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Understanding Military-NGO interaction in
conflict and disaster

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Abstract

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and militaries are thrust together in the complex spaces that follow conflict. While both entities may be crucial to ongoing stability and development, little is written specifically about their interactions in pursuit of these outcomes. This paper begins with a review of the diverse relevant literature, then moves on to discuss the need for improved understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced before outlining a study that has commenced to understand and improve interaction between NGOs and militaries. It is well known that militaries and NGOs have distinct and divergent cultures. However, their understanding of and attitudes towards each other are at least as important in defining their ability and willingness to interact. Better mutual understanding and respect allows for improvements in practice that may, in turn, help militaries and NGOs to meet their respective and interdependent goals: for militaries, establishment of stability and withdrawal; and for NGOs, improvement of living conditions of citizens at a grass-roots level.

Introduction

Over one quarter of Australia's total aid budget is specifically targeted toward 'fragility and conflict [which] are priority issues for Australia's aid program.'¹ This is hardly surprising given that 25% of the world's population live in states that are fragile, conflict affected or extremely violent, and all 'low-income fragile or conflict-affected' countries have proven unable to meet any Millennium Development Goal.² Facilitating stabilisation, recovery and reconstruction is central to the work and concerns of national development agencies, militaries, and many development NGOs. Both civil and military inputs are critical to successful development and stable peace.³ While the specific focus and the strategies applied differ significantly, development and defence organisations work in many of the same spaces and must therefore understand each other and the opportunities and risks involved in working together.

In the complex space following conflict, the minimum requirement of military and civilian organisations and agencies is to work in the same location, if not necessarily cooperatively or collaboratively. Even meeting this minimum baseline effectively 'requires an understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, lines of authority and mutual functions for coordination, as well as the 'no-go' areas for collaboration.'⁴ Where roles differ, they may complement each other, yet there exists a strong conviction among many NGOs that association with militaries will compromise their independence and thus their security,⁵ or that military activities are infringing on their 'sovereignty'.⁶

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- 1 Calculated on 2010-11 figures, the last financial year for which this breakdown is currently available. AusAID 2011. *Framework for Working in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States: Guidance for Staff*. Australian Agency for International Development, Canberra; Commonwealth of Australia, 2010. *Portfolio Budget Statements 2010-11*, Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra; DFAT 2013. *Fragility and Conflict*. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), Available aid.dfat.gov.au/aidissues/fragility-conflict/Pages/home.aspx [Accessed 15 April 2014].
 - 2 World Bank, 2011. *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*. The World Bank, Washington DC, pp.2,5.
 - 3 See for example AusAID 2006. *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability*. Australian Agency for International Development, Canberra p.10; North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2010. *Lisbon Summit Declaration*. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Lisbon, para.8; Rosén, F., 2010. 'Third Generation Civil-Military Relations: Moving Beyond the Security-Development Nexus'. *Prism* 2(1), 27-42., p. 27; Rietjens, S.J.H., 2008. 'Managing Civil-Military Cooperation: Experiences from the Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan'. *Armed Forces and Society* 34(2), 173-207, p.199.
 - 4 Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence, 2010. *Strengthening Australia's Conflict and Disaster Management Overseas*. Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence, Canberra, p.26.
 - 5 Rietjens, S.J.H., K. Verlaan, T.W. Brocades Zaalberg, and S.J. de Boer, 2009. 'Inter-Organisational Communication in Civil-Military Cooperation During Complex Emergencies: A Case Study in Afghanistan'. *Disasters* 33,(3), 412-35, p.412.
 - 6 Gordon, S., 2006. 'Exploring the Civil-Military Interface and Its Impact on European Strategic and Operational Personalities: 'Civilianisation' and Limiting Military Roles in Stabilisation Operations?' *European Security* 15(3), 339-61, 341.

Militaries may likewise feel that NGOs impede their work,⁷ or that they are ‘disorganised and wasteful’.⁸

Extensive literature exists on interaction between civilian and military organisations, often referred to by the military term CIMIC (civil-military cooperation), although the humanitarian community tends to use the term CMCoord (civil-military coordination), indicating that they do not want to be seen as actively cooperating with militaries. CIMIC features much more prominently in academic literature (CMCoord is rarely addressed), with ‘civil’ referring primarily to government⁹ and/or police,¹⁰ rather than non-government development and humanitarian actors, who are largely side-lined in both theory and policy/doctrine.¹¹ Even when ‘civil’ refers to government departments and agencies, the challenges of civil-military interaction are significant: although directed by the same government, toward the same broad policy goal, these actors can have different objectives, priorities and strategies, as will be drawn out in the following sections.

This paper addresses existing knowledge about interactions, attitudes and beliefs that characterise what might be called the defence-development interface and the divergent approaches of militaries and NGOs to interacting in increasingly complex security and development environments. The key issues at play in this interaction are: the changing development and security environments; the roles of militaries and NGOs in these changing contexts; the challenges of working in the same space and the reluctant interdependence that arises; the differing approaches of militaries and NGOs to the needs and opportunities of interaction; and the role of trust and mutual understanding in that interaction. These will be addressed in turn below, followed by a discussion of a potential pathway to improving the civil-military interface, as set out in research designed to improve understanding of and responses to these issues

7 See Duffey, T., 2000. ‘Cultural Issues in Contemporary Peacekeeping’. *International Peacekeeping*, 7(1), 142-68, p.155.

8 Scheltinga, T.A.M., S.J.H. Rietjens, S.J. De Boer, and C.P.M. Wilderom, 2005. ‘Cultural Conflict within Civil-Military Cooperation: A Case Study in Bosnia’. *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement* 13(1), 54-69, p.58.

9 For example Bruneau, T.C, and F.C. Matei, 2008. ‘Towards a New Conceptualisation of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations’. *Democratization* 15(5), 909-29.

10 For example Coticchia, F., and G. Giacomello, 2009. ‘Helping Hands: Civil-Military Cooperation and Italy’s Military Operation Abroad’. *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 20(3), 592-610.

11 Abiew, Frances Kofi, 2003. ‘NGO-Military Relations in Peace Operations’. In *Mitigating Conflict: The Role of NGOs*, eds H.F. Carey and O.P. Richmond. Frank Cass, London and Portland, 24-39 (primarily from an NGO perspective); Rietjens et al., op cit; and Kremers, J., B. Rietjens, H. Voordijk, and S.J. der Boer, 2010. ‘Construction Contracting and Civil-Military Interaction’. *Construction Management and Economics* 28(8), 871-83 (primarily from a military perspective).

