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# **Dilemmas in Providing Humanitarian Intervention in Ethnic Conflict**

**A thesis presented in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**Master of Philosophy in  
Development Studies at**

**Massey University, Palmerston North  
New Zealand**

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**2004**

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the difficulties of providing humanitarian assistance in ethnic conflict situations, explaining the problems and offering suggestions to mitigate the consequences.

Ethnic conflicts are complex situations that result from and exacerbate uneven development, political instability, social inequality and poverty. Humanitarian intervention has evolved to become as complex as the conflict itself. Humanitarian agencies are increasing in number and diversification, expanding their capacity to address emergency situations. As a consequence, the repercussions of assistance have also increased and the exploitation of aid by warring parties and the creation of dependency have become central concerns.

The commitment of political institutions is important for the success of humanitarian intervention yet it often remains in doubt. Unwillingness to be involved in the problems of another state or region has minimal appeal where no national security issues are at stake. The tendency to misinterpret or obfuscate the causes and processes of conflict has compromised the capability of political actors to address the conflict and its consequences. The conflicts in Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands illustrated the multifarious problems associated with humanitarian assistance and the subsequent consequences.

It is suggested the capability of humanitarian intervention in the future relies on its re-evaluation in an effort to deal with the specific aspects of the given conflict and minimise the inappropriate allocation of aid. Furthermore, reform of the processes of development in conflict and post-conflict situations is required in an effort to bolster the resilience of recipient populations to the processes conducive to conflict. The support and commitment from political actors also remains critical for the success of humanitarian intervention. The need for early assessment and pre-emptive or reconciliatory diplomacy are key objectives yet must be backed by military capabilities necessary for the protection of the providers and the beneficiaries of relief aid.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Susan Maiava and Dr. Donovan Storey of Massey University for their invaluable assistance and the contributions they made during the completion of this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance my father gave me and my family and friends for the support they have extended to me during the course of my study.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the processes of humanitarian intervention in ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflict characterises the majority of conflicts in the post cold war era and is responsible for millions of civilian deaths (Taras and Ganguly, 2002). Civilians are no longer innocent victims caught in the crossfire but have become strategic objectives of violence. They are deliberately targeted and subjected to injustices, inhumane acts and atrocities unlike those seen in traditional conflicts between opposing state military forces (Annan, 1998:56). There is a moral imperative to intervene to provide relief to the victims of conflict and this is reflected in the increasing number and diversity of non-government organisations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, and aid donors. The argument posed by this thesis, however, is that humanitarian intervention can maintain the potential to exacerbate the processes conducive to ethnic conflict.

### **Key Concepts**

It can be argued that traditionally, ethnic conflict was largely attributed to ingrained hatreds bred out of historical animosities. Typically, tensions became marked by hostility and violence when the capability of central authority failed to maintain peace (Taras and Ganguly, 2002). This view maintained that the end of colonisation and the collapse of communism was often manifested in violent ethnic conflict. The emergence of ethnic conflicts in the latter half of the twentieth century, and particularly the post cold war era, are typically perceived to be a result of the fall of these authoritarian structures. It is suggested in this thesis, however, that ethnic conflict is often a result of certain contemporary causes. For example, much ethnic conflict in recent decades can be attributed to political oppression, developmental processes and access to resources. However, conflict arising out of factors such as these typically includes ethnic components by default. For example, ethnic differentiation can often reflect geographic and economic divisions in society and, furthermore, these divisions

may be exploited by ethnic or political elites. Political and economic inequalities are sometimes non-ethnic types of catalysts that aggravate pre-existent ethnic tensions or animosities.

Responding to humanitarian emergencies created by the processes of ethnic conflict requires complex humanitarian, political, and, at times, military responses (Annan, 1998:56). As ethnic conflicts have become increasingly frequent and severe in recent decades, humanitarian assistance has necessarily increased. In 2001 USAID (2003) estimated that over 35 million people were affected by conflict worldwide. The task assumed by humanitarian aid has been to alleviate their suffering. As Terry (2002) argues, the responsibility of aid agencies was limited to accomplishing this task. Humanitarian intervention, however, has become more than an external player providing assistance - arguably it has often become a party to the conflict. Humanitarian interventions face numerous implications and many have been criticised for funding conflict and prolonging violence, arguably, creating further detriment for those they are meant to assist. Lovgren and Stoddart (1998:1) suggest delivering humanitarian aid is a more complex moral proposal than it might seem.

The nature of ethnic conflict has made it increasingly difficult to provide aid that distinguishes between legitimate beneficiaries and combatants. Anderson (1999) notes that aid given in a conflict cannot be separated from the conflict. Aid resources provided in conflict zones are often stolen by warring parties and the unstable circumstances relief is often provided in necessitates that relief actors may have to cooperate with warring parties to secure access to recipients. Access, however, may not be granted without compliance with conditions imposed by warring parties. This often means that aid agencies may have food and resources 'taxed' further contributing to the activities of the perpetrators.

Moreover, the danger faced by the providers of humanitarian relief is often the result of political inaction. Political institutions can also come to rely on humanitarian relief as an effective response to a conflict minimising their

imperative to coordinate an effective diplomatic or military response. Political institutions, therefore, often see relief intervention as a substitute for their own responsibilities. Relief aid is not a solution to conflict, and political commitment therefore remains crucial to humanitarian intervention.

## **Research Objectives**

This thesis aims to draw together a diverse range of concepts and arguments into a framework from which to analyse the conduct and the impact of humanitarian intervention in ethnic conflict situations. Much research, both in the past and ongoing, has been based on the theories and concepts examined in this thesis. However, most research has been narrowly focused in its approach and there remains a plethora of fragmented concepts and arguments. The thesis aims to integrate the various theories, concepts and arguments into a workable model utilising a series of case studies to examine the notion that humanitarian relief can be distorted in ethnic conflict situations due to a series of factors both internal and external to an intervention itself. Furthermore, it questions whether a lack of understanding and coordination in a conflict situation can be manifest in inappropriate or ineffective humanitarian assistance.

International humanitarian actors working in areas of ethnic conflict and civil war have come under considerable criticism for their involvement, particularly with regard to inadvertently maintaining or exacerbating the conflict. Public, academic and political scrutiny, with the luxury of hindsight, have dissected the operational and ethical domains of humanitarian actors in major conflicts, raising a set of central issues that need addressing.

The initial objective of the thesis is to draw together the main theoretical arguments that describe the causes of ethnic conflicts with specific focus on the contemporary causal factors. The suggestion is that this knowledge is vital to the success or failure of humanitarian intervention.

The second objective is to examine the dilemmas faced by humanitarian intervention in the context of ethnic conflicts, with the intention of providing an explanation for the problems that exist. The key humanitarian actors, including donors, the UN and the Security Council, and NGOs, are identified and their operational practices and relationships within ethnic conflict situations, the criticisms directed at them and the associated difficulties and restraints that accompany them are examined. The purpose of this is to enable identification and analysis of the potential of humanitarian intervention to facilitate or maintain an ethnic conflict through failing to take appropriate courses of action.

The third objective is to identify how important political decisions and policy have become in the pre-intervention and intervention phases, and the level of responsibility they should bear for the outcome of an intervention. This objective includes the debate over the level of political willingness and commitment given to humanitarian interventions and what role this has to play in an intervention's success. Integrated in this objective is the degree to which political institutions misinterpret or obfuscate the seriousness of the underlying causal factors of a given ethnic conflict.

The fourth objective is to illustrate the relationship between relief and development with reference to the fragmented uneven structure of development and the impact this may have on the role of development in conflict and post-conflict situations. An examination of the fundamental relationship between relief and development is an integral part of this objective. The relief-development continuum is examined with reference to post-conflict reconstruction. Following on from this, the potential of humanitarian relief and post-conflict reconstruction to break the cycle of centralised development is assessed. Accordingly, the risk that humanitarian relief may reinforce uneven centralised development is also examined.

Building on these objectives, with the benefit of hindsight, the thesis identifies a series of lessons that can be learnt by humanitarian actors. Included in this is the topical and complex debate over whether humanitarian actors should

withdraw, leaving beneficiaries to their own devices, or stay when an intervention is facilitating the conflict.

## **Methodology**

This thesis is a literature based study examining a series of concepts and theories to interpret the processes of ethnic conflict and humanitarian intervention. It also draws on three case studies in order to research humanitarian intervention in ethnic conflict situations. Firstly, Rwanda has come to signify one of the world's most serious and fastest developing humanitarian crises. In 1994 Rwanda slipped into a state of emergency and in the space of 100 days, 800,000 people were killed (Uvin, 1998). The international community's response to the genocide was delayed and has been subjected to a high level of criticism (Weiss and Collins, 2000; Rieff, 2002). The Rwandan case study was chosen because it illustrates the complications that humanitarian actors face in complex conflict situations and the difficulties of fairly allocating relief. Furthermore, it demonstrates the potential for humanitarian action to become a substitute for political action.

The second case study examines the conflict that began in Bosnia-Herzegovina in April 1992. Serbian forces, dominated by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, set out to forcibly remove non-Serbs from Bosnia territory in order to create a new set of territories and boundaries reserved for Serbs only. These actions have been termed 'ethnic cleansing' and in response to the campaign of terror, the international community became involved (Minnear, 1994). Using Bosnia as a case study enables the risks faced by humanitarian relief institutions and the difficulties of remaining impartial to be highlighted. It also portrays the importance of political will and commitment for humanitarian intervention.

The Solomon Islands case study differs from the other two in that the intervention deployed in July 2003 to break the cycle of violence and administer humanitarian aid proved relatively successful, particularly in the capital Honiara (Community Aid Abroad, 2003). The Solomon Islands, however, was initially a

political 'hot potato' that regional powers were inclined to debate but not support with an active deployment. As a result, the Solomon Islands deteriorated to become what can be termed the Pacific's first 'failed state'. The Solomon Islands case study was chosen because, in conjunction with Rwanda and Bosnia, it displays a series of factors which can cause and exacerbate ethnic conflict. Furthermore, the Solomon Islands reveal the importance of political decisions to the success of an intervention. This case study also illustrates the ability of humanitarian intervention to further the link between relief and longer-term development.

## **Structure**

The thesis comprises seven chapters. Chapter 2 examines contemporary causal factors of ethnic conflict. The causes of ethnic conflict outline the context in which humanitarian interventions operate, highlighting the complications and the evolving nature posed by ethnic conflicts.

Chapter 3 introduces the concept of humanitarian intervention, examining how humanitarian relief has evolved. The chapter continues by examining the relief-development continuum debating the potential of linking relief and development and the inherent problems accompanying this concept. The chapter also highlights the difficulties associated with humanitarian intervention in ethnic conflict situations and examines the potential for interventions to exacerbate the processes of ethnic conflict.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the key actors that provide humanitarian relief assistance in ethnic conflict situations. Examination of the main actor groups focuses on the roles played by each group and their relative ability in conflict situations. The chapter then turns to the specific criticisms associated with each actor group and expanding on Chapter 3, examines the potential they have for exacerbating the processes of conflict.

Chapter 5 places the processes of ethnic conflict and humanitarian intervention in context in a series of three case studies. The case studies provide grounds

for analysing the causes of ethnic conflict and also the speculative processes through which humanitarian intervention can fail to appropriately assess tension and conflict and potentially exacerbate and prolong conflict situations.

Chapter 6 draws on the case studies and provides an examination and analysis of the main issues surrounding ethnic conflict and humanitarian intervention. The chapter also reflects on the viability of reconstruction and longer-term development initiatives in a humanitarian relief environment.

The final chapter begins by discussing the main issues and concepts examined in the thesis. The chapter goes on to reflect the main issues, summarising the key points and the conclusions of the thesis. The chapter also examines a series of challenges and directions for future research and humanitarian intervention.

## CHAPTER TWO

# THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THEORIES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

### Introduction

The term 'ethnic conflict' has been exploited to rationalise a multitude of conflicts and civil wars. Deep-seated ethnic animosities have been cited as root causes for many ethnic conflicts. Warring parties therefore, are assumed to be predisposed to tension and conflict. This phenomenon has been exacerbated by media reports of 'ethnic' conflicts as in Rwanda and Bosnia. In conjunction, the role of virulent nationalistic ideologies has also been used in explanations of ethnic conflict. Reliance on such explanations for the cause of ethnic conflicts, at least when independent of any other factors, can be misleading considering genocide and forced assimilation and expulsion were all occurring prior to the age of nationalism.<sup>1</sup> It is not disputed that historical ethnic animosities do in fact cause and maintain ethnic tensions. However, it can be argued they display a minimal propensity to initiate violent ethnic conflict where no contributory factors are involved.

In this chapter a series of contemporary causal factors of ethnic conflict are examined. Furthermore, this chapter sets the context for the humanitarian relief interventions examined in the following chapters by providing an analysis of the most relevant causes and the varying types of ethnic conflicts that today's relief operations are conducted in. The fundamental causes of ethnic conflicts in the current era are diversified and for the majority are not initiated by a single cause, but rather a series of factors have bred tension to the point that it erupts into conflict. The diverse nature of ethnic conflict creates critical implications for humanitarian intervention. Ethnic conflict situations constantly differ and are

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<sup>1</sup> The age of nationalism from 1789 to 1911 was characterised by the emergence of strong nation-states (Hans, 1962). Yet even though nationalism served to unite peoples, it also drove them apart (for example, the U.S. civil war).

constantly evolving, complicating the efforts of standardised or unprepared humanitarian interventions.

The chapter initially examines the role of power structures and political elites and the potential they have for shaping and breeding ethnic conflict. It then goes on to explain the effects of the break-up of colonial and authoritarian rule. The political oppression that was both a part of these power structures and a consequence of their break-up, and where an oppressive role was assumed by emergent political movements and elites, is described in the next section of the chapter.

Valuable resources have always been a cause of conflict and this is no more evident than at present. The ethnic connotations that are associated with and ascribed to resource wars are explained in the following section. In the last section the economic and social factors, including inequality and the role of large-scale development initiatives and the role they play in contributing to ethnic conflict, are examined. The causal arguments of ethnic conflict this thesis offers do not purport to include all aspects of ethnic conflict but rather detail the factors most conducive to ethnic conflict, particularly in the post-cold war arena.

In this thesis the term 'ethnic conflict' will be used to describe conflicts between ethnic groups and is less concerned with the ethnic cleansing 'projects' of occupying powers such as the Nazis. In those instances, different motivations and complexities are involved.<sup>2</sup> An ethnic group or community shares an identity and refers to people who are united by a common culture, racial similarity, common religion and belief in common history and ancestry and "who exhibit a strong psychological sentiment of belonging to the group" (Taras and Ganguly, 2002:6). This is not to say, however, that ethnic groups are necessarily attributable to genetic similarities. Horowitz (1985) explains how

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<sup>2</sup> In these cases ethnic violence and the reasoning behind it is prescribed by the occupying power and native populations have no choice in the conflict save for their level of direct involvement. In some instances, even this choice can be removed by the occupying power (Peterson, 2002).

ethnic groups, albeit with varying degrees of acceptance, have a certain level of tolerance at their margins and membership may not necessarily be ascribed, although it can be achieved. Hardin (1995) suggests that many individuals join ethnic groups not because of primordial ties but because it is a rationally motivated move.

The thesis does not assume ethnic conflicts are inherently intra-state but does identify with the fact that ethnic pluralism<sup>3</sup> exists within the boundaries/borders of the majority of the world's political systems (Taras and Ganguly, 2002). While Taras and Ganguly (2002:9) argue ethnic politics and ethnic conflict take place mostly within the context of multi-ethnic societies, it is not disputed that ethnic conflicts can be borderless.

### **Fundamental Causal Arguments**

Theories of ethnic conflict vary widely across disciplines. There is no one set of factors that cause ethnic conflict and attempting to search for or explain an ideal set is somewhat futile and can lead to confusion. Brown (2001) likens the search to that of the search for the 'Holy Grail'. This chapter addresses the more common explanations found in the literature, avoiding repetition except where this may be necessary for greater clarity. It should be recognised that while the causes of ethnic conflict are eclectic, the causal arguments explained by the thesis are quite universal and therefore are not contextually specific. Rather, the aim is to provide a series of causal factors from which certain attributes can be associated with certain conflicts.

### ***History of power***

In this section, the role of historical power structures and political elites in shaping or exacerbating ethnic conflict is examined. Ethnic conflict, particularly since the middle of last century, has often (re)emerged after a period of relative

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<sup>3</sup> Ethnic pluralism refers to societies that are multi-ethnic and is not aligned with the policy of pluralism providing equal rights and separate status for ethnic groups (Taras and Ganguly, 2002).

stability that was controlled by a dominating power, most commonly in the form of a colonial administration or a communist government. Any simmering animosities were kept largely in check prior to the break-up of powerful authorities, regardless of whether the controlling hegemony bred these animosities or subdued old ones. Rwanda is an example of this. Furthermore, when a dominating power was removed, or granted independence to the country or region it occupied or influenced, a power vacuum often ensued. This was characteristic of 2003 Iraq and the former Yugoslavia.

When a dominating power is dissolved, the territory it ruled is subjected to a profound change in the power structure. Even where a predetermined government or ruling body is set to fill what would otherwise become a void as, for example, in Rwanda in the years leading up to its 1962 independence, the power dynamics usually still change significantly.

### *The Colonial Legacy*

Colonial control in Africa, for example, was largely based on the power structures of the colonisers with the addition, in some countries, of the manipulation of indigenous power structures to indirectly control populations and mediate conflict.<sup>4</sup> When independence is gained in these situations an inherently different model of political and economic control emerges. The move to independence or the removal of an oppressive regime and the subsequent removal of certain social, political and even trade barriers can be revolutionary. It can also reduce control over security and social order thus expanding the propensity for tension, conflict or civil unrest, as in Iraq in 2003. The specific processes that cause the escalation into ethnic conflict following a lapsing power structure are difficult to generalise about due to their contextually specific nature and complexities (Gurr, 1993).

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<sup>4</sup> The British employed 'indirect rule' utilising indigenous rulers and headmen in low level administration roles. The French policy, on the other hand, employed 'direct rule' where even low-level roles were filled by French administrators. Migdal (1988:104) suggests the Belgian model, like that in Rwanda prior to independence, was a hybrid case of 'quasi-direct rule'.

The type of social control colonialism fostered was important for post-colonial states. The intentional and unintentional social control policies colonisers handed to indigenous rulers, Migdal (1988:105) suggests, made crucial economic and political resources available to some but not to others in society. These differences in access had prolonged effects enabling some social organisations to maintain and establish control once colonial rule lapsed.

'Divide and conquer' ideologies of European colonisers were also practised in colonial administrations across the globe. The majority of colonial administrations made two critically flawed judgements regarding ethnic identity. The first was the forming of non-differentiating colonial borders between colonies held by different powers, ignoring cultural and ethnic divisions and popular aspirations (Taras and Ganguly, 2002). Within colonies the difficulties of this first became apparent when British colonial administrators began ruling indirectly through chiefs and headmen as, for example, throughout Africa, Sri Lanka and Punjab (Reddy, 2001). Due to the underlying need to preserve ethnic identity and coherence for this policy to be successful, the non-coherent colonial boundaries emphasised their own shortcomings.

Borders also created a double-barrelled problem that has had longer lasting implications. The geography of many borders lumped together and separated ethnic groups with little regard for history, uniting foes and dividing friends. The Kurds, for example, have been divided between Iraq and Turkey. While group identity was maintained, boundaries necessitated any opposing groups exist and operate within proximity's that allowed for less movement than previously, increasing the tendency for tension. The other side of the problem saw many individuals organising themselves into more coherent (and powerful) separatist groups, within their wider ethnic group, in an effort to alter prescribed boundaries and increase political power.

The second legacy of colonial administrations was the characteristic absent – present existence of the colonial power (Reddy, 2001). At one level colonial administrations were deeply involved and intrusive in civil societies. They had a high level of control and dominance over politics, the economy and resources.

On another level, however, the administrations were largely absent. Welfare, financial aid, civil protection, health and even education and justice services were largely not addressed (Reddy, 2001). This caused people to rely on indigenous structures to take the place of the state, reinforcing the dynamics of communal groups. This nurtured resentment of the administration and the political elite (Reddy, 2001). Resentment of the state was often carried through to a post-colonial period, manifesting itself as violent conflict that frequently had ethnic attributes resultant from the common ethnic favouritism colonial administrations had. For example, Hutus thought Tutsis were favoured initially by the Belgian administration in Rwanda (Sambanis, 2000).

Towards the end of the colonial era ethnic partition theory or 'containment' was another strategy that emerged whereby ethnic groups were kept separate (either wholly separate or divided on clear-cut lines) and unequal (Sambanis, 2000). Gurr (1993) suggests this type of strategy by the dominant power can be exercised on racial or religious beliefs, material interests, security concerns, or all three, and it can preserve ethnic identity and coherence. In Rwanda, the Belgian administration divided Hutus and Tutsis, effectively barricading them into ethnic groups. These groups were essentially based on material wealth rather than on genetic or ethnic identity<sup>5</sup> and diversion from that group was criminal, therefore denying individual rights to choose participation (Chirot and Seligman, 2001). The ethnic classification scheme introduced in 1933 categorised Rwandans into three distinct ethnic groups; Hutus (85 percent); Tutsis (14 percent) and; Twas (1 percent) (Tindill, 1997:5). Ethnically ascribed identity cards differentiated people under this system.

Historically this type of policy has favoured one group over another or others. In Rwanda, for example, the minority Tutsis, initially favoured by the Belgian administration, occupied many political positions and government jobs. When Rwanda assumed self-governance (two years prior to independence in July 1962) ethnic tensions, which arose out of what was essentially a struggle for power, led to conflict. Midgal (1988:105) suggests:

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<sup>5</sup> Rwandans were classified, in part, according to how many cows you owned.

In brief, these colonial policies [were] permitted or encouraged creating a firm base of social control for particular indigenous leaders and their social organizations.

Arguably, policy that creates partition breeds tension. The mentality that it creates can cause tension, and even escalation into conflict, when barricaded groups come into contact with other ethnic groups that may threaten (or appear to threaten) their autonomy or fundamental existence (Chirot and Seligman, 2001). In barricaded societies, where the recognition of individualism is absent, the scope to commit violence against any member of another ethnic group in retaliation for acts against a member of your group is higher (Chirot, 1995).

Beyond a handful of self-selected cases, partition theorists have not presented proof that partition is a viable and credible solution to ethnic conflict, despite its appearance as a clean and easy solution. Research by Sambanis (2000) indicated that partitions do not help prevent recurrence of civil war or ethnic conflict.<sup>6</sup> Other authors, for example, Schaeffer (1990); Etzioni (1992); Byman (1997); and Kumar (1997), argue that partition is too severe a solution, as forced population movements cause tremendous human suffering and violate important human rights. It may create undemocratic successor states, once authoritarian rule dissolves, that would be more likely to repress ethnic minorities and create new ethnic antagonisms. It also does little to resolve underlying ethnic rivalry, increasing the propensity for conflict to follow.

### *The End of Political Hegemony*

The break-up of a central authority, leading to an increase in violent widespread ethnic conflict, is demonstrated by the former Yugoslavia situation (Taras and Ganguly, 2002). In the wake of massive disinvolvement of a dominating power (or authority), there has been a high degree of transformation and liberalisation, and an increase in political assertiveness on the part of many minority groups.

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<sup>6</sup> See Sambanis (2000) *Partition as a solution to ethnic war* for further reading.

Ethnic tensions, not seen at a critical (arguably unregulated) level since World War II, were revived. The ethnic conflict between Serbs, Croats and Muslims during the 1990s and tensions in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are good examples.

Conflict, because of changing power structures, has also been attributed to the end of the cold war (see Gurr (1993); Christie (1998)). In the post-cold war era, the declining involvement of the superpowers, whose hegemony arguably stifled ethnic conflict in certain regions (for example, former Yugoslavia), led to an explosion of ethnic violence (Taras and Ganguly, 2002:31). This has been debated strongly, with some authors (see Laitin and Fearon (2002)) refuting this popular theory. They argue ethnic conflicts and civil wars are most likely occurring in impoverished, politically unstable regions that lend themselves to guerrilla insurgency (Laitin and Fearon, 2002:1). This approach argues that the prevalence of ethnic conflict is mainly the result of an increase in post-colonial conflicts and the fact that more ethnic conflicts are beginning than ending. Annually, on average 2.3 intrastate conflicts<sup>7</sup> have begun, while 1.7 have been resolved (Laitin and Fearon 2002:1; 2003).

The large increase in ethnic conflicts after the cold war may have appeared as an emerging spate of seemingly new ethnic conflicts and violent tendencies. Resurfacing pre-communist (and pre-colonial) attitudes, values, fears and hatreds, however, should also be recognised (Christie, 1998:2). These tensions can help set the scene for ethnic conflict. The gaining of independence, the break-up of central authority and the emergence of new or reconstituted political ideals can act as accelerants for pre-existent ethnic tensions. Until the end of the cold war, roles of ethnicity and ethnic conflict were largely ignored at the political level (see appendix 1 for some suggested reasons for this).

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<sup>7</sup> This figure includes both ethnic conflicts and civil wars.

## ***Power and Politics***

### *Post-colonial and Post-communist Elites*

The last section touched on the issue of political elites and their role in post-colonial states. The resentment that authoritarian systems, particularly closed systems, can generate over time can be transferred to the political institutions that form when the authoritarian system dissolves. The resentment is quite rational and can be considerable where a particular group is inadequately represented in government or is a victim of political violence or oppression by the authoritarian system (Brown, 2001).

Ethnic conflict against the ruling majority or minority can be initiated as a manifestation of resentment bred out of ethnic inequality or oppression during the authoritarian system. This type of conflict is not, therefore, inherently based on ethnic feud. Rather it is caused by the actions of the ruling elite who may (as in the case of Rwanda) be an identifiable ethnic group. However, where the ruling elite in an authoritarian system are not part of a nationalistic ethnically ascribed group this does not rule out ethnic conflict after the political transition. The resentment is transferred to the new ruling elite. The most intense conflict, however, is initiated against the ruling elite and their ethnic group where elites were perceived to be employing unjust tactics during the period of political transition or during times of political or economic turmoil in order to fend off domestic challengers to their grasp of political power (Brown, 2001:10). Slobodan Milosevic is a good example of a political elite employing such actions (Brown, 2001).

Ethnic divisions have allowed political elites to organise campaigns and institutions, and exploit markets along ethnic lines. In Fiji, for example, political elites exploited ethnicity, using the rhetoric of indigenous rights in a self-serving campaign to attempt to regain political power in 2000 (Tarte and Kabutaulaka,

2002:75).<sup>8</sup> Discrimination and exploitation against ethnic groups by elites can mobilise oppressed groups to become more politically active and compete for better equality through, for example, political and economic positions or political autonomy.

After the end of authoritarian rule, political elites may move to undo policies and institutions that caused inequality. Gurr (1993:37) explains that members of dominant groups who oppose discriminatory barriers on pragmatic or principled grounds are increasingly committing to the protection and promotion of group rights. This can, however, include the income and wealth redistribution like that seen in Zimbabwe, which built from March 2000. Groups who are considered economically and even politically superior may then mobilise to prevent the erosion of their wealth and standard of living (Gurr, 1993). Due to the majority of inequalities being inherently divided on ethnic lines this can cause tension and, in worst-case scenarios, violent conflict (Mbaku, 2001:66).

Hechter (1988) asks the question: why would people join ethnic movements led by elites acting on their behalf? The elite strategy of mobilising mass support capitalises on people's rational choice. People will inherently join a group because the probability of success is higher for a collective action. Characteristic of groups and organisations, however, is the key role that can be played by controlling the information available to the members (Hechter, 1988:271). This role can be played by elites and can be exploited to a high level. Perhaps the most glaring example of this was Hutu political elites in Rwanda brandishing Tutsis as the 'evil other' leading up to the 1994 genocide. Elites, particularly the extremists, moulded the preferences and views of the Hutu population by sanctioning the Tutsi 'other' and controlling the level and the content of information they received about them<sup>9</sup> (Hechter, 1988).

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<sup>8</sup> Factors where ethnicity is exploited for the purposes of political organisation and gain are firstly, common language and culture, and the existence of ethnic organisational structures that can allow contenders for political office to minimise transaction costs. Secondly, possession of large deposits of exploitable environmental resources (for example, petroleum, natural gas, diamonds and other minerals, etc) by an ethno-regional group. Thirdly, historical domination of some groups by others (Mbaku, 2001:65).

<sup>9</sup> This does not assume manipulation by political elites was a sole cause of the ethnic conflict in Rwanda in 1994 but recognises it as a contributing factor.

Ethnic elites may also portray themselves, and their ethnic group as a whole, as 'victims'. A victim mentality can help unite group members behind a leader. The concept of being a victim (in the past) may not, however, be legitimate but can legitimise victimising others (Richardson and Sen, 1996). It can create a tendency to treat an 'opposing' ethnic group inhumanely and ensure maintenance of control, reducing the risk to the dominating group of ever being victimised again. Gurr (1993) suggests that although oppressors may have been victimised in the past, this does not generate any sympathy or reduce any resentment on the part of the oppressed.

### *Political Oppression*

Political oppression as a cause of ethnic conflict has strong links with the role of political elites. The concept of political exploitation is the most obvious link. Political exploitation is characterised by the relationship between the dominant ethnic group and those on the ethnic periphery (Taras and Ganguly, 2002). The allocation of resources and valued roles to the dominant group is actioned primarily by political elites.

The role of elites, however, is easy to over-emphasise. Elites and manipulative power-seeking regional leaders who optimise ethnic divisions and take advantage of unequal resource and power allocations cannot alone be responsible for political oppression. Political oppression is also the result of broader causal factors. Brass (1991:247) recognises official ideologies, the structural forms of a state, alliance strategies and policies on ethnic identity formation as factors that also feed into political oppression. Political oppression has a holistic dimension that goes beyond the realm of political elites and the level to which they can have an impact on society.

Political oppression as a cause of ethnic conflict can be broken down into three interrelated parts. Firstly, the policy and the institutional strategy of particular states play a central role in differentiating and discriminating against ethnic groups in society. Political, cultural, social, and economic policies and

strategies can be employed as means to reduce the political power and voice of ethnic groups. In previous sections, the ability of historical power structures and political elites to shape or exacerbate ethnic conflicts was examined. However, government ethnic policies can also generate or exacerbate such conflict (Stavenhagen, 1996). Of course, government policies are frequently formulated to lessen, solve or avoid ethnic conflict, and this is discussed below, but history has shown that states are rarely neutral in ethnic conflicts. Some examples are discussed in Appendix 1.

Direct or indirect discrimination against ethnic groups is an inherent institutional strategy in many modern states. Certain categories of society are favoured or become exempt from inequality. This is particularly evident in non-egalitarian states and a number of reasons may be attributed to this. The state may be controlled by a particular ethnic group and a favourable bias toward that particular group, while not explicitly inherent, is a higher probability (Brass, 1991). The state will seek support in a certain sector of the general society and in doing so may afford this sector motivators or benefits in an effort to coax support. As a consequence, there is a tendency for those ethnic groups who do not benefit, and who may in fact have benefits reduced, either to develop a violent potential that may escalate into conflict with beneficiary groups or to try to capture the apparatus of the state (Mbaku, 2001:77). Migdal (1988) suggests the tendency for a state to elicit support from organisations in society and non-state actors is a characteristic trait of 'weak states'.<sup>10</sup>

Where the state is dominated by an ethnic group or facilitates or formulates the organisation or the dissolving of ethnic groups, ethnic conflict has a higher propensity (Brass, 1991). In these states the potential for neutrality is made more difficult. A series of obstacles compound this difficulty. For example, groups involved in ethnic conflict almost inevitably require some form of state support. Not providing support and allowing conflict to continue may jeopardise national security. Providing support, however, reduces the state's impartiality,

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<sup>10</sup> The term 'weak states' is used by Migdal (1988) to describe those states that were largely failing to penetrate society and extract resources, particularly third world states since independence.

particularly as usually only one group will require support (for example, military humanitarian support).

The task of remaining neutral through inaction, however, is equally difficult as it, in effect, means support for the status quo (Brass, 1991). Refusing to rectify an imbalance between groups in society will subsequently prolong conflict and promote anti-state feelings among the oppressed. Moving to balance an inequality, as discussed earlier in the chapter, would almost certainly create resentment among those facing reduced benefits, wealth and/or political power and economic control.

The tolerance exerted by liberalism, however, does not exempt a liberal state from the problems associated with state neutrality.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the level of tolerance liberalism promotes can be contradictory. Kernohan (1998) asks, for example whether a liberal state should tolerate the view that women should be subordinate to men. In a liberal setting the answer is relatively obvious and tolerance of such a view goes against the premise of liberalism to 'commit to the equal moral worth of all members of society'. An over-emphasis on tolerance, therefore, comes at the expense of equality (Kernohan, 1998) thus implicating the state in a similar situation as above where a series of obstacles challenge neutrality.<sup>12</sup>

A second aspect of political oppression as a cause of ethnic conflict is where ethnic divisions in society are bred by political power, through competition for resources or power, or out of a historical feud, inherently creating some form of ethnic discrimination, particularly against the less dominant ethnic group. Political oppression is a phenomenon that states may exacerbate through the

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<sup>11</sup> Dworkin (1990:3) argues "Liberalism commands tolerance; it commands, for example, that political decisions about what citizens should be forced to do or prevented from doing must be made on grounds that are neutral among the competing convictions about good and bad lives that different members of the community might hold".

<sup>12</sup> See Dworkin (1990); Parekh (1990; 1994; 1995); and Rawl (1993) for a counter argument to liberalism and its premise. Parekh claims that the liberal devotion to individuality, autonomy and personal liberty rests on a limited, modern European view of human life and human fulfilment, which leads liberals to condescend to other ways of life and to feel entitled to dominate other cultures for their own good (Brown, 1999:80).

promotion and support of pre-existent ethnic divisions. Whether these divisions are purely racial or result from the effects of state policy, political elites or tensions over resource availability and control or political power, the state may exploit them to further its ends. The value of political gains to the majority of states is arguably very high (Stavenhagen, 1996). The exploitation of ethnic divisions by states can legitimise this practice for the dominant societal group.

The state can effectively create the mass mobilisation of political oppression. Groups that are subjected to oppression and who perceive themselves as oppressed<sup>13</sup> may then initiate conflict as they struggle for equality. The state mobilisation of dominant ethnic groups as vehicles for oppression thus reduces the level of violence directed at the state. Employing other forms of oppression and discrimination (other than state oppression), for example, violence and intimidation, against subordinate groups and members can normalise oppression (Kernohan, 1998). People usually think of oppression as something that only a state does to its citizens. Kernohan (1998:6), in contrast, argues that when oppression is brought about by the actions of citizens themselves, it takes on a more subtle role.<sup>14</sup>

A third and critical aspect of political oppression as a cause of ethnic conflict concerns the historical context of a region. Political oppression can be rooted deeply in the history of power in a nation or region. Gurr (1993:35) highlights how European rule created or reinforced hierarchies among conquered peoples because colonisers had almost invariably favoured some traditional rulers and tribes over others.

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<sup>13</sup> It is important to recognise there is an argument that many members of subordinate groups find oppression and overt forms of discrimination natural, acceptable and normal. The most common reason is that they believe their requirements and livelihoods matter less than those of the dominant group. "They fail to notice overt forms of oppression as wrong because they implicitly believe in their own unequal worth as persons" (Kernohan, 1998:7).

<sup>14</sup> See Mill, 1991 for further reading.

## ***Resource Scarcity and Allocation***

Conflict over valuable resources has always existed, from an individual level up to the international level and it has often been associated with ethnic, tribal, religious and nationalist antagonisms (Klare, 2001). Over the last century, Klare argues competition over water, land, oil, natural gas, timber and minerals have been the primary initiators for resource conflicts. While oil and large water reserves are more likely to spark inter-state wars between established nation-states,<sup>15</sup> certain other valuable resources may provoke conflict within states, usually between ethnic and political factions that are already divided over a variety of issues (Klare, 2001:190).

This section comprises two parts – resource wealth and resource scarcity. While the two are interrelated and often overlap, there are certain fundamental differences. Furthermore, often both wealth and scarcity can be part of the same problem. Renner (2002:9) notes that some analysts have argued that it is either resource wealth or resource scarcity, but not both, that gives rise to conflict but then argues this is a false dichotomy, providing an example from Bougainville:

The island of Bougainville ... is extraordinarily rich in copper. Scarcity factors (the environmental devastation from mining operations in the form of contaminated rivers and decimated crop harvests) triggered conflict on the island as much as the wealth factor (disputes over the unjust distribution of revenues from copper mining).

### *Resource Wealth*

Resource wealth generally refers to non-renewable resources such as minerals (although timber, a nominally renewable resource, can also be important)

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<sup>15</sup> The water conflicts in the Jordan and Tigris-Euphrates River basins or oil conflicts in the Persian Gulf are examples where nation-states have been involved in conflicts (Klare, 2001).

(Renner, 2002:9). Ross (2001) argues recent studies have correlated the relationship between civil wars and natural resources and de Soysa (2000) and Elbadawi and Sambanis (2001) suggest states relying on natural resources for a large portion of foreign revenue face a much higher risk of conflict. Arriving at a similar conclusion, Collier and Hoeffler (1998; 2000) found a curvilinear relationship between a state's natural resource wealth in a given year, and the likelihood it will suffer from civil war over the next five-year period. Although not directly applicable to this research, an opposite perspective, according to Ross (2001), is that conflict may produce resource dependence (through reverse causality) due to the collapse of the manufacturing sector. For example, localised ethnic violence or insurgency may drive manufacturing firms away. A third perspective is both conflict and resource dependence are based on a weak rule of law whereby the state has difficulty attracting investment. Natural resource dependency increases as a result, while the outbreak of conflict is attributed to the weak rule of law (Ross, 2001).

Determining the role of resource wealth in the outbreak of conflict is split between creating grievances that exacerbate the tendency to engage in conflict, and the use of valuable resources as a tool for funding conflict. Where available, states will usually exploit valuable natural resources, however, this may involve a heavy dependence on outside investment and an associated fall in the revenue available to the state. In many poorer resource-rich countries a large proportion of revenue may go to debt servicing and accrue to foreign investors and business elite and local people will usually see little of the financial benefits that natural resources can potentially provide. While local populations endure most of the disadvantages such as expropriation from land and environmental damage, they are often left out of consultation about resource extraction.

The fair allocation of resources can be more important than the net benefits that resources actually provide. Where recipients do not deem wealth and resource allocation fair they will, arguably, always strive toward better allocation. This can attract groups that may claim they are driven by the denial of their rights, unjust land expropriation or depleted water and soil resources, or numerous

other associated grievances. Bougainville and the Indonesian province of Aceh illustrate this.

Renner (2002:9) suggests that groups initiate violence not necessarily to overthrow a government, but “to gain and maintain control over lucrative resources” - typically one of the few sources of wealth and power in poorer societies. According to Renner, weakened, poor or repressive governments, crumbling social services, lack of economic opportunity and deep social divides can aid this. Such divides, particularly ethnic divides, can be between a dominant ethnic party or elites, and minorities, or due to geographical factors. In many cases a sought after resource is concentrated in a region that a particular ethnic group occupies (Klare, 2001:190).

Resource wealth can also prolong conflicts. The pillaging of valuable resources, like for example, diamonds, can allow conflicts to continue, including where they were triggered by other factors. Natural resources offer rebel groups a unique funding opportunity, because they typically produce rents and are location-specific, and can be looted on a sustained basis (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000 cited in Ross, 2001a:9). Looting or extorting money from businesses, on the other hand, is less sustainable as it may force them to relocate or close down (Ross, 2001a).

Access to valuable resources can enable payment for combatants, money for weapons and ammunition, and payments for warlords or corrupt elites. Conflict is therefore not only fuelled by valuable resources but fighting may evolve into a resource war as resource-rich territories are sought out. The fighting over diamond-producing areas of Sierra Leone, Angola and Liberia, involving rebel groups and warlordism, demonstrates these characteristics (Klare, 2001).

### *Resource Scarcity*

Resource scarcity, on the other hand, is more concerned with resources that can be traded (and looted) such as land and timber (Renner, 2002). Conflict over the scarcity of resources has always been a dominant characteristic of

warfare. Resource conflicts figured prominently in the inter-imperial wars from the 16<sup>th</sup> century through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and laid the groundwork for World War I (Klare, 2001). Many authors argue, however, that conflict over valuable resources, and the power and wealth they confer, has become more prominent.<sup>16</sup>

A series of interrelated forms of resource scarcity contribute to the propensity for conflict. Firstly, entrenched poverty and a heavy dependence on natural resources is often one of the primary causes behind civil wars. For example, for a country like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the late 1990s, with deep poverty, a collapsing economy, and huge mineral exploitation, the risk of civil war was incredibly high (Collier et al, 2003:58).

At a local level, conflict over the availability of necessary resources is characteristic of many tribal wars. Access to degraded land (for hunting, grazing or cultivating) and depleted water resources, and even to stock, can create tension or aggravate previous grievances. Groups may feel worse off if other groups improve their material condition while they remain at their previous level (Smith, 1998). Scarcity can have psychological as well as physical effects and desire may become confused with need.

Resource depletion may occur through natural population growth, immigration or environmental degradation, including that by an outside actor (for example, mining operations). Natural population growth in itself has a low propensity to contribute to ethnic conflict, as it is a gradual process to which populations usually adapt. Conflict is common where migrating groups encroach on the resource base of another group (for example, the Solomon Islands). This migration may in fact be a result of a population swell elsewhere (Smith, 1998). Migration may also take an economic form where corporate enterprises move infrastructure for the purpose of resource extraction thereby reducing the available benefits to the local population. Environmental degradation, often

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<sup>16</sup> See Collier and Hoeffler, 1998; Klare, 2001; Renner, 2002.

because of corporate enterprise can also be attributable to over-population, exploitation and natural disaster.

Resource scarcity and resource competition have relatively few ethnic connotations. However, when dispute over resources is mixed with ethnic tension the potential for conflict increases. This does not assume scarcity is an effect of ethnic tension, but argues a lapse into conflict can be sparked by the social tension and disruption that is associated with resource scarcity.

Secondly, the international demand for valuable resources coupled with an ever-diminishing supply has serious implications. It increases the stress on resource-rich regions increasing the propensity for damaging extractions<sup>17</sup> and intensifying the struggle to control valuable resources. The lack of policy and control of many governments (particularly poorer governments) over resource extraction can increase the level of environmental degradation. It may also increase the level of discontent populations feel toward governments or certain elites. Small-scale conflicts like skirmishes, roadblocks and human rights abuses by state forces and rebel groups are the most common form of violence where tension escalates (Renner, 2002).

Conflict over the demand for scarce resources is arguably more prevalent where resource extraction is illicit. Friends of the Earth UK estimates, for example, that 50 percent of tropical timber imports into the EU are illegal (Global Witness website, 2003). Illicit extraction exists where non-state groups (or corrupt elites) award illegal concessions to companies or through the looting of resources. Rebel forces, for example, lend themselves easily to plundering resources. Renner (2002:13) identifies logging as a relatively straightforward activity offering a quick return for little investment. A small number of combatants with chainsaws and trucks can generate a substantial revenue flow. Alternatively, civilians may be pressed into operations, or rebel forces may 'tax'

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<sup>17</sup> Open cast mining and logging for example, cause tremendous levels of erosion and surface run-off and increase the probability of flooding. Heavy metals may also poison waterways and render farmland unusable.

those engaged in resource extraction or extract ransom before allowing resources through to their intended destination (Renner, 2002:12).

The access to resources or associated revenue, in most circumstances, involves the exploitation of another group or population. Violent human rights violations or land expropriation are methods used to de-populate areas with valuable resources. Ross (2002a:2) argues:

Most of the violence in resource-related conflicts is directed at civilians. Since establishing undisputed control over resources is a key objective armed groups seek to intimidate the local population into submission or use terror to drive people away.

Kaldor (1999:90) identifies extreme measures of intimidation including spreading landmines, shelling hospitals and homes, chopping off limbs, inducing famine through imposing blockades, and inflicting systematic sexual violence. Looting and resource battles in the DRC ongoing from 1998, and in Sierra Leone in 1991-2000, initiated prolonged conflicts<sup>18</sup> (Ross, 2002a). Conflict over scarce resources is prolonged, if need be, by those groups who are living off the lucrative benefits (Renner, 2002). Resource scarcity in this sense is not real but rather is politically and economically induced as central government, external forces or illicit trading groups extract and remove resources without returning profit to the source.

### ***Economic and Social Factors***

#### *Poverty*

The incidence of conflict is often related closely to the level of poverty in a region. Eight of the ten countries with the worst Human Development Index and the lowest GNP per capita, for example, have had major civil wars in the last 20

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<sup>18</sup> Conflict was also initiated by looting and incentives posed by predatory groups in the Republic of Congo in 1997 and in the DRC in 1996-97).

years.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note, however, that not all ethnic conflicts are related directly to the level of poverty. The former Yugoslavia, for example, appeared to be relatively better off than many regions that had experienced ethnic conflict.

Poverty and economic inequality are closely related to the differential access groups have to scarce resources (Gurr, 1993). For reasons outlined above, many communities have been pushed into resource-poor regions and consequently their economic well-being has declined. In situations like this, deprived groups are likely to seek redress and where this fails conflict may ensue.

Societal stress resulting from poverty can also be a major contributing factor to sporadic or endemic conflict. Poor economic growth, low food production per capita and human indicators like infant mortality rates are factors that tend to increase societal stress (Frances, 2000). Although poverty mediated stress alone is not likely to lead to widespread ethnic conflict, other factors, which have been previously outlined, in combination with this, may provoke a rise to this level.

Some authors dispute poverty as a cause of ethnic conflict. Miller (2000) argues poverty is not a proactive factor for creating conflict. He notes that if poverty were to become a thing of the past, there would be no assurance that conflicts that were assumed to be wholly or partially attributed to poverty would also be eliminated. While in practice this situation is unlikely, Miller (2000:1) believes ethnic conflicts are characterised by tribal, religious and ethnic rivalries that political elites exploit to mobilise support for conflict, and/or by the desire for money or hegemonic power.

While poverty touches directly and indirectly on conflict, conflict also affects many aspects of poverty. Causality works both ways. Poverty leads to conditions that are conducive to violence, yet evidence suggests that civil wars

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<sup>19</sup> Major civil wars have occurred in Sierra Leone, Burundi, Mozambique, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Ethiopia and Eritrea (Frances, 2000:1,12).

are a major source of poverty (Frances, 2000:1).<sup>20</sup> Conflict has the potential to impoverish or further impoverish populations or groups who are implicated (not necessarily by choice) in conflicts. As a result they can become implicated in what Collier et al (2003) term a 'conflict trap'. This is a downward spiral whereby conflict accentuates poverty and economic and political disadvantages that in turn increase tension and the propensity for conflict.

### *Conflictory Modernisation and Unequal Economic Development*

This conflictory modernisation approach,<sup>21</sup> Newman (1991) argues, is characteristic of urbanisation.<sup>22</sup> Urbanisation, which emerged out of modernisation and the unequal development and industrialisation that characterised it, was not only a process that caused the widespread competition for occupational positions and economic opportunities. People also tied their condition to the plight of a larger social group and this became a tool for promoting their economic and political demands (Newman, 1991). Newman (1991:465) suggests that this reinterpretation of the relationship between modernisation and ethnicity had a profound influence on the study of ethnic political conflict. It was no longer dismissed as primordial identity that would soon dissipate.

The processes of modernisation and economic development will be considered in two parts. The first will explain the relevant processes of the modernisation paradigm with reference to urbanisation and industrialisation, and the role of modernisation in the political arena. The second section will outline negative impacts of economic development at the local and regional level.

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<sup>20</sup> See also statistical evidence of the link between poverty and civil war produced by Auvinen and Nafziger (1999).

<sup>21</sup> For further reading, see Connor (1973); Smith (1981).

<sup>22</sup>Urbanisation has some parallels with 'social strain' theory. Strain theorists argue unintegrated citizens – which emerge out of the disintegration of traditional integrated society – will grab hold of an anachronistic ethnic identity (Newman, 1991:455). The urban arena provides the ideal setting for this. Ethnic identity may resurge temporarily, manifested as an ethnic political conflict seeking redress. This perspective, however, argues ethnicity would eventually subside and thus has all but disappeared as evidence – in the form of continued ethnic conflict – largely disproved it (Newman, 1991).

The shift from tradition to modernity has not been the great success it was originally expected to be. The expectation of academic thinking until the 1960s and 1970s was that primordial, 'backward' traditional alliance to clan, tribe and region would gradually wither away as modernisation proceeded and that these would be replaced by new forms of identity (Reilly, 2002:12). In reality quite the opposite occurred and group identity was strengthened, in part as a reaction to change and the division of labour<sup>23</sup> and social upheavals. Geertz (1963) was one of the first to hint that modernisation might play a role in the enhancement of ethnic conflict. Connor (1973) also argued that economic modernisation does not undermine ethnic divisions but rather invigorates them. He argues that ethnic groups are brought together through competition for economic niches and that heightened interaction can lead to conflict.

Economic development has been a curse for many of the world's impoverished communities because it is inevitably uneven and centralised, inevitably producing social tension, as the case studies will demonstrate. Economic development can be uneven across sectors and regions and the agricultural sector, regarded as the poorest sector in many developing countries, is often the most neglected (Richardson and Sen, 1996). Gurr (1993:42) notes that economic differentials have occasionally been created and reinforced by deliberate social practice and public policy.<sup>24</sup> Discriminating economic practices are often interpreted as an attempt to oppress a minority group and radical members of a group may protest this deliberate discriminatory economic development. The associated competition accompanying economic discrimination and deliberate uneven economic development provides fertile ground for breeding discontent and animosities toward majority groups and the state.

Centralised economic development also has indirect impacts. Models of economic development not only allocate disproportionate and inadequate levels

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<sup>23</sup> See Emile Durkheim (1933).

<sup>24</sup> For example, the restrictions imposed by the Indonesian government on the economic activities of the Chinese minority, and the deliberate discriminating policies by the South African government that restricted employment opportunities for black workers.

of development for rural sectors, increasing the incidence of poverty, but also promote the urbanisation trend. It is widely assumed rapid industrialisation typically brings about a high level of economic growth that is broadly diffused throughout urban centres. This is a recurring theme and has been a draw card for millions of workers in many countries to migrate to urban centres for better job prospects. As people move to urban areas in search of work they are better organised to make demands on regional and national governments. Furthermore, unrealistically high expectations that are often unfulfilled can leave young men, in particular, hostile and prone to radicalisation. A pool of supporters is therefore left for ethnic and religious organisations that seek redress (Richardson and Sen, 1996). The aspirations, coupled with the animosities such groups can possess, can be potentially volatile and may escalate into rebellion and violence if attempts at redress fail or are countered by other groups or the state (for example, the Solomon Islands). The tendency toward violence is multiplied where other factors like, for example, poverty and resource conflict, are also implicated.

### *Social Discrimination*

Certain aspects of cultural and religious discrimination and differentiation have been addressed previously but for the most part they have been a by-product of other factors that contribute to ethnic conflict rather than a direct causal factor. Blatant discrimination against ethnic minorities purely because of their social, cultural or religious differentiation is less prevalent than other types of factors that cause conflict. In other words, although many conflicts are fought along ethnic lines, ethnicity is not the root of inter-group violence in all instances. Discrimination on an ethnic basis, however, can still have very violent consequences. This is considered in two sections: Historical grievances, and religious and cultural antagonisms. The first section (historical grievances) is largely concerned with objective history. The second is more focused on subjective history.

Historical hatred has often been used by journalists to explain ethnic conflict in Europe, Asia and Africa (Taras and Ganguly, 2002:25). A central theme of this

argument is that ethnic relations can become violent where central authority becomes weak. The collapse of the Yugoslav authority under elites like Tito, therefore, saw Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Kosovars, Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims and Montenegrins regress back to violence (Woodward, 1993). However, the argument tends to largely ignore a multitude of other factors, such as political oppression, uneven economic development or immigration.

Despite its indiscriminate usage by the likes of journalists, the theory does have certain legitimate applications. There are authors, however, who largely deny that ethnic conflict can be attributed to historical feuds and grievances providing strong supporting arguments for this.<sup>25</sup> Conflict between ethnic groups, which has a historical context, can be a result of both cultural perceptions and myths, memories and stereotypes, or because of actual events in history. While the two are interrelated, the former is based on a series of cultural and social perceptions about another group rather than direct reference to concrete facts. This perspective can often be subjective and is addressed below.

The reference to actual conflicts or historical discrimination in history by a group can re-ignite a degree of vengeance. Characteristic of almost all ethnic groups involved in historical ethnic conflict, however, is a reflection on the past. This can be viewed in three parts – ancient past, colonial past and recent political past. The latter two have been examined previously. Eller (1999:31) notes that ancient history may be a period of great honour and glory, or humiliation and dishonour, such as a great military defeat (or a combination of these). Ethnic groups do not inherently act out violently on past issues. History may offer competitive reasoning but some groups, which could advance on this, may see no tangible benefit of doing so (Eller, 1999). Certain groups, however, may be motivated to take advantage of historical situations. Group motivation, where their history is associated with humiliation and dishonour, may create a desire for revenge and redemption, even many years later (Eller, 1999:31). Factors that initiated conflict in the past may be recycled (like for example, disputes over

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<sup>25</sup> See for example, Frances (2000); Laitin and Fearon (2002; 2003); Hildyard (2003).

homelands) but motivation for re-ignited conflict is also often fuelled by a sense of pride and retribution.

In terms of racial, cultural and religious beliefs differences these have historically been a source of conflict between groups (Landis and Boucher, 1987). These attributes often inflame a conflict that may emerge from a different source or they may be a primary cause of tension. Cultural and religious backgrounds, belief systems and social values differentiate and shape people and group thinking and their perceptions of themselves and others. The difficulties groups have communicating with each other is attributed to this (Rabie, 1994). Rabie (1994) suggests this happens when different groups place different values on the same things causing contradictions and conflicting viewpoints. The conflict between religious groups throughout the world is characteristic of this type of difference.<sup>26</sup>

Group perceptions can be based on collective memories, the memories of ancestors, or on stereotypes. These can portray false images and create antagonisms toward other groups. Also important is the different values that different cultures place on certain human actions (Rabie, 1994). Dehumanising other groups for example, due to their ethnicity or religion is often characteristic in severe conflict as a means of justifying their mistreatment (Rabie, 1994).

The socio-cultural processes that initiate ethnic conflict often include the institutions that manage the social and cultural affairs of a state (Rabie, 1994). Promoting cultural heritage and emphasising traditional values and belief systems are methods the state or political or religious elites can use. Rabie (1994:213) notes that in doing so “older cultures are revived, ethnic ties strengthened, and a new wave of conservatism, religious fundamentalism, and

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<sup>26</sup> Christian fears, for example, that the Muslim Palestinians threatened their survival helped spark Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war that was fought largely by Israel-allied Lebanese Christians (Moaveni, 2001:31).

nationalism is fast emerging in most parts of the world".<sup>27</sup>

## Summary

This chapter has examined a range of explanations for the causes of many of the world's ethnic conflicts. The aim was to examine and describe a series of explanations that ethnic conflicts could be identified with, including where numerous causal factors were apparent, thereby acknowledging the diversity inherent in the causality of ethnic conflict.

In surveying a range of causal arguments the chapter has identified the key processes creating the conditions conducive to ethnic conflict. Uneven centralised development models that emerged out of de-colonisation and a breakdown of authoritarian rule, and the drive to economic growth, coupled with the tension installed by manipulating political elites are key processes. The chapter also identified social and economic inequality as a key factor in many, if not the majority of, ethnic conflicts. Inequality is a powerful motivation and is exploited as such. Inequality, including political oppression, can be shaped and moulded by elites, separatist groups and combatants to mobilise public sentiment. The suggestion is that violent ethnic conflict is not often instigated by ethnic differences or grievances, but by social and economic catalysts that have ethnic connotations attributed to them.

The term 'ethnic conflict' can be confusing, connoting that ethnicity is the root cause of conflict. Frequently conflicts assume an ethnic dimension because of socio-economic divisions in society. Once ethnic division and tension become dividing factors in a conflict, however, they remain so and most other causal

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<sup>27</sup> Eller (1999:41) also comments that groups (or group elites) or institutions may "manufacture (out of disparate pieces and scraps of history and culture...) and disseminate a past that is partly fallacious... but which is thereby no less powerful or effective". The manipulation of religious symbols for violent ends can include alleging that members of one religion blasphemed another. Bock (1997:18) suggests that this can be with reference to a "holy book; claiming that the destruction of a sacred space (such as temple, mosque, or church) of one religion was carried out by a conspiracy of adherents of a different religion... in a disrespectful and destructive way".

factors can have ethnic differentiation attributed to them. The us-them politics is very hard to break. Richards (1995) argues ethnic tension can also become an opportunity for rebellion, rather than a cause of it. That is, ethnic tension can be used as a vehicle or a mode to act out violently even though it may not be the original basis for dispute.

The implications for humanitarian interventions in ethnic conflict situations therefore are complex and volatile. The diverse nature of ethnic conflict limits the potential of an intervention unprepared for the specific conditions of a conflict. A standardised approach incapable of adjusting and evolving will not suffice. The following chapter highlights the difficulties and the problems that arise for humanitarian actors in ethnic conflict and post-conflict situations.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HUMANITARIAN RELIEF AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

#### Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of humanitarian intervention examining the difficulties it faces in ethnic conflict situations and the potential it maintains to inadvertently exacerbate conflict. The chapter begins by examining the advent of humanitarian relief in conflict situations. It examines the change from humanitarian relief delivery for battle-wounded soldiers to humanitarian intervention for the benefit of non-combatants ravished by the effects of ethnic conflict. The chapter continues by examining the relief-development continuum and debating the possibility of linking relief and development.

Following the debate over linking relief and development, criticisms of the relief-development continuum and linking relief and development are examined. Furthermore, the fundamental problems with traditional centralised models of development are examined. Lastly, the crucial criticisms of humanitarian intervention and the potential implications it can have through exacerbating tensions and supporting warring parties are examined.

#### The Advent of Humanitarian Relief

Humanitarian action is in the nature of human kind. Political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) commented, "It is pity which carries us without reflection to the assistance of those we see suffer" (cited in Weiss and Collin, 2000:16). Providing assistance on humanitarian grounds is not only motivated by human traits of pity or benevolence but is also grounded in morality and justice. Islam, Judaism and Christianity, for example, all have principles of humanity and human conduct (Weiss and Collin, 2000). Proverbs, Chapter 3 verses 27-28 states, "Refuse no one the good on which he has a claim when it

is in your power to do it for him. Say not to your neighbour, 'go and come again, tomorrow I will give', when you can give at once".

The principles of humanity have been evident during warfare throughout history and the first laws of war were proclaimed by major historical civilisations. The *Viqayet*, for example, a text written near the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century at the height of Arab rule in Spain contains a code for warfare (ICRC website, 2003). The majority of laws for war were, however, scattered and fragmented. Important advances in humanitarian relief for wounded soldiers in conflict situations came with the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the 1864 Geneva Convention.

In 1863, Henri Dunant, inspired in part, by what he witnessed at the Battle of Solferino in 1859, founded the Red Cross in Geneva. He set the precedent for seeking sovereign authority approval for politically neutral humanitarian intervention (Weiss and Collin, 2000:13). The Red Cross principles were codified in the 1864 Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in the Armies in the Field at the Diplomatic Conference held by the Swiss government at the prompting of the ICRC (Weiss and Collin, 2000:14; ICRC website, 2003).

Since 1864, a series of movements and conventions have codified and institutionalised humanitarian relief. The International Peace Conference held at The Hague in May 1899 was attended by 26 governments and resulted in the negotiating and signing of three conventions regarding international dispute resolution (UN website, 2003). Weiss and Collin (2000:18) note the importance of these conventions as they showed that a large number of governments could, "negotiate in the collective humanitarian interest... and the snowballing effect of conferences and conventions surrounding humanitarianism and human rights began to roll". At the second International Peace Conference held in 1907, 54 governments were represented and the three conventions were revised.

In 1919, following World War I, the League of Nations was created under the Treaty of Versailles. The United States, however, did not ratify its membership, for fear of loss of control over foreign policy, and by the 1930s Japan, Germany and Italy had withdrawn from the League (the Soviet Union was expelled shortly after for invading Finland) (Weiss and Collin, 2000:21). The end of the League of Nations was confirmed by its failure to prevent World War II. The atrocities of World War II, however, re-ignited humanitarian ideals and the UN was created to help manage humanitarian law. The UN Charter was signed in June 1945 by representatives of 50 countries (later signed also by Poland) and came into existence in October 1945, once ratified by the United States, the United Kingdom, China, France and the Soviet Union (UN website, 2003).

Despite the contradictions found in the text of the UN Charter<sup>28</sup> a series of UN resolutions have furthered humanitarian principles. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted to legitimise the rights of non-combatants to security (UN website, 2003). While not legally binding,<sup>29</sup> it provides an ideal that all ratifiers agree is worth aiming for (Weiss and Colin, 2000). In 1988, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 43/131, which recognises the rights of non-combatants to international assistance and the role of NGOs in humanitarian emergencies. Resolution 45/100 re-affirmed these rights in 1990 and endorsed cross border operations and other methods of facilitating humanitarian access (Weiss and Colin, 2000; UN website, 2003). Article 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that occupying powers must ensure the well-being of the host population. Additional Protocol I of 1977 prohibits the 'starvation of civilians as a method of combat' and more relevantly, Additional Protocol II requires the 'protection of civilians of non-international armed conflicts'.

The spate of intra-state conflicts since the end of the cold war intensified the level of humanitarian assistance required. Numerous Security Council resolutions and various international responses regarding humanitarian

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<sup>28</sup> See Weiss and Collin (2000) for detailed examination.

<sup>29</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights directly challenges Article 2(7) of the UN Charter in that it supersedes the rights of states against non-intervention by outside states.

concerns have accompanied this and have been more prominent than at any time in history. These responses, however, have been seemingly ad hoc. The UN was overwhelmed to a degree by the accelerated increase in number and severity of intrastate conflicts and it failed to meet the challenge. The UN relied heavily on NGOs during the early 1990s as a result of its inability to deal with the extra workload.<sup>30</sup> Weiss and Collin (2000:30) suggest the failure to base interventions on enduring institutions remained a central problem. The idea of linking relief and development, explained below, attempts to counter the neglect to address these issues.

### **The Relief-Development Paradigm**

The 1990s saw an intense debate over the role of relief in conflict situations and its relationship with development (Sollis, 1994; Galperin, 2002). Sollis (1994:451) argues it was widely assumed that relief efforts and development initiatives were separate, even mutually exclusive. This assumption has been reinforced by the disparity between relief and development activities and organisations. MSF (Medecins sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders), for example, directly specify themselves as an emergency relief agency specialising in short-term intervention (Andrews, 1998:23). On the other hand, many NGOs and bilateral aid agencies are concerned primarily with long-term development initiatives. Distinctions between development and relief can also be found within agencies. NGOs like Oxfam and Save the Children and certain UN agencies are similarly compartmentalised (Andrews, 1998; Smillie, 1998). UNDP and UNHCR, while coordinating with each other, represent the two different orientations of short-term relief assistance and longer-term development.

The classical view of relief and development as different ends of a continuum remained through the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s, in part, because attempts to create a synergy between the two were rare (Smillie, 1998). In

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<sup>30</sup> The UN began setting up an increased number of negotiated access programs for NGOs to administer humanitarian relief in places like Bosnia.

practice, the first approach was based on an assumption that emergencies requiring relief were an interruption in a process of otherwise linear development and that separate specialised agencies worked with the respective situations (Bidder, 1994). This type of approach has long been standard practice for natural disaster relief – development is interrupted by a disaster, requiring emergency relief and reconstruction, which would then subside and ‘development as usual’ would resume (Smillie, 1998:xxiii). The other approach recognises the relief-development continuum also emerged out of conventional inter-state warfare. Smillie (1998:xxiv) suggests there is a natural desire to see the end of war and work towards peace, reconstruction and development, to minimise relief and dependency and to emphasis self-sufficiency and independence.

Increasing numbers of intra-state conflicts throughout the 1990s, however, have highlighted the importance of strategies conducive to linking relief and development. Conflicts have been critical in highlighting the need for change. Complex intra-state conflicts do not always briefly interrupt a process of development then subside. Such ‘emergencies’ are increasingly becoming more frequent and protracted. Differing from natural disasters and even inter-state conflicts, complex intra-state conflicts also introduce unforeseen and unpredictable factors, including those in post-conflict situations. Animosity and tensions between ethnic, religious, or socio-economic groups in close proximity may negate normal development processes.

Development agencies and donor governments have slowly begun to acknowledge the more holistic thinking and practicality of linking relief and development. Traditionally UNDP and UNHCR, for example, represented the two extremities of the continuum. Now UNDP, which rejects the continuum idea, has set up an Emergency Response Unit beginning in 1997 diverting five percent of its core resources to ‘building bridges’ between relief and development activities (Smillie, 1998:xxvi). This was an effort by the UN to solve its coordination problems between the emergency and development agencies and to ensure relief did not breed long-term dependencies (Duffield, 1994a:40). It followed the original framework of the agreement that UNDP and

UNHCR signed in 1987 on 'cooperation with regard to development activities affecting refugees and returnees' (UNHCR, 1989).<sup>31</sup>

Academic literature has strengthened the emphasis on the benefits of linking relief and development.<sup>32</sup> Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994:3) outlined five reasons why the linkage has received increased attention. The first is concern over increasing portions of aid budgets being spent on emergency relief and how this should be integrated with development aid. Second is the awareness that emergencies can make subsequent development more difficult by diverting resources from local institutions and by creating new command chains. Thirdly, rehabilitation has become more important, especially due to the effects of war and its association with famine. Fourthly, compartmentalisation between relief and development is artificial and irrelevant as far as the poor are concerned. Lastly, linking relief and development may allow interventions that can help mitigate the effects of emergencies but also provide safety nets ensuring food security.

Despite the slow shift in thinking and justifiable reasoning for linking relief and development, the theory cannot be described as a mainstream concept in practice. Typical of most theories, this theory has implications that reduce its capability. Traditionally, relief has had political considerations but has not been tied to political conditionality or the recognition of a legitimate host government. This was the domain of development aid (Macrae and Leader, 2000; Galperin, 2002). Linking relief and development, however, blurs the distinction. Duffield (1998:86; 2001:5) argues that developmental relief introduces conditionality through the backdoor and humanitarian relief is no longer given without expectation of a return. It can also justify the withholding of humanitarian relief.

The crucial implication this introduces is the collapse of humanitarian relief as politically neutral and impartial. The compromised impartiality of humanitarian

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<sup>31</sup> Between 1993 and 2000, for example, UNHCR and UNDP, in accordance with the agreement, facilitated the repatriation and reintegration process in Northwest Somalia by rehabilitating and reconstructing water, infrastructure, agriculture and environmental projects.

relief is potentially dangerous in an era where the most complex emergencies are intra-state conflicts. Merging relief and development initiatives with the expectation that it should contribute to longer-term goals (for example, decreasing people's vulnerability to emergencies) is complex in intra-state conflicts and should not always be assumed as the appropriate action.<sup>33</sup> The theory, after all, derives from a natural disaster model that pays little attention to political or ethnic factors (Duffield, 1994a). The potential of relief activities, where linked with reconstruction and development activities, is examined in Chapter 6.

There should be no illusion as to the difficulty of linking relief and development within intra-state conflict (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell, 1994). Despite the increasing level of aid budgets being diverted into relief operations in protracted conflicts, the ability of such operations, traditionally focused on health, nutrition, shelter, physical protection and water/sanitation, to work toward long-term objectives has restrictions (ibid.). Arguably, the diverse and unpredictable nature of many conflicts and restrictions (particularly where political conditionalities are in place) due to physical dangers or blockades, undermines development initiatives. Mass population movements, particularly in protracted conflicts, for example, make ongoing projects difficult.

Improving people's resilience, thus reducing their vulnerability to emergencies, a key objective of development, can be sporadic and inefficient. Mass population movements of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), host government policy, or security (for example, ongoing conflicts, particularly intra-state conflicts that draw in non-combatants) make sustainable development initiatives difficult.

Despite the difficulties, intra-state conflicts are highly situation-specific and experiences have shown that a linkage approach is possible. Working to

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<sup>32</sup> See Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994); Eade and Williams (1995); Longhurst (1995); Smillie (1998).

<sup>33</sup> Merging development initiatives with relief demands a longer term, and thus more expensive relationship, which has not been the strong point of relief aid or its providers.

support health institutions and staff, including psychological health is one key area (Seaman, 1994; Walker, 1994). The decision by Save the Children Fund in Somalia to work with local doctors and nurses rather than importing autonomous medical units is a good example of an alternative approach (Seaman, 1994).

The success of linking relief and development in protracted conflict, Duffield (1994a:43) argues, is based on moving away from supporting transitory populations to attempting to work with indigenous structures in the thrall of protracted crisis. At an institutional level, this includes changing funding and management structures necessitating the commitment of political institutions. Galperin (2002:15) notes that in protracted conflicts, there is no room for short-term engagement and planning timeframes. It also necessitates changes to personnel regimes and their ethical frameworks (Duffield, 1994a). Developmental relief efforts may help to mitigate some of the negative aspects of relief work while development initiatives that are more aware of the challenges of ethnic conflicts may enable better preparation of populations to deal with emergencies. The transitional recovery and rehabilitation process that acts as the intermediary between relief and development is still, however, an evolving concept. Chapter 6 examines this concept further reflecting issues raised by the case studies.

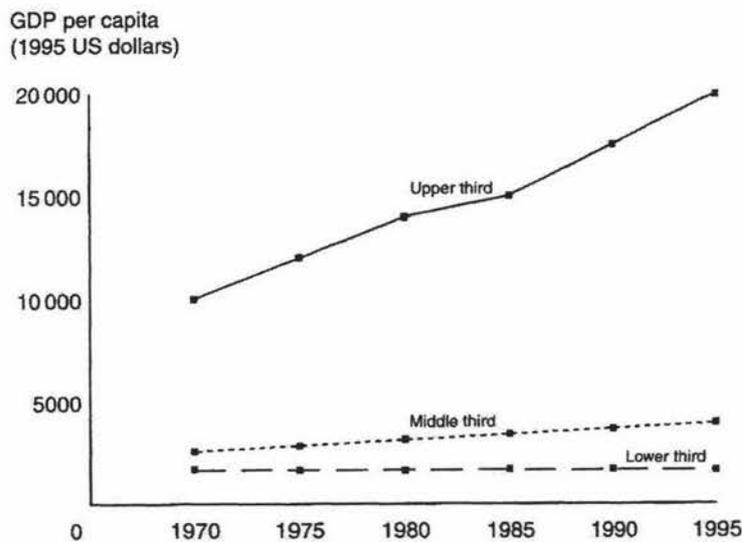
### **Failed Development**

The difficulties inherent in linking relief and development are compounded to a large degree by the fundamental problems and shortcomings associated with each individual concept.

The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crime have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work (Sachs, 1992:1).

Poverty and inequality have persisted despite gains in economic and social development. The harsh reality is that while the progress of development has been beneficial in certain social spheres, others have suffered increased deprivation (Kothari and Minoque, 2002). Increasing disparity between rich and poor countries and between people within these countries challenges the consensus that development has been successful (the continually diverging incomes of rich and poor countries are illustrated by Figure 1). Rather, it contributes to the argument that large-scale centralised economic development models based on the premise of capitalism and modernisation have exacerbated and maintained the conditions conducive to social tension and conflict.

**Figure 1: The Diverging Incomes of Rich and Poor Countries**



Source: Kothari and Minoque (2002).

Schuurman (1993; 2000) suggests that development reached an impasse due to a crisis at two levels in the 1980s: a crisis in the Third World with regard to increasing poverty levels, inequality and deprivation and a crisis in development thinking where dominant theories and paradigms, which had dominated understandings and explanations of the world, were being challenged and losing hegemony. Andre Gunder Frank (1966) argues:

We cannot hope to formulate adequate development theory and policy for the majority of the world's population who suffer from underdevelopment [because] ... most of our theoretical categories and guides to development policy have been distilled exclusively from the historical experience of the European and North American advanced capitalist nations.

The traditionally dominant centralised development theories have come to be seen as hegemonic orthodox ideals that are too deterministic. This is reinforced by Frank's (1966) argument that condemns the Western-centred perspective. Hettne (1990) condemns the dissemination of 'Eurocentric'<sup>34</sup> theories to the third world as a form of academic imperialism. Hettne's research attempts an understanding of the Eurocentric thinking of these Western development ideologies. Cowen and Shenton (1995:41), however, argue that Eurocentric thinking is inherent as the conditions that gave rise to intentional development first arose in Europe.

The issues on the development agenda – economic growth, poverty reduction, the reform of trade regimes, debt reduction, democratisation, social development and sustainable development, which Kothari and Minoque (2002:2) suggest are standard priorities, have been complicated by conflicts. Andrews (1998:23) argues, "severe poverty and conflicts are more prevalent after four decades of 'development' than prospects for support to long-term growth". This suggestion concurs with the argument outlined above that relief, which has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon, and development strategies, which traditionally have been separate, need to converge.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Hettne (1990:36) refers to Eurocentric development thinking as development theories and models rooted in Western economic history and consequently structured by that historical experience.

<sup>35</sup> See Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994); Smillie (1998) for further examination.

## **Criticisms of Humanitarian Relief**

Accompanying the fundamental problems associated with the broader concept of development are also the criticisms of humanitarian relief including its potential to exacerbate tensions and conflict already heightened by uneven development, poverty and inequality, and to further fuel conflict by providing combatants the means to sustain fighting.

### ***The Failure to Link Relief and Development***

Some broad difficulties inherent in both the relief-development continuum and in linking the two strategies were explained above. Keeping in mind the fundamental problems associated with the individual concepts of development and relief, there is also, however, a series of criticisms relevant to the failure to link relief and development and the implications these have in the field. These warrant more detailed analysis.

The main criticism of the failure to link relief and development is that, arguably, it has reduced the efficiency of both strategies and undermined the potential of future development by each remaining distinct and separate from the other. Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994:2) suggest that better 'development' can reduce the need for emergency relief, better relief can contribute to better development and better rehabilitation can ease the transition between the two. It could be argued that in a sporadic ethnic conflict prior development might be sparse and thus have little effect on relief operations responding to the conflict. For the majority, today's ethnic conflicts are, however, protracted and occur in underdeveloped regions that have been the subject of development projects or processes in their past. Rwanda and the Solomon Islands, for example, were both recipients of foreign development processes.

Arguably, once relief becomes linked closely with development it introduces political conditionality and loses whatever element of impartiality it may have had. Relief, however, may not necessarily need to become an extension of development. Rather, relief interventions may operate in ways conducive to

facilitating better, yet separate, future development initiatives. There is also a widely held assumption, noted by Galperin (2002:15), that once situated in a supposedly, “apolitical world of neutrality and impartiality”, relief is now seen to fuel conflict. The subject of relief fuelling conflict will be expanded on later in the chapter.

The lack of attention paid to recovery and rehabilitation, crucial elements to the success of linking relief and development, has also been criticised. Essentially, it can leave a void of infrastructure and social and economic services after a conflict thereby increasing people’s vulnerability and maintaining dependency.<sup>36</sup> For a number of months after coalition forces invaded Iraq in 2003 this was characteristic of the situation. It was also a serious concern regarding the Australian led intervention into the Solomon Islands in 2003, examined further in Chapter 5.

### ***Exacerbating Tension and the Failure of Relief***

Since the end of the cold war humanitarian relief has increased and is now present, often in significant proportions, in virtually every humanitarian crisis in the world, providing valuable and credible assistance. In this new era, however, the innocence about the impacts of relief is lost as we realise the side effects of large-scale humanitarian interventions on the recipients and on the economies in conflict zones and war-torn regions (Anderson, 1998). Anderson (1998:137) notes, even as it saves lives and reduces human suffering, humanitarian assistance can also reinforce the fundamental circumstances that produced the needs it temporarily meets. The Red Cross suggest many negative effects are often unexpected and neglected (ICRC website, 2003).

The negative effects of humanitarian intervention have been widely documented as having serious implications and can potentially have widespread ramifications including some for humanitarian relief workers.

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<sup>36</sup> Duffield (1997) notes research has not yet provided conclusive systematic evidence of relief-induced dependency but it is a popular concept in UN, NGO and donor documents and statements.

## *Problems Associated with the Allocation and Distribution of Relief*

The 1990s have seen a succession of clear-cut instances of major international aid interventions whose aftermath has not left the desired legacy. The results have not been commensurate with the money spent nor the hundreds of thousands of man/woman hours devoted to the task. What is the reason for such a failure? (ICRC, 2003:82).

### The Problem of Uneven Allocation and Distribution

The first and most obvious problem relief allocation and distribution faces is the tendency to neglect (purposely or otherwise) certain regions, or on a global scale, countries. The direct implications can be continued deprivation of the benefits associated with humanitarian relief. The reasoning for this suggestion is three-fold. Firstly, relief aid often targets particular groups or regions because they are the most in need and relief resources are frequently very limited (Anderson, 1999). Aid, therefore, is prioritised based on a legitimate basis. However, targeting specific groups, experience has shown, often reinforces group divisions rather than linkages (Taras and Ganguly, 2002). The problems associated with unequal distribution are explained below while the wider ramifications of a divided society were explained in Chapter 2. Despite knowing the consequences, many relief agencies recognise it as the only realistic way of assisting the most vulnerable (Anderson, 1999:46). Anderson (1999:46), for example, notes that in Tajikistan an aid agency initiated a post-war housing reconstruction program targeted toward those who suffered the most damage. This group, the Garmi, however, had also lost the war (this is characteristic of situations where humanitarian relief is provided) and the Kulyabi, who won the war, resented the fact that international assistance was re-strengthening the 'enemy'. They saw this as a political rather than a humanitarian act.

Secondly, the apparent uneven distribution of relief aid, or deployment of humanitarian agencies in particular regions may be associated with the risks associated with security concerns. The problem is exacerbated by poor

transportation routes or infrastructure<sup>37</sup> or where humanitarian relief workers are only allowed to work at the mercy of warring parties (SAIS, 2003). The failure to distribute relief therefore can be inescapable (or at least until tensions reduce or humanitarian workers are accompanied by adequate protection).

The third argument is more controversial. The bias of relief allocation and distribution, from local to global levels may be influenced by media attention. Relief is often provided with the highest intensity where media coverage is the best. This is detailed further with specific reference to NGOs in Chapter 4.

When relief aid is not provided equally or even when the profits and wages associated with relief aid is inconsistent among local employees (as examined below) inter-group tensions (referred in Chapter 2) can be fuelled. As Anderson (1999:46) notes, differential benefits from aid can reinforce inter-group tensions in conflict areas. Contempt can be bred toward both the recipients and the provider of aid. Strategies by the disaffected parties may include political, social or economic discrimination, abuse (verbal or otherwise) against recipients, the thieving or confiscation of aid from both recipients and aid agencies or the imposition of blockades (Cremer, 1998). Anderson (1999:46) suggests that when aid is targeted toward certain groups and others are excluded, competition between them can be fuelled. This can contribute to the concept of resource competition explained in Chapter 2. In extreme cases, it can increase or prolong conflict. This is examined in more detail below.

It could be argued, therefore, that the fair allocation of aid becomes more important than the total benefits provided due to the potentially volatile situation that ethnic division coupled with conflict provides. For example, by not paying attention to the distribution effects of relief aid, tensions were exacerbated between Tamil and Muslim communities in Eastern Sri Lanka and between resident and refugee populations in Pakistan (Hulme and Goodhand, 2000:12).

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<sup>37</sup> In many situations, inadequate infrastructure increases the risk of theft and insecure compounds can put staff at greater risk.

The fair allocation of aid, however, can be problematic in itself. Cremer (1998:4) makes a point suggesting there is no solution:

Even when a relief organisation endeavours to distribute aid equally among different regions, representatives of the various regions may take the view that their region should be the only one to receive assistance.

This raises the question, what is the fair allocation of aid and who should decide? Is equal distribution among groups fair and is the provider of aid the most appropriate body to make the decision? Arguably, this kind of decision should be made based on the dynamics of a specific situation. It reinforces the importance of humanitarian agencies understanding the processes and the causal factors of ethnic conflicts. This is an important point as failing to do so inevitably increases the potential of humanitarian intervention to exacerbate the processes of conflict through their inappropriate or irresponsible actions in the specific context.

These two theories – providing aid to specific groups/regions or providing aid fairly and evenly - both have valid points and problems. Ethnic conflicts are very diverse as highlighted by Chapter 2 and are regionally specific. Humanitarian relief interventions – like ‘horses for courses’ – need to adapt to suit the specific situations and determining which method to use in a conflict is a critical decision that needs to be made by specific agencies or by a coordinating body like the UN. For example, in East Timor, UNTAET was the coordinating body providing broad direction and some guidelines for other humanitarian agencies. This was a reasonably successful model but has only been employed at this level once in the past namely in Kosovo.

### The Problem of Dependency Creation

In regions where relief is allocated there is potential for recipients to become over-reliant on aid. In many circumstances this is unavoidable as the means for food production may have been destroyed and relief aid is the only source of

food. However, a criticism that is becoming more frequent suggests relief aid may encourage people that are not displaced or otherwise seriously affected to abandon their productive activities in an attempt to acquire the same goods and services provided to the displaced (Weiss and Collin, 2000:135). Weiss and Collin (2000:120) note local populations in Afghanistan mingled with IDPs as they queued up to receive their daily rations. Distinguishing between local settled populations and IDPs has become increasingly difficult for relief workers. Chapter 6 argues the tendency of relief to promote or exacerbate dependency on aid, or population movements, can unintentionally feed into and maintain pre-existent structures of centralised uneven services and development.

The argument for linking relief and development outlined earlier in this chapter is a valid method of promoting the re-creation of production means to minimise the long-term effects of dependency. Dependency, however, can be hard to break and the criticism that relief aid creates dependency is key and is reinforced by advocates of the development approach. The central theme of this argument suggests relief aid is frequently provided too early and for too long (Weiss and Collin, 2000).<sup>38</sup> Further, where the sudden arrival of relief aid occurs it is argued IDPs and settled populations may not be able to avoid the dependency trap as overwhelming aid can displace recipient's indigenous coping mechanisms (ibid.).

The provision of relief aid can be assumed (by donors and relief agencies) as effective in its delivery of food, shelter, sanitation or medical assistance (Anderson, 1998). As noted above, the ramifications of this can be the creation of dependency. However, this concept can also be expanded to include a substitution effect. Large-scale relief operations particularly, run the risk of freeing up resources available locally allowing their usage by rebels for the

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<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to note that newly emerging humanitarian emergencies can be favoured over protracted crises (UNICEF, 1999). The case of Kosovo and East Timor, both of which received high levels of attention and funding, can be contrasted with Angola, Uganda, Tajikistan or until very recently the DRC, which are under-funded yet some of the worlds most needy countries (UNICEF, 1999).

purposes of war. This implication and the associated consequences will be examined in the next section.

### The Problem of Unbalancing Local Market Economies

Reaching further than the creation of dependency or a substitution effect is the compromise of existing economic or 'coping' networks (ICRC, 2003). Many interventions overlook the economic side effects. Humanitarian intervention will never be economically neutral for the recipient country and a series of impacts ensue (ICRC, 2003). Services such as accommodation, restaurants, fuel suppliers and even brothels can be boosted or spring up as large humanitarian operations begin (SAIS, 2003). This immediate development creates winners and losers. Jobs and wages are provided for local people employed by relief agencies or local service providers. Prices are also inflated for commodities and rent prices relief agencies are paying, artificially boosting the local economy.

However, the poorest and most vulnerable members of society may find themselves unable to pay the new cost of living (SAIS, 2003). Where agency salaries for local employees are higher than the local average a salary race may occur as agencies try to retain the best skilled labour. This subsequently drains the domestic public and private sector of skilled labour resources effectively creating an internal 'brain drain'. The influx of cash, which is not generally long-term, particularly if in hard currency, creates problems when restoring credibility to the domestic currency. It can also undermine the national authority's control it may have had over monetary policy (ICRC, 2003:82). The use of hard currency also affects the exchange rate and can have wider implications when agencies use the black market rather than official exchange rates.

A slightly perverse implication occurs when humanitarian relief aid can reinforce the interest in perpetuating the 'war' economy (Anderson, 1999). People whose livelihood is linked to war-related enterprise, including where employed by relief agencies, develop a stake in the continuation of the conflict (Anderson, 1999).

Anderson (1999:42) notes the thoughts of one Bosnian truck driver employed by an NGO:

Driving the aid convoys during the war was dangerous, but this seems like nothing compared to the dangers of peace. Not only my immediate family but also my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins depend on my income. I almost dread this peace and wish for war again.

### The Problem of Aid Channelled into Elite and Political Camps

The large influx of funding that has the potential to sustain the livelihoods of local entrepreneurs and employees alike, in conjunction with those for whom the aid is destined, is also in danger of being siphoned by local and political elites. Misallocation or redirection of aid in this respect can occur at all levels from within the boundaries of refugee camps or in a wider sphere where certain ethnic groups or subgroups, or political groups have a greater ability to coerce aid or redirect it into their own pockets. The role played by elites and elite groups in ethnic conflict situations and the means by which they can disadvantage other groups and further their own ends was examined in Chapter 2.

As noted above some agencies direct relief aid at specific groups in society or at a certain region to minimise the misuse by those not in desperate need. In a similar way to the methods used to try to reduce settled populations from becoming dependent on the aid destined for IDPs, this stops more powerful elite groups further disadvantaging the poor by becoming relatively better off. This type of allocation, as seen above, creates additional problems. It raises questions about neutrality and can also increase the instances of corruption and inter-group tension as certain groups try and address what they may perceive as inequality issues. In the most serious instances, it can provoke (further) violent attacks on recipient groups and humanitarian aid providers.

## The Problem of Recipients and Providers as Targets of Contempt

Corruption is endemic in many emergency situations subject to intense influx of relief aid. The ICRC (2003:83) notes some of the less assuming forms that corruption can manifest itself in and how relief agencies can be implicated. These include, accepting loose financial controls, accepting some misuse of funds or project proposals that appear 'obviously' over-exaggerated, accepting high levels of wastage in in-coming goods, tolerating certain levels of pilferage,<sup>39</sup> ignoring organised prostitution in refugee camps, or excepting the levying of internal taxes on food aid.

The most serious consequence of aid breeding contempt is violent reprisal by armed groups. In today's civil wars and ethnic conflicts, civilians rather than military forces are often targets of the opposition. Providing relief for civilians may be perceived as 'feeding the enemy' and thus humanitarian relief agencies can become threats to the warring party. Violent reprisal can take two main forms. Firstly, warring parties can target recipient groups directly and act to stop or undo humanitarian efforts. Andrews (1998:118) notes that in Zaïre (now DRC) in 1996-97 there were 'cat and mouse' relations between humanitarians and the military. Humanitarian agencies would request permission to visit a region thereby alerting authorities to the presence of refugees and soldiers would be sent out before humanitarians to break up refugee settlements. In May 1997, the High Commissioner for Refugees required all 'active search and rescue missions' cease due to the detrimental impact they were having and only passive 'receptor' missions were to continue (ibid.).

Secondly, humanitarian relief agencies are targeted directly and may face increased instances of theft and also hijacking, kidnap, beatings or murder (Weiss and Collin, 2000). In 1996, for example, six Red Cross relief workers, including nurses from New Zealand, were shot dead in their beds in a Red Cross hospital in Chechnya, while in Congo in 2001, six more Red Cross

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<sup>39</sup> In Afghanistan, for example, during the latter years of the cold war, donors were prepared to accept 'wastage levels' of up to 40 percent (Nicholds and Borton, 1994; Hulme and Goodhand, 2000).

workers were brutally murdered on an allegedly safe road near Bunia (BBC website, 2003). Since 1992, over 180 UN civilian relief workers have also been killed in conflict situations (Weiss and Collin, 2000:119). Research at the John Hopkins School of Public Health found that not only had deaths among relief workers increased, but also 67.5 percent were intentional killings largely in 'cold blood' (Acharya, 2003:1).

### *Problems Associated with Relief Workers Themselves*

Relief workers are frequent witnesses to many of the world's dire humanitarian tragedies and human rights abuses. The work they carry out in conflict situations has always been dangerous but the danger has intensified since the end of the cold war. The targeting of relief agencies has become common. The bombing of the Red Cross headquarters, for example, on October 27 2003 in Baghdad killed two Iraqi Red Cross workers.

The bombing of the UN headquarters in Iraq that killed 22 UN staff provides further evidence of this. With the increased pressure on humanitarian aid workers comes increased stress. Many aid workers subsequently overwork to try to overcome the distress of their environment (Terry, 2002). Psychological trauma and cases of 'burn-out' are common, hence the characteristically high staff turnover of humanitarian relief agencies operating in conflict situations.

High turnover, however, is not the only consequence. Relief workers make many decisions<sup>40</sup> in the field based on personal knowledge, conditioned in part by their own history, assumptions and motivations or knowledge availability, taking into consideration their mandates and donor directives (Weiss and Collins, 2000). The often ad hoc or rapid deployments of humanitarian

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<sup>40</sup> Decisions that fieldworkers must make include choosing between drawing noncombatants to permanent food centers or keeping food distribution mobile and hoping that noncombatants find it. They choose between giving money, food and equipment to belligerents in exchange for access to noncombatants or refusing relief diversion that might fuel the war further. Field workers decide when a refugee camp is full and they must turn away noncombatants. Worst of all, when supplies are limited, field workers must choose which of the noncombatants have the best chance to survive if given food and medical treatment (Weiss and Collins, 2000:119).

interventions can limit the level of knowledge relief workers have about their area of intervention. The rapid deployment of relief workers in East Timor in 1999, for example, was associated with a high level of ignorance regarding local culture, values and resource base (Haddon, 2002). One of the key issues that led to relief worker's inability to integrate relief into local communities was the reliance on standardised international practices that were assumed to be applicable and appropriate (Haddon, 2002).

Relief workers often suffer from a lack of professional training. Weiss and Collin (2000:119) attribute this not only to rapid deployment but also to under-funding and a lack of attention paid to institutional learning. New staff who are deployed early or almost immediately into conflict situations with little training or background knowledge compound the vicious cycