

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 28
Number 2 *Parameters Summer 1998*

Article 8

5-20-1998

Civilian-Military Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance: Lessons from Rwanda

John E. Lange

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

John E. Lange, "Civilian-Military Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance: Lessons from Rwanda," *Parameters* 28, no. 2 (1998), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.1880.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

Civilian-Military Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance: Lessons from Rwanda

JOHN E. LANGE

From *Parameters*, Summer 1998, pp. 106-22.

On 22 July 1994, President Clinton announced that the United States would contribute massive relief assistance to Rwandan refugees in Zaire in response to an appeal from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The greatly increased level of US humanitarian support would be provided primarily by the military. The Department of Defense quickly responded, and its rapid reaction has been highly commended for saving thousands of lives.

The military effort, Operation Support Hope, evinced significant differences in perspectives between the military and civilian organizations involved. There were concerns among the senior military leadership and key members of Congress that the operation detracted from military readiness. On the other hand, there were concerns among many civilians, particularly in the humanitarian community, that the military's successful effort to terminate the operation quickly did not match public US commitments of support for Rwandan refugee relief.

Since that time, several "lessons-learned" exercises have focused on improving military-civilian coordination in humanitarian operations. These efforts should continue, particularly given the certainty that the military will be called upon again to support humanitarian relief efforts when they exceed the capacity of humanitarian agencies to handle them. Improved planning and coordination is particularly important between the armed forces and the international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that specialize in humanitarian relief.

Those who engage in such efforts within the US government, however, should be under no illusions: there is a basic cultural difference between how the US military and the civilian humanitarian agencies view emergency relief. There will inevitably be great tension between the two because the US military looks on such an operation as secondary in importance to its basic mission of warfighting, while the civilians involved see their primary mission as protecting and assisting innocent civilians. This inherent tension should give pause to US military leaders whose new vision for the future includes the ability to dominate military operations involving humanitarian assistance as part of "full spectrum dominance." [1]

A Massive Emergency, and the President Responds

Some 500,000 to 800,000 refugees fled from Rwanda into Zaire in July 1994. Initial estimates at the time were as high as 1.2 million people in the period 14-17 July. This sudden and massive outflow of refugees overwhelmed the ability of relief agencies to provide water, food, medical care, shelter, and other relief items. [2] On 15 July in Geneva, Switzerland, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, addressed an emergency meeting of the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group (consisting of 24 donor governments and the European Commission) to alert the assembled ambassadors of the impending disaster and to explain that she soon would be calling on governments for specific assistance.

By 20 July, UNHCR had hastily put together a list of eight self-contained (and ill-defined) "service packages." High Commissioner Ogata requested that donor governments provide the specified assistance as in-kind contributions. Many of the packages were geared to the kinds of operations that could be accomplished by military establishments: airport services, logistics base services, road servicing and road security, site preparation for refugee camps, provision of domestic fuel for cooking, sanitation facilities, water management, and airhead management. [3]

The US government was quick to respond. On 22 July, President Clinton held a news conference at the White House.

He reported:

The flow of refugees across Rwanda's borders has now created what could be the world's worst humanitarian crisis in a generation. It is a disaster born of brutal violence, and according to experts now on site, it is now claiming one life every minute. . . . Today, I have ordered an immediate, massive increase of our efforts in the region, in support of an appeal from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.[4]

President Clinton said the efforts would be directed "from the White House" through the National Security Adviser working with the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of the US Agency for International Development, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (The State Department--despite its role in regional diplomacy, mobilizing other donors, and providing funds to UNHCR and other organizations--was notably absent from the list.) The President explained that the Defense Department would "establish and manage an airlift hub in Uganda, . . . assist in expanding airlift operations near the refugee camps in Goma and Bukavu, . . . establish a safe water supply, and . . . distribute as much water as possible to those at risk." In response to a question, he reported the cost would be "in excess of \$100 million." [5]

Operation Support Hope began quickly. On 25 July, the Director of the Rwanda Task Force in the Department of Defense and others testified before the US Senate Armed Services Committee and received full support for the undertaking. Senator James Exon lamented the magnitude of the tragedy and said that the United States "should be saluted" for doing something about it.[6] Committee Chairman Sam Nunn expressed his agreement and then added, "In the military, when you are sitting around in war colleges and so forth, this is not what you undertake as your mission, and this is not the kind of contingency you planned. The US military is the only organization in the world that can bring to bear this kind of relief effort in a short time frame in an emergency situation." [7]

Marine Corps Lieutenant General John Sheehan, Director for Operations of the Joint Staff, told the committee that the military effort would last until November or December: "We are putting into place a logistics network that will take us a full month or so to put into place, and then we expect to sustain it at least for three or four months." [8]

Initial Military Reluctance

Official executive branch pronouncements of support for the humanitarian operation masked serious misgivings on the part of the US military. According to a senior government official involved in the effort,

It was clear from the beginning the JCS was not a willing participant. If they had their "druthers," they wouldn't have been involved in the effort at all. DOD, specifically JCS, were "naysayers" who didn't want to do it. That's why Tony [National Security Adviser Anthony Lake] got the President involved. . . . JCS had been putting up roadblocks not to engage in any way.[9]

Such concerns became public after then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili, met with reporters on 28 July. He was quoted as saying, "We have a capacity like almost no one else to help with tragedies of a magnitude like we're witnessing now in Rwanda. But we also at the same time need to strengthen the United Nations so they can do more on their own without always having to call upon us or we don't have to play as large a part." [10] The newspaper report of the meeting explained the JCS thinking at the time:

While proud to help save the starving and shelter the homeless around the world, Defense Department officials cringe at the notion of becoming a super, muscle-bound Red Cross or Salvation Army. Such humanitarian missions are fine now and then, Pentagon officials say. But these operations sap time and attention of senior officials, cut into combat training exercises, tie up equipment and personnel and take increasingly scarce defense dollars away from other operations focused on the Pentagon's primary mission of making sure US armed forces remain strong enough to win two regional wars nearly simultaneously.[11]

Despite the military's misgivings, the President's policy remained in place.

Misgivings Among Key Members of Congress

On 29 July, the Defense Department announced that it was sending additional troops for the Rwandan aid effort. The Administration also asked Congress for supplemental appropriations totaling \$320 million (\$270 million for defense and \$50 million for foreign operations). About the same time, both Republican and Democratic members of Congress "criticized the Clinton administration for failing to adequately and speedily deal with the civil war and refugee crisis." [12]

Others in Congress, however, were sending different signals. Led by Chairman Robert C. Byrd, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved only \$170 million of the defense supplemental appropriation; Byrd said that the funds were sufficient to get the operation off to a start and that the President could ask Congress for additional monies before it adjourned in October. The bill also would require that US forces be withdrawn by early October unless Congress specifically approved a longer stay. Byrd crafted limitations on use of the relief money to forestall any expansion of US operations to establish security inside Rwanda, telling the committee, "We had enough of that in Somalia." [13]

In the latter half of August, key Pentagon supporters in Congress expressed their concerns about the military mission. On 24 August, Senator Strom Thurmond, ranking minority member of the Armed Services Committee, wrote a letter to the President urging that humanitarian operations be paid from a separate account, rather than from "the already anemic defense budget." Three days later, a newspaper article citing Administration officials and congressional sources criticized the Clinton Administration's "open-ended commitments [for the Pentagon's Rwandan relief mission and refugee interdiction in the Caribbean] costing millions of dollars a day without agreement on how to pay for them." [14]

Regarding the termination date of Operation Support Hope, an officer who worked with the operation in the Pentagon confirmed that the "budget was part of the bureaucratic reinforcement of the perception of mission responsibilities." [15]

Civilian-Military Debate over US Commitment

During the height of the relief effort, frequent international consultations were held on the political, economic, military, and humanitarian aspects of the Rwanda crisis. On 2 August, an international donors pledging conference was held at the United Nations offices in Geneva. In his speech, Richard McCall, head of the US delegation and chief of staff to the USAID administrator, described the international relief effort and the US actions "to implement four of the eight service packages requested." He mentioned the request to Congress for supplemental appropriations and noted that "much of this will be used to continue managing the four service packages on behalf of UNHCR." He also reported, "Secretary of Defense William Perry visited Kigali and the refugee camps around Goma this past weekend. Upon returning to Washington yesterday, Secretary Perry reported that, thanks to the collective relief efforts, the corner has been turned, but much work remains to be done." [16]

Joint Task Force Support Hope was the key to expeditious delivery of humanitarian relief. By 12 August, a news report out of Kigali said that "most American soldiers probably will leave Goma, Zaire, within weeks, senior US officers here say." Lieutenant General Daniel Schroeder, Commander of the Joint Task Force, was quoted as saying, "The Goma piece, I think, is settled. Our water production is now at the point where it is exceeding consumption." [17] Reinforcement of this view came from discussions with UNHCR officers on the scene, who apparently were not always in full agreement with their headquarters. The official UNHCR view was strikingly different. On 11 August, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Gerald Walzer wrote to the US Ambassador to International Organizations in Geneva to explain that much more needed to be done: "Substantial support will be needed in the water sector until production goals are achieved in all areas and distribution systems are fully established and sustainable." [18]

By mid-August, it was increasingly clear that organizational perspectives on the relief operation in eastern Zaire differed dramatically between the Department of Defense on one side and the Department of State and the Agency for International Development on the other.

From the military perspective, the worst was over and it would soon be time for an expeditious transfer to relief

agencies. In mid-July, Zaire had witnessed one of the worst humanitarian crises imaginable: up to 800,000 refugees had crossed the border in the course of four days and arrived in a remote area of volcanic rock with insufficient water and food; almost 50,000 refugees (between six and ten percent) died during the first month after the influx. By the second month, however, "a well-coordinated relief programme . . . was associated with a steep decline in death rates" to one-fourth of the earlier level.[19] The US military, with its unmatched logistical capability, had provided the necessary surge capacity that international relief agencies lacked for a crisis on such a massive scale. As one military officer involved in the operation put it, once the dying stopped and the infrastructure was established, "our mission was over" and resources that had been diverted to Operation Support Hope could be applied to "more appropriate tasks." In his view, "the military didn't perceive this as a true mission" because there was no security factor involved, as there was in Somalia or Haiti.[20]

The civilian agencies, however, had a different outlook. They were accustomed to dealing with refugee and migration crises (such as the earlier influx of Rwandans into Tanzania, which had not required US military involvement), but the crisis in Zaire was one of the worst in history. It seemed less and less likely that the refugees (primarily Hutus) would return to Rwanda anytime soon. Extremists, many of whom had committed genocide, were living in the refugee camps. Meanwhile, Rwanda itself had been devastated by the horrific genocide and the government takeover by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (led by Tutsis). The prospects for further conflict appeared to be high. During the second month of the crisis, five to eight refugees out of every 10,000 were dying each day, and this was still way above the crude mortality rate (0.6 per 10,000 per day) in Rwanda prior to the conflict.[21] Thus, from the perspective of the State Department and USAID (and many NGOs), this looked to be a long-term situation requiring large-scale humanitarian and development resources and an extraordinary commitment on the part of the international community. This context made it even more important that the US government meet its July policy commitment to provide four of the "service packages" requested by UNHCR. As to the critical water package, there was a lengthy debate in Washington regarding the minimum number of liters of water needed per person per day in a humanitarian emergency.[22] Key civilian government and NGO officials believed that the departure of the military should take place only after internationally accepted standards for water production and distribution were met, and that there should be a seamless transition as the military departed. In the view of a State Department refugee official, it was important to look objectively at the situation on the ground rather than simply "define the crisis as over so the military could leave." [23]

UNHCR, with its responsibility to care for the refugees after the initial crisis passed, considered it vital to maintain continuity in the humanitarian relief operation after withdrawal of Operation Support Hope. At the request of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Counselor for Refugee and Migration Affairs at the US Mission in Geneva (the author) met on 16 August with UNHCR staff and was presented with an urgent request for information on US plans and intentions in order to identify resource gaps and priorities in the coming weeks. The US government response, which was transmitted to Geneva two and a half weeks later, made US intentions clear:

The US commitment "to carry out" the service packages will not necessarily continue. . . . The US committed its military forces to several UNHCR packages on an urgent, crisis-response basis. As NGOs, under the guidance of UNHCR, are accepting responsibility for these packages on a continuing basis, the US military is being withdrawn. . . . US forces withdrew from Goma on 26 August after having handed over operations to UNHCR et al. on the ground. Provided the situation remains stable we expect to restructure the US military presence in the region to handle remaining missions--essentially airlift--with greatly scaled-down presence at Entebbe and Kigali. . . . Planning considerations: (a) our goal is to have no residual military presence in the area; (b) US military support should be considered only if it is a unique, military capability not found in IOs [international organizations], NGOs, or other countries.[24]

Two days later, a *Washington Post* report citing US and international relief officials criticized the Defense Department's organizational response to the President's commitments in July:

The discrepancy between the White House's promises and the Pentagon's performance was due to a combination of the administration's reluctance to insist that the military meet each UN task and the military's judgment that the tasks were either too costly, too risky or unnecessary. . . . [The projected end-September withdrawal] is earlier than some US diplomats and many international relief workers favor.

Moreover, the military plans to depart after performing only a portion of the four principal humanitarian tasks that National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and other senior officials in July pledged publicly it would undertake.[25]

The article also provided a clue as to why the President and the National Security Council had allowed such bureaucratic politics to proceed: "Senior administration officials who would ordinarily closely monitor the military's performance were distracted by crises in Cuba and Haiti." [26]

Not surprisingly, the article caught the attention of officials in Washington. The Department of Defense prepared a response, stating:

There is no discrepancy between the tasks identified by President Clinton and what the [US government] delivered. DOD has essentially completed the specific tasks directed by the President on 22 July speech [sic], and has done so in full coordination with the UNHCR. The President defined DOD's general objective as the alleviation of the immediate suffering of Rwandan refugees. Toward that end, he directed DOD contribute *in a significant way* to four of the eight so-called "service packages" requested of the international community by the UNHCR.[27]

There is a notable contrast in phraseology between McCall's 2 August speech saying the United States would "implement" four of the service packages versus the Defense Department's view a month later that the military was tasked to "contribute in a significant way" to four of the packages. That contrast serves as a microcosm of the civilian-military debate over the extent of the US commitment.

Soon afterward, with most of the Rwandan refugees remaining in Zaire, the US military--whose operation had been announced with great fanfare on 22 July--was gone. "JTF Support Hope completed re-deployment on 30 September and was disestablished on 8 October 1994 having accomplished the mission assigned by CINCEUR." [28]

There were some on the civilian side who saw the military as having withdrawn before the job the US government had "contracted for" was completed, and to have done so when it still was not clear whether the civilian agencies could gear up quickly enough to meet the military's timeframe.[29] In addition, some civilian officials felt that the Defense Department did not provide other agencies sufficient advance notice of drawdowns.[30] The US military review of Operation Support Hope recognized such divergent approaches taken by the civilian and military organizations involved in the relief effort. The After Action Report also explained how the mission guidance through the chain of command to the Joint Task Force Commander allowed the military to prevail in the bureaucratic battle with the civilian organizations:

From the first the commander and staff were permitted to develop criteria that defined success in doctrinal military terms, resisted mission creep, and encouraged the rapid transition of relief support from military to USAID or other civilian agency control. Other agencies, however, notably the State Department, USAID, and the UN/NGO community, had a longer view of involvement that, without specific limits, was roughly tied to stabilization of life in the refugee camps and nation-building activities (in some cases they had *no* view of end state criteria, as expressed and understood in military doctrine). . . . Clear mission guidance thus permitted the commander considerable freedom of action in determining his operational objectives and end state, and was key in avoiding the additional taskings to deployed forces that has become known as "mission creep." [31]

Former Secretary of Defense William Perry made similar comments at the first After Action Review of Operation Support Hope. After Lieutenant General Schroeder made his presentation, Perry described the rationale and criteria for US involvement which he had told the President: it is a major emergency; the need for relief is time-urgent; the solution is unique to the US military; and the risks to US forces are minimal. He said the same criteria would be applied to the next crisis. The mission plan was to save lives, protect US troops, and pass the mission on as soon as possible to those who would normally handle it. He added that there had been great pressure in Washington for "mission creep," but the Department of Defense had dug in its heels and got out.[32]

During a series of interviews with officials in the National Security Council, Defense Department, State Department,

and USAID, the emotional level of the discussion when describing events from a year and a half earlier was very high. A few of the civilians described Defense officials as having been "disingenuous" during interagency discussions of the military's future plans for the operation, while Pentagon officials were adamant that their assigned mission and the situation on the ground in Zaire fully warranted the termination of Operation Support Hope by the end of September. Clearly, July through September of 1994 was not a good period for military-civilian harmony in Washington.

Operation Support Hope in Broader Context

To understand fully the different perspectives of those working on humanitarian relief for Rwandan refugees, one needs to keep in mind events elsewhere that had an effect on the players involved.

US troops withdrew from Somalia by the end of March 1994. The Somalia operation, despite its initial success in relieving famine, is commonly viewed in the United States as a failure. This stems in part from the "mission creep" that occurred after the original goal, to alleviate the suffering, was expanded to include nation-building and later to arrest a particular warlord.

On 6 April 1994, a week after the Somalia operation ended, an unexplained plane crash killed the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi and sparked the genocide by extremist Hutus against Tutsis and moderate Hutus inside Rwanda. For complex reasons, the international community was unable to stop the genocide in the ensuing months. After the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front took over Kigali, Hutus (including perpetrators of genocide) began to flee, and many of them were part of the refugee influx into Zaire in July.

By September, another part of the world was receiving great attention. US troops prepared to engage in an American-led invasion of Haiti aimed at forcibly removing the de facto government. After a last-minute agreement, the Haitian military leaders agreed to step down, and US troops landed in a relatively peaceful environment.

These surrounding events affected those concerned with Rwandan refugee relief in Zaire. From the Pentagon's perspective, it was important that Operation Support Hope be a success after the failure in Somalia. At the same time, there was to be no Somalia-style expansion of the mission. The humanitarian relief effort, which took place in a secure environment, had a lower priority in the Pentagon than the planned invasion of Haiti, which was potentially far more dangerous.

Many of the civilians, meanwhile, were greatly affected by the fact that the US government had not done more to stop the Rwandan genocide, which killed upwards of a half million people. One State Department official speculated that, had the refugees been Tutsi victims rather than Hutus (some of whom had committed acts of genocide), the civilians in the internal debates may have more strongly insisted that the US military meet public US government commitments.[33] This sense of guilt persists. President Clinton, when he addressed genocide survivors in Kigali on 25 March 1998, said,

The international community, together with nations in Africa, must bear its share of responsibility for this tragedy, as well. We did not act quickly enough after the killing began. We should not have allowed the refugee camps to become safe haven for the killers. We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide.[34]

Lessons-Learned Exercises

In reviewing the events that led President Clinton to order the US military to undertake Operation Support Hope, one could easily conclude that the problem lies in the humanitarian relief organizations' inadequate logistical capabilities (in terms of both magnitude and rapidity of response). Perhaps, as then JCS Chairman Shalikashvili suggested, donor governments should provide the United Nations--specifically, the key operational UN relief agencies, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Food Program--the wherewithal to undertake such massive relief efforts on their own.

Even in the richest of times, however, that would be a highly unlikely scenario. In today's difficult budgetary environment (affecting the United States as well as many other donor governments), it is simply impossible. The High Commissioner for Refugees will not have her own air force, or commercial fleet on-call for strategic airlift, anytime in

the foreseeable future. Even if she did, there will be circumstances--such as existed during the Sarajevo airlift--where the delivery of humanitarian supplies involves a security element that requires the use of military assets.

Given that reality, many of the studies formulating "lessons learned" from the Rwandan refugee crisis have assumed that at some point the military will again be called upon to act in a massive humanitarian crisis occurring in a secure environment. Thus, the reviews have focused much of their attention on improving the civilian-military linkage.

On the international level, for example, the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA, the organization within the United Nations established to coordinate emergency relief, which has since been renamed the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs) chaired a UN task force in Geneva on the subject. The objective was to develop "a common framework to ensure the most effective use of military and defense assets in support of all types of humanitarian operations where their use is appropriate." The task force operated under two principles: "First, any use of such assets should be exceptional, to be considered only when more normal arrangements are either not available or would not be available in time on the scale required. Second, all consideration of, and practical arrangements for, such use must be based on, and be perceived to reflect, solely humanitarian criteria." [35]

The latter point expresses the concern of humanitarian actors, who believe that their ability to deliver humanitarian aid requires impartiality and neutrality, that military involvement in humanitarian operations "may be perceived as reflecting political rather than humanitarian considerations." [36] As a result of the task force's study, DHA created a UN Military and Civil Defense Unit in Geneva to serve as a planning and operations focal point within the UN for governments, regional organizations, and other institutions. [37] The idea of creating such a focal point stems in part from the view that the United Nations needs a single point with which militaries can engage in planning, which was expressed by US Army General George A. Joulwan (now retired), then Commander in Chief, European Command, during his 1995 visit to Geneva. [38]

For its part, UNHCR concluded that it would continue to use the concept of service packages for self-contained facilities and services provided by donor governments to meet exceptional emergency needs. The organization noted that "the specifications for, and operating principles governing the use of such packages, should be agreed upon in advance." [39] UNHCR turned over to the Military and Civil Defense Unit the task of working with governments to refine the service packages further.

Among donor governments, US Ambassador Daniel L. Spiegel chaired a November 1994 meeting of the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group in Geneva that featured Lieutenant General Schroeder. During the meeting, the assembled ambassadors raised several ideas that could serve as guiding principles for the civilian-military linkage:

- . In a crisis situation where relief organizations are overwhelmed, military organizations can be called upon to use their unique capabilities (or their comparative advantage) until relief organizations are able to meet the humanitarian needs.
- . There can be no automaticity to such a military response (given the principal role of military establishments to defend their countries), and this is understood and accepted by the humanitarian assistance agencies.
- . It is important to establish in advance appropriate coordination mechanisms between humanitarian agencies and military establishments in order to take maximum advantage of the military's unique capability: the rapidity of its organized response.
- . Advance joint training should include both military and relief organizations and aim to improve coordination, communication, and definition of tasks requested of the military.
- . In humanitarian situations where governments decide their militaries should be involved, the military mission should be precisely and clearly defined both in scope and duration.

- . The service package concept, if more clearly defined and in more manageable sizes, can be usefully employed again. Refined service packages should allow both larger and smaller military establishments to assume some of the tasks required.
- . The use of troops for direct delivery of supplies is often controversial, expensive, and full of political complications. If used, there should always be a strategy to ensure their departure as soon as the situation permits.
- . The military's involvement should be used to leverage the participation of relief organizations (e.g., airlift to bring in equipment belonging to relief organizations).
- . Unity of effort should be achieved through improved coordination, especially in sharing "real time" information and setting priorities.
- . The operation should remain under civilian control.[40]

For the United States, the After Action Report from Operation Support Hope seconded the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group's suggestion for joint training: "To preclude 'meeting on the dance floor,' US military schooling and exercises should include representatives of other governmental agencies, the UN, and NGOs. JTF/Unified Command exercises should include non-military representatives 'playing' their normal roles even in hypothetical combat situations." [41] In 1995, the Department of Defense took another step to improve liaison with the international humanitarian agencies when it created a position for a military "humanitarian affairs liaison officer" to work in the Refugee and Migration Affairs section of the US Mission to International Organizations in Geneva.

The need to overcome expected difficulties in civilian-military liaison is recognized in the Joint Doctrine regarding military operations other than war (MOOTW):

In MOOTW, achieving unity of effort is often complicated by a variety of international, foreign, and domestic military and non-military participants, the lack of definitive command arrangements among them, and varying views of the objective. This requires that JFCs [joint force commanders], or other designated directors of the operation, rely heavily on consensus building to achieve unity of effort.[42]

With its emphasis on unity of effort, the doctrine assumes that a basic principle of war--unity of command--will not exist for such operations.

The Military and Humanitarian Operations: Inevitable Involvement and Inevitable Clashes

The many efforts to improve military-civilian coordination should prove to be helpful in future humanitarian crises, particularly regarding military coordination with international humanitarian organizations. All parties need to recognize, however, that such measures in the United States will have only a marginal effect on the core issue: the fundamental difference in perspective between the military and civilian (particularly humanitarian) organizations.

The purpose of the US military is to fight and win the nation's wars. Military officers trained to have that mindset will inevitably find humanitarian operations to be a secondary activity.

The purpose of the humanitarian agencies is to protect and assist civilians in need, and their personnel on the ground sometimes risk their own lives to do so. Those in the US government who provide funding for the international humanitarian agencies and NGOs are equally committed to meeting humanitarian needs.

This difference in perspectives, a veritable "clash of cultures," was a continuing theme during the Rwandan refugee crisis, from the initial misgivings of the US military about engaging in an effort that detracted from readiness, to the concerns among key members of Congress that defense funding was inappropriately being diverted to humanitarian missions, to the bickering between civilians and the military over the extent of the US commitment to UNHCR and

the termination date of Operation Support Hope. The differences are attitudinal and not readily subject to change through implementation of assorted lessons-learned recommendations.

Some observers may therefore conclude that the answer is to remove the US military from such operations altogether. Others may take the opposite approach and suggest that the military should be restructured and retrained to facilitate its involvement in humanitarian activities. A less drastic option would be to take steps to make the military more receptive to such operations. None of these measures is likely to succeed in the foreseeable future, however.

Those who favor removing the military from involvement in humanitarian operations ignore key factors: there are limitations on the capabilities of humanitarian agencies to respond to sudden, massive emergencies and in situations where there are substantial security concerns; funds to increase those capabilities in the humanitarian agencies will not be forthcoming; and there is a strong sense in the American public, facilitated by the media ("the CNN effect"), that the United States should be part of the international effort to alleviate suffering in such crises. As Samuel Huntington has written, "The United States has a clear humanitarian interest in preventing genocide and starvation, and Americans will support intervention to deal with such tragedies within limits." [43] The US military in recent years has been ordered by both Republican and Democratic Presidents to engage in activities that have a humanitarian dimension. Operation Provide Comfort for Kurds in northern Iraq, the Sarajevo airlift, and the Unified Task Force for Somalia all were initiated under President Bush, while Operation Support Hope for Rwandan refugees, the intervention in Haiti, and the US troop presence in IFOR in Bosnia commenced under President Clinton. Under extreme circumstances, the US military should, and inevitably will, undertake additional humanitarian missions--even if doing so has adverse consequences for military readiness.

A different approach would be to restructure the US military so that separate units are designated for peacetime operations such as humanitarian assistance. Even if this were the best approach to take organizationally (which is not at all certain), for the foreseeable future it would meet intense resistance. The downsizing of the US military in recent years accentuates the military's view that it must focus on the current strategy of being able to fight two major regional contingencies nearly simultaneously. Also, there is scant sentiment in Congress to shift even a bit of the emphasis from warfighting to peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and the like. As Huntington also reminds us, proposals to organize and train the military for such activities, or to create a unified command for humanitarian assistance operations, are met with a strong rejoinder:

Such proposals are basically misconstrued. The mission of the Armed Forces is combat, to deter and defeat enemies of the United States. The military must be recruited, organized, trained, and equipped for that purpose alone. Its capabilities can, and should, be used for humanitarian and other civilian activities, but the military should not be organized or prepared or trained to perform such roles. A military force is fundamentally antihumanitarian: its purpose is to kill people in the most efficient way possible. That is why nations traditionally maintained armies and navies. Should the military perform other roles? Absolutely, and . . . they have done so throughout our history. Should these roles define the Armed Forces? Absolutely not. [44]

Lieutenant General Schroeder, based on his experience commanding Operation Support Hope, argued that military restructuring was unnecessary: "This operation validated the capability of the armed forces to perform these kinds of operations without specialized training or dedicated units." [45]

Without restructuring or retraining, would it be possible simply to make the military more receptive to such operations other than war? As the Rwanda example showed, the military-civilian clash in the United States is based on different organizational perspectives; perhaps a more supportive attitude on the part of the military would alleviate much of the problem. Certainly, many military personnel have had experience providing humanitarian aid (even former JCS Chairman Shalikashvili was once directly involved in Operation Provide Comfort).

A major organizational shift in attitude is not an easy task, however. One observer believes that it could require "draconian means" for the US military "to embrace nontraditional missions without inordinate anxiety." These include coercion and "wholesale reeducation of the officer corps." Coercion would involve assertive civilian control into the process of selecting senior leaders in the services, while reeducation would include revising the curricula at every level

of military education in order to inculcate officers with "a new vision of international politics, a revised understanding of the nature of war, and a new doctrine for the use of force." Such a program would meet great resistance (including potentially spawning a civil-military crisis), and it is argued that supplanting the "warrior mystique" with an attitude more pertinent to humanitarian and other peacetime missions could "lead to creation of an officer corps that loses its stomach and capacity for more orthodox military operations." [46] Given these considerations, a major change in the perspective of the Pentagon, as an institution, is not likely at this time.

Conclusion

The termination of Operation Support Hope by the end of September 1994 forced other agencies to take over all aspects of the relief operation within a few months of the massive refugee outflow. Perhaps the presence of US military support for a period beyond 30 September would have made for a better transition, but that subject is beyond the scope of this article. What is clear is that the extent of the military role in refugee relief was the subject of intense debate in the United States between the military and the civilian humanitarian agencies.

As a result of the experience with Rwandan refugee relief, various efforts are under way to improve civilian-military coordination and cooperation on humanitarian relief. These should proceed, since there undoubtedly will be humanitarian crises in the future that require military involvement. Additional contacts between military establishments and humanitarian actors can reduce some of the wide gap between organizational perspectives.

The new vision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the year 2010 uses the catch phrase "full spectrum dominance" to encompass the military's humanitarian role: "New concepts will enable us to dominate the full range of military operations from humanitarian assistance, through peace operations, up to and into the highest intensity conflict." [47]

The 1994 experience with Rwandan refugees, however, calls into question the prospects for effective implementation of this vision. The US military will need far more than "focused logistics" [48] to be fully successful when it is selectively engaged in providing humanitarian aid. It will require stronger commitment from its leadership, stronger support in Congress, and closer cooperation with civilian agencies on both the nature and termination of its humanitarian mission. Nevertheless, even under the best of circumstances, the concept of dominance in *Joint Vision 2010* will be difficult to achieve. The nature of the United States military, with its focus on warfighting, means that humanitarian assistance will always be viewed as a secondary concern and as a distraction from the real task at hand. This will inevitably result in clashes with the civilian humanitarian agencies whose primary mission is to protect and assist civilian victims and with whom the military must cooperate in any such action.

NOTES

1. US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010* (Washington: GPO, 1996), p. 25.
2. Goma Epidemiology Group, "Public Health Impact of Rwandan Refugee Crisis: What Happened in Goma, Zaire, in July 1994?" *Lancet*, 345 (1995), 339.
3. United Nations, High Commissioner for Refugees, "Urgent Requirements for Relief Operation for Rwandese Refugees in Eastern Zaire," memo for donor governments, Geneva. 20 July 1994, pp. 2-4.
4. William J. Clinton, "Remarks Announcing Assistance to Rwandan Refugees and an Exchange With Reporters," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1994*, Book I (Washington: GPO, 1995), pp. 1298-99.
5. Ibid.
6. US Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Hearing: Department of Defense Briefing on the Situation in Rwanda*, 103d Cong., 2d sess. (Washington: GPO, 1994), p. 24.
7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 28.
9. Senior US government official who wishes to remain anonymous, personal interview, 8 April 1996.
10. Bradley Graham, "Pentagon Officials Worry Aid Missions Will Sap Military Strength," *The Washington Post*, 29 July 1994, p. A29.
11. Ibid.
12. Heather M. Fleming, "U.S. Steps up Rwandan Relief as Lawmakers Assail Pace," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 30 July 1994, p. 2158.
13. Pat Towell, "Defense Bill Adds \$170 Million for Relief to Rwanda," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 30 July 1994, p. 2159.
14. Thomas W. Lippman, "U.S. Costs Mounting in Rwanda, Caribbean," *The Washington Post*, 27 August 1994, p. A10.
15. Joint Staff officer who wishes to remain anonymous, personal interview, 15 December 1995.
16. Richard McCall, Chief of Staff to the Administrator, US Agency for International Development, address, Rwanda Pledging Conference, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva, 2 August 1994, pp. 1-2.
17. Steve Vogel, "U.S. Won't Raise Troop Levels in Rwanda," *The Washington Post*, 13 August 1994, p. A12.
18. Gerald Walzer, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, letter to US Ambassador Spiegel, 11 August 1994.
19. Goma Epidemiology Group, "Public Health Impact . . . ," pp. 339-42.
20. Joint Staff officer interview, 15 December 1995.
21. Goma Epidemiology Group, "Public Health Impact . . . ," p. 340.
22. Nan Borton, Director, Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, personal interview, 29 March 1996.
23. Margaret McKelvey, Director, Office of Refugee Assistance for Africa, Southeast Asia and the American Republics, Department of State, telephone interview, 15 December 1995.
24. US Mission to International Organizations, Geneva, response to UNHCR, memo, 3 September 1994, pp. 1-2.
25. R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. Mission to Rwanda Criticized," *The Washington Post*, 5 September 1994, pp. A1, A16.
26. Ibid., p. A1.
27. US Department of Defense, International Security Affairs, "Response to Smith Article," internal memo, 6 September 1994, emphasis added.
28. US European Command, "After Action Report, Operation Support Hope," Stuttgart, 1995, p. 24.
29. McKelvey interview, 15 December 1995.
30. Senior State Department official who wishes to remain anonymous, personal interview, 29 March 1996.
31. US European Command, "After Action Report, Operation Support Hope," p. 26, emphasis in original.
32. William Perry, Secretary of Defense, remarks to Operation Support Hope After Action Review, US European

Command, Stuttgart, 3 October 1994.

33. Senior State Department official interview, 29 March 1996.

34. William J. Clinton, "Remarks by the President to Genocide Survivors, Assistance Workers, and US and Rwanda Government Officials," White House press release, Office of the Press Secretary (Kampala, Uganda), 25 March 1998, p. 2.

35. United Nations, Department of Humanitarian Affairs, "Note by DHA on the use of military and civil defence assets in UN humanitarian operations," memo to US Ambassador Spiegel, 24 November 1995.

36. Ibid.

37. United Nations, Department of Humanitarian Affairs, "The Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Support of Humanitarian Operations," Report of the Task Force, Geneva, 27 September 1995, p. 6.

38. H. Kirkby Ressler, Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, US Mission to International Organizations, Geneva, telephone interview, 3 April 1996.

39. United Nations, High Commissioner for Refugees, "Lessons Learnt from the Rwanda Emergency," document prepared for Executive Committee, Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, 34th meeting, 7 June 1995, p. 6.

40. Daniel L. Spiegel, US Ambassador to International Organizations, Geneva, "Military Support for Humanitarian Operations--Ideas Raised During the Discussion," memo to members of the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group, 21 November 1994.

41. US European Command, "After Action Report, Operation Support Hope," p. 33.

42. US Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, Joint Pub 3-07 (Washington: GPO, 1995), p. II-3.

43. Samuel P. Huntington, "New Contingencies, Old Roles," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn 1993, p. 42.

44. Ibid., p. 43.

45. US European Command, "After Action Report, Operation Support Hope," p. 2.

46. A. J. Bacevich, "Military Cultural and Institutional Change," in *Peace Operations--Developing an American Strategy*, ed. Antonia Handler Chayes and George T. Raach (Washington: National Defense Univ., 1995), pp. 112-13.

47. US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010*, p. 25.

48. Ibid., p. 24.

John E. Lange is the Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He is a Foreign Service Officer at the FSO-1 level. A graduate of the National War College, he holds a J.D. degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School. From 1991 to 1995, he was an Officer, then Counselor, for Refugee and Migration Affairs at the US Mission to the United Nations Offices in Geneva. As with all *Parameters* articles, the opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official views or policies of any agency of the US government.

Reviewed 26 May 1998. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil