THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION BY WESTERN MILITARIES IN CONTEMPORARY PEACE OPERATIONS

Juan Pablo Caicedo*

ABSTRACT

The merging of peacekeeping, peace building and sometimes peace enforcement initiatives into the concept of Peace Operations has raised difficult challenges for the humanitarian community, which has had to struggle to protect its principles from dynamics that pretend to subordinate the humanitarian aid to the political and military goals of the interventions. In this context, this paper pretends to examine recent developments in contemporary peace operations and explore the challenges they pose to humanitarianism. For this purpose, a first section will highlight some new trends in western 'Peace Operations' and the role conceived for 'humanitarian' initiatives in this integrated approach to conflict management. A second section will then explore the challenges and risks posed by the integration and submission of humanitarian assistance into broader political and

* Politólogo Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, magíster en defensa y seguridad de la Escuela de Guerra y Magíster en acción humanitaria de la Universidad de Uppsala. Profesor asociado Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano. caicedojp@yahoo.com

military objectives in the framework of contemporary warfare and; finally, a third section will sketch some recommendations for the relations between humanitarians and the military.

Key words: humanitarian aid, Peace Operations, CIMIC, peacekeeping

RESUMEN

La fusión del mantenimiento de la paz, la construcción de paz, y en algunas ocasiones la imposición de la paz, en el concepto amplio de Operaciones de Paz, ha generado importantes desafíos para la comunidad humanitaria, que ha tenido que luchar para proteger sus principios de dinámicas que pretenden subordinar la ayuda humanitaria a los objetivos políticos o militares de las intervenciones. En este contexto, este artículo pretende examinar la evolución reciente de las Operaciones de Paz contemporáneas y explorar los desafíos que representa para la acción humanitaria. Para este fin, en una primera sección se describen algunas de las nuevas tendencias en las Operaciones de Paz occidentales y el rol asignado para las iniciativas «humanitarias» en el enfoque integrado para el manejo de conflictos. La segunda sección explora los riesgos y desafíos que implica la integración y sumisión de la asistencia humanitaria a objetivos políticos y militares en el contexto de las guerras contemporáneas y; finalmente, una tercera sección presenta una serie de recomendaciones sobre las relaciones civiles y militares en el mundo de hoy.

Palabras clave: ayuda humanitaria, Operaciones de Paz, relaciones civiles-militares, mantenimiento de la paz

INTRODUCTION

Due to the different (and seemingly contradictory) nature, culture, values, perceptions and objectives of both communities, the relationship between the military and the humanitarian actors in the midst of peacekeeping operations (PKO) has never been free of tensions and frictions. Nonetheless, given the fact that both actors have to work in the same geographical area and in many occasions get involved with the same civilian population, a complete separation (complete lack of communication and coordination) between them is not only not feasible but might not even be desirable. Thus, the traditional debate on the relationship between the military and the humanitarian actors in the context of PKO has been focused on whether or not, and under which circumstances, should humanitarian actors use military assets in their humanitarian activities; whether or not should they use armed protection for their missions and personnel; whether or not should they share information with the armed forces on the ground and, whether or not, and under which circumstances, should the military get involved directly or indirectly in the provision of humanitarian aid. Beneath all these practical questions lies the need to protect the main foundations of humanitarianism: its principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence.

Even though this debate continues without a final solution, much has been done to address these sensible issues through the development of guidelines and codes of conduct by the humanitarian community (although they remain voluntary and without enforcement mechanisms), which in general terms emphasize that the military should only get involved in humanitarian aid in a subsidiary and exceptional basis and as a last resort (if the capacities of the civilian actors are overwhelmed by the circumstances), that even in those cases there should be civilian control and leadership, that the military's role should be limited to providing security and protecting the civilian population, and that the humanitarian initiatives should no be subordinated to political or military objectives.[1] All other possibilities of interaction and cooperation should have to be weighted against the humanitarian principles in a case by case basis.

There was also a trend in Western military actors (such as the UK, NATO and the UN DPKO for example) to acknowledge and claim that their role and their comparative advantage is the provision of security, while the role of humanitarian actors is the provision of humanitarian aid. As stated by a high UN officer, «If there is a large [humanitarian] community out there – why would we ask the military to carry out operations that are the specialization of others? It doesn't make sense».[2] This reluctance of the military to intervene in humanitarian activities had also been associated with their concern of negatively affecting their war fighting capabilities if they get involved in what the US Army doctrine calls Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW).[3] A lot of progress had also been achieved, both by humanitarian actors and by western militaries, in improving their familiarity and their knowledge of each other and in lessening their 'natural' distrust, through better and institutionalized channels of communication and repeated interaction both in the field and in training courses and exercises.[4]

Nonetheless, this optimistic panorama in the humanitarian-military relationship, which was facilitated by the context of the first generation of PKO has changed considerably since the end of the Cold War, with the radical transformation that has taken place in the nature and logic of multinational and unilateral peacekeeping interventions. In this sense, while the first generation of PKO was characterized by its limited military nature (i.e deployment of troops to monitor and verify a ceasefire or a demilitarized zone, thus contributing to *keep* some degree of *peace* once it has been

---

[1] For a review of the existing guidelines and codes on conduct, see for example: «Armed forces as humanitarian aid workers? Scope and limits of cooperation between aid organisations and armed forces in humanitarian aid». pp. 16- 17 VENRO Position Paper, May 2003. Source: Venro, Date: 8th May 2008, at: http://www.venro.org/publikationen/archiv/Position%20Paper%20Armed%20Forces%20and%20Humanitarian%20A.PDF

[2] See: BARRY, Jane and JEFFERYS, Anna. 2002. «A bridge too far: aid agencies and the military in humanitarian response». Humanitarian Practice Network, HPN Paper No. 37. p. 4-5

[3] See: ROSE, D.G. 2002. «FM 3-0 Operations: The Effects of Humanitarian Operations on US Army Doctrine», in: *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 p. 63

[4] See: BYMAN, Daniel L. 2001. «Uncertain Partners: NGO and the Military», in *Survival,* Vol. 43, No. 2. pp. 107-108

accomplished) and was conditioned by the consent of the warring parties, by the impartiality and neutrality of the mission and by the authorization of the use of force only in self-defense; the goals of the second generation of PKO have been broadened to include peace building and reconstruction efforts, thus combining under the same mission (and leadership) the military component of the mission with political, developmental and «humanitarian» initiatives.

To make things ever more complex for the humanitarian-military relationship and for the protection of humanitarian principles, the third generation of PKO—widely known as 'Peace Operations—does not even pretend to contribute to the maintenance of peace once it has been achieved, but have also expanded its objectives to include the imposition of a peaceful and secure environment in the name of universal values (human rights, democracy, etc.), usually through a more flexible and robust mandate for the use of force and if necessary without the consent of the warring parties or the legitimating authority of the UN.[5] This transformation of the PKO from pure *peacekeeping* to *peacebuilding* and *peace enforcement,* has created new dilemmas and challenges for the humanitarian community which has had to struggle to protect its principles and the humanitarian space from dynamics that, in the name of global peace, stability and security, pretend to subordinate the humanitarian aid to the political and military goals of the interventions.

In this context, this paper pretends to examine these new developments and explore the challenges they pose to humanitarianism. For this purpose, a first section will highlight the new trends in western 'Peace Operations' (with emphasize in *peace enforcement* interventions) and the role conceived for 'humanitarian' initiatives in this new integrated approach to conflict management. A second section will then explore the challenges and risks posed by the integration and submission of humanitarian assistance into broader political and military objectives in the framework of contemporary warfare and; finally, a third section will sketch some recommendations for the relations between humanitarians and the military.

1. NEW TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY PEACE OPERATIONS

With the waning of ideological differences after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the triumph of western political and economic liberalism over other forms of governance, the international community was over optimistic of its possibilities to foster an environment of global peace and security in the framework of a 'New Global Order'. This optimism was soon challenged in the early 1990s with the increased number of internal armed conflicts, characterized by an apparent irrational and savage violence and which usually took place in so called weak or 'failed states'—states incapable of providing a minimum degree of security and wellbeing to their citizens and

---

[5] See: RAMSBOTHAM, Oliver et al. 2006. Contemporary Conflict Resolution, The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 134-150

therefore whose legitimacy was easily challenged—[6]. In this context, and without the ideological constraints of the Cold War, the natural response of the international community was to undertake comprehensive initiatives of peace enforcement, peacebuilding and state building (all under the banner of 'Peace Operations') which replaced the more limited and traditional PKO. Then, in current western military interventions, peacekeeping or even the «…defeat of the enemy is not the only objective or rationale put forward for taking military action. Military forces also aim to restore peace, democratic political order and economic development».[7] Thus, nowadays *peacekeeping* has been transformed into State-building, with which the Western powers try to replicate their liberal values (democracy, market economy, human rights, etc.) into war-torn societies and weak states, assuming that this will automatically create a more peaceful and stable world. At least five trends in this new type of Peace Operations can be identified that affect humanitarianism.

First of all, military interventions against the will of sovereign states and sometimes without the 'blessing' of the UN Security Council are being justified in the name of «humanitarianism», using force to protect the life of civilian population under imminent threat. This has created a dangerous expansion of the use of the concept of 'humanitarian' action that goes well beyond the traditional humanitarian principles and that is used to justify military interventions and the use of force for «humanitarian» reasons. Just to give an example, nowadays it has become normal to hear what would otherwise be contradictory terms such as 'humanitarian soldiers' or even worst, the delivery of 'humanitarian bombs', as was claimed by a NATO spokesman during the airstrikes in Kosovo.[8] The debate on the legitimacy of the so-called «humanitarian interventions» reached its peak with the development of the concept of the 'responsibility to protect', according to which the sovereignty of the States is conditional to the State´s protection of its own citizens «from avoidable catastrophe – from mass murder and rape, from starvation – but that when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states».[9] In such cases the response of the international community can include coercive measures up to the use of force and military intervention. An undesired consequence of these conceptual developments is that the humanitarian needs of a population can be used as a façade for the intervention of western powers, which would use their 'responsibility to protect' as an excuse to

---

[6] On the relationship between weak states, legitimacy and violence, see for example: OHLSON, Thomas. «Understanding Causes of War and Peace», in: European *Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 14. pp. 137-139

[7] See: DE TORRENTE, Nicolas. 2006. «Cover Story: Contemporary Peacekeeping Is State-Building. Humanitarian NGOs Must Not Ally With Military», in: *European Affairs,* Spring/Summer. Source: CIAO, Date: 5th May 2008, at: https://login.ezproxy6.ndu.edu/login?url=http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ea/2006_spring_summer/ea2006_spring

[8] See: «Armed forces as humanitarian aid workers? Scope and limits of cooperation between aid organisations and armed forces in humanitarian aid». *OpCit.* p. 3

[9] See: International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. 2001.»The Responsibility to Protect». p. 5 Source: The International Development Research Centre, Date: 5th May 2008, at: http://www.idrc.ca/openebooks/960-7/

advance their political and economic national interests—abandoning to their fate the population of countries where they do not have strategic interests, as was shown by the inaction of the international community during the Rwandan genocide—.

Secondly, following the path opened by second generation PKO, the current response to humanitarian crisis and conflict situations (whether international, multinational or unilateral) tends to integrate military, political, economic, developmental and humanitarian dimensions under the same command (the Special Representative of the Secretary General in the case of the UN missions[10]), presupposing that all components have the same objective of accomplishing a peaceful and stable environment and hence that there is no reason for avoiding further coordination and integration. From this perspective, «Effective humanitarian assistance operations require civilian and military cooperation to facilitate unity of effort and to attain desired end states.»[11] In the case of the UN, for example, «ever since the early 1990s (it) has stressed the need for an 'integrated approach' to crisis management that would no longer separate humanitarian concerns from those of peace and security»[12], thus compromising the impartiality, neutrality and independence of any humanitarian initiative. The humanitarian aid is then subordinated to higher and usually abstract political and military strategic ends (such as security, peace, democracy, stability, etc.) in such a way that at the end it is just considered as «…another 'tool in the toolbox' of conflict management»[13]. The extreme end of this tendency was illustrated by the statement of the then US Secretary of State Colin Powell, when he said that the humanitarian NGOs working in warzones where US troops were deployed were «…such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team.[14]

Third, related to the theory that weak states are more prone to violence and conflict, a new paradigm in security has developed according to which the efforts made to foster the socioeconomic development of a country (thus strengthening the state) have a positive correlate effect in its security environment. Here again, given that security is a priority in the international agenda, humanitarian aid ends up being subordinated to political and military strategic goals: the aid would not necessarily

---

[10] See: WHEELER, Victorian and HARMER, Adele. 2006. «Resetting the rules of engagement: trends and issues in military-humanitarian relations», in: *Humanitarian Policy Group Research Briefing,* No.21. p. 3. Source: ODI, Date: 4th May 2008, at: http://www.odi.org.uk/HPG/papers/HPGBrief21.pdf

[11] ARCHER, Sarah. 2003. «Civilian and Military Cooperation in Complex Humanitarian Operations», in: *Military Review,* March April. Source: The US Army Professional Writing Collection, Date: 10th May 2008, at: http://www.army.mil/prof_writing/volumes/volume1/june_2003/6_03_2_pf.html

[12] LILLY, Damian. 2002. «The Peacebuilding Dimension of Civil-Military Relations in Complex Emergencies. A Briefing Paper.» Source: International Alert, Date: 5th May 2008, at: http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/613/lilly.pdf

[13] BARRY, Jane and JEFFERYS, Anna. 2002. *OpCit.* p. 8

[14] See: POWELL, Colin. «Remarks to the National Foreign Policy Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations». Source: US Department of State, Date: 10th May 2008, at: http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/5762.htm

be given to those that need it the most (as should be according to the impartiality principle), but to those living in areas with a strategic value for the overall objectives of the intervention (foster peace and stability and fight against terrorism, for example). In the context of the global war on terrorism «This thinking has led military planners to embrace humanitarian assistance and development as counterterrorism strategies»[15];   therefore, the humanitarian aid can easily be instrumentalized by the military to advance what might be non-humanitarian objectives. The faith that the military has in development and «humanitarian» projects as a way to achieve a more secure environment can be summarized by Archer's statement that «Effective civil-military interdependence is the military's ticket home from Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other complex emergencies yet to come».[16] Fourth, when the 'Peace Operations' are deployed without the consent of the warring parties and are given the mission to enforce peace, then the intervening force quickly becomes itself a party to the armed conflict (completely losing its neutrality and impartiality). In this context, which resembles more war than peacekeeping (i.e Afghanistan), in order to achieve its objectives of peace, security and stability and to protect its own force, the military needs to achieve a minimum degree of cooperation and control over the civilian population in its areas of operation. For this purpose, it has tended to mainstream into its normal activities CIMIC operations (Civil-Military Coordination)[17] and 'hearts and minds' campaigns, which would not be problematic if they were not portrayed as «humanitarian initiatives» as it is happening nowadays. In this sense, military actors are instrumentalizing «humanitarian aid» to achieve military and political objectives, including the protection of their own troops, the gathering of intelligence, the reduction of the support that the enemy has from the local population and also to break its morale, influence the local, national and international media and public opinion and to increase its perception of legitimacy. As denounced by the ICRC[18] in the case of Afghanistan, the humanitarian aid is being transformed in just another mean of warfare, when for example, leaflets are launched to desperate communities by the military with the message that the «humanitarian aid» is conditioned to the provision of useful information. An US Army Lieutenant confirmed this when (referring to the delivery of «humanitarian aid» in Afghanistan) he stated that: «The more they help us find the bad guys, the more good stuff they get».[19]

A similar problem was raised by the dropping of «Humanitarian Daily Rations» by the US military in Afghanistan at the same time that bombs were being dropped, raising the question of the impartial and neutral character of the aid, since it might have been dropped to benefit local allies[20] or to win

---

[15] KENYON, Sarah. 2007. «Military Intervention and the Humanitarian «Force Multiplier»», in: Global Governance, Vol. 13, No. 1. p. 106

[16] ARCHER, Sarah. 2003. *OpCit.*

[17] CIMIC is the term used by NATO doctrine to refer to any relationship between the military and civilian actors in order to advance politico-military objectives. See: LILLY, Damian. 2002. *OpCit.* p. 6

[18] See: RANA, Raj. 2004. «Contemporary Challenges in the civil-military relationship: complementary or incompability?», in: *International Review of the Red Cross,* Vol. 86, No. 855 p. 565

[19] KENYON, Sarah. 2007. *OpCit.* .p. 105

[20] LILLY, Damian. 2002. OpCit. p. 11

the hearts and minds of the beneficiaries in strategic areas (which were not necessarily the people with more needs). Even president Bush confirmed that the «humanitarian» aid was being used as war propaganda, when he stated that «At the same time, the oppressed people of Afghanistan will know the generosity of America and our allies. As we strike military targets, we will also drop food, medicine and supplies to the starving and suffering men and women and children of Afghanistan.»[21] A similar concern has been raised by the direct delivery of «humanitarian assistance» by armed US soldiers in Afghanistan while wearing civilian clothes; an action that does not only attempt against the humanitarian principles but also against the principle of distinction established by the Geneva Conventions.[22]

Finally, due to its expected positive contribution to the achievement of military and political objectives and to the increasing demands for military involvement in Peace Operations, the instrumentalization of humanitarian assistance by the military has become institutionalized in the military doctrine (a process that once established will be very difficult to revert). In the case of the US Army, for example, its doctrine and manuals were revised in 2001 to broaden the type of missions for which the military should be prepared and which were encompassed in the concept of «full spectrum force». [23] Within this concept, alongside the traditional wartime use of force for offense and defense, was included the use of military power in conflict situations and during peacetime for stability and support operations. Curiously enough, within the possible stability operations that can be undertaken by the army with the objective of promoting and protecting «American national interests by influencing the political, military, and information dimensions of the operational environment»[24], are at the same level the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the support to insurgencies, and the combat of terrorism, among others. With this logic the humanitarian assistance ends up being nothing else than another way of waging war and advancing politico-military objectives, a tendency that is even more worrisome taking into account that the doctrine contemplates that both war operations (defense and offense) and MOOTW (stability and support operations) can be employed at the same time and in the same geographical area. This means that the same soldiers can be engaged in a combat operation in one block of a city, in a peacekeeping operation in the next one and in a humanitarian and relief operation in a third one.[25]

Another way in which the instrumentalization of humanitarian action by the military has been institutionalized is through the model of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan,

---

[21] «America's Response: Bombing Afghanistan; Bush Addresses the Nation». Source: CNN, Date: 12th May 2008, at: http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0110/07/bn.01.html

[22] See: LILLY, Damian. 2002. OpCit. p. 11

[23] See: ROSE, D.G. 2002. OpCit. p. 77

[24] Ibíd. p. 77

[25] See: KRULAK, Charles (Gen.).1999.»The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War» in, *Marines Magazine*. Source: US Air War College, Date: 13th May 2008, at: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/strategic_corporal.htm

which represents «the merging of military and humanitarian assistance».[26] The PRT model, which would probably be replicated in other Peace Operations, represent the complete integration (and subordination) of humanitarian assistance to the political and military strategy; consisting basically in the deployment in the field of military and civilian personnel under the same command with the shared objective of providing security and carrying out humanitarian and reconstruction efforts (but even in this case prioritizing the security agenda and the counterinsurgency efforts). Within this model the military can get involved in «humanitarian work» directly or it can outsource it to «humanitarian» NGOs or to «humanitarian» private contractors.

2. CHALLENGES AND RISKS FOR THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

The trends described above imply serious risks and challenges for the humanitarian community in its effort to protect both its traditional principles and the humanitarian space from the attempts to subordinate them to political and military objectives. Five main challenges and risks can be identified: First of all, the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence that have historically been a guarantee for the security of the humanitarian workers and a key to access the population in need independently of their side in the conflict, have been compromised by the integrated approach of contemporary Peace Operations, which blurs the distinction between military and humanitarian initiatives. Since the consent of the warring parties is not anymore a precondition for the deployment of this type of missions which have the political objective of «rebuilding» the state, then they can not claim to be impartial and neutral and will be quickly considered by the local actors as a new party to the conflict. As a result, mirroring the image that western political and military leaders have of the humanitarian NGOs as part of their 'combat team', the local armed factions might also consider the foreign NGOs as part of the enemy to defeat (and as legitimate military targets), thus increasing the security risks they have to face.

In this context, «terrorist incidents» against NGOs in Afghanistan has increased by 1300% in the last 15 years, with the annual average of violent deaths of aid workers increasing from 2.6 in the period of 1997 to 2001 to more than 30 since 2005.[27] After the killing of 5 of its staff members, which caused its withdrawal from Afghanistan, MSF explained its decision mentioning the statement made by Taliban leaders in the sense that MSF and other NGO were working for the US and thus would be the target of military attacks.[28] Not only the NGO's personnel, but also their projects and the population that benefits from them (and that is stigmatized as helping the occupying forces) have become easy targets for the local warriors which oppose the presence of foreign troops in their

---

[26] OLSON, Lara. 2006. «Fighting for Humanitarian Space: NGOs in Afghanistan», in: *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 9, Issue 1. p. 4

[27] See: OLSON, Lara. 2006. *OpCit.* P. 11

[28] See: Ibíd. p. 14

territory.[29] In this context, western humanitarian actors have been caught in a catch-22 trap where their security is compromised if they accept to be part of an integrated Peace Operation (thus working under a political or military command) but also if they do not, since in the perception of the local actors they are an integral part of the war effort.

Second, a further consequence of the integrated approach to conflict management has been a division within the humanitarian community, between the NGOs that keep endorsing and defending the traditional humanitarian principles an a new tendency called 'new humanitarianism' which apart from saving lives and protecting human dignity has as its objective the promotion of peace, human rights and good governance.[30] For the NGOs that assume this latest view, integration is therefore not a problem but an opportunity and if it affects the humanitarian principles these should then be reexamined and reevaluated. This division and lack of coherence within the humanitarian community has without doubt debilitated it in its defense of the humanitarian space and has opened the window for the further instrumentalization of humanitarian aid.

Third, as a result of the reluctance of many traditional humanitarian actors to subordinate its work to military and political goals in the framework of a Peace Operation, the emergence of «humanitarian» companies (or private contractors) that implement so called «humanitarian» projects financed by the intervening governments in their areas of influence without subscribing to the humanitarian principles, can be identified as a new challenging trend for the humanitarian community. «This approach will allow (the donors) greater political control of implementation and choice of projects and targets populations, and will inductively limit responsibility and accountability».[31] Thus, aid workers are dangerously transformed into government agents[32] and in many cases even behave as what Olson calls «NGO warlords»[33], meaning with this that their style of life and behavior resembles that of the former warlords operating in the area. The dilemma this creates for the humanitarian actors is that when they are not willing to intervene for security reasons or because they would be obliged to subordinate their work to the military or political agenda, then the vacuum they left will be fulfilled by unscrupulous «humanitarian mercenaries» more concerned with the financial gains of getting a contract than with the humanitarian principles.

Fourth, as a consequence of the instrumentalization of humanitarian action by the military, the humanitarian aid is not necessarily being delivered on a need based criteria but based on the strategic value given by the military planners to a geographical area or to a population, which directly attempts

---

[29] See: Ibíd. p. 17

[30] See: OLSON, Lara. 2006. «Fighting for Humanitarian Space: NGOs in Afghanistan», in: *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 9, Issue 1. p. 10

[31] See: RANA, Raj. 2004. *OpCit.* p. 581

[32] See: KENYON, Sarah. 2007. *OpCIt.* p. 108

[33] See: OLSON, Lara. 2006. *OpCit* p. 18

against the foundations of humanitarianism (its principle of impartiality.) This leaves almost completely unattended the population living in non-strategic areas even if according to a non-politicized assessment they should be the first ones to receive aid. With this logic, aid can also end up (intentionally or unintentionally) in the hands of one or several of the warring parties (which are seen as allies by the military), thus helping to prolong or even to escalate the conflict, instead of contributing to its solution or at least remaining neutral.

Finally, there is a high risk of 'donor irresponsibility', meaning with this that, in the context of Peace Operations, some donor countries have been willing to finance «humanitarian» initiatives carried out directly by the military or by implementating private contractors. Just to give an example, in 2002 «the UK government's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD) announced that it would consider bids from the UK-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for 'humanitarian' work…»[34]. The problem with this new tendency is that it puts a lot of political and financial pressure on humanitarian NGOs to get integrated into broader conflict resolution, state building and even counterinsurgency efforts (such as the Quick Impact Projects in Afghanistan), leaving them with the only option to accept this against their principles or to assume the cost of being marginalized and excluded from areas of the world where their help is really needed.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having explored five of the main trends in contemporary Peace Operations and five challenges and risks they pose to humanitarianism, this last section presents five recommendations for the relations between humanitarians and the military with the aim of protecting the humanitarian space in the context of contemporary warfare. First of all, a return to the basics is desired, where humanitarian actors intervene in the midst of war with the purpose of saving lives and protecting human dignity prioritizing its aid only according to the needs of the population (impartiality) while the military takes care of providing a secure environment and protecting the civilian population. In this sense, before thinking of extending its activities to providing humanitarian assistance, armed forces should concentrate in their military objective of providing security which is already a very difficult task as proven by the cases of Somalia, Srebrenica or Rwanda. As Larry Minear stated in one of his articles on Rwanda, «Also troubling were indications that the availability of humanitarian roles for troops may have discouraged acceptance of tougher, security-related chores by the military».[35]

Second, it is important to rescue the principles and values of humanitarianism and call things for their name, in such a way that only an impartial, neutral and independent intervention can be

---

[34]See: BARRY, Jane and JEFFERYS, Anna. 2002. p. 1

[35] MINEAR, Larry. 1996. «The Humanitarian and Military Interface: Reflections on the Rwandan Experience». Source: Humanitarianism and War Project, Date: 3rd May 2008, at: http://hwproject.tufts.edu/publications/electronic/e_hami.html

considered as truly humanitarian. The humanitarian community should thus denounce all other initiatives that pretend to be humanitarian, even if they deliver aid to populations in need, as an attempt to instrumentalize humanitarianism for political or military purposes. This does not mean that these other initiatives should stop existing, because this would be naïve; but at least they should be called for their name, whether military interventions, bombings, «hearts and minds operations», psychological operations, information operations, etc.

Third, the humanitarian community should put pressure on the donor countries to encourage «donor responsibility» by, for example, developing and strengthening donor's codes of conduct (such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative[36]) that will discourage and limit the transfer of humanitarian funds directly to the military or to «humanitarian mercenaries». Since these initiatives remain voluntary and hence depend on the good will of the signing governments, it would be in the interest of the humanitarian community to insist in the development of enforcement mechanisms (i.e peer review and control among the donor countries). It would also be a step forward to link the NGO's codes of conduct with the behavior of the donor countries, in such a way that, for example, only those NGO that have agreed to the humanitarian principles would be eligible for receiving humanitarian funds.

Fourth, taking into account that the development of integrated responses to crisis and conflicts have compromised the security of western humanitarian actors in such a way that «It is unrealistic—and possibly dangerous— for humanitarian organizations to assume they can operate outside the political context of Western-led interventions» [37], it seems to be that in many places of the world subscribing to humanitarian principles is not anymore a guarantee of access and safety for Western NGOs. In this context, given the fact that the situation seems to be different for non-Western NGOs (i.e Muslim organizations in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq)[38], then Western humanitarian actors should have to consider the possibility of working with and through them or even to pull out and support their work without a significance presence in the field. This would test the Western NGO's real commitment to help the populations in need since they might have to pull out and be ready to leave space for others to be the protagonists.

Finally, if the instrumentalization of humanitarian aid by the military already poses enough problems and challenges for humanitarianism, then humanitarian actors should not only take the lead to promote an independent evaluation of the impact of this instrumentalization[39] (which will illuminate further discussions and policies), but should also be prepared for the possible engagement of private military companies (and mercenaries) in «humanitarian» work.

---

[36] See: «Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship», Source: Good HumanitarianDonorship, Date: 14th May 2008, at: http://www.reliefweb.int/ghd/a%2023%20Principles%20EN-GHD19.10.04%20RED.doc

[37] See: KENYON, Sarah. 2007. *OpCit.* p. 111

[38] See. Ibíd. p. 111

[39] See: BARRY, Jane and JEFFERYS, Anna. 2002. *OpCit.* p. 15

REFERENCES

«America's Response: Bombing Afghanistan; Bush Addresses the Nation». Source: CNN, Date: 12th May 2008, at: http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0110/07/bn.01.html

ARCHER, Sarah. (2003). «Civilian and Military Cooperation in Complex Humanitarian Operations», in: Military Review, March April. Source: The US Army Professional Writing Collection, Date: 10th May 2008, at: http://www.army.mil/prof_writing/volumes/volume1/june_2003/6_03_2_pf.html

«Armed forces as humanitarian aid workers? Scope and limits of cooperation between aid organisations and armed forces in humanitarian aid». VENRO Position Paper, May 2003. Source: Venro, Date: 8th May 2008, at: http://www.venro.org/publikationen/archiv/Position%20Paper%20Armed%20Forces%20and%20Humanitarian%20A.PDF

BARRY, Jane and JEFFERYS, Anna. (2002). «A bridge too far: aid agencies and the military in humanitarian response». Humanitarian Practice Network, HPN Paper No. 37.

BYMAN, Daniel L. (2001). «Uncertain Partners: NGO and the Military», in Survival, Vol. 43, No. 2.

DE TORRENTE, Nicolas. (2006). «Cover Story: Contemporary Peacekeeping Is State-Building. Humanitarian NGOs Must Not Ally With Military», in: European Affairs, Spring/Summer. Source: CIAO, Date: 5th May 2008, at: https://login.ezproxy6.ndu.edu/login?url=http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ea/2006_spring_summer/ea2006_spring

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. 2001.»The Responsibility to Protect». p. 5 Source: The International Development Research Centre, Date: 5th May 2008, at: http://www.idrc.ca/openebooks/960-7/

KENYON, Sarah. (2007). «Military Intervention and the Humanitarian «Force Multiplier»», in: Global Governance, Vol. 13, No. 1.

KRULAK, Charles (Gen.).(1999).»The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War» in, Marines Magazine. Source: US Air War College, Date: 13th May 2008, at: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/strategic_corporal.htm

LILLY, Damian. (2002). «The Peacebuilding Dimension of Civil-Military Relations in Complex Emergencies. A Briefing Paper.» Source: International Alert, Date: 5th May 2008, at: http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/613/lilly.pdf

MINEAR, Larry. (1996). «The Humanitarian and Military Interface: Reflections on the Rwandan Experience». Source: Humanitarianism and War Project, Date: 3rd May 2008, at: http://hwproject.tufts.edu/publications/electronic/e_hami.html

OHLSON, Thomas. «Understanding Causes of War and Peace», in: European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 14.

OLSON, Lara. (2006). «Fighting for Humanitarian Space: NGOs in Afghanistan», in: Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, Vol. 9, Issue 1.

POWELL, Colin. «Remarks to the National Foreign Policy Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations». Source: US Department of State, Date: 10th May 2008, at: http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/5762.htm

«Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship», Source: Good HumanitarianDonorship, Date: 14th May 2008, at: http://www.reliefweb.int/ghd/a%2023%20Principles%20EN-GHD19.10.04%20RED.doc

RAMSBOTHAM, Oliver et al. (2006). Contemporary Conflict Resolution, The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts. Cambridge: Polity Press.

RANA, Raj. (2004). «Contemporary Challenges in the civil-military relationship: complementarity or incompability?», in: International Review of the Red Cross, Vol. 86, No. 855

 ROSE, D.G. (2002). «FM 3-0 Operations: The Effects of Humanitarian Operations on US Army Doctrine», in: Small Wars & Insurgencies, Vol. 13, No. 1

WHEELER, Victorian and HARMER, Adele (2006). «Resetting the rules of engagement: trends and issues in military-humanitarian relations», in: Humanitarian Policy Group Research Briefing, No.21. Source: ODI, Date: 4th May 2008, at: http://www.odi.org.uk/HPG/papers/HPGBrief21.pdf