

## **INTERAGENCY AND CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION: LESSONS FROM A SURVEY OF AFGHANISTAN AND LIBERIA.**

***Lara Olson and Hrach Gregorian, Co-Directors, Peacebuilding, Development and Security Program (PDSP, Centre for Military and Strategic Studies (CMSS)***

The end of the Cold War brought a dramatic increase in conflicts within states and a similar increase in international peace operations, as complex multi-actor interventions to end civil wars and build peace have come to be known. While in 1998 the UN deployed 14,000 peacekeepers worldwide, today over 90,000 military and civilians are in the field in 16 UN missions.<sup>1</sup> New international *coalitions of the willing* led by regional organizations like NATO in Kosovo emerged in place of UN involvement in some contexts. More fundamentally, the nature of UN involvement expanded dramatically from classical peacekeeping characterized by the monitoring of ceasefires. New expanded UN missions involved solidifying fragile truces, building the capacity and legitimacy of states emerging from conflict, holding elections, demobilizing and reintegrating combatants, and sometimes direct administration of a territory for a period. These changes encompassed a broadening of the goals and sectors that were involved, a deepening of the engagement with the internal workings of societies, and a lengthening in terms of the stages of conflict when such missions would be deployed, with preventive and post-conflict state-building missions a major new focus.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Centre on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations*, 2006, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Lund, *What Kind of Peace is being built? Assessing the Record of Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, Charting Future Directions*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, January 2003.

A parallel development was a dramatic increase in involvement by non-governmental organizations in these internal conflicts, particularly humanitarian, relief and development NGOs, to address civilian needs, but also human rights organizations and conflict resolution groups conducting track 2 negotiation efforts and civil society dialogues across conflict lines. These changes occurred alongside the new ability of the international media to bring the plight of civilians caught in war to the world stage, thereby mobilizing populations in donor countries to push for action.

As a result of these shifts, international efforts to secure peace in conflicts such as Kosovo, East Timor, DRC, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Afghanistan, Burundi and Sudan have witnessed the involvement of a dizzying array of actors: foreign diplomats and UN personnel, international military forces, international humanitarian and development agencies and NGOs, and a myriad of national NGOs and civil society groups. A wide range of efforts to promote security, relief, development, peacemaking among leaders, support to civil society, gender equity, mine clearance, and community-level peacebuilding have been undertaken by these actors, in the attempt to end violence and build sustainable peace. This spectrum of activities has come to be called *peacebuilding*, often widely (and loosely) defined as all efforts and programs conducted by international and national actors in all sectors and at all levels, to solidify peace.<sup>3</sup>

With the added complexity of such international peace missions and the expanded number of international actors and approaches involved, the question of coordination has become a key focus for donors, the UN, other multilateral agencies

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<sup>3</sup> This term is used in different ways by different researchers, governments and practitioners. For some, it refers to the overall engagement of the international community in a given country to consolidate peace; that is elections, economic liberalization, security reform, governance, development, human rights assistance, etc. For others, peacebuilding is a particular kind of programming engaging people in a range of activities that have the explicit aim of fostering peaceful relations.

and NGOs. In numerous reviews of the crises of the 1990s in Mozambique, Angola, Guatemala, Bosnia, and Sierra Leone, problems of coordination amongst the multiplicity of actors were constantly raised. While the critiques were leveled at the UN, World Bank, other intergovernmental organizations and donor governments, NGOs were often singled out as especially “anarchic,” given their sheer numbers, diversity and culture of independence.

The trend in peace-building since Kosovo in 1999 is towards greater integration of international efforts and the necessity for collaboration between relief, development and security organizations. By the late 1990s, from key donor countries, to UN agencies, to NGO networks, a common understanding emerged that efforts for peace must become more strategic and coordinated if they are to have the ambitious impacts they intend. This consensus has led to efforts in recent years to promote explicit communication, coordination and even formal integration among interveners to achieve greater impact.

Since the late 1990s, this push for more unified efforts has led to such innovations as UN Integrated Missions, which combined the political, peacekeeping, and humanitarian arms of the UN system under a unified command. Indeed, many donor countries have now synchronized the foreign assistance arms of government in what has been variously called the “joined up approach,” the “whole of government approach,” or, the “3-Ds” approach, referring to defense, development and diplomacy. The goal has been to use military, political and humanitarian/development instruments in a more synchronized and presumably more effective, manner to achieve security, development and peace in conflict affected countries.

## **Civil-Military Coordination in International Peace Operations**

The area of civil-military coordination in the field is even more difficult than other interagency relationships given fundamental differences between international military forces and humanitarian and development agencies in terms of their agendas, operating styles, roles, and the principles and doctrines guiding their work. For groups that do try to engage across these divides, there is often a strong sense of frustration on both sides with the energy invested in trying to establish good communication and clear understanding of each other's positions. Another key issue is that field-level coordination is vulnerable to directives coming from the policy level, and a reported lack of two-way information flow between the field and policy levels. As one NGO representative interviewed commented, "even when military-NGO meetings in the field are quite helpful, and there is lots of mutual respect, in the end things don't change correspondingly or a new policy comes down from above and there is a sense that the right people were not in the room."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, field cooperation often depends on developing good personal relationships, but with frequent turnover of personnel such relationship building must begin from scratch.

In situations of an incomplete or fragile peace, the interlinked nature of security and development is inescapable, with security necessary to enable progress on development, and immediate relief and longer-term development gains necessary to solidify the peace by giving people a stake in the new stability. Roles and mandates often overlap as military forces engage in aid provision and governance support, major donor representatives work directly with provincial and local governments, and

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<sup>4</sup> Telephone interview with a representative of a major international NGO with programs across Afghanistan who asked to remain anonymous.

development actors participate in the security sector reform spectrum (of DDR, justice reform, police reform). Whether international military forces, UN and donor country diplomats, and humanitarian and relief agencies choose to explicitly work together or not, the outcomes of their efforts in such settings are deeply intertwined.

Given this interdependence, improving how security and development actors interact in such settings is critical to increasing the probability that their independent efforts will lead to positive outcomes, and to increasing the chances that some level of constructive coordination may be developed.

### **Factors Contributing to the Coordination Problem**

There are many factors that render integration and collaboration problematic between diverse assistance agencies, and especially so between civilian and military agencies. In the discussion below we examine some of these factors, roughly grouped as political and organizational factors.

#### Political Factors

##### *National Interests and Political Factors*

The bilateral engagement of key aid donors in conflict-affected states is often driven by politics more than technical assessments of need. Commentators note that whole of government approaches often tend to be motivated by “classical national interest calculations, based on considerations such as strategic location, diplomatic implications, and economic consequences, as well as intangible variables like colonial

history and Diaspora linkages...”<sup>5</sup> Multilateral engagement in humanitarian and development activity can also be problematic. The work of UN departments that have sought to step up the level and scope of humanitarian intervention has met with resistance among some in the General Assembly who view such penetration as a threat to state sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> Regional, governmental and NGO actors all have vested interests that an often vague commitment to multilateralism in peace-building cannot overcome. Necla Tschirgi of the National Peace Academy writes:

The integrated policies promoted by the United Nations or the linked-up policies by key donor countries applied primarily to conflicts that did not affect the vital interests of powerful external actors. In politically difficult cases like Kashmir, North Korea or Palestine, there was little insistence on integrated policies; in other cases like Bosnia, Kosovo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the sequencing of security and development approaches decidedly reflected the vital interests of key players.<sup>7</sup>

Tschirgi reminds us that when advocating for integrated policies we must ask, “Whose security is at stake? Whose development is affected [and] “Whose agenda has precedence?” National governments in conflict-ridden states also worry about being overwhelmed by a range of external actors with differing missions and objectives determined as often by the agency’s organizational capacity as the recipient country’s needs. Such countries are wary of highly coordinated multi-donor interventions and the potential threat posed by a “donor cartel.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown, *Greater than the Sum of Its Parts? Assessing ‘Whole of Government’ Approaches to Fragile States*, (New York: International Peace Academy, 2007), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce D Jones., “The changing role of the UN in protracted crises,” *HPG Research Briefing*, Number 17, July 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Necla Tschirgi, *Security and Development Policies: Untangling the Relationship*, International Peace Academy (IPA), 2005, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Tschirgi, *Untangling the Relationship*, 12-13.

### *Incompatible Objectives*

Different organizations hold differing, and sometimes, mutually contradictory policy goals. Humanitarian and development agencies are concerned that their core objectives, such as relief, reconstruction and structural reform will be subordinated to more immediate security and political concerns. Such incompatibilities can exist within the same organization. One study points to the OSCE, “where the democratization branch generally seeks to develop working relationships with local authorities, while the human rights branch is tasked with responding to complaints against local authorities.”<sup>9</sup> According to a study of the Liberia case, “Many NGOs in Liberia were unhappy with UNMIL’s incorporation of the Humanitarian Coordinator role (as a dual function of the SRSG) as well as OCHA into the integrated mission framework.” The study quotes the following observation by the International Council of Volunteer agencies regarding the integrated mission framework in Liberia:

“This step, which could be seen as the final step in realizing the full integration of humanitarian coordination under a political banner, may involve humanitarian concerns becoming subservient to the political process and/or the UN neglecting immediate humanitarian needs. The coordination of humanitarian action needs, however, its own humanitarian space.”<sup>10</sup>

As a practical matter, carving out such space is difficult at best. Military units generally undertake UN CIMIC operations according to the national doctrines of their respective nations, these doctrines are not necessarily designed to comport with the specific requirements of humanitarian action in a specific geographic space. Peace operations

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<sup>9</sup> Roland Paris, “*Understanding The ‘Coordination Problem’ In Post War State-Building*,” Research Partnership on Postwar State-building (RPPS), <http://state-building.org>, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Abby Stoddard and Adele Harmer, *Room to Manoeuvre: Challenges of Linking Humanitarian Action and Post-Conflict Recovery in the New Global Security Environment*, United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report Office, Occasional Paper, 2005, 10.

are most often carried out by the military at the battalion level. Currently, the countries providing the largest number of battalions include Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Ukraine, and Uruguay. According to one study, “none of these countries have a national CIMIC doctrine for use in peace operations.” Their soldiers are trained for the most part in counter insurgency warfare, which some are called on to wage in select theaters. As the same study concludes, “without a conscious effort to provide them with clear policies and guidelines for UN CIMIC actions in the UN peace operations where they are deployed, it is natural that they will revert to what they know best, i.e., counter insurgency style “winning hearts and minds” campaigns.”<sup>11</sup>

### *Conflicting Definitions of Peace*

The challenge to cross-sectoral collaboration in peace-building at the most fundamental level may well come down to differing concepts about the path to and ultimate meaning of peace. Differing conceptions of peace lead to differing approaches to achieving it. Generally speaking, the role of the military has been to achieve peace by winning wars. What some characterize as “mission creep” has expanded this role to include conflict prevention and management in more complex intrastate environments where civil conflict has led to something less than victory or defeat for belligerents who continue to occupy the same physical space. The absence of violence (or negative peace) in such situations is an acceptable end state for military interveners. This may also be characterized as attainment of peace at the symptomatic level; that is, the

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<sup>11</sup> Cedric de Coning, “Civil-Military Coordination and UN Peacebuilding Operations,” *The Durban Accord*, <http://jha.ac/articles/a183.pdf>, 12.

reduction or elimination of actual (or kinetic) violence. It does not, nor is it designed to, address the underlying or structural causes of violent conflict.

While humanitarian action is generally not concerned with peace but with alleviating immediate suffering, development policy is much more in line with concepts of positive peace, which includes attempts to root out and ameliorate the causes of conflict in state and society. The requirements of positive peace are complex and vary depending on socio-economic and political characteristics of a given society. Addressing these factors is usually believed to be a long term proposition, requiring sustained programming across a range of activities planned and executed with maximum input from key actors in the host nation. In theory, structural change will lead to transformation in human relations leading to stable and sustainable peace that satisfies basic human needs, including the need for identity, security, recognition and personal development.<sup>12</sup>

### *Conflicting Theories of Change*

Research currently underway suggests that a big part of the coordination problem rests at the conceptual level. The Reflecting on Peace Practice Project found that agencies have trouble coordinating in the field, or even agreeing on an analysis of the problem, often because they are guided by radically different theories, or assumptions, about what causes conflict and how conflict can be resolved.<sup>13</sup> The project's findings suggest that a first step in working to achieve better coordination may lie in getting people to first recognize the "theories of change" that guide their own work.

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<sup>12</sup> See: John Burton, *Conflict: Basic Human Needs*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> Mary Anderson and Lara Olson, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*, Collaborative for Development Action, 2003. [www.cdainc.com](http://www.cdainc.com)

“While peace practitioners select methods, approaches and tactics that are rooted in a range of ‘theories’ of how peace is achieved, in many (perhaps most) cases these theories are not necessarily conscious. Rather, they are embedded in the skills and approaches that they have learned, the capacities and ‘technologies’ of their organizations, attachments to favorite methodologies, and the perspectives they bring to the peacebuilding process. They may also be dictated by international political dynamics and policies. A useful first step in enhancing the ability to develop effective strategies is to become more explicit about underlying assumptions about how change comes about—that is, theories of how to achieve peace. Such theories can take the simple format: We believe that by doing X (action) successfully, we will produce Y (movement towards peace).”<sup>14</sup>

Often coordination is seen as a purely technical issue of engineering, how to achieve the best information sharing structure. Or it is seen as a political problem, in terms of getting some groups to cede power and agree to be coordinated by others. What the “theories of change” concept points to instead is that people operate with different mental maps of what causes conflict, and therefore how to address it and what passes for coordination is often a dialogue of the deaf.

### Organizational Factors

More mundane pathologies common to all organizations are also responsible for the lack of coherence in the efforts of the international community in a given peace mission, or within the various departments of the same organization.

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Woodrow, “Theories of Change/Theories of Peacebuilding”. Reflecting on Peace Practice Project Paper, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2006.

### *Structural Barriers*

Rigid organizational structures, including the stove piping of departments and units, physical distance between organizations headquartered in different cities and field operations, the differing mandates of bureaus or divisions even within the same organization, and bureaucratic and daily operational constraints tend to stifle innovation and favor the status quo. The considerable gap between policy formulators and implementers and between headquarters and field operations continues to undermine effectiveness. Among the problems identified by researchers are:

- extremely weak knowledge management within organizations;
- inadequate mechanisms to incorporate lessons learned;
- little institutional memory about new programs implemented in various countries;
- lack of a consistent and rigorous planning methodology and management capacity;
- little country or field level interaction between program implementers, national authorities and donors resulting in a multitude of unconnected programs and projects in various sectors; and
- lack of transparency and accountability.<sup>15</sup>

### *Organizational Cultures*

There is a general tendency among organizations and even across units within the same organization to adopt substantially different planning and implementation

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<sup>15</sup> Tschirgi, *Untangling the Relationship*, 12-13.

terminology or to describe different processes and outcomes even when employing the same terminology. Examples abound. Civil-military coordination is relatively simple to conceptualize as an effort by civilian and military organizations to harmonize their operations, and yet it has been described as a “contested concept with many different, competing definitions and doctrines that describe essentially the same activity...” Civil-Military cooperation (CIMIC) is the terminology employed by NATO, most of the EU and Canada, the United States prefers Civil Military Operations (CMO), while the UN humanitarian community describes such activity as Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord). The UN uses the acronym CIMIC when referring to “Civil-Military Coordination,” whereas NATO uses CIMIC to describe “Civil-Military Cooperation.” Here there are conceptual differences that matter growing out of fundamental differences in each organization’s expectation and approach to the civil-military interface as it pertains to peace building.<sup>16</sup>

Military culture and civilian cultures do not generally mesh seamlessly in conflict settings. There are inherent stressors between them owing to differences in mandates, objectives, methods of operation and vocabulary. Operationally, aid agencies tend to be flexible whereas the military functions in a top-down manner, the durations of stay of aid agencies can be for many years, the military, on the other hand, prefers well defined end states and exit strategies, aid agencies have a culture of independence while the military is hierarchical, and soldiers are armed when dealing with local actors while aid

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<sup>16</sup> Cedric de Coning, “Civil-Military Coordination,” p.6.

and development workers are not.<sup>17</sup> Private contractors fall somewhere in between depending on the nature of their assignment.

### *Organizational Independence*

Some organizations consider their independence a higher priority than coordination with other organizations. They are not prepared to follow the lead of another organization. There is too a fear among NGOs of cooption and marginalization in some crisis regions where military forces have an overwhelming presence. "This first became apparent in Afghanistan. NGOs previously open to dialogue with the military found their arguments for the importance of their independence and neutrality had limited impact, as US forces took on new small scale relief endeavors, and administration officials spoke of humanitarian NGOs as "force multipliers."<sup>18</sup>

The UN and international financial institutions (IFIs), especially the World Bank, have also come to play dominant roles in peacemaking vis-à-vis NGOs, especially where the strategic interests of powerful states are high. The transitional authority missions in Kosovo and East Timor enjoyed full control of virtually all aspects of state-building. The UN "performed functions related to civil administration, economic reconstruction, financial management, internal security, external security, international relations and treaty making, mounting of elections, administration of justice (including police and courts), and drafting of laws and constitutions."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Georg Frerks and Bart Klem, Stefan van Laar and Marleen van Klingereren, *Principles and Pragmatism Civil- Military Action in Afghanistan and Liberia*. Study commissioned by Cordaid, [www.cordaid.nl](http://www.cordaid.nl) May 2006, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Abby Stoddard and others, *Room to Manoeuvre*, 13.

<sup>19</sup> Bruce D. Jones, "The UN's Evolving Role in Peace and Security: Background Note," <http://www.cic.nyu.edu/internationalsecurity/docs/The%20UN%20and%20International%20Security%20in%20the%201990s.doc>.

Some agencies argue that coordination (or integration, as in the UN system) is, by definition, a threat to humanitarian action because it undermines impartiality and represents a fundamental threat to the operational flexibility and physical safety of aid workers. In Afghanistan and Iraq in particular, but also to some extent in Liberia, where the military mission is not considered impartial, the blocking and deliberate targeting of aid workers has resulted in unprecedented numbers of fatalities. The counter argument posits that humanitarian space can be better protected through integrated structures as opposed to a fragmented approach and that the humanitarian perspective will have a more effective voice when at the same table with other elements of an integrated mission. There are also questions about the capability of humanitarian and aid organizations to provide for their own security in highly dangerous settings, the ethics of leaving some area without assistance because they are too dangerous for aid workers, and the ability of soldiers to provide quality aid.

### *Competition for Resources*

Organizations compete for financial resources, for status, power, recognition and influence. As one study of development and humanitarian action concludes:

“The most direct course for the expanding humanitarian sphere may be found in the large flows of donor aid to high profile emergencies, and the desire of UN development agencies to tap into these resources and establish themselves as players early on in the crisis. In the competitive environment that exists within the UN system of agencies and larger aid community, to do otherwise is to risk marginalization.”<sup>20</sup>

Competition also pits NGOs against generally higher paying organizations flying the banner of the UN, of donor government agencies, and increasingly of private

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<sup>20</sup> Abby Stoddard and others, *Room to Manoeuvre*, p.5.

contracting firms. NGOs complain of losing in-country staff in particular to these competitors and of being lumped together with for-profit entities, as in Afghanistan where until an NGO law was passed in 2005, they were officially categorized as belonging to the private sector. In fact, NGOs in Afghanistan pointed to an Afghan government study reporting that of the \$3.9 billion of donor funding physically disbursed in the country by mid-2005, 45.5% had gone directly to the UN, 30% to the government, 16% to private contractors, and only 9% directly to NGOs.<sup>21</sup>

### *Inexperience and Lack of Proven Models*

Organizations do not necessarily share a common understanding of the requirements or objectives of coordination. This problem is compounded by the fact that many organizations do not have established and well-defined working relationship with one another. Difficulties also arise when organizations are stretched beyond their traditional areas of expertise, as when development agencies take on security sector reform and the military becomes involved in state-building operations. Few models are available on best practice in combining and sequencing assistance, development, state-building, security and stability in so-called “failed state.”

Below senior management in UN missions, there is less than full appreciation of the exact nature or function of UN integrated missions. NGOs and civil society organizations consulted by one study team were even more in the dark as to the exact form and function of integrated missions. Mission structures were found to be improvised. “In three different missions, senior management explained that it has

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<sup>21</sup> Lara Olson, “Fighting For Humanitarian Space: NGOs In Afghanistan,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 9:1 (2006), 20.

applied best practices from other missions. Yet there was no evidence that such practices had ever been rigorously and systematically identified.” Rather, the study team reveals, with reference to Liberia and Sudan, as well as to Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone, where the problem was less pronounced, “design reflects the inclinations and predilections of senior management, with little if any substantive reference to best practices, concepts of integration, or modern management practices.”<sup>22</sup>

### *Idiosyncratic/Personality Factors*

Success in cross-sectoral collaboration, particularly in the realm of civil-military relations, often depends on the personalities of the field level personnel and the liaison structures that are established. Reliance on individuals is a risky business, however, particularly among relief and development NGOs and other peacemaking organizations, given high rates of turnover, particularly among field staff.

Uncooperative attitudes are not uncommon within and across organizations. This may result from competition for resources, for power, and for notoriety, but it may also arise from personal likes and dislikes or stereotyping. “Aid workers may consider the military arrogant or dominant and they may blame soldiers for a lack of true commitment and argue they should establish closer contact with the people rather than staying in the camp...The military, on the other hand, may blame aid workers for being an uncoordinated, self-interested group of arrogant money-spenders that drive around in expensive cars and send impressive pictures to their constituencies without actually

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<sup>22</sup> Abby Stoddard and others, *Room to Manoeuvre*.

accomplishing much.”<sup>23</sup> Facts aside, where such views are held, collaboration is the more difficult to achieve.

### **Findings on Coordination Problems in Afghanistan and Liberia**

A research process culminating in a two-day practitioner workshop, “*Coordinated Approaches to Security, Development and Peacemaking: Lessons Learned from Afghanistan and Liberia*” surveyed the practical dynamics of interagency and civil-military coordination in these two peace operations.<sup>24</sup> Thirty-five representatives of key civilian and military assistance actors involved in Liberia or Afghanistan together with experts on peacebuilding examined whether current coordination efforts amongst diverse assistance actors effectively support the interlinked goals of supporting security, development and sustainable peace.

Any workshop represents a mere snapshot of a fast moving and complex issue. The findings presented here represent a preliminary look on this complex problem and lay down some markers that we plan to build on through an ongoing learning effort. Two publications from the workshop review the experience to date and how the integrity and effectiveness of field coordination efforts among diverse assistance actors can be

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<sup>23</sup> Espen Barth Eide and others, *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations, Independent Study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group*, (2005).

<http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbpu/library/Report%20on%20Integrated%20Missions%20May%202005%20Final%202.pdf>, 36.

<sup>24</sup> March 30 and 31 at the University of Calgary's Centre for Military and Strategic Studies (CMSS), in conjunction with its Washington, D.C. based partner, the Institute of World Affairs (IWA). Generous financial support for this workshop was provided by the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Conference Secretariat, the Department of National Defence's Security and Defence Forum, NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, and several departments of the University of Calgary – the Faculty of Social Sciences, the International Centre, and the Political Science Department. Equally generous in-kind support was extended by the Institute of World Affairs, and many participating agencies covered the time and costs of their personnel.

improved.<sup>25</sup> Some of the key findings related to civil-military coordination in particular from these findings are summarized below.

Two important caveats to the findings presented here must be stated upfront.

1. The focus of attention in the two cases was somewhat different. In Afghanistan issues of civil-military coordination were a major focus, while in Liberia issues of humanitarian coordination were more prominent. Nonetheless, an overall picture of the challenges and dilemmas of coordination in such settings was achieved.

2. The findings relate to field-level dynamics where programs are implemented - how headquarters policies actually play out in the field, rather than coordination efforts among agencies in donor country capitals or within the global headquarters of international organizations in New York, Geneva, or Brussels.

### Brief Overview of Lessons from Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, military, humanitarian and development actors work side by side (though not necessarily together) in an environment with active insurgency in some regions and relative stability in others. In many policy areas, the agendas of violence reduction, and the longer-term objectives of democratization, civil society building, and good governance clash as broad strategies are translated into concrete programs. Currently, dealing with widespread perceptions of corruption and improving governance

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<sup>25</sup> Policy Brief, October 2007, "*Beyond Information Sharing & False Coherence: Interagency Coordination in International Peace Missions*"; Workshop Report, October 2007; "*Side by Side or Together? Working for Security, Development and Peace in Liberia and Afghanistan*". <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pdsp/publications>

is seen as the key to stability, alongside security and development gains. Tensions are high between military and some development actors over a perceived *militarization of aid* and the merging of military and assistance agendas in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model, which is seen as the key mechanism for security and reconstruction outside of Kabul, but which critics claim has not produced the hoped for gains in either security or reconstruction.

Examples of effective coordination cited were the health sector and the government's National Solidarity Program, where participatory, inclusive processes involving the government, donors and implementing NGOs has resulted in significant "buy-in" from all key stakeholders. The record of coordination in many security-related areas however is poor, as evidenced by a lack of coordination on counternarcotics and diverse national strategies for the PRTs. These areas involve civilian and military actors with little history of positive cooperation, little common strategic vision, and a lack of effective inclusive and participatory planning processes.

Assessments strongly differed over capacity building efforts and the PRTs, which are alternately seen by supporters as building blocs for an effective state, or by critics as superficial and externally driven approaches. Furthermore, there were strong disagreements over appropriate *means* to conduct programs, and *few common principles* guiding the efforts of military and development actors. More fundamentally, current coordination processes ignore differences in power and influence, undermining prospects for sincere communication, which is seen by many as requiring some level of horizontal relationship and transparency.

In the field, the perception is that the perspectives of military forces dominate and dramatically affect the work of aid organizations. NATO finds itself in the position of reluctantly leading the overall strategy “by default”, being suspected of “taking control”, and perceives “little real interest” in coordination from other actors. A key complicating factor is that, by virtue of its resources and policy weight, US policy often leads from behind the scenes. Given these dynamics, there is little trust amongst actors that coordination efforts on offer are not simply an attempt by powerful actors to exert control over the activities of smaller players.

#### Brief Overview of Lessons from Liberia

In Liberia, violence has been quelled in the aftermath of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the presence of 15,000 UN peacekeeping forces under the UNMIL mission. Basic security has been consolidated but long-term stability rests on meeting daunting humanitarian and development needs, and building legitimate and effective government institutions, especially the army, police, and justice system. Currently, UNMIL’s large force is key to providing security with domestic institutions still very weak and relief and development efforts heavily dependent on the UN and NGOs. Examples of effective coordination are to be found in humanitarian sectors, notably health and education, where there is a history of engagement and where dedicated UN-led humanitarian coordination mechanisms provide a forum for common analysis and strategy-making amongst civilian assistance actors.

Security sector activities however are reportedly plagued by poor coordination, with inclusive consultative processes largely lacking, undermining public trust in army

and police reform, for example. Problems identified include: a lack of a common strategic vision between the government, the UN, and external NGOs; the limitations of existing coordination mechanisms in going beyond information sharing and dealing with power asymmetries between UN agencies, government and NGOs to create a truly joint vision; fundamental differences in how problems and solutions are defined between key actors; and a tendency for external actors to dominate in defining frameworks and strategies, promoting a “false coherence” that is counterproductive.<sup>26</sup>

There is also in Liberia a fundamental difference between actors on appropriate roles for external actors in sensitive political decisions as well as a perception that even though current humanitarian coordination processes have had some success, they often serve the UN mission’s agenda over that of NGOs and local civil society. The preponderant US role in all areas of assistance to Liberia continues to be a key factor, and coordination between US initiatives and the UN mission is seen as problematic at times. Finally, the mismatch of international assistance with actual needs has been underscored by various commentators, with observations that today Liberia needs more engineers and development specialists, than military peacekeepers.

### Coordination Processes and Outcomes

The diverse assistance actors that make up international peace missions each have unique mandates, accountability to different constituencies, and are motivated by different models of how to promote change. These fundamental incompatibilities between international military forces, political and diplomatic actors, and relief and

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<sup>26</sup> This useful term was first suggested by a participant in the March 2007 workshop - Cheyanne Church, Lecturer in Human Security, Fletcher School, Tufts University, Boston.

development agencies make effective communication difficult, and significantly block the realization of coordination and collaboration in the field.

At the broadest level, the workshop revealed a substantial gap between policies institutionalizing coordination and coherence amongst the headquarters (HQ) of assistance actors and the messy reality of very little effective coordination between civilian and military actors in the field. This result echoes the findings of an in-depth report subsequently published by the International Peace Academy (IPA) in July 2007 that examined in detail the evolution of current “whole of government approaches” in 7 major donor countries, including Canada and the United States, and found that across the board the rhetoric of coherence within departments of donor governments far outstrips the reality.<sup>27</sup>

Clearly mission-wide coordination is far more complex than these efforts towards coherence within individual donor governments and the gaps in existing knowledge are immense. Mission-wide coordination involves multiple bilateral efforts by major donors like the U.S., and smaller ones like the U.K., Canada, Germany, etc., multilateral agencies like the UN, the EU, and World Bank, security organizations such as NATO, and a huge array of international NGOs, usually working with local organizations. The challenges of understanding the complex dynamics of these processes are considerable, but doing so is critical to improving the impact of international efforts for sustainable peace.

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<sup>27</sup> Patrick and Brown, *Greater than the Sum of Its Parts: Assessing “Whole of Government Approaches” to Fragile States*, International Peace Academy, NY, July 2007.

In brief, the examination of the Afghanistan and Liberia cases showed that existing field coordination processes in the main have two outcomes:

1. they result in mere “information sharing” and have no real coordination impact; and/or
2. they produce a kind of forced, “false coherence,” referring to superficial changes in language and formal adherence to new frameworks, driven by the agenda of the actor with the most power and resources.

### *Blocks to Coordination in Afghanistan and Liberia*

Some of the blocks to effective coordination identified in the two cases examined derive from the factors noted earlier on - different organizational cultures, styles and approaches, structural issues such as the nature of the overall objectives being pursued and the tools utilized. Very different timeframes and criteria for success are two more key areas where these incompatibilities manifest themselves in very concrete ways and may be insurmountable.

For international military forces time frames are generally short, with military rotations commonly of 6 months durations and commanders pressured to show results in that period. Furthermore, for the military, primary objectives are to protect national security of their home government and populations, and criteria for success ultimately has to focus on those points of reference. For relief and development actors, timeframes are generally longer term - while emergency relief aims to save lives immediately, expected to show immediate results, development initiatives commonly are assessed over periods of 3, 5, or even 10 years. Finally, for relief and development

agencies generally, the primary focus of concern is ostensibly the welfare of populations in the recipient country, whereas the interests of the donor country or organization may be more pronounced with defense and security actors.

Tellingly, most examples of poor coordination noted in the two cases involved areas relating to security sector reform where agencies had little history of contact and where models for coordination and participatory public processes are very new and untested. In these areas, there is a lack of “holistic” engagement between security related and development related agencies such that mutually agreeable and reinforcing approaches can be ironed out.

The review of experience in these two countries led to the identification of the following as the fundamental barriers to coordination.

#### 1. Lack of Common Purpose

Assistance actors do not agree on the purpose of coordination efforts in the first place. Some emphasize minimalist goals of simple information exchange and mutual awareness, while others’ aims extend to joint analysis of problems, joint strategy making and prioritization of tasks, a clear division of labour and sequencing of interventions. Without transparency and trust about the purpose, well-intentioned coordination efforts often paradoxically result in “false coherence,” the superficial commitment to common strategies on paper only.

With respect to civil-military coordination in the field, common aims were largely absent. Military actors expressed frustration with coordination exercises for amounting to “just information sharing,” while many NGOs saw the purpose of

such efforts as rightly limited to information sharing and expressed more concern about the quality and reliability of the information. It is striking that for the military, these meetings are aimed at enhancing impacts, deciding a functional division of labour and realizing synergies in the work, while for the development NGOs they are about mutual understanding and awareness, building reliable lines of communication, and sometimes “minimizing the harm from the military’s involvement in relief work.”<sup>28</sup> For strictly humanitarian relief NGOs, their goals in such interactions are to exchange a minimal amount of information so that the NGOs and aid beneficiaries “do not get shot at” and so the “military understands our approach”.

## 2. Lack of a Level Playing Field in Consultative Processes

Actors had very different sensitivity to the power asymmetries inherent in coordination efforts. NGOs and host government representatives emphasized power differentials while international political and military actors treated coordination largely as a technical exercise that was power-neutral. Not dealing directly with the power differential may be counterproductive - as the “elephant in the room” it is likely to undermine trust.

## 3. Different Guiding Principles

Civilian and military assistance actors operate on the basis of fundamentally different principles for decision making. The principle of “neutrality” and “humanitarian need” that humanitarian and relief groups use to allocate aid

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<sup>28</sup> As observed by one workshop participant.

clashes at times with the principle of “UN endorsed partiality” guiding the state building activities of diplomatic, political and military actors in their support for the government. Furthermore, the widely accepted principle of local ownership is difficult in practice, given the weak state of government institutions, and the fact that the expressed priorities of national and provincial governments and grassroots communities often conflict, with international agencies in effect responding to different “local voices.” While most agencies fall back on a pragmatic “greater good” orientation, there may be little agreement amongst assistance actors on just what the greater good is, given their different values, orientations, constituencies, mandates, and timeframes. There are serious concerns about who will be held accountable as well in making ethical choices about sensitive political issues, given that only national governments are held accountable by their publics, not international agencies or militaries.

### *Factors Supporting Coordination*

Diverse civilian and military assistance actors pointed to the following attributes of “effective coordination” they had experienced in the field. When synthesized, this provided almost a checklist that could be used to build on the strengths and identify the weaknesses of existing coordination efforts.

According to workshop participants from both military and civilian agencies, effective coordination involves:

- Informality and “face to face” time
- Getting “straight information” from someone you trust, not agency “propaganda”

- Transparency and horizontal relationships amongst agencies/people
- Time –learning how to coordinate takes time and is a learning process
- Inclusiveness – all key stakeholders involved early in the process
- Sincere motives to improve program impacts (vs. funding, competition, credit, egos)
- Good negotiation skills, ability to articulate arguments and win over others
- Common knowledge of the issues amongst participants
- An ability to accept criticism from others
- When internal consensus on key issues exists within agencies and networks
- When higher decision makers allow for flexibility and negotiation at the field level
- Continuity of service and less turnover of field personnel

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Our findings to date point to four key challenges in better understanding the real prospects for cross-agency and civil-military coordination in international missions for peace.

### The Mixed Consequences Challenge

Efforts to promote more coordination and integration of multiple assistance actors working in war-to-peace transitions seem on the surface to be an uncontroversial agenda. In reality, they present real tradeoffs and can have negative consequences for other equally important agendas. As the cases noted here show, the *humanitarian dilemma* over compromising humanitarian impartiality, the *human rights dilemma* over working with war leaders, and the *local ownership dilemma* over letting local

perspectives and “ways of doing things” lead, identified in general by other reports are abundantly present in Liberia and Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup> They emerge in the many examples of programs where there were fundamental differences in strategies and the weighting of means and ends between the key assistance communities. Some examples raised of where the different goals and ethics of assistance actors clashed were: working with government-allied warlords to quickly build a key road; pushing IDP repatriation to meet a political timetable for elections rather than in response to humanitarian needs, “bribing” war leaders to lay down arms with seats in parliament, transforming wartime militias into national police and army units; recruiting skilled people who over-represent certain ethnic groups into these new security institutions; “rewarding” ex-combatants with employment in development projects to reduce threats to stability; and, ignoring or accepting corrupt practices because they are more efficient, or as the “way of doing things here.”

### The Policy Practice Challenge

The gap between policies institutionalizing coordination and coherence amongst the headquarters of assistance actors and actual practice in the field is real. In both cases national governments and international actors have agreed formal frameworks for the statebuilding/peacebuilding effort that show how political reforms, economic development, security, governance and national reconciliation are critical “pillars” of national recovery. These frameworks are helpful in establishing the highest-level goals but do not represent multi-actor agreement on strategies - because there are differences in terms of the weight of different pillars or sectors, and especially over how

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<sup>29</sup> Espen Barth Eide and others, *Report on Integrated Missions*, 10

to actually accomplish these goals. Consequently, these commonly agreed frameworks for the recovery effort do not automatically translate into common goals between actors engaged in different sectors and pillars.

As the two cases show, coordination processes often assume agreement among actors on strategies and don't provide opportunities for inclusive and meaningful multi-stakeholder dialogue on these more fundamental issues. Additionally, power asymmetries block real dialogue and limit the ability of existing coordination processes to achieve some level of common intent. Cross-agency dialogue that might help arrive at consensus on strategies is hard and requires dedicated skills, procedures and incentives. The review of experience here suggests there are few dedicated efforts at the field level to promote such inclusive approaches to dialogue and consensus building among field actors.

As well, the field-headquarters relationship too often reflects a top-down flow of policy directives that often translate into changes in language and formal adherence to new frameworks without having achieved "buy in" from field personnel to the intent of policy makers. The experience shows a need to shift the relationship between field and headquarters within many agencies to promote a two-way information flow with the goal being to bring field perspectives more into the HQ level debates and vice versa. The goal would be to help decision makers at both levels better understand important factors that must shape policy responses. In a rapidly changing environment, the importance of field personnel to be able to understand and interpret the intent of a policy is key to flexible and effective responses. The inflexibility of policies set at headquarters level

was cited as sometimes rendering dialogue over strategies amongst field actors “pointless”.

### The Evaluation Challenge

Effective coordination between security and development actors presumably means more effective work than is possible without coordination. This requires evaluating the impacts of projects involving significant coordination efforts on the broader peace. However, as noted, this is an area where there are few credible methodologies, and generally, substantial pessimism that such impacts are possible to trace at the level of individual projects. Among assistance actors in Liberia and Afghanistan as well coordination is assumed to be a good thing, but equally clear was that different actors used dramatically different criteria for what effective coordination looks like. As well, most of these criteria focus on coordination processes rather than outcomes.

The findings here show the importance of continued effort in assessing the positive benefits of coordination on peace, and, equally important, the negative impacts that may inadvertently arise – on beneficiaries directly, in terms of undermining key project goals, or on prospects for peace more broadly. This is critical because without evidence that striving to attain linkage between diverse assistance efforts matters to their “bottom line”, few actors will want to invest the considerable energy and political will involved, or be willing to accept tradeoffs and even negative consequences for other important goals. Methodologies for evaluating coordination success and failure remain a very big knowledge gap that needs to be addressed. Finally, evaluation efforts should

not be seen as an “add-on” or as a donor-driven agenda, but rather as critical to helping coordination efforts find their way. Rigorous efforts to clearly define what goals coordinated projects are fostering and how we can tell if these are achieved will help all involved better define what is desired and reduce the ambiguity and “faith-based” approach surrounding existing coordination efforts.

### The Challenge of the Role of NGOs

Today, NGOs are critical actors in war to peace transitions in that they represent a large proportion of the implementation and service delivery capacity of the international assistance enterprise from the earliest emergency stage to the handoff to host government institutions. For example, a recent World Bank report noted that in Afghanistan, money flowing to NGOs accounted for 27% of development aid in 2005, but the magnitude of the NGO role in Afghanistan only becomes clear when looking at specific sectors, for example in health care some estimates suggest that 90% of total health service delivery is carried out by NGOs and in other sectors and major programmes as much as 75%-80% of the funds are contracted through NGOs.<sup>30</sup> Though, as often noted, they represent a fantastically diverse number and array of organizations and agendas, recent years have seen the growth of NGO networks united by common principles and practices both internationally, and in-country - as with the NGO coordination bodies in existence in Afghanistan and Liberia. Though engaged often in multi-agency coordination processes with governmental and intergovernmental actors, NGOs still do not have a lot of power at the formal tables where strategies are

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<sup>30</sup> World Bank, “Service Delivery and Governance at the Sub-National Level in Afghanistan,” July, 2007, 29.

decided, though they have significant power in shaping how these strategies turn out in the field.

### Spheres for Improvement in Coordination Processes

The experience reviewed in the workshop suggests some key areas for coordination where new approaches seem necessary. These relate to people, processes, structures and principles.

#### *People*

The skills and approaches used and the personalities of the people involved matter to coordination outcomes. Participants mentioned individuals, whether military or humanitarian personnel, or diplomats, who by their energy and initiative and communication skills had been very effective at coordination in the field. In fact, good people can often overcome bad systems. But in general, across the two cases, the level of skills that groups have to bridge the big divide between unlike actors renders coordination highly problematic. Recruitment should emphasize consensus-building abilities and interpersonal and communication skills if agency personnel are to bridge major organizational divides and foster coordination. The cultivation of “good people” in these roles can also be supported through dedicated training in the necessary skills (negotiation, conflict management, consensus-building) and through rigorous screening to be sure the right people are situated in the right positions. It is imperative that properly vetted and trained personnel, who can exercise the kind of leadership that

cross-organizational and cross-cultural collaboration requires, be placed in leadership positions at all levels.

There is not enough focus on the skills required for managing conflict and engaging in consensus building processes in the way that coordination efforts are currently conceived. This is the case with civil-military coordination but also among UN agencies and NGOs that are engaged in coordination exercises within their own community and with other actors. The prevalence of “badly run meetings” in field coordination efforts across the board was noted in the workshop, as was a general inability to “win others over with arguments” and to “accept criticism”. These necessary skills should be cultivated among senior as well as junior personnel so they have the ability to engage effectively in efforts to communicate and coordinate with diverse agencies in the field. An additional consideration is that international agencies are staffed with people from a very wide range of cultural backgrounds and perspectives on power, authority, and coordination, and these differences need to be dealt with in trying to support a more inclusive, consensus-seeking process of interagency dialogue on if and how to collaborate.

### *Processes*

The processes used for interaction are a critical part of effective coordination. Experience from both Liberia and Afghanistan shows assistance actors from all perspectives are currently ill-served by existing top-down approaches to coordination, often resulting in a “false coherence,” a superficial commitment to common strategies on paper only. At best, most current approaches in Afghanistan achieve information

sharing between agencies, but they do not yield the kind of basic agreement on strategies and 'buy in' necessary for a coherent response. In Liberia, humanitarian coordination is an instructive example in that outcomes are somewhat better due to inclusive planning processes, e.g., the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) led by the Humanitarian Coordination Section within UNMIL in Liberia, but developed by the dedicated United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). The CAP and CHAP process require UN agencies and NGOs to jointly define the situation and agree on priority needs, a very important process of creating some minimal common understanding of the problems and the solutions needed. That experience, reviewed in the Liberia case study nevertheless illustrates that even between like actors (UN and NGO humanitarian agencies) questions of power asymmetry can undermine the integrity of coordination processes and cause some actors to withdraw; but overall the process of dialogue fostered by these mechanisms produces a humanitarian strategy with some basic level of "buy in" from NGOs, the UN, and donors. These processes require intense efforts and dedicated personnel and resources however and are time consuming even among the UN humanitarian agencies, OCHA and humanitarian and development NGOs that exhibit sufficiently like backgrounds, principles and modes of operation.

In Afghanistan, what stops the key political and military actors and a representative group of NGOs from sitting down to do a similar common assessment of problems and needs? From the experience reviewed, the sense is that the political and military actors sit down and create the strategy, likely acknowledging advocacy from civil society and NGOs that they have invited at various points, but without direct

representation in a way commensurate with their importance in the whole implementation enterprise. Consultations are too often held with the development community only after the fact, in particular the NGOs, and narrowly focused on implementation. The proposed Afghan Development Zones model is a case in point, where NATO's ISAF aimed to facilitate development efforts by devising a plan it thought met the needs and interests of other actors, only to face strong resistance from development actors. Effective consensus-based planning processes in other fields show that this approach rarely works, and transparency and horizontal relationships are often critical to effective coordination. Not bringing in the aid implementers into the up-front planning and not offering them a role as strategies are developed makes getting a buy-in from this critical group a difficult proposition. The more likely scenario is resistance by groups to strategies decided elsewhere.

Another important dynamic related to coordination processes in Afghanistan and Liberia was that different assistance communities, in general, had different assumptions about the very goals of the effort. The fact that groups often do not even share the same assumptions significantly reduces the chances of useful coordination emerging from such interactions.

Some analysts have argued that in cases where agencies are not committed to a common goal, explicit coordination is not appropriate or useful.<sup>31</sup> However, because the effects of the work of agencies in the security-development interface are so closely linked, they cannot realistically, separate themselves. If they choose not to interact at some minimal level, they still suffer the consequences of poor coordination. What is

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<sup>31</sup> Susan Allen Nan. "Intervention Coordination." Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base. [www.beyondintractability.org](http://www.beyondintractability.org). 2003. [http://crinfo.beyondintractability.org/essay/intervention\\_coordination/](http://crinfo.beyondintractability.org/essay/intervention_coordination/) (accessed June 2007)

needed is a way of working side by side that advances their mutually supportive agendas, but that is different from the integration agenda/top down command currently being pushed in some quarters or the overly optimistic model of self-coordination driven by awareness of the benefits among various actors. What is needed is a process that recognizes the inherent linkage between security and development efforts and strives to maximize the positive benefits from this and minimize the negative. Also critical are sincere, even-handed and widely inclusive consultative processes for devising strategies in a given area and some incentive for all groups to engage in these.

It is imperative that in trying to make progress on the coordination issue in international peace operations, we do not overestimate the importance of coordination amongst external actors. We need to keep in mind the provocative research finding that in recent international peace missions, the strength of internal processes was more important for successful recovery than coordination amongst external actors.<sup>32</sup> Some participants in the workshop pointed out that in both Afghanistan and Liberia, there has been little effort to foster this kind of internal debate inclusive of government, opposition and civil society perspectives over how to create the new state and its institutions such that the internal actors can reach some basic common positions on what they need from international actors, and what they do not.

### *Structures*

The structures defining civil-military interaction are also a critical element. The Afghan and Liberian experience reviewed shows the utility of a common organizational

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<sup>32</sup> Chetan Kumar, "What really works in Preventing and Rebuilding Failed States?" *Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars: Occasional Paper Series*, Issue 2, December 2006, 7.

structure in affecting the complex interface between security, development and peacemaking. The UN integrated mission structures in Liberia provide a way to deal with the big differences among diverse actors in a common organizational structure, though we learned little of the dynamics and negotiation between the civilian and military arms of the mission. The Afghanistan case, by contrast, shows the immense difficulties of direct interface between civilian and military actors as occurs in the PRTs, and also of working on peacebuilding issues as a loose coalition of diverse states with separate policies.

One important structural issue particularly directed at the military is the need to more clearly separate out security and development roles in practice, though they are tied conceptually. The military should focus its efforts on establishing security and resist the temptation or the push from political masters to sell its mission in humanitarian or development terms. Many recent studies have shown that populations in conflict zones appreciate security assistance first and foremost for its own sake.<sup>33</sup> The selling of the Afghan mission as a humanitarian effort to domestic constituencies in NATO member states is very problematic for humanitarian and development agencies, as noted throughout this report. Discussions revealed however that it is also not fully supported by many military personnel as it forces them to take on roles they are ill-equipped for and that create major problems with the other key actors whose role in relief and development is critical to the success of the overall outcome.

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<sup>33</sup> Antonio Donini, Larry Minear, Ian Smillie, Ted van Baarda and Anthony C. Welch. *Mapping the Security Environment: Understanding the Perceptions of Local Communities, Peace Support Operations and Assistance Agencies*, Feinstein International Famine Centre, June 2005, [http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/17F3955C-09AC-4405-B375-FD5A4FACAA8D/0/map\\_security\\_envirmnt\\_june05.pdf](http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/17F3955C-09AC-4405-B375-FD5A4FACAA8D/0/map_security_envirmnt_june05.pdf) (accessed Jan. 2007); also Diana Chigas, *Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo?* (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, July 2006). [http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/cdapeacebuildingreportkosovo\\_Pdf4.pdf](http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/cdapeacebuildingreportkosovo_Pdf4.pdf) (accessed February 2007).

Another structural issue relates to the financial mechanisms available to both security and development-focused actors. One structural reason noted why relief and development actors cannot deliver aid as quickly as the military claims it “needs” is that funding mechanisms for aid and development work often require much longer lead times, while military commanders often have access to substantial discretionary funds. Donors should consider making available more rapidly available standby funds and both donors and NGOs should develop mechanisms that would allow NGOs to respond more quickly to urgent needs in areas where there is an international military presence and preclude the need or temptation for militaries to fill these roles themselves.

### *Principles*

The lack of common principles to guide decision-making amongst diverse actors is another key problem area suggested by the experience reviewed. With some actors basing the daily strategic and operational decisions that arise on the principle of “the will of the international community as expressed by UN resolutions” and others on “humanitarian independence and neutrality” and still others on a more flexible, subjective “greater good” orientation, some clarity on basic principles is needed so that, at a minimum, the efforts of various actors do not undermine each other.

As both cases noted, the interdependence of security and development forces disparate assistance actors to attempt to coordinate, even though they often do not share common objectives. One clear difference amongst agencies that blocks coordination is the relative weight different agencies place on means and ends. Agencies that place great importance on a specific means of implementing aid work are

not willing to synchronize their efforts with other actors that do not share these values. Other actors are more willing to compromise on the means in order to get things done and get results. The example discussed during the workshop of building a strategic road in Afghanistan to open up an area of the country to development cast these differences in stark relief, with some groups emphasizing the actual road as the only important end and other groups emphasizing the governance impact of the way the road was built as equally important. If agencies could define some “accepted means” to conduct programs and lay out some clear basic common principles, this could assist groups in working “side by side” without undermining each other, even in the absence of common goals. Such an approach has been suggested by Rob Ricigliano, employing his concept of “networks of effective action” for peacebuilding actors united by some basic principles, but to date no test case has been undertaken.<sup>34</sup>

Yet finding common principles between such diverse actors is still a difficult enterprise. A general commitment to “building peace” or “helping the people” in Afghanistan or Liberia is not enough and there must be some agreement on means as well.

In terms of principles, a key challenge for the humanitarian and development community is to clarify for themselves and other actors how the concepts of neutrality and humanitarian space apply to development and reconstruction activities in such ambiguous half-war/half-peace settings. Development is an expressly political activity, working with the recognized government on building an effective state infrastructure, services, and a functioning economy. Currently, agencies engaged in development

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Ricigliano. “Networks of Effective Action: Implementing an Integrated Approach to Peacebuilding,” *Security Dialogue* 34, 2003.

work still defend the importance of neutrality and strict separation from the military, but while the need for neutrality and independence of purely humanitarian actors is accepted, this position for development actors is greeted with skepticism. There is confusion among development agencies themselves, it seems, as to the principles that should guide this development role.

Reconstruction, the primary mandate of the military in aid, is a final major grey area since often only the military have the capacity to undertake certain large-scale reconstruction efforts quickly. There are many questions that the aid community does not seem to have clear answers to. Do reconstruction activities require neutrality and if so, why? What can be done, when? Is there a legitimate role for the military in the provision of aid, when there are no humanitarian actors in a setting to provide relief? Is humanitarian space really possible in these environments? The aid community, as part of an improved interagency dialogue, needs to develop more clarity internally on these questions.

Equally, international military forces should clarify the principles that guide their involvement in these contexts. What principles should guide the military's non-military operations to ensure they contribute positively to the broader stabilization effort? How does the interdependence of security and development in these settings change the way such operations need to be planned and decisions made?

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