). The reality of intra-state conflict and natural disasters is that such organisations are present in large numbers; they bring real strengths to bear and are key players in bringing relief to those who suffer. We need to learn more about them, about how they operate and about how we can work better with them.⁸

The aim of this paper is to illuminate and interpret some personal reflections from the 1999 Kosovo refugee crisis, particularly as they relate to working with non-military organisations.

OP AGRICOLA - The essentials

Having returned from Bosnia in April 1998, I found myself preparing to go back to the Balkans in late January 1999 as the Commander of 101 Logistic Brigade,⁹ to support and help implement a peace agreement that was, at the time, being negotiated at Rambouillet. The aim was to move quickly into Greece and Macedonia,¹⁰ receive, stage, onward move and integrate (RSOI) the UK’s contribution to the NATO led KFOR,¹¹ and then move on up into Kosovo itself. Events, as they so often do, were to overtake us. By mid-February we were settled into a number of locations around Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, and had begun the process of bringing in large elements of both my own brigade and 4 Armoured Brigade. As the armoured vehicles of the first battle group were being off-loaded at the port of Thessaloniki in Greece, the talks began to

⁷ From conversations prior to the Taormina conference, 13-16 April 2000.

⁸ This need is widely recognised in non-military literature. See e.g. Edward Moxon-Browne, p.16 – but much less so in military journals.

⁹ The brigade deployed as CSSG(UK) but re-titled in June 1999.

¹⁰ Macedonia is more politically correctly known as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

¹¹ The initial UK contribution included the KFOR Headquarters and Signals Brigade and 4 Armoured Brigade, as well as 101 Logistic Brigade.

falter. By the end of February, over 2000 military personnel and several hundred vehicles were in theatre, but with the situation deteriorating we realised that the operation was not going to be anything like as straightforward as we had originally thought. Ships and aircraft continued to flow into theatre, but by the end of March the bombing campaign had started, following the complete breakdown of the Rambouillet talks.¹²

Reports indicated that fighting inside Kosovo was escalating. By mid-March over 200,000 IDP's were reportedly on the move. Several thousand people had also crossed Kosovo's international borders into Albania and Macedonia; the refugee flows had started in earnest and the bombing campaign served only to exacerbate matters.¹³ There could be no doubt that the refugee crisis would get worse, so we produced contingency plans; as usual, of the 3 options we planned for it was the fourth that actually happened. On Thursday 1st April, I drove out to look at several sites that the Macedonian Government were intending to develop as refugee camps. They were small and in poor locations, very close to the border with Kosovo. The government-led reconnaissance was badly organised and chaotic, but I was able to meet with some UN officials, in particular the head of the UNHCR mission to Kosovo, Jo Hegenauer, and a representative from the U.S. State Department, David Scheffer, an Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues.

I outlined our thoughts on the situation. In essence, this was to construct major camps around a grass airfield and range complex, situated alongside the main road running from Pristina to Skopje, 10 km south of the border crossing at Blace. The location was big enough to create manoeuvre space to deal with the refugees; it had a good river source for water and an excellent site for a logistics base. In the meantime, we agreed to help the Macedonian Government construct a small camp at Bojane, some 20 kilometres away.

The following day, 2nd April and Good Friday in the UK, I was contacted by the UNHCR (Jo Hegenauer). Large numbers of Kosovar Albanians had been arriving at Blace over the last few days, by road and now by train, and things were getting extremely serious; there was no shelter, food or medical cover and the tired and hungry people were in a bad way, indeed some were beginning to die. Could we help? I rang my Chief of Staff (COS) and ordered him to establish our tactical headquarters (Tac HQ) at a location near the airfield and implement the initial elements of our contingency plans. The immediate task was to establish a focal point where we could work with the UNHCR, ferrying food, blankets and medical supplies up to the border. Tac HQ was up and running within 4 hours. Field kitchens were starting to prepare chicken and rice; I

¹² Bombing started on 24 March 2000.

¹³ Numbers inevitably vary from source to source but around 2,500 Kosovars had been killed in the 12 months prior to the bombing; 10,000 more died in the 3 months after. Similarly, some ¼ million Albanians had become IDPs and 200,000 refugees before the bombing; well over ½ million became refugees in the month after, 1 million by June. These numbers, horrific as they are, need to be set in the context of the Krajina, when the Croatian Army ethnically cleansed 250,000 Serbs in 3 days in August 1995, and Rwanda, when 250,000 crossed into Tanzania in 24 hours in April 1994, another 250,000 in the next 3 days and 1 million in July. See Shawcross, *“Deliver Us From Evil”*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000. p.344.

ordered the release of both fresh food and operational rations, and food was being moved forward by about 2300 hours, some 9 hours after Jo Hegenauer's call, on UNHCR vehicles loaded at our logistic base. The temperature was not much above freezing and it had been raining or sleeting for 36 hours. Images of the thousands of people crammed into the fields around the border crossing were beginning to be shown around the world; the scenes there were disturbingly chaotic, with no evidence of any co-ordinated response.

Pressure was mounting on the Macedonian Government, and on the UNHCR, whose small team was self-evidently going to be overwhelmed. Various government officials visited Tac HQ during the following day, Saturday 3rd April; most importantly, in retrospect, Julia Taft from the U.S. State Department. The U.S. was putting real pressure on the Macedonian government, who clearly needed convincing that the situation at Blace could not be allowed to continue. There was inevitably a great deal of uncertainty but I was convinced that the dam at the border would break at short notice, and when it did we had to be able to deal with the torrent of refugees that would be released. No other organisation was in a position to help and we could not stand idle; apart from the human needs it was clear to me that the Macedonian Government needed KFORs strength, and we needed them to maintain their resolve. After a night of detailed planning I ordered construction work to start.

The brigade engineers pulled aside the crop-spraying Antonov 1 aircraft, built a bridge across the fast flowing stream which ran alongside the airfield, opened up access tracks from our logistic base out onto the range and airfield, and began to dig deep trench latrines. Elsewhere, amongst a myriad of other tasks, the logistic regiment, working with the UNHCR, continued to move supplies forward to the border; the medics began to prepare their reception centres, and the first tents were set up. All of this was being done in a vacuum, as I had received no orders. Finally, and thankfully, at 0800 hours on UK's Easter Sunday morning, the Macedonian Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, rang me to ask that we should indeed implement our plan. International pressure, particularly from the US, had clearly worked. The tempo of work increased. Water purifying and pumping systems were set up, reception and registration areas were established. The KFOR Commander visited and authorised assistance from other KFOR nations and small, but important, attachments from the German and Italian contingents arrived to help put up tents. At 1700 hours Macedonian police informed me that the first refugees would be allowed across the border at 1900 hours. One of the sites, eventually known as Stenkovic 1, was ready to accept some, and overnight several hundred arrived; around 30,000 were, however, estimated to be crammed into no-man's land at Blace and the situation there continued to deteriorate.

On Monday, 5th April, the dam broke. The UK Secretary of State for International Development, Claire Short, arrived with the UK's Ambassador and a number of other officials; a large media presence was also gathering. Authorising DFID support, which was to prove absolutely invaluable, she asked to look around. As we were approaching the main airfield site, Stenkovic 2, a number of buses arrived crammed to bursting point with refugees. The pictures of Claire Short helping them off the buses became worldwide prime-time news. Work continued but no more refugees arrived. Then

darkness fell. Suddenly buses by the dozen poured in. Arriving five at a time, with 80-100 refugees per bus, they disgorged their human loads and were replaced 15 minutes later by another 5 buses - and on it went, hour after hour. As dawn broke the flow stopped, but by then around 20,000 refugees had arrived. All through the night soldiers from the brigade put up tents, helped families into them, issued food and blankets and provided medical support; I watched as a tiny baby died, but many other refugees, both young and old, were successfully treated by the multi-national medical facility. It was a gruelling night but it was just the first of many. Day after day the brigade erected more tents, and provided more water, food and other supplies. Night after night the buses arrived. It was only later that we realised that during the day these buses were being used to ferry children in Skopje to and from school, and adults to and from work; as soon as it got dark they moved to the border to ply a different trade. By 9th April, there were around 40,000 refugees in the 2 major camps; whilst some were being flown out there was little space left.

Over 2,800 tents had been erected, 1600 meters of water pipeline had been laid, tens of thousands of meals had been cooked and distributed, along with over 103,000 jars of baby food, 11,000 loaves of bread, 264,000 litres of bottled water and 430,000 bars of chocolate; 400 deep trench latrines had been dug and thousands of refugees had been treated in our medical facilities - 5 had died, but 24 babies had been born, our proudest statistic!

In one sense the worst was over. Initially the NGO presence on the ground had been minimal. OXFAM arrived first and quickly became effective, playing a key role in the development of the water and sanitation systems. Other organisations began to arrive, but slowly. The UN became more effective as the week progressed. Various senior officials arrived and were briefed, the UNHCR and WFP teams were strengthened, and several key individuals emerged as real “players”. For a few days the flow of refugees slowed and the various NGOs began to get organised. On Sunday 11th April, we were able to hand over most of the medical support to MSF and the Red Cross. Although we began to plan the hand-over of all aspects of the camps, the following week was still a demanding one. The camps had to be extended as more refugees arrived, policing and security became a problem, and the temperatures began to soar. Rubbish clearance, sanitation and the threat of disease became key issues;¹⁴ once again our military resources had to lead the way. Further influxes of refugees continued and thunder storms flooded the camps. The ability of the various agencies to cope remained suspect and we were asked, by the UNHCR, to stay on for a few more days. Finally, we withdrew over the period of the 17th-19th April, leaving behind a military liaison team.

After a gap of about 8 days, during which time the brigade was immersed in the RSOI of the 2nd Battlegroup and the training programme of 4 Armoured Brigade, our attention was directed back to the humanitarian aspects of the situation once again. Inside Kosovo, further waves of Kosovar Albanians were being rounded up and moved to the borders. The camps in Macedonia were full and the ones in Northern Albania, where NATO AFOR was operating, were overflowing. The Macedonian government was

¹⁴ I knew that in Zaire, after the genocide in Rwanda, Cholera had broken out; 50,000 had died in 4 weeks at the height of the crisis. This, and the threat of fire, were my worst fears.

adamant that it would not allow additional camps to be built in their central and southern regions and so attention focused on southern Albania. Numerous meetings were held and reconnaissance trips conducted. Finally, UNHCR and HQ KFOR agreed that we should use brigade assets to establish a series of camps in the Korce region of Albania, around 40 km south of Lake Ochrid. Dividing the brigade, and the HQ, over such a distance - we would now have elements of the brigade in 3 countries, Greece, Macedonia and Albania - was far from ideal. My main HQ was heavily involved with military support to KFOR, particularly 4 Armoured Brigade, and our primary mission was to support the UK move into Kosovo; nonetheless there seemed little likelihood of any such move in the short term - indeed we were beginning to plan forced entry options, which would inevitably take weeks to prepare and implement. The lead elements of Tac HQ thus deployed to Albania on 8 May, and I joined my COS there the next day.

The problems were very different to those we had encountered in Macedonia over Easter. Although there was a time imperative it was not as urgent as before. The UNHCR and NGO presence was considerable and the emphasis was on developing sustainable camps, suitable for refugees to live in throughout the winter if necessary. It was, however, a demanding few weeks. Local politics was riven with corruption and there was criminality in abundance. Superimposed on this was an unclear military command structure - we were operating in AFOR's area of responsibility, with both AFOR and KFOR forces working with us - and an equally unclear link between the UNHCR in Albania and Macedonia. Our first few 'situation reports' back to the PJHQ apparently read more like a John Le Carre' novel than a military update - particularly when rival gangs in Korce began open warfare and anti-corruption officials, appointed from Tirana, began to stir things up. Nonetheless, by 6th June and in very close concert with DFID, who were once again quite excellent, UNHCR and the NGOs, four substantial camps were constructed, and other locations surveyed and planned; in all we created capacity for well over 60,000 refugees. As it turned out only 12-15,000 spaces were used as, once again, events were to turn, this time for the better.

At the beginning of June planning for the B(-) option had begun in earnest¹⁵ and additional elements of the brigade, still based in UK, were deployed. At short notice, 5 Airborne Brigade and a large RAF Support Helicopter force were inloaded and configured to go north into Kosovo. Entry into Force was 10th June, D-Day 12th June, and by 18th June my Tac HQ had moved up into Pristina, along with literally hundreds of journalists and NGOs, of every acronym imaginable. In addition to providing military engineering, logistic and medical support to the UK Forces, the brigade repaired and ran a large part of the Kosovo railway system, established a fire-fighting capability in Pristina and a civilian criminal detention centre in Lipljan; in addition a temporary, emergency refugee camp was constructed just outside Pristina to enable several thousand Romany gypsies to be relocated. In all of these areas we attempted, with lesser or greater success, to work with the various non-military organisations and agencies, who by then were pouring into Kosovo. Individual relationships were excellent, but tensions between KFOR and the UNHCR at the operational level meant that the

¹⁵ B(-) was the planning option for forced entry into Kosovo; it included around 50,000 UK troops.

brigade's assets were under-utilised, particularly our rail capability. By the beginning of August the situation was settling and we began to prepare to hand over our responsibilities. We finally withdrew and returned to the UK in late August.

So ended OP AGRICOLA, for me at least. Throughout the deployment I met and worked with a large number of non-military organisations. Since returning I have attended two conferences, one in the Hague on NATO's involvement in Humanitarian action in the Kosovo crisis, and the other at Stanford University on "Ethics and Civil Wars".¹⁶ The next part of this paper will outline the insights gained from my experiences and research.

The 'humanitarian' agencies

Whilst relationships between the military and civilian humanitarians have certainly intensified over the last decade, they are by no means new. As Hugo Slim notes in a series of excellent articles¹⁷, the ICRC was born in 1863 out of the Battle of Solferino, the Save the Children Fund (SCF) in 1919 out of the First World War, and OXFAM and the US Committee for Aid and Relief Everywhere (CARE) out of the Second World War in 1942 and 1945 respectively. He points out that, to a large degree, "militarism and humanitarianism have represented two sides of the same coin – humankind's inability to manage conflict peacefully."¹⁸

There are three primary humanitarian forces: NGOs, the UN, which Kofi Annan has come to personify perhaps more than any other official for generations, and governmental agencies, most of whom have been born out of the liberal democracies of the northern hemisphere. NGOs exist primarily, if not solely, to provide relief from suffering and, in today's world, to try to bring about sustainable development, addressing the failures of governments and society as a whole. Slim defines them as "a wide range of primarily non-profit organisations motivated by humanitarian and religious values, and that are usually independent of government, UN and commercial sectors".¹⁹ Ranging in size from large international and trans-national organisations,²⁰ to very small local groups who "send a cow" to Africa or Asia, there has been an

¹⁶ The output from the Hague Conference, 15/16 Nov 1999 was, "NATO and Humanitarian Action in the Kosovo Crisis", *Occasional Paper*, No 36, Thomas J Watson Jr., Institute for International Studies and the Humanitarian Law Consultancy, Copyright 2000. That from Stanford University, 26/27 May 2000, The 3rd David Hamburg Symposium on Conflict Prevention, has still to be published.

¹⁷ Particularly "The Stretcher and the Drum: Civil-Military Relations in Peace Support Operations", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 3, No 2, 1996, pp.123-140, and Section 6 of *A Guide to Peace Support Operations* produced by the Thomas J Watson Jr., Institute for International Studies, Brown University, Edited by John MacKinlay, July 1996.

¹⁸ Slim, "Stretcher and Drum", p.124.

¹⁹ Slim, *A Guide to Peace Support Operations*, p.93. Weiss' definition is a "non-profit, voluntary, formal, non-violent, non-political organisation whose objective is to promote development and social change." See Weiss Thomas G., *Military-Civilian Interactions - Intervening in Humanitarian Crisis*, Rowan and Littlefield, 1999. The Introduction and Chapter 1 give a forceful and excellent overview of all of the Humanitarian Actors, including the military, with the following chapters detailing case studies.

²⁰ OXFAM UK has a budget of around £124m, employs 1,500 staff in the UK and 200 "ex-pat" and 3,000 "local" staff abroad. CARE has an annual budget of around \$350m.

explosion in their numbers over the last 30 years;²¹ worldwide there are now over 1,500 international NGOs registered as “observers” with the UN. Nonetheless, of the hundreds in existence there remains a serious ‘1st XI’, through which perhaps 75% of all emergency aid flows. They are a powerful force in the world, in many cases providing the dynamics for change, and the revolution in communications technology and in networking has only served to strengthen them further, especially in the last 5 years.²²

These NGOs operate alongside, and often for, a wide range of governmental and international aid and relief agencies. The UN itself spawned a number in its early years, including the UNHCR and WFP, for although the UN Charter mentions the term NGO in Article 71 such organisations were, as noted above, relatively few and far between and were not the major players they are today.²³ International/governmental aid agencies can be “multilateral”, like the UN or the World Bank, or “bilateral” like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) or DFID. Funded by taxpayers to the tune of billions of pounds per year, these agencies have changed the shape of the world, for good or ill.²⁴

Before looking in detail at my perceptions of these organisations, particularly the NGOs and the UNHCR, it is important to recognise that we are not talking about generic, impersonal bureaucracies, but people. All organisations, both military and non-military, are constituted by unique, individual people. Moulded in the womb, raised and nurtured by parents alongside siblings and peers, softened perhaps by family and friends but hardened and tempered by their environment and day to day life, through success and failure, rivalries and challenges, these individual people come together within organisations which themselves have identities. The UN agencies and the NGOs are not single organisations; they are a mix, in the same way that military forces around the world are a mix, of professional and amateur, effective and non-effective, efficient and inefficient. In dealing with organisations we are inevitably dealing with their ethos and their psyche, and in order to understand them it seems to me that one must at least have an understanding of their nature, and the nature of the people within them – what drives them.

²¹ The end of the Vietnam War, 1968 and the African Civil Wars of the 1960s seem to have been the triggers for an exponential growth in non-violent NGO intervention.

²² See Major S R Skeates, *Operating in a Complex Environment: How can the British Military Improve Interagency Co-operation in Peace Support Operations*, Cranfield University (RMCS), MBA Course No. 12, July 1998; Commodore Tim Laurence, “Humanitarian Assistance and Peacekeeping: An Uneasy Alliance?” RUSI Whitehall Paper Series, No 48, and *Economist* article, 29 January 2000, pp.25-28.

²³ The nature of the UN is summarised in any number of references; see e.g. The MOD’s Peace Support Operations JWP 3-01, pages 1-3 → 1-8.

²⁴ There are many who argue that these governmental and international aid and relief agencies do little good and often real harm. See, Graham Hancock, *The Lords of Poverty*, Macmillan 1989, which details the power, prestige and corruption of the international aid business as he sees it, and “The Road to Hell”. Also articles by Graham Boynton, *Daily Telegraph*, 8 May 2000, p.18, and by Simon Jenkins, *The Times*, 10 May 2000, p. 20, which are indicative of a growing questioning of the effectiveness of Western aid intervention. Even those deeply committed to aid recognise the dangers, see Shawcross, particularly pp. 4,5,33,121,131. I met with William in Macedonia and discussed these issues; his book offers a reality check for those who clamour for ‘something to be done’.

Sun Tzu, some time between 500 and 300 BC in his book the *Art of War*, wrote, “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.” The non-military organisations within the context of this paper are certainly not the enemy, although it must be said that military commentators sometimes portray them as such. Nonetheless, the principle holds true. To get the best results out of any relationship we must know both ourselves and those we work alongside. So, whilst recognising that we can only brush the edges, it is worth at least assessing the psychology that lies behind non-military organisations, setting it against the military ethos and psyche.

The raw material: fired by duty or fired by love?

In discussions with Hugo Slim and others, and from my own observations, the development of individuals within the humanitarian community can follow an intriguing progression. In early years many pass through an “impetuous, altruistic” phase; indeed some remain there! Wanting to alleviate suffering they offer somewhat simplistic, if well-intentioned solutions. As a seven year old Hugo Slim recalls wanting to hijack a jumbo, fill it full of food, fly out to Biafra, feed the hungry, and then be home in time for tea - were that life was so simple! The 20’s and 30’s were Slim’s “dysfunctional, chivalric and politicisation” phases. Wanting action and adventure, to be courageous and to demonstrate self-sacrifice, many within the humanitarian community drive around in 4x4’s trying to change the world. They are “victim” orientated, and are often not really interested in the reasons for the conflict, or necessarily have a desire to find a solution, arguing that they are not a part of a ‘peace process’.²⁵ Social justice and human rights drive them on; health, racism, poverty, gender relations and the dangers of globalisation are amongst the key issues. Whilst some remain rooted here, beyond these phases many, if not the majority, move into a “parental phase”. Most, if not all of the senior players I came across, were intellectually and emotionally mature; they recognised the restraints and the reality of conflict. They, nonetheless, were driven to protect civilians wherever possible, providing security and relief, and to ensure human rights, equality and dignity for all; they were also clear that the sovereignty of the individual and the sanctity of human life were not just academic phrases but important issues, and that war criminals, both military and political, should be prosecuted. They were, and are, impressive individuals.

These values are, to a large extent, universal, and most in the UK military would share them; we start in the same moral place, but take a different route to securing them. Whilst within the military most personnel would claim to be “humanitarian”, the overall aim, nonetheless, is to bring the conflict to an end, through violence if necessary; military operational needs sometimes, by necessity, override suffering. Not so for the NGOs. There is, rooted in their souls, a “blood-line” divide, which was often put there in their early years and which many struggle to cross in their search for moral and ethical virtues and a “what I stand for” doctrine. In simplistic terms, the military are driven or fired by Duty in the best sense of the word; they bring courage – both moral

²⁵ To quote from an NGO representative at the Stanford University conference, “Some are there for Aid, others for Peace.”

and physical - self-sacrifice, discipline and order, with all the strengths that these bring in terms of output, structures and control. But taken to extreme the military can be too “Task” orientated, becoming over-controlling, autocratic and critical; the individual is held to be subservient to the greater good. State focused, with legitimacy coming from the State, the military are, by definition, political servants and are neither neutral, impartial or independent. Too often we can forget individual needs and close our minds to others views; often our head rules our heart.²⁶ The non-military organisations on the other hand are driven or fired by Love, again in the best sense of the word. They too bring courage and self-sacrifice, but also independence, individual nurturing and encouragement; they are people, not State or Task orientated. Taken to extreme they can be self-indulgent, too focused on their particular human issue and, living within a “rights-based” culture, they can be resentful of control, morally arrogant and blind to the dark side of individual human nature; often their heart rules their head.

Set within this context, and recognising that I have skated over an extremely complex subject, we can now consider both the strengths and weaknesses²⁷ of the non-military organisations, and draw out one or two conclusions.

Strengths

Principled. Those who work for the humanitarian organisations are suspicious, if not scornful, of governments and institutions representing governments, including the military – often with good cause.²⁸ Their principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality are usually tempered with a recognition that there is a ‘bottom line’,²⁹ as they face up to the conflicts between positive principles and negative imperatives – not to legitimise rebel movements, not to contribute to the war effort of either side, not to submit to government controls that interfere with their ability to fulfil their humanitarian mission. Recognising that the very process of fulfilling the humanitarian imperative can mean that both neutrality and impartiality are compromised, and that their involvement does influence a conflict, their approach is to “minimise” rather than “do no harm.” In an effort to match their principles, many take real risks and face real hardships.³⁰ They

²⁶ For an interesting perspective of the military (albeit US military) see the USAID Disaster Assessment and Response Field Operations Guide (FOG), p. VI-35. Also Scott Peterson, *Me against my Brother - at War in Somalia, Sudan and Rwanda*, Routledge 2000: this includes a classic portrait of an army in its pomp - “ignorant, arrogant and ripe for the humiliation it suffered” - the US in Somalia.

²⁷ These are my observations. See also Slim in *A Guide to Peace Support Operations*, pp.106-111, and the results of the survey conducted by Major R K Tomlinson for his Defence Logistics Course MSc, 25 March 2000 - some comments of which are included in these footnotes.

²⁸ We should not forget that many NGOs were born out of the suffering caused not just indirectly but directly by military forces around the world, both ill-disciplined and unprofessional national armies and ‘rebel’ or irregular forces.

²⁹ In discussions with MSF this ‘bottom line’ is usually drawn where their aid contributes to a rotten process, for example where it is being turned against the refugees/people it is intended to help; where this is so they will pull out rather than be used. That said, it is rare for these agencies to do so.

³⁰ For a wider analysis of the doctrine and principles of the NGOs see e.g. ICRC, “The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements”, ICRC, Geneva, 2nd Edition, 1996. Their 7 fundamental principles are “humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.”(pp. 1-2).

are prepared to work in dangerous areas and on both sides of a conflict, often moving between and across factional borders/boundaries to places where the cause may seem hopeless but where there is real need. Operating in areas where there may be no front-lines, real security or protection, and where access is difficult, they are often vulnerable to warlords and bandits; 140 of them were killed between 1992-97.³¹

Knowledgeable. They know their business. Those who deploy on NGO/UN operations have often done so for many years. They have served in many countries, through many conflicts and can bring their considerable skills to bear effectively. Most specialise in particular areas of the business. The OXFAM team who arrived in Northern Macedonia included experts in water and sanitation who had been through the mill on many occasions and knew what was required; we met members of the same team again in Southern Albania and in Kosovo, and they displayed equal energy in all 3 countries. WFP specialise in food; they were impressive, working quietly and efficiently, moving and distributing enormous quantities of food. Individuals within the UNHCR and CARE were equally as impressive. Other NGOs focused on health, children's work, registration or camp management; whatever their specialisation many were pretty good at it, some very good.³²

Commitment. Those who work for the humanitarian community are drawn by a genuine desire to alleviate suffering in the world, in the widest sense, and to make a real difference in their chosen area of concern. Their organisations are usually committed for the long haul, not a six-month tour. Whilst some individuals do move in and out, the organisation itself may well be committed to a particular area or problem for years, working with local staff and local engineers.

They have usually been in country for many years, developing an understanding of the problems inherent within the situation; they may not have all of the answers, but they at least understand the questions. Because they are in it for the long term they know that they will have to run with any "solutions", so they work hard to get it right. Ian Loring, for example, is a UK civilian who had been a successful lawyer in London before deciding to give up the rat race and work for the Laurasi Foundation in Erseke, Southern Albania. He had been there since before the fall of the Hoxeth regime, had lived through the turmoil of the 1990s, and was building a community of faithful workers attempting to alleviate real suffering. He, like so many others, may not have worn any campaign medals but he certainly deserved a few. Such people are worth listening to, and having

³¹ The human rights component of UNTAC worked hard under a New Zealander from UNHCR, Dennis McNamara; I worked with Dennis in Macedonia/Kosovo where he was the UN Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs. Shawcross remarks that "they had an uphill job in trying to temper the brutal authoritarianism of the Phnom Penh authorities and no luck at all with the Khmer Rouge ... They were extraordinarily brave ... A human rights campaigner in the provinces was truly alone in facing the wrath of either the Khmer Rouge or the secret police and army of the Phnom Penh regime" (see Shawcross p.57). Let no one, particularly those of us who work for heavily armed military forces, backed by all that NATO stands for, disparage or dismiss such people.

³² Comment by a UK Royal Engineers (RE) Major: "Without doubt the most impressive crew we worked with was 'Mission Ost (East)', in Dersnik Camp in Albania, who were quite excellent. Their attitude, the way they worked and their practical ability were all first class ... (they) put the job first without promoting their own image." See Tomlinson.

identified key individuals, I used them unmercifully! Even hardened cynics of the International Aid business can agree that “NGO staffs are well motivated. They rarely do significant harm; sometimes they do great good.”³³

Networking. Knowing each others’ organisations well, and often having strong individual personal relationships, the humanitarian community are usually pre-disposed to co-operate with one another. Most of the key NGOs are used to working with the UN. Multi-national and multi-lingual organisations such as MSF, World Vision and OXFAM are truly world-wide, with well established contacts, both between each other and into governments and civil structures. Given devolved responsibility from the home based HQ, the representatives on the ground operate under Mission Command; they have the authority to make decisions, and do so, being accountable to their donors and fellow workers.³⁴

Media links. Importantly, these agencies are good at working with, if not manipulating, the media. With a bias towards drama, crisis and controversy there is a natural alliance. The media often accept the NGO/UN perspective and quote it uncritically, allowing them to voice their concerns and criticisms. Together they can effectively mobilise public opinion. Whatever the rights and wrongs of individual NGOs they, together with the media, have become searchlights, illuminating and drawing attention to particular causes and conflicts, and influencing both the participants and the outside world community. Between them they are often the catalyst for a military deployment in the first place.³⁵ The world is now so inter-dependent and so vulnerable to public opinion mobilised by these humanitarian “lobbies” that, even where professional instinct and advice argues against intervention, western governments in particular will often succumb.³⁶ Global audiences, particularly those in the rich, liberal democracies, demand action of some sort - and humanitarian action, as Alan Roberts, the British historian, has pointed out, is usually much easier to reach agreement on than wider political action. Staying neutral seems not to be an option,³⁷ as Western foreign policy increasingly includes human rights issues.

The role of women. Finally, I was struck by the number of women who work within the humanitarian agencies, often over 50%. Their drive and professionalism was impressive, and they brought a tangible touch of humanity to the situation, especially working with the refugees.³⁸ Their numbers were in stark contrast to our male

³³ See Hancock, *The Lords of Poverty*, page 1 of Introduction.

³⁴ OXFAM, for example, has 30,000 volunteer workers and 500,000 committed donors who provide both legitimacy and accountability.

³⁵ This said the media, and the NGOs, might sometimes do well to reflect on history. A Punch cartoon entitled the ‘Dogs of War’ appeared in the edition dated 17 June 1876. It shows a man restraining four snarling dogs whose collars bear the names Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia and Herzegovina. A second man peering anxiously at them over a fence says: ‘Take care my man! It might be awkward if you were to let ‘em loose!’ – see Lawrence p.71.

³⁶ See Footnote 56 for comments by Kissinger and Luttwak.

³⁷ In Dante’s ‘Inferno’ there is a special place of torment reserved for those who have remained neutral in life. Their sin is considered to be so grave that they are not even allowed into hell, only its vestibule, separated from hell by the river Acheron. See Shawcross pp.32/33.

³⁸ As Laurence comments, it is remarkable how many NGOs “owe their early success to energetic, tough and determined women” (p.9); the same applies today.

dominated Army, and they were too often dismissed by arrogant officers - many senior - who tended to either brush their opinions aside, condescendingly attempt to ingratiate themselves or were simply distracted!³⁹

Weaknesses

Like any organisation, the UN/NGOs are far from perfect. My admiration for much of what I saw was tempered with several harsh realities.

Resources. NGOs often lack resources, and their lean structures are simply not able to cope with 24-hour operations. They need to find their own accommodation, food, transportation, communications etc. and, unlike the military, prefer not to operate from the “field” but from offices and apartments. Even relatively large organisations, like the UNHCR, have no equivalent of a brigade headquarters. The ability to establish and operate from a ‘Tac HQ’ and maintain a ‘Main HQ’ a considerable distance away, is simply beyond them. Travelling light may have advantages, but to sustain operations in all conditions over protracted periods needs a structured command team and the resources to sustain them; there was little evidence of either.⁴⁰ Key among resources are people. Inevitably the quality varies, but many that I met were young and inexperienced, with little staying power or self-discipline. With relatively impressive salaries and allowances, they often portrayed a moral arrogance and cultural imperialism that alienated local agencies and angered many of my officers and soldiers.⁴¹

Responsiveness. Recognising the advantages inherent in our position in Macedonia, I was nonetheless taken aback at the length of time the various agencies, including the UNHCR, took to arrive, establish and to become effective. The refugee crises had been building for some time and should hardly have been a surprise, yet even the key medical NGOs took over a week to establish themselves at Brazda, even with our not insignificant assistance. Whilst some individuals arrived after the Easter weekend, they were initially focused on their own administration - finding vehicles, accommodation etc - and then, frustratingly, spent hours, even days, driving around in their 4x4’s talking over mobile phones as they seemingly dispassionately observed our operation.⁴² In stark

³⁹ For an analysis of the proportion of females currently deployed, and a rationale for more, see Edward Moxon-Browne, p.195.

⁴⁰ Comment by a UK Royal Signals Major: “It is easy to be over critical of the UNHCR effort. I think two things come to mind: firstly, the team working in Macedonia were dedicated people. They worked very hard, particularly during the first days when the flood of refugees started crossing the border. They worked day and night to provide the necessary support. However, and this is my main observation, they lacked the numbers and the structure to be effective on their own.” See Tomlinson.

⁴¹ The UN and governmental aid agencies can be particularly guilty here. One MSF worker I met had left the UN, for whom she had worked as a 24 year old earning \$6,000 a month, tax free, because her fellow ‘workers’ were apathetic, disorganised and arrogant. Comment by an RLC Captain: “It’s very personality driven with regard to the different Aid Agencies - some were very proactive, others were a disgrace. The general impression was very poor and they all seemed incredibly money-orientated.” See Tomlinson.

⁴² Comment by RE Major: “They need to organise themselves for prompt response, not the gradual incremental response that they deem suitable and which ultimately threatens lives. Also the workers should consider spending a longer day at the crisis and not disappearing to their comfortable hotel rooms.

comparison, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) Field Hospital announced itself on the Tuesday night (6th April) and was up and running and open for business within 48 hours; many lives were saved by KFORs' medical facilities and by the IDF, but one cannot help but wonder how many IDPs/Refugees die around the world waiting for NGOs to get organised. Whilst recognising Macedonian bureaucracy, I reluctantly join those who level criticism at the '1st XI' NGOs and the UNHCR for being caught out in the first place, and for their inadequate field office staffing levels.⁴³ There were too many 'chiefs', usually referred to as 'spokespersons', and not enough 'indians'/workers to get on and make a difference.

Single issue focus. Whilst bringing tremendous expertise and strengths to bear in their particular fields, several NGOs struck me as being very narrowly focused. A lack of understanding or acceptance of wider issues can (and did) come across as arrogance; indeed in one or two cases as a dogmatic selfishness of their own aims/needs to the detriment of others. Not comfortable with pragmatism, there is a constant fear of losing their integrity. They are very cagey about being manipulated, by any side, don't want to be "used" and worry about their independence; they thus want their own space and freedom to operate - as they see fit. Whilst lessons have been learnt during the 1990s, an agreed Code of Conduct is still needed; one is being developed but agreement will be far from easy.⁴⁴

Rivalries. Notwithstanding their knowledge of each other, and willingness to network, there are many rivalries.⁴⁵ The NGOs in particular are dependent upon profile and income and they can be fiercely independent and competitive. Running a large humanitarian NGO is big business and most employ public relations men and women whose aim in life is to touch the heartstrings of the rich West. Appealing to the emotions of both governments and the public is a key element of maintaining profile

Few were about after normal working hours;" and by RE Lt: "Most organisations functioned in a satisfactory manner once set up. Their complete inability to react, organise themselves and make decisions rapidly was astounding." See Tomlinson.

⁴³ The House of Commons International Development Report on the Kosovo crisis, Third Report, printed 11 May 1999, is particularly harsh on the UNHCR, to the extent that it raises the suggestion that in future emergency situations the UN office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) might more appropriately take the lead in the co-ordination of humanitarian activities (paragraph 12, 14-16, 18). To balance their criticisms of the UNHCR they (rightly) praise WFP and DFID for their response (paragraphs 9 and 73). In my view UNHCR should remain the tactical (i.e. field) level focus; OCHA, which was originally the Department for Humanitarian Affairs (established by the UN in 1992 and renamed in 1997), was relieved of its operational responsibilities to concentrate on policy, advocacy and co-ordination. That said, the UNHCR need to learn lessons from Kosovo. They have initiated a number of studies, including an Independent Evaluation and produced a series of relatively hard-hitting reports; They now need to be actioned. See UNHCR EPAU/2000/001, February 2000, and the ICVA Newsletter, Vol 2, No 1, 18 February 2000.

⁴⁴ The "Sphere" project – see <http://www.ifre.org/pubs/sphere/sphrdocl.htm>.

⁴⁵ Comment from an RLC Captain on the urgent need to provide additional rail lift capacity to move refugees and aid into Kosovo: "a number of agencies had the funding ... the reason it didn't happen was due to the debate over who would be the lead agency, and the unwillingness of each agency to pool resources;" and by a RE LCpl: "From what I gathered during Brazda, the top management of several aid organisations were to busy having bun fights as to who is the best organisation instead of spending there (sic) time saving people." See Tomlinson.

and raising money, but to do so they must be seen and heard.⁴⁶ The NGOs can also be reluctant to share information with each other, sometimes not surprisingly,⁴⁷ and sadly some see disasters as “business opportunities” and put great effort into ensuring that their logo is both large and prominently displayed.⁴⁸ The spontaneity and creative nature of the individuals within these organisations can also lead to rivalries, indeed anarchy within them. MSF reluctantly decided, as an NGO, to withdraw from Rwanda; some members followed “orders”, others didn’t! As Hugo Slim has commented “the only consistent factor in NGO approach to co-operation is a lack of consistency.”⁴⁹

Relationships with the military. Many NGOs are intrinsically hostile to the military and most “fidget” when the military are around. Their perception of the military is not an unfair caricature, given the range of military forces around the world, and most are prepared to recognise that some military are “better” than others, with UK Forces being generally held in high regard. Few of the individuals that I met were pacifist; most had no problems with the idea of “just force.” Nonetheless the “blood-line” was real. Whilst some were prepared to come to military-led meetings, they were instinctively suspicious, expecting them to be highly structured and for “orders” to be given;⁵⁰ at least initially, many steered clear or were reluctant participants. A UNHCR reluctance to live and work permanently from my Tac HQ, despite repeated offers in the early days was, I suspect, linked to a fear of being too closely associated with the military. There was, throughout the humanitarian community, a noticeable determination not to be controlled, let alone commanded! The end result was that all too often military resources were not put to best effect.⁵¹

Meetings. By the end of the first week in Macedonia I was involved in interminable meetings with a large number of NGOs, both with and without the UNHCR. Any idea of punctuality was a naïve hope on my part, and none thought it in the least bit unusual to take mobile phone calls during a meeting, or to wander in and out at will. I attended many UN/NGO led meetings, and they ran from a mixture of chaos and confusion

⁴⁶ See *The Economist*, 29 January 2000, p.26. Also, comment from a QARANC (Nursing) Captain: “The main agency I had contact with was the Red Cross Society. Their agenda was quite obviously a high publicity, low effort attempt.” See Tomlinson.

⁴⁷ In Albania, the UNHCR asked for tenders from any agency wishing to run the camps we were building. Whilst it might be unfair to call them business plans they were not far short. This is a “competitive” process, with interested agencies bidding against each other, not to pay UNHCR from their funds but to receive significant sums of money from the UNHCR to fund their work; in doing so they inevitably tie themselves into UN/governmental policies.

⁴⁸ The worst example of this in Brazda was the refusal by MSF to allow a Médecin du Monde doctor to operate from “their” compound; whilst surrounded by literally tens of thousands of refugees, I watched and listened in amazement as the argument raged between the 2 organisations, whilst flags/banners were being unfurled to ensure that the media carried particular images into homes and offices around the world.

⁴⁹ See Stretcher and Drum, pp. 123-140, and *The Hague Occasional Paper*, No 36, p.115.

⁵⁰ See USAID FOG p.VI-36.

⁵¹ An enormous number of articles have been written on the subject of the linkages between ‘Humanitarians’ and the Military in Kosovo - most expressing concern and ‘demanding’ that alternatives to military involvement be sought. See e.g. *ICVA Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No 1, 18 February 2000 pp.17-22. The output from the Hague Conference, *Occasional Paper*, No. 36, accurately reflects some pretty strong debate, see e.g. pp.15, 17, 59.

through to well structured and useful – inevitably, personalities were the key.⁵² By the middle of the second week in Macedonia, and early on in Albania, I had successfully reached a position where the chair was taken by the senior UNHCR representative, with me beside him and my HQ running the administration; it seemed to be a good compromise!

So what?

These perceptions will not be a surprise to most readers. But it seems to me that the important fact to recognise is simply that differences do exist, and no amount of military wishful thinking will change them. We must learn to live with the realities; through an understanding of the strengths, and an acceptance of the weaknesses, strong working relationships can be developed, and indeed friendships forged. In one sense both sides of the “blood-line” divide are a mixture of ‘missionaries, mercenaries and misfits’, and both share very similar problems. Often, if not usually, put into and operating within a vacuum, with poor mandates and force structures, each can be humanitarian “fig leaves” covering neglect. The crowded theatre of operations is made up of uneven actors, with poor and good quality players on both sides being asked to make hard moral choices. Often unable to take the decisive action needed, and being put into dangerous situations - self-sacrifice may be the ethic but it is not the objective - both sides are accountable to donors or governments who can be very wise after the event and who can be unfairly critical of decisions taken under enormous pressure. These similarities bind the players together. Both get it wrong now and then, but our joint aim must be to develop the natural synergies that exist in order to ensure that the achievements eclipse the failures.

Where now?

As noted at the beginning of this paper there has been a noticeable increase in the number of ferocious intra-state conflicts, often referred to as ‘complex emergencies’⁵³ over the last couple of decades. The troubling echoes of Bosnia and Rwanda are now imprinted on the psyche of the UN and the international community; just about every politician who spoke with me during the deployment showed that to be true. Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone are simply the latest examples of the world desire to stop ethnic cleansing and avert, or at least minimise the effects of such conflicts. Future developments are far from clear, but if the emerging consensus that state sovereignty is being redefined strengthens, then the results could be significant. Henry Shue, for example, argues that people have a “right not to become victims of genocide, and that the effective protection of this right involves both changes to the prevailing idea of the sovereign state and also the recognition that other states sometimes have a duty to

⁵² Comment by a RE Major: “The daily meetings were something to behold as every day we went over the same ground for the benefit of the new staff or for the simple reason that no-one took notes or issued direction.” See Tomlinson.

⁵³ See Laurence, pp.3/28, and Edward Moxon-Browne p.192.

intervene.⁵⁴ He is not alone. Kofi Annan and Tony Blair have spoken along similar lines.⁵⁵ Whilst Henry Kissinger, Edward Luttwak, and many others argue that such a doctrine could lead to “everlasting humanitarian war,”⁵⁶ the reality is that the deployments of the 1990s are unlikely to suddenly cease as the impetus for ethical/humanitarian foreign policies gain strength, and deployments of choice will increasingly include operations driven by humanitarian instincts.⁵⁷ We must recognise this and learn the appropriate lessons from Kosovo and elsewhere. These lessons include improving the way we relate to the non-military agencies - the essence of this paper, whilst not losing sight of the fact that any operation which begins at a relatively low level has the potential to escalate. AGRICOLA started as helping to implement a peace agreement; it involved humanitarian operations on the one hand, but also the preparations for forced entry into Kosovo on the other. This latter option would have entailed serious combat power, and the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) was right to emphasise that maintaining such combat power remains our first priority.

⁵⁴ See “Conditional Sovereignty” by Henry Shue, in *Res Publica*, Vol. 8, No.1, 1999. Henry attended the Conference at Stanford University where we debated these, and many other issues.

⁵⁵ Kofi Annan, in his address to the UN General Assembly on 20 September 1999, spoke of humanitarian intervention in the 21st Century. He pointed out that the idea of state sovereignty is being re-defined by the forces of globalisation; individual human rights are of increasing importance. Tony Blair has spoken in a similar vein; unlike previous wars, which he argues were fought on grounds of *realpolitik* or national self-interest, Kosovo he asserts was “fought for a fundamental principle necessary for humanity’s progress: that every human being regardless of race, religion or birth, has an undeniable right to live free from persecution” (Shawcross, p.325). At the height of the conflict in 1999 he delivered a speech in Chicago in which he sketched out his thoughts on a world where dictators will not prosper nor ethnic crimes go unpunished. The Czech President, Vaclav Harvel, has also argued that the “glory” of the nation state has passed, and that “human beings are more important than the state”. (Shawcross, p. 349). Many, particularly the young (and 40% of the worlds population are under 20), now argue that a universal, global respect for human rights will emerge, along with civic equality.

⁵⁶ Those who oppose such a notion, arguing it both dangerous and unrealistic, point out that the doctrine of non-interference in other states borders - enshrined in the UN charter - lies at the heart of national sovereignty. Henry Kissinger has warned that non-interference emerged “at the end of the devastating Thirty Years War, to inhibit a repetition of the depredations of the 17th Century, during which perhaps 70% of the population of Central Europe perished in the name of competing versions of universal truth”. Edward Luttwak, in a recent article on Kosovo in *Foreign Affairs*, has argued, that “Governments should resist the emotional impulse to intervene in other people’s wars - not because they are indifferent to human suffering but precisely because they care about it and want to facilitate the advent of peace” (Shawcross, p.373). Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that the ending of the Cold War has given governments, particularly in the West, a freer reign to intervene and “The traditional strict doctrine that a human rights problem concerns none but the state where it takes place.... is becoming an increasingly eccentric position” (See Calvoloresi).

⁵⁷ Recent comments expressed in frustration at the ineffectiveness of UN operations in Sierra Leone are unlikely to bring about a retrenchment; indeed the opposite may be true as increasingly the NGOs, the media and the UN itself argue for more effective intervention. The British Spearhead Battalion Group deployment had a significant impact on the situation in Sierra Leone, in stark contrast to the much larger but inexperienced and ill-equipped UN Forces; policy makers will be increasingly caught between the desire, indeed the imperative to act, and a recognition that these deployments require strong combat power. In the context of Sierra Leone, “European officials, normally prompt in their praise of UN authority, voiced stinging criticism of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his top peacekeeping staff for jeopardising the UN’s prestige in an increasingly hopeless-looking operation”, (*The International Herald Tribune*, London, Tuesday 16 May 2000); a military force need not be large, but it must be effective.

Nonetheless, as a professional Army, we should welcome our involvement in 'humanitarian' deployments. Complex emergencies are demanding, and they provide excellent vehicles for maintaining the professionalism of our Forces, a professionalism needed as much in the early stages of emergency aid provision, disaster relief and humanitarian operations as in Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement and War-Fighting. British soldiers happen to be extremely good at this business, and take great pride in making a difference.⁵⁸ They switch easily from one role to another, and psychologically had no difficulty with helping refugees one day and preparing to fight their way into Kosovo on another. Force protection issues were no barrier, with our soldiers striking an admirable balance as the situation dictated. The tasks were often gruelling, but they responded willingly, displaying their humanity alongside their professionalism in a way that was noted by many of the other participants.

As far as commanders are concerned these operations provide, at all levels, sufficient uncertainty and friction to ensure that they are well tested. We need commanders who are comfortable with chaos, and the humanitarian community, never mind the situation itself, ensures that there is plenty of that! Nothing is ever easy on these deployments, and cool heads are needed to bring order out of the chaos.⁵⁹ The experiences gained within my brigade from AGRICOLA have resulted in better commanders, at all levels, and we emerged from the deployment a far more professional brigade than when we went in.

Development of doctrine: 'joined-up' approach

The doctrinal debate on how effective action can best be orchestrated and executed must be widened. UK military doctrine has developed well throughout the 1990s, and it is held in high regard. Nonetheless, there is work to be done, particularly in the area of working alongside the various humanitarian organisations and other governmental departments. A recent US State Department report provides an "unusually frank" assessment of why past American action has been slow or ineffective; "it is a tale of poor co-ordination, missions being duplicated or falling through the cracks and confusion inside the Administration and the private humanitarian groups that sometimes cannot be sure with which agency to work."⁶⁰ It is tempting to argue that the UK's involvement over the last 10 years has had a better track record, and there is some truth in that. However, the wave of press comment which followed the inter-departmental "debates" on the UK's response to the floods in Mozambique rightly touched a nerve,⁶¹ and my AGRICOLA experiences confirm that we too have much to learn.

⁵⁸ Comment by an RAMC Corporal: "... the work we did in Kosovo was a great boost for the troops on the ground ... it made us feel we were achieving something ... treating 11,500 in 13 days ... the training and experience that will come from it will be invaluable." See Tomlinson.

⁵⁹ The Rt Rev Dinis Sengulane CMG, the Bishop of Lebombo in Mozambique, commented during his talk to the RCDS on the crisis there that we "need people who are trained to deal with chaos and who can bring order and control." See also *the Daily Telegraph*, 4 March, 2000, p.19.

⁶⁰ See Editorial, *International Herald Tribune*, 6 June, 2000.

⁶¹ See Editorial, *The Guardian*, 1 March, 2000; Editorial and article p.1, *The Times*, 4 March, 2000; *Sunday Times*, 5 March 2000, p.8; *Sunday Telegraph* 5 March, 2000, pp. 3,4; *Independent on Sunday*, 5 March, 2000, p.13; *The Times*, 6 March, 2000, p.5; *The Guardian* 7 March, p.5.

Whilst it is idle to suggest that it is easy to establish a single doctrine for complex emergencies, the realities of these deployments means that the DFID, FCO, the DTI and the MOD must enhance their links and work closer with each other, and with the other key players, agencies and donors.⁶² Our collective and ‘joint’ doctrine must reflect agreed principles, on everything from intelligence gathering and analysis, provision of the means, including funding, the roles of the military and the links with and status of non-military aid agencies and civilian contractors. There is a need for an integrated ‘campaign plan’, covering the political, economic, legal and humanitarian imperatives, alongside the military ones. Whilst inevitably events on the ground will dictate and modify, and commanders will need to respond to these changes, such a campaign plan, prepared jointly by the key players using a framework set within an agreed doctrine will both guide and educate, support and, where necessary, constrain.

The military role is to support, not supplant the work of the humanitarians; we are there to serve, not to be served. Logistic, medical and engineering support, encompassing the management of airheads and seaports, transportation, shelter, route protection and the provision of a secure environment, are all key roles, and the Logistic and Engineer Brigades of the British Army are both equipped and structured to provide such support. Linked to ongoing work within the Civil-Affairs Group, these brigades, preferably brought together under the umbrella of a divisional level “Support Command”, should become the military focus for the development of an integrated training and exchange programme, to educate and prepare like-minded people for future deployments.⁶³

Finally, this doctrine should also take into account developments within Defence Diplomacy, one of the new tasks identified by the SDR.⁶⁴ Conflict prevention, early warning and early deployment of forces must be set alongside preventative diplomacy, disarmament and peace-building measures, including focused aid. This broader definition of security policy seems some way off, but developing the doctrinal debate will bring it closer. The Joint Doctrine Centre at the RMCS, Shrivenham, should continue to play their part, developing the principles, practice and procedures which together will make up the doctrine from the military perspective, but the process must be politically driven.

Whilst it is a truism to say that there is no such thing as purely military success in any conflict, this is particularly so in complex emergencies, where military involvement is simply a means to an end. Politics dictates the speed and nature of response, and determines priorities, and it is politicians who need to bring together the key players in a co-ordinated manner, and allocate the resources as appropriate. The natural lead would be DFID, which responded so well last year and which is most ably led at the moment;

⁶² Ideally, the aim is to “integrate into one coherent approach different tools and forms of action – developmental, humanitarian, political and military – so that they reinforce each other”. See Whalley p.109 and *The Hague Occasional Paper*, No 36, p.113.

⁶³ For an exhaustive, accurate and achievable series of policy recommendations, see Skeates RMCS MBA paper, pp. 97/98. I see little to fault his assessments, which follow logically from his summary and conclusions (pp. 93-96), except to add the need for an additional “Support Command” focus.

⁶⁴ The SDR identified eight Defence Missions, including Defence Diplomacy and Peace Support/Humanitarian Operations, Part 1, Ch 3, p.13, and a seemingly genuine international commitment to be a “Force for Good.”

some structural change may be necessary to ensure an ability to plan ahead and, particularly, to maintain a close link with the PJHQ. One thing is clear; if we are to avoid the complete militarisation of humanitarian assistance, which would be a grave mistake in my view, then a clear and widely understood doctrine is required quickly.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Operation AGRICOLA, the UK deployment to Macedonia/Kosovo, was but one of a continuing series where military commanders, at all levels, found themselves working closely with non-military organisations. Whilst the scale of humanitarian assistance provided may have been exceptional, and it was certainly unusual for the military to have to fill such an enormous vacuum and to take such a strong lead, military involvement in such complex emergencies is unlikely to end. This being so there is work to be done. The military, in particular, need to appreciate the cultural and psychological make-up of the non-military players; we need to better understand the ethos and psyche of the various organisations and agencies, and acknowledge the strengths that they bring to such deployments. We must put effort and resources into improving our capabilities and our relationships with the key players, NGO, UN and governmental, particularly DFID, encouraging and participating in a wide doctrinal debate to ensure better and closer co-operation. The future fate of many people, all around the globe, caught in the middle of inter- and increasingly intra-state violence will depend on this; and the stakes are too high to be left to the sometimes inadequate efforts of well intentioned individuals.

⁶⁵ See also Wilkinson, Lt Col P. R., "Sharpening the Weapons of Peace: The Development of a Common Military Doctrine for PSO", *BAR No. 118*, June 1998, pp.3-7, and Rose, General Sir Michael, and Ramsbottam, General Sir David, in: Whitman, J. and Pocock, D. (eds.), *After Rwanda: The co-ordination of UN Assistance*, MacMillan Press, Basingstoke, 1996.

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