Development in conflict-affected environments

In a shift known as the securitisation of development, conflict is now recognised as a critical issue in international development, with clear economic and social impacts. Reflecting on the emerging policy discourse in the late 1990s, Duffield noted an ideological shift in which security and development came to be viewed as mutually reinforcing, with ‘Underdevelopment [seen as] dangerous since it can lead to violence; at the same time, conflict entrenches and deepens that danger. Societies are left not only worse off, but even more prone to outbreaks of instability’.¹² The World Bank notes that a civil war will wipe out ‘more than thirty years of GDP growth’ for a country, while human development indicators including the MDGs appear increasingly impossible to attain for fragile and conflict-affected low-income countries.¹³ Added to this, violence is most likely to occur in countries that have previously experienced civil war, with half of these countries unable to survive a decade without further conflict, caught instead in a cycle of violence and poor development.¹⁴

Barakat reflects that the development challenges of post-conflict environments mirror those of more peaceful situations, but with many of the ‘normal’ development concerns intensified – including the need to build trust, to rebuild infrastructure, to meet basic needs, and to bridge divisions. Of particular concern is the reality that ‘transitions following armed conflict bring with them unrealistically high expectations amongst the local population which contrast with the state’s low capacity to deliver’.¹⁵ These expectations are often intensified when the conflict has been concerned with independence or recognition of a specific group, where the expectation is that with the struggle concluded, people can now get on with the prosperous lives they dreamed for themselves as the end point of the conflict. It is therefore especially important that international assistance is consistent and predictable in order to achieve rapid and demonstrable success, and facilitate trust and cooperation in local communities, yet it is more often the case that assistance is unpredictable and under constant need of justification and renewal.

Assistance must also be grounded in the fundamental development principle that recognition of the contributions, expectations and priorities of the affected communities must underpin any assistance. While external actors may see peace-building and reconstruction as ‘a novel undertaking that only begins when violent conflict has come to an end’,¹⁶ those directly affected by conflict have often commenced reconstruction while the conflict was under way. Effective peace-building and development must recognise and be based on these activities, although this becomes particularly

12 Duffield, M., 2001. *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. Zed, London, p. 38.

13 World Bank, ‘World Development Report 2011’, p.5.

14 Collier, P., 2007. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.27.

15 Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, p.27.

16 Barakat, S., 2010. ‘Preface’. In *After the Conflict: Reconstruction and Development in the Aftermath of War*, ed S. Barakat. I.B. Taurus, London and New York, 1-5, p.1.

challenging when the field is flooded with diverse external actors including government agencies, intergovernmental organisations, militaries, security actors including police, and NGOs.

The World Bank's World Development Report 2011 (subtitled 'Conflict, security and development') strongly concludes that the 'key elements of protection to achieve human security' are 'citizen security, justice and jobs',¹⁷ demonstrating a conviction that security must play a strong role in development processes, whilst also being reliant on effective economic and social development. This emerging understanding of the interdependence of development and security (and the associated donor support) means aid agencies and NGOs are working in areas of conflict in higher numbers than ever before, at rapidly increasing rates¹⁸ - indeed in 2009-2010, 130 countries received international assistance in response to disaster or conflict, with NGOs participating in delivering much of that assistance.¹⁹ At the same time, military missions are being redefined, with a focus on military contributions to humanitarian responses, saving lives and rebuilding communities.

These shifts mean that key actors regularly find themselves out of their traditional zones - militaries as peacekeepers, transitional police, and a deterring presence as stability increases; NGOs operating in increasingly dangerous environments and under threat of violence and theft, while attempting to maintain independence. Aid workers and militaries therefore find themselves working beside each other in the same spaces, despite never having been natural allies.

It is important to note here that the term 'humanitarian' may be used by militaries and NGOs with important differences in meaning. While militaries may use the term to mean 'Support provided to host governments, humanitarian and development agencies by a deployed force', the aid community uses it to describe a range of action in the face of humanitarian crises, whose primary objective 'is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity'.²⁰ Subtle though this distinction may be, the following sections will show that recognising these nuances is important to understanding the interaction between NGOs and militaries.

17 World Bank, 'World Development Report 2011', p.11.

18 Anderson, M.B., 1999. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War*. Lynne Rienner, Boulder and London, p.64.

19 Humanitarian Outcomes, 2011. *Aid Worker Security Report 2011: Spotlight on Security for National Aid Workers - Issues and Perspectives*. Humanitarian Outcomes, London & New York, p.2.

20 Australian Civil-Military Centre and Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 2012. *Same Space, Different Mandates*. ACMC, Canberra, p.54.

The evolving role of international militaries

Militaries have long been key actors in stabilisation, peace and reconstruction operations. In the modern state system, militaries have a range of distinct and clearly defined characteristics: they come under the civilian control of government, have an external security focus (with the internal/domestic focus the primary realm of police), and may use maximum (lethal) force to achieve their mission, within the constraints of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, which outline limitations on the conduct of armed conflict. At their best, national militaries are highly disciplined organisations with strong hierarchical authority structures and clearly specified procedures and regulations for dealing with a range of situations.²¹ In setting military goals, governments are influenced by concerns ranging from geopolitical factors to reluctance to sustain casualties, and such considerations determine whether intervention will be approved, and whether such intervention will focus on ending conflict or will also include attempts to resolve the underlying reasons for the conflict.²²

The forms of conflict that may involve militaries evolve with national concerns and international relations. The current era is characterised by a decline in inter-state conflicts, a sharp rise in intra-state conflict, and a continuation of the trend towards high numbers of civilian casualties. As a result of these factors, the orientation of national militaries has shifted to include more peacekeeping missions and international interventions under the auspices of intergovernmental organisations such as the UN.

Militaries therefore participate increasingly in what are known as ‘complex’ operations, with designations of which humanitarian, contingency, emergency, and so on. In these contexts, complexity is understood as combining a number of factors demanding a multi-faceted response, such as disaster or humanitarian crisis together with conflict or state incapacity.²³ In simple terms, it is a combination of significant security needs and significant human needs necessitating a response from more than one sector. The nature of these missions means that they often take place under the auspices of a non-military entity such as the United Nations,

21 Scheltinga et al., ‘Cultural Conflict within Civil-Military Cooperation’, p.57.

22 Byman, D., 2001 ‘Uncertain Partners: NGOs and the Military’. *Survival* 43(2), 97-114, p.100.

23 Definitions of complex emergency range greatly. While the IASC definition has been broadly cited (‘a humanitarian crisis in a country, region, or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme’), a range of other definitions are adopted by organisations and researchers, as for example WHO (‘situations of disrupted livelihoods and threats to life produced by warfare, civil disturbance and large-scale movements of people, in which any emergency response has to be conducted in a difficult political and security environment’) and Mark Duffield referencing the UN (‘a complex emergency is a major humanitarian crisis of a multi-causal nature that requires a system-wide response’). United Nations and Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2008. *Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, New York, p.8; Wisner, B., and J. Adams (Eds), 2002. *Environmental Health in Emergencies and Disasters: A practical guide*. World Health Organisation, Geneva, p.13; Duffield, M., 1994. ‘Complex Emergencies and the Crisis of Developmentalism’, *IDS Bulletin* 25.4, p.3

requiring careful and effective coordination between military and non-military actors. According to Rosen, this has posed fundamental challenges to military organisations, by the very nature of their deployment ‘under the umbrella of ‘some weak and confused international organisation upholding abstract humanitarian values’ rather than ... in unambiguous missions to protect the motherland in heroic and spectacular battles’.²⁴

Key documents such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Civil-Military Guidelines and References for Complex Emergencies and the Oslo Guidelines (specific to disasters) make it clear that even in complex environments, the roles of military and civilian organisations remain distinct, and that military resources should be used in support of civilian operations (government or non-government) only when no civilian alternative is available.²⁵ This position is consistent with the military perspective that it is generally only ‘when no civilian agency can do the job well enough or well enough under the circumstances’ that military action is justified beyond the core mission.²⁶ A key example of such circumstances is that a military may be given tasks more appropriate to national (local) police very early in a mission, where national police are weak or absent and militaries are the only international actors present and able to fulfil these tasks, prior to the arrival of other actors such as international police.²⁷

When a military is deployed in support of humanitarian action, the nature of its actions may change, but the clear, pre-defined restrictions on mission activities remain. For example, Byman et al note that in complex contingency operations, the role of the U.S. military is clearly defined as falling into one or more of five categories: ‘

- > providing humanitarian assistance;
- > protecting humanitarian assistance;
- > assisting refugees and displaced persons;
- > enforcing a peace agreement; and
- > restoring order.

Together these guidelines show a clear delineation of appropriate military engagement beyond traditional war-fighting activities.

24 Rosén, F., 2010. ‘Third Generation Civil-Military Relations’, p.30.

25 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2006. ‘Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief.’ Available ochaonline.org. accessed September 30 2012, §32.ii; UN and IASC, *Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies*, p.12.

26 Byman, ‘Uncertain Partners’, p.27.

27 Byman, ‘Uncertain Partners’, p.39.; Eaton, D., 2009. ‘The Role of the Military Police in Enhancing ADF-AFP Interoperability on Peace and Stability Operations’. *Australian Army Journal* 6(1), 1-19, p. 14.

NGOs in complex environments

NGOs are key among the plethora of actors working in complex environments to improve outcomes for local people. While the term NGO appears to encompass an almost infinite range of possibilities, it is generally accepted as describing a specific group with identifiable aims and practices. NGOs are not-for-profit, voluntary organisations with a focus on one or more particular areas of human need. They may be local, national or international, and functions include (but are not limited to) advocacy, capacity building, humanitarian action and promoting human rights. Their role is recognised by the UN, with over 3,500 attaining consultative status, and many more recognised by their national governments through funding arrangements.

The proportion of official overseas development assistance (ODA) channelled through NGOs is significantly smaller than that delivered through bilateral and multilateral paths, but NGOs draw the majority of their funding from public donations – to the point of exceeding ODA of every member of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee except the USA.²⁸ Nonetheless, government development agencies remain committed to making ‘continued and increased use of the non-government community as a delivery mechanism for ... aid’.²⁹ While NGOs maintain strong claims to independence, those in receipt of government funds are subject to a range of conditions including accountability, non-discrimination, and specific concerns such as gender equitable service provision, which enforce a level of consistency among those organisations receiving government funding.

The important place of NGOs in aid delivery rests on a range of factors, including their ability to reach the ‘grass-roots’ in a manner governments and militaries can rarely achieve, and this can make them better able to discern and respond appropriately to local goals and needs.³⁰ According to Weiss, NGOs ‘are normally reputed to be more non-bureaucratic, flexible, and creative than their governmental or intergovernmental counterparts; and they are certainly less constrained by legal formalities and diplomatic niceties’.³¹

Diversity is often viewed as a great strength of the NGO sector because it adds breadth to their work and appeal.³² Importantly, NGOs are not centrally organised or regulated, although accreditation by national development agencies comes with concomitant accountability and compliance requirements, and they may be voluntary members of NGO umbrella organisations such as the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). In spite of this, they are often connected with each other in loose ways, and can be understood to be embedded in an ‘international network of

28 Roodman, D. and S. Standley, 2006. *Tax Policies to Promote Private Charitable Giving in DAC Countries*. Centre for Global Development, Working Paper 82. Washington, D.C.

29 AusAID, *Australian Aid*, 64.

30 Hailey, J., 2000. ‘Indicators of Identity: NGOs and the Strategic Imperative of Assessing Core Values’. *Development and Practice* 10(3&4), 402-07, p. 9; Hudock, A.C., 1999. *NGOs and Civil Society*. Polity, Cambridge, p.9

31 Weiss, T.G. *Military-Civilian Interactions: Intervening in Humanitarian Crises*. Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, p.11.

32 Rugendyke, B.A., 1992. PhD Thesis. *Compassion and Compromise: The Policy and Practice of Australian Non-Government Development Aid Agencies*. University of New England, Armidale, p.35.

relationships that go up to make what might be called an aid chain - networks linked to international aid and cooperation, and channelling funds and offering resources and information for the purpose of fostering social change'.³³

This lack of central coordination and control can create problems. In particular, there is the danger of duplication of effort (and of missing equally needy groups or issues), competition for funding, and disagreement on valued outcomes. At the same time, independence can enable NGOs to be creative, work with extremely marginalised groups and challenge oppressive practices. National and regional umbrella organisations may exist, but membership is voluntary and they tend to draw together organisations with similar philosophies. The exception to this apparent anarchy within the NGO sector can be seen in the context of designated humanitarian crises, where coordination and coherence between NGOs is improving, as evidenced by two key features of the contemporary humanitarian environment.

The first is the uptake and increasing effectiveness of the 'cluster system' under the United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), which has delineated eleven sectors of humanitarian action with designated lead agencies for each.³⁴ As well as being 'a first point of call and a provider of last resort' for the UN's Humanitarian Coordinator (IASC 2006 10), cluster leads are responsible for operational support (including coordination), building response capacity, and setting standards and policy. This level of coordination is exceptional in the non-government sector, and is evolving in response to practice and critique. Key practical frustrations arising from the cluster system are that cluster meetings can involve so many organisations that they become unwieldy, and that clusters have no power over organisations that choose not to participate or to follow agreed strategies.

The second key feature of contemporary humanitarianism is the *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, better known as the Sphere Handbook, now in its third edition.³⁵ Its broadly accepted designation of principles and standards for humanitarian action represents unprecedented collaboration in this sector to develop, circulate and comply with agreed standards. This contrasts with historical resistance by NGOs to be bound by a commitment to shared values and practices. The cluster system and Sphere Handbook draw together NGOs and other agencies and organisations working in humanitarian environments, with a level of agreement and committed collaboration that cannot be found in other areas of NGOs' development practice.

33 Bebbington, A., 2004. 'NGOs and Uneven Development: Geographies of Development Intervention'. *Progress in Human Geography* 28(6 (2004), 725-45, p.729.

34 These are: logistics; nutrition; emergency shelter; camp management and coordination; health protection; food security; emergency telecommunication; early recovery; education; and water, sanitation and hygiene. Cluster leads are UN agencies with the exception of three co-leads: the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) on emergency shelter, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for camp management and coordination, and Save the Children for education.

35 Sphere Project, 2011. *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*. Practical Action Publishing, Rugby.

Challenges of working in the same space

As has been noted above, the changing security and development environment increasingly draws militaries and NGOs into the same spaces. Key contributing factors include the longevity of instability in developing countries,³⁶ the stark human need that accompanies and follows civil conflict, and the heightened sense of humanitarian duty emerging in the early 1990s (as opposed to the previous notion of a right to provide humanitarian assistance). These circumstances give rise to the notions of the humanitarian imperative – that the international community is obliged to provide assistance to those in need, in contrast with previous notions that were more deferential to principles of sovereignty and non-intervention. While critiques of this reconception of international relationships have branded it ‘strangely imperious’ and ‘reckless and lacking in operational nuance’,³⁷ the notion has nonetheless gained traction.

A result of this equation of humanitarian assistance with moral duty is that by the end of the Twentieth Century, ‘more aid workers [were] found in almost all current conflict settings than were present even a decade’ before.³⁸ An increase in danger to civilian aid workers goes hand in hand with such swelling numbers, exacerbated by ‘a break-down in both regulated warfare, fought according to international rules, and acceptance of and adherence to international humanitarian principles’.³⁹ In 2008, attacks on aid workers around the world reached a peak of 165 attacks, with analysis revealing that attacks with ‘political motivations have increased relative to incidents that were purely economically motivated, or in which the victim’s role as an aid worker was incidental to the violence’.⁴⁰ With three quarters of these attacks taking place in just six countries – Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Chad, Iraq and Pakistan – the political motivation was judged to be less an association between aid workers/agencies with militaries and political agendas, and more a perception that aid workers are agents of a Western agenda.⁴¹ The number of attacks has decreased since 2008, largely due to a reduction in aid worker numbers in two of the three most dangerous settings for aid workers (south central Somalia and Darfur, Sudan).⁴²

36 Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, p.32.

37 Slim, H., 2002. ‘Claiming a Humanitarian Imperative: NGOs and the Cultivation of Humanitarian Duty’, Paper Presented at the Seventh Annual Conference of Webster University on Humanitarian Values for the Twenty-First Century. Geneva 2002, p.3.

38 Anderson, *Do No Harm*, p.64.

39 Anderson, *Do No Harm*, p.64.

40 Stoddard, A., A. Harmer, and V. DiDomenico, 2009. *Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: 2009 Update Trends in Violence against Aid Workers and the Operational Response*. Overseas Development Institute, London, p.5.

41 Stoddart et. al., *Providing Aid in Insecure Environments*, p.6. By 2011 Chad had fallen out of this position and 67% of attacks took place in the remaining five countries listed – Humanitarian Outcomes, *Aid Worker Security Report 2011*, p.3.

42 Humanitarian Outcomes, *Aid Worker Security Report 2011*.

In her key text on aid in conflict environments, Anderson notes that aid provided in a conflict setting ‘can reinforce, exacerbate, and prolong the conflict; [or] help to reduce tensions and strengthen people’s capacities to disengage from fighting and find peaceful options for solving conflict’.⁴³ Whether positive or negative, aid is inescapably part of the conflict environment, and in this difficult context, aid workers continue to put themselves at risk by working in unstable environments because such danger does not diminish their commitment to the imperative to respond to humanitarian needs. A dynamic tension therefore arises for NGOs: they are increasingly insecure and in need of strategies to protect their staff, resources and projects; yet at the same time they must protect and advertise their independence in the conflict. As a result they could be seen as needing the protection that could be provided by militaries, but also needing protection from any perceived association with militaries. In responding to this, some NGOs may inadvertently contribute to the instability of the broader environment by seeking protection through alternative security organisations (specifically private military companies or PMCs).⁴⁴

Military approaches are also undergoing transformation in complex humanitarian environments. As Egnel notes, the traditional perception of sequenced and separate roles for military and humanitarian actors (i.e. the military secures peace then withdraws, replaced by humanitarian actors including NGOs) has been replaced with ‘a very different picture of overlapping tasks and interdependence’.⁴⁵ This is partly due to the recognition that ‘post-conflict’ is not an accurate descriptor of the rough and uneven period of transition from outright conflict to relatively stable peace. It is also due to the increasing adoption of so-called ‘hearts and minds’ strategies for dealing with contemporary conflicts and insurgencies. British General Sir Gerald Templer is credited with coining this phrase in 1952, based on his conviction that ‘The shooting side of this business is only 25 per cent of the trouble and the other 75 lies in getting the people of this country [Malaya] behind us’.⁴⁶

In practice, hearts and minds strategies rest on the identification of community grievances that can be addressed to reduce unrest and support for insurgents or ‘the enemy’ – such as provision of infrastructure such as roads and schools. The use of soldiers for these kinds of activities has been shown to be effective in turning ‘a hostile or, at best, sullen population into a cooperative one’, and drawing out ‘intelligence on the actions and whereabouts of insurgents, which in turn [has] led to the focused and effective use of force against them’.⁴⁷ In other words, activities traditionally used by humanitarian and development actors to meet basic human needs have been adopted by militaries as strategies for achieving their ends more efficiently and effectively.

43 Anderson, *Do No Harm*, p.64.

44 Byman, ‘Uncertain Partners’, p.30

45 Egnel, R., 2008. ‘Between Reluctance and Necessity: The Utility of Military Force in Humanitarian and Development Operations’. *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19(3), 397-422, p. 398.

46 Brocades Zaalberg, T.W., 2006. ‘Countering Insurgent-Terrorism: Why NATO Chose the Wrong Historical Foundation for CIMIC’. *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17(4), 399-420, p.411.

47 Mockaitis, T.R. ‘Reluctant Partners: Civil–Military Cooperation in Kosovo’. *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 15,(2), 38-69, p.58.

This movement towards military engagement in development tasks is perhaps epitomised in what Barakat calls ‘The pre-war reconstruction of post-war Iraq’,⁴⁸ in which planning, resourcing and awarding of contracts for reconstruction efforts that would follow the US-led war in Iraq took place long before sufficient stability had been achieved to commence reconstruction. This meant it necessarily took place with neither participation by local stakeholders nor an adequate assessment of the post-war circumstances.⁴⁹ To those outside the NGO sector, these changes may appear to be positive moves in support of development goals and community sustainability. For NGOs, however, problems arise in both the process and the aims of such actions. Core development priorities were overlooked, such as genuine community participation, inclusion of minorities and transformation of inequitable power structures. The development sector has a broad and well developed body of literature and wealth of experience concerning the most effective and appropriate ways of delivering assistance but these are rarely familiar to military professionals, however knowledgeable they may be in other areas. NGOs are also concerned that this type of military engagement can blur the delineation between the militaries and development organisations, potentially increasing the danger of politically motivated attacks on them.

These challenges are exacerbated for NGOs by the perception that militaries are now ‘in direct competition’⁵⁰ for the delivery of programs that were previously firmly in the development realm, impacting national aid budgets. One example of non-traditional aid spending is the \$AU217.17 million Australia’s aid program allocates to international programs delivered by Australian Federal Police (approx 4.5% of the overall aid budget).⁵¹ As well as concern for the security of their own funding, NGOs have a significant interest in the mode of delivery of humanitarian projects: in the case of militaries there is seen to be ‘a greater tendency to focus on military assets rather than the needs of the intended beneficiaries, producing ill-matched outcomes’,⁵² such that they may view military humanitarian spending as a misallocation of funding.

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- 48 Barakat, S., 2010. ‘Post-War Reconstruction and Development - Coming of Age.’ In *After the Conflict: Reconstruction and Development in the Aftermath of War*, ed S. Barakat. I.B. Taurus, London and New York, 7-31, p.29.
- 49 Barakat, ‘Post-War Reconstruction and Development’, p.29.
- 50 Hall, Rosalie Arcala. ‘Civil-Military Cooperation in International Disaster Response: The Japanese Self-Defense Forces’ Deployment in Aceh, Indonesia’. *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 20(4), 383-400, p.385.
- 51 See Harris, V. and A. Goldsmith, 2012. ‘Police in the Development Space: Australia’s International Police Capacity Builders’. *Third World Quarterly* 33(6), 1019-36.
- 52 Hall, ‘Civil-Military Cooperation in International Disaster Response’, p. 385; Rietjens et al., ‘Inter-Organisational Communication’, p.420.

These concerns are just part of a broader field of challenges that have been identified with regard to the coexistence of militaries and NGOs in post-conflict environments, among them:

- > financial constraints and lack of resources;
- > the abandonment of the fundamental principles of peaceful third party intervention (that is, consent, impartiality, and the non-use of force);
- > occasional violation of human rights;
- > ambiguous mandates;
- > inadequate logistical planning;
- > command, control and communications difficulties;
- > and the lack of coordination between the military and civilian components.⁵³

53 Duffey, 'Cultural Issues in Contemporary Peacekeeping', p. 143.

A Reluctant Interdependence

With these conflicting perspectives and priorities comes the reality that militaries and NGOs have a reluctant and unequal dependency on one another following conflicts. Militaries need NGOs (and aid more broadly) for the stabilising effect of development, legitimacy for military actions, access to particular sources, information that NGOs hold due to their proximity to grass-roots communities,⁵⁴ and because ‘while military forces may have resources and manpower [sic], which are very valuable in a disaster, it is civilians that are the relief experts ... NGOs can be of great assistance in letting military leaders and planners know how to best utilise their assets’.⁵⁵

Conversely, militaries may be able to provide resources and personnel that would otherwise elude NGOs and their relatively low budgets. A key example of this is in the USA’s Denton Program, under which the Department of Defense is able ‘to provide space-available transportation of humanitarian cargo at little or no cost’,⁵⁶ which can have a significant financial and logistical impact. Militaries can also provide important information to NGOs, particularly regarding security, although a persistent complaint is that militaries consistently give high security ratings to so much information that there is little they are willing to share (even information they originally received from NGOs). Finally, NGOs may need stability to ensure development achievements can be sustained, and international militaries can make a critical contribution here. The efficacy of militaries in protecting aid workers and projects is far from straightforward, however a strong case can be made for their contribution in creating a ‘humanitarian space’ in which there is sufficient security for humanitarian action to take place.⁵⁷ It has also been strongly argued that military actions can compromise this space, further endangering humanitarian workers,⁵⁸ demonstrating the contradictions persistently thrown up by NGO-military interaction.

In the end, however, whether or not NGOs and militaries want to work together is irrelevant: at the very least they must communicate effectively if they want to improve conditions for the affected population because working at odds can be damaging. Furthermore, their funding comes from sources that expect them to be able to work together, however counterintuitive this may be to NGOs and militaries themselves. As Duffield notes, the contemporary conflation of security and development means that ‘achieving one is now regarded as essential for securing the other’.⁵⁹

54 Rietjens et al., ‘Inter-Organisational Communication’.

55 Thompson, W.C., 2010. ‘Success in Kashmir: A Positive Trend in Civil–Military Integration During Humanitarian Assistance Operations’. *Disasters* 34(1), 1-15, p.6.

56 Byman, ‘Uncertain Partners’, p.10.

57 Rollins, JW. ‘Civil-Military Cooperation (Cimic) in Crisis Response Operations: The Implications for Nato.’ *International Peacekeeping* 8, no. 1 (2001): 122-29, p.128.

58 Gordon, ‘Exploring the Civil-Military Interface’, p. 340.

59 Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars*, p.16.

Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)

Military doctrine is very clear about both the need for cooperation with civilian agencies and the forms this can and should take. Definitions of CIMIC are broadly consistent internationally, with NATO, the EU and Australia sharing the wording ‘coordination and cooperation, in support of the mission’ between the respective commander and civilian populations, governments and agencies.⁶⁰ Australian Defence Force (ADF) doctrine manual on civil-military relations opens with the statement that civil-military operations provide ‘a framework enabling military operations to make a coherent contribution to national and international objectives’.⁶¹ The manual expands on how this contribution can be realised, always maintaining a clear priority on mission objectives, as set by the Australian government. While ‘all force elements should be capable of conducting CIMIC’ (with implementation often required of regular troops) any action must be under the clear directive of the mission commander, in order to prevent potential ‘conflict with the broader objectives, and with the civil and military end-states that have been established during the inter-agency planning process’.⁶² CIMIC is thus understood as critical to mission objectives, requiring significant input, careful planning and strict control, and always a means to the identified mission ends.

In recent decades there has been a critical shift in international understanding of how CIMIC can support mission objectives, such that CIMIC activities are increasingly viewed as ‘force-multipliers’⁶³ and critical tools for achieving military goals. So-called ‘hearts and minds’ projects have rapidly gained favour as a military strategy, post-conflict reconstruction has gained prominence in planning, and militaries have joined the ranks of those delivering governments’ international development funding. Rosen goes as far as to argue that the current security environment has reduced any distinction between civil and military roles to semantics, acknowledging the fundamental challenge humanitarian organisations would make to this claim by pointing to militaries’ extreme simplicity in following a single goal, such that ‘Even military-driven ‘nonmilitary’ activities such as children’s schools and health care’ have a clear aim of ‘deliver[ing] adequate coercive force at the right place at the right time’.⁶⁴ For development and humanitarian organisations, the use of development to achieve military goals is a fundamental corruption of development.

60 Australian Defence Force (ADF), *ADDP 3.11*, §1.4; EU, *Civil-Military Co-Operation (CIMIC) Concept for EU-Led Crisis Management Operations*; NATO, *NATO Military Policy on Civil-Military Co-Operation (CIMIC)*.

61 Australian Defence Force (ADF), 2009. *ADDP 3.11: Civil-Military Operations*. Australian Defence Force, Canberra, §1-1. Doctrine is, in effect, the written policy and practice of a military organisation regarding a particular issue.

62 ADF *ADDP 3.11*, §4.14.

63 Thompson, ‘Success in Kashmir’, p.6.

64 Thompson, ‘Success in Kashmir’, pp.39, 38

Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord)

The purpose of CIMIC is to harness both civilian and military energies to meet the stated goals of a specific military mission. Humanitarian and NGO actors use the term civil-military coordination (CMCoord), indicating that they recognise a potential need to coordinate but do not necessarily welcome the deeper engagement implied in the term cooperation – and particularly not in the interests of achieving a military mandate. UNOCHA's widely cited definition of CMCoord is 'the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals'.⁶⁵ In practice, this 'dialogue and interaction' may be located along a spectrum spanning coexistence, coordination and cooperation – to which may be added the option of curtailing presence, or suspending operations.⁶⁶

Given that NGOs are by their nature disparate and loosely networked,⁶⁷ it can be very difficult to establish effective communication among them, let alone collaboration, even in stable environments. Their diversity means that they do not (and could not) have the equivalent of government policy or military doctrine on CIMIC, or even a central management body, although they may participate voluntarily in a coordinating network. NGOs tend to guard their independence fiercely, at times prioritising it over collaboration.⁶⁸

Unlike militaries, NGOs are unlikely to see CMCoord as key to achieving their goals, but rather acknowledge that growing insecurity on the ground, in addition to policy developments in 'winning hearts and minds' campaigns and aid effectiveness, are contributing to an increasingly pressing need for more appropriate NGO policies and operational guidance on how to interact with armed groups at both field and headquarter levels.⁶⁹

65 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012. 'UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord)'. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Available afg.humanitarianresponse.info/Coordination/CMCoord [accessed 23 October 2012].

66 World Vision International, 2009. *Civil-Military and Police Engagement: Partnership Policy*. Available adpc.net/cso/Downloads/CD/Documents/World_VisionInternational_CivMil_Policy.pdf, [Accessed September 30 2012], p.1.

67 See for example Rollins 'Civil-Military Cooperation', p.129; Boli, J., and G.M. Thomas, 1999. In *Constructing World Culture: International NonGovernmental Organisations since 1875*, ed J. Boli and G.M. Thomas. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

68 See for example Lipner, M., and L. Henley. *Working Better Together: An NGO Perspective on Improving Australia's Coordination in Disaster Response*. Australian Civil-Military Centre and Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Canberra; Boli, J., 1999. 'Conclusion: World Authority Structures and Legitimations'. In *Constructing World Culture: International NonGovernmental Organisations since 1875*, ed J. Boli and G.M. Thomas. Stanford University Press, Stanford, 267-300.

69 Thompson, E., 2008. *Principled Pragmatism: NGO Engagement with Armed Actors*. World Vision International, Humanitarian Emergency Affairs, Monrovia, p.6.

In other words, NGOs may see themselves forced to interact with militaries given their commitment to working with extremely vulnerable people, because this necessarily draws them into unstable environments where militaries are more likely to be present.

In an attempt to give aid workers a practical tool for approaching civil-military interaction, and based on an extensive study of the impact on their operations of contemporary military and policing strategies in complex environments, World Vision International has proposed a model it calls HISS-CAM. This name is an acronym, the first component of which gives four criteria against which to measure interaction: the Humanitarian imperative; Impartiality and independence; Security and protection; and Sustainability. The second component sets out three criteria to be satisfied within each of those steps: Compelling aim; Appropriate, adapted, adequately informed; and Minimal negative impact.⁷⁰ This framework gives those using the approach a clearly defined set of criteria on which they can base informed and context-sensitive decisions about whether and how to engage with militaries.

It is, however, impossible simply to define a unified 'NGO position', given the diversity and independence of NGOs. Rana and Reber studied a range of NGOs and identified three main attitudes to militaries, and interaction with them: refuseniks (absolutely against interaction with militaries, and military humanitarian action); principled pragmatists (recognising the pragmatic need to engage whilst affirming humanitarian principles); and 'neither for, nor against', which was identified as the most common position.⁷¹ The prevalence of this last position of having no firm position on interactions with militaries creates a significant problem, in that it is thus impossible to have clear policy or practice guidelines for staff – and even harder to communicate a position to militaries that may be interested in improving engagement. Indeed, even principled pragmatists were often found to be lacking in clarity and consistency on their positions.⁷² Unfortunately for militaries seeking engagement, few NGOs have a clearly articulated, comprehensive response – and there is little knowledge of how well staff are adopting the better defined approaches that exist.

70 Thompson *Principled Pragmatism*, pp.30-1.

71 Rana, R., and F. Reber, 2007. 'Civmil Relations.' NGO VOICE Seminar on Civil-Military Relations. Brussels, 3-4 December, p.7.

72 Rana and Reber 'CivMil Relations', p.7.

Questions of trust and understanding

With scarce literature on NGO-military interaction, what does exist is characterised by discussion of the impediments posed by the vastly differing cultures of the two groups. Military personnel tend to be highly trained, oriented towards clearly stated mission objectives (which may include escalation to lethal force), and familiar with hierarchical, highly ordered and planning-oriented organisational structures. In contrast, NGO staff and volunteers are used to significant autonomy, objectives that are long-term and often broad, consensus model decision-making, and a strong focus on needs of communities and individuals, particularly the most vulnerable and/or marginalised. With such different orientations – and the broad diversity within each group– it is hardly surprising that the encounter is often challenging on an individual-to-individual level as well as an inter-organisational level.

Duffey states that NGOs and militaries experience a mutual lack of understanding and familiarity that leads to a range of difficulties, predicated primarily on ‘ill-informed stereotypes (for example, the military is often characterised as an insensitive, ill-informed, controlling, and inflexible war-machine, while NGO personnel are seen as sandal-wearing, two-faced, undisciplined and uncoordinated liberals)’.⁷³ Consistent with this, a 1995 study found that the military was frustrated by what they viewed as disorganization and waste growing out of a tendency not to conduct detailed planning. Individually, they saw relief workers as young, liberal, anti-military, academic, self-righteous, incompetent, expatriate cowboys who came to an area for a short time to ‘do good’ without fully considering the consequences ... [while] many relief workers saw military officers as inflexible, conservative and bureaucratic. They found them insensitive to Somali suffering and viewed their concern over ‘mission creep’ as obsessive, an excuse to do the minimum and go home.⁷⁴

This is not the only picture, however: a contrasting study a decade later found that cultural differences were reported to be ‘only a small problem in the information sharing in Afghanistan, and one that was surmountable’.⁷⁵ This demonstrates that while such differences in organisational culture may exist, claims that they constitute an insuperable barrier must be treated with caution.

Similarly, it may be easy to assume that antipathy between NGOs and militaries extends to an official level, yet there is little evidence that this is the case. For example, ADF doctrine states that NGOs are a key component of CIMIC, describing them as numerous, ‘independent’, ‘sophisticated’, ‘often highly professional in their field, well motivated, and prepared to take physical risks in poor conditions.’⁷⁶ While it is difficult to find similarly constructive words about militaries in NGO and humanitarian publications, they do speak of the necessity of being able to operate effectively in these contexts. For example, part of UNOCHA’s role is to coordinate interaction between militaries and NGOs responding to humanitarian crises because ‘it is essential that they can operate in the same space without detriment to the civilian character of humanitarian assistance.’⁷⁷

73 Duffey, ‘Cultural Issues in Contemporary Peacekeeping’, p.149.

74 Dworken, J.T., 1995. ‘Restore Hope: Coordinating Relief Operations’. *Joint Forces Quarterly* 8(Summer), pp.19-20.

75 Rietjens et al., ‘Inter-Organisational Communication’, p.248.

76 ADF ADPP 3.11, §4.31-2.

77 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012. ‘OCHA on Message: Civil-Military Coordination. OCHA Civil-Military Coordination Section. Available www.UNOCHA.Org/What-We-Do/Coordination-Tools/UN-CMCoord/

A pathway to improving the NGO-military interface

The incidence of natural disasters and protracted civil conflicts globally mean it is likely that the intersection between NGO and military spaces will increase in coming years, yet there is very little collected knowledge regarding the ways militaries and NGOs interact, particularly from the perspective of the soldiers and NGO staff most likely to encounter one another in these environments (or perhaps to avoid such an encounter). For this reason, the author has commenced a qualitative research project with the aim of building an enhanced understanding of the NGO-military interface in post-conflict engagements, with a view to improving practice and outcomes in these complex environments. The research has received competitive grant funding from the Australian Civil-Military Centre and ethics clearances from both RMIT University and ADF.

The primary focus of the study is on the ADF and international NGOs with a base or significant presence in Australia. Australia provides an interesting case study for a range of reasons. Focusing on a relatively small and isolated country such as Australia allows the research to be somewhat more contained than it might be with a significantly larger country such as the UK or the USA. It is a middle level power that contributes consistently to peace-keeping operations and is now a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, indicating its international orientation. Australia's commitment to development assistance was steadily increasing at a time when that of other nations was stagnant or decreasing, and the uses of its development assistance budget have been diversifying to include security-specific areas such as international policing. This nation has a strong NGO community with a reach in the Asia-Pacific region and globally, and the national NGO coordination body, ACFID, has a functioning humanitarian action taskforce. Although small, the nation's defence force has taken the lead in a number of international interventions (including, most recently, coordinating the military withdrawal from Oruzgan province in Afghanistan) and has gained respect internationally for its conduct. While militaries may differ significantly between nations and regions, the ADF's CIMIC doctrine is broadly consistent with that of key western militaries, including the USA, UK, and northern European and Scandinavian countries.⁷⁸

With reference to peacebuilding, Anderson and Olson note that 'to talk about improving effectiveness, we need first to know where we want to get and, then, to consider the options for getting there'.⁷⁹ In other words, in order to improve military-NGO relationships, it is critical to have an accurate understanding of the current nature of these relationships, the extent to which the parties wish to collaborate, and the areas they see as most appropriate for such collaboration. Starting from this premise, the research focuses on three lines of inquiry. The first is to establish a deeper picture of the current state of NGO-military interaction in policy, doctrine and practice, recognising that this is

Overview. [Accessed 23 October 2012].

78 For further discussion of these approaches see de Coning, C., 2005. 'Civil-Military Coordination and UN Peacebuilding Operations.' *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 5(2), 89-118, p. 98. The USA uses the term civil-military operations (CMO) rather than CIMIC.

79 Anderson, M.B, and L. Olson, 2003. *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*. The Collaborative for Development Action Inc, Cambridge, p.11.

likely to differ according to context. Key to this are the perspectives of individual soldiers and NGO staff regarding the benefits and dangers of interaction, any procedures they are guided by, and what actions can or should be involved.

This leads into the second line of inquiry, which is to discern the main drivers informing their interactions in specific environments, recognising that these may include factors such as individual (or collective) attitudes, context, and practical considerations. The third component is to ask whether the parties see value in improving these interactions, and if so, what that perceived value is and how it could be achieved. The hypothesis is that mutual understanding will be low and characterised by negative stereotypes, and that this will limit views on what can be achieved through NGO-military interaction. Poor understanding of each-other's mandates is expected to have a similarly negative impact on perceptions of potential areas for improved interaction.

Underpinning this research is recognition that attitudes inform action, and that understanding the attitudes of the soldiers and NGO staff working in these shared spaces is important to understanding (and potentially influencing) their practice. The research therefore augments a thorough analysis of academic literature, policy/doctrine and practice documents of NGO and military communities, with 100 individual interviews.⁸⁰ The majority (approximately 80) of these interviews will be with ADF and NGO personnel at varying levels and with diverse responsibilities (few will have specific civil-military responsibilities, reflecting the allocation of such roles in these organisations). The remaining 20 interviews will be with civil society representatives in the countries addressed, and with senior government, defence and NGO staff in Australia. These interviews will be analysed qualitatively.

Recognising the importance of context to both development and security, another hypothesis of this research is that attitudes and inclination to interact will be strongly affected by the nature of the environment. These environments differ greatly in nature and may be characterised by differing levels of conflict and development, and whether a natural or human-induced disaster is involved. The research is therefore built on three case studies that seek to capture two broad variables within a developing country context. These variables are the level of conflict and the presence of natural disaster. While there is deep diversity in each complex environment, the three countries in focus are among the 45 countries ranked as having 'low human development' as measured by the UN's Human Development Index.⁸¹ This helps to maintain a level of comparability, since it would be patently unhelpful to attempt to compare international contributions in Japan and South Sudan, for example. Conducting this research across three sites provides a basis for comparison that can highlight both consistencies and contextual differences, allowing for theorising about other cases.⁸²

80 These commenced in 2012.

81 The United Nations Development Program publishes its human development index (HDI) annually, drawing on a range of data. The HDI is a composite of measures of income, life expectancy and education, giving a broader assessment of development than can be gained by measures of GDP alone.

82 Stake, R.E., 2005. 'Qualitative Case Studies.' In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln. Sage, Thousand Oaks, 442-66.

The three case studies therefore represent a high conflict context (Afghanistan), a low conflict context (Timor-Leste) and a post-disaster context (Pakistan) – all in environments of low human development. In particular, these three case studies are identified to reveal whether levels of conflict present in an area affect each group’s perception of the legitimacy of the other group’s presence. The hypothesis is that in high conflict areas, militaries will be relatively unsupportive of NGO presence, while in low conflict areas NGOs will be relatively unsupportive of military presence, but that there will be a greater mutual inclination to act collaboratively following disasters, due to the stark human need exposed in such settings.

Afghanistan is a country still experiencing significant conflict, where Australia is not the lead military country,⁸³ and extensive challenges remain for the military even as planning is underway for the completion of the military mission. It is also a site of significant non-military international engagement, with hundreds of NGOs present and an extensive civil-military strategy of PRTs in place. While the conflict level fluctuates, it has reduced in recent years, and there is a clear program in place to draw down the international military involvement and hand over to the Afghan National Army. NGO access to certain areas of the country may be (or have been) limited due to significant physical danger and some have therefore sought military support or other security arrangements.

Timor-Leste is experiencing relative stability after prolonged conflict culminating in independence from Indonesia. After nearly fifteen years of intense international engagement, the small nation has now seen steady, planned draw-down of foreign military. The ISF has been Australian-led and assessed as largely successful by diverse actors. In the current stage of stabilisation, Australia’s ISF contributions are primarily reservists rather than regular army personnel. With the enormous UN engagement since 1999, Timor-Leste has also been host to significant international governmental, intergovernmental and non-government engagement, and of particular interest for Australian civil society. As such it also has hundreds of NGOs in operation, and a thriving civil society comprising diverse groups. NGOs and CSOs are preparing to take an even stronger role as the UN mission once more prepares for its own withdrawal.

Finally, Pakistan has been selected as the disaster case study. In mid-2010, almost 20% the country was struck by monsoonal flooding, killing nearly 2,000 people and directly affecting approximately 100 times that number. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon reflected that ‘In the past I have seen scenes of natural disaster around the world, but nothing like this. The scale of this disaster is so large. So many people in so many places in so much need’.⁸⁴ In the face of this massive disaster, NGOs already present in Pakistan were joined by many newer groups, and international militaries including the ADF. While interviews with this group may be somewhat influenced by the passing of time, it is also anticipated that the nature of the task led to more positive attitudes and collaboration between NGOs and militaries.

83 The international intervention in Afghanistan has been divided along provincial lines, with different nations taking responsibility for a region, leading both the military engagement and the reconstruction program. Australia maintains responsibility for these concerns in Oruzgan province.

84 BBC. ‘Pakistan Floods ‘Heart-Wrenching’ – UN Chief.’ BBC News South Asia (online), 15 August 2010.

Interviews with individuals who have worked in these case study countries will contribute to a more complex understanding of the nature of the NGO-military interface and the barriers, attitudes and practices that underpin it, and on this basis contribute to improvements in interaction and functioning in complex settings. Yet the inquiry is designed to identify far more than just military and NGO attitudes towards each other: it is designed to develop a clearer understanding of what the two groups believe they can contribute to each other, and wish from each other in these contexts, based on the assumption that they have a poor understanding of each other's structures, objectives and practices. If this is the case, it is highly unlikely that they fully understand the real strengths and weaknesses of the other organisation(s), and therefore what they might be able to contribute to or draw from improved interaction.

The key objective of the research is to use this knowledge to develop tangible outcomes, namely realistic and relevant strategies for improvement of the interactions, thus contributing to enhanced practice in these areas. Understanding these key areas of inquiry and communicating results effectively in both academic and non-academic fora will streamline and enhance cooperation by ensuring that proposals for improved practice actually meet the needs of the respective parties. In particular, the intention is to contribute positively to developments in NGO policy and military doctrine, and the practice of both in conflict and disaster environments. Such improvements would contribute to better outcomes for local populations and more effective transitions from crisis to stability, particularly achieving the target of timely military withdrawal.⁸⁵

85 Jenny, J., 2001. 'Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies: Finding Ways to Make It Work.' *European Security* 10(2), 23-33, pp.25-6.

Conclusion

Conflict remains a dominant presence on the international landscape. While there is substantially less fighting between nations, extended civil conflict is now a characteristic of many countries and regions. This has strong negative ramifications for a country's development aspirations by draining resources, damaging infrastructure and disrupting education, health, wealth and well-being of entire generations. The complexity of these environments has been well recognised by the international community, leading to contributions of many kinds, including military presence, bilateral and multilateral assistance programs, and NGO contributions to community development.

The boundaries have never been distinct between development and security, but it is fair to say that they are firmly conflated in the current international environment, with the result that traditional security actors and traditional development actors are now operating in shared spaces. This co-location means that militaries and NGOs need to interact, but that is made difficult by their very different natures and a significant discrepancy in the way they understand and engage with these environments. These differences go well beyond the easy stereotypes of militaries as hierarchical and NGOs as disorderly and anarchic, with the two groups even using different terms to describe their potential interaction – CIMIC and CMCoord – denoting fundamentally different attitudes towards such interaction.

NGOs and other humanitarian actors are improving their coordination and coherence in humanitarian environments, marking a significant change from the fiercely independent and often segmented character of development NGOs more broadly. Extending this agreement on approaches to CMCoord could contribute greatly to clarity and ease in NGO-military encounters, but is unrealistic given the diversity amongst NGOs internationally. National militaries have refined doctrine on CIMIC that informs their interaction with non-military entities, however they have more experience and success when dealing with government agencies than with NGOs.

Nonetheless, the nature of the encounter between NGOs and militaries is evolving: traditionally viewing each other with suspicion, the two groups are now drawn into a much closer – and potentially more contested – encounter. Their historically wary relationship has persisted in spite of their continued coexistence in complex environments characterised by low human development and persistent conflict, and often exacerbated by major disasters. In several respects they depend on each other in their work following conflict and disasters, whether for protection, information, resources or relationships. Even these dependencies, however, bring with them a range of risks, diminishing each group's willingness to acknowledge dependence or prioritise interaction.

Many factors combine to make it increasingly urgent to improve interaction between NGOs and militaries, even if improvement is limited to an increased recognition of areas in which interaction is unwelcome and unwise. Factors contributing to this urgency include: the evolving conviction that security and development are intertwined; acknowledgement of the cost of conflict for human development; mutual suspicion between NGOs and militaries in an increasingly shared operational environment; and a limited existing understanding of the interface between these organisations. While there may be compelling reasons to maintain a 'respectful distance' between these entities (such as

aid worker safety and military mandates), failure to improve mutual understanding has the potential to reduce the ability of both militaries and NGOs to foster safe, secure environments in which citizens can build prosperous and healthy lives.

The research project outlined in this paper is therefore timely and critical. It recognises these concerns, as well as the importance of attitudes in informing actions and therefore seeks to improve understanding of the attitudes underpinning these interactions. This new understanding will contribute to improved mutual comprehension, with strategies proposed for enhancing interaction where it is desired, and minimising time wastage, inconvenience and duplication of effort where interaction is not desired.

These improvements will streamline and optimise CIMIC/CMCoord efforts and free up resources that would otherwise be wasted on futile actions based on misconceptions. This will help both NGOs and militaries to focus on their respective efforts to improve outcomes for communities severely affected by conflict, disaster and low human development. Ultimately, such changes will help to improve the lives of ordinary people living in the world's most challenging environments.

Acronyms list

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACMC	Australian Civil-Military Centre
ADF	Australian Defence Force
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CMCoord	Civil-Military Coordination
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
HDI	Human Development Index
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISF	Internal Stabilisation Force
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PMC	Private Military Company
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
UN	United Nations
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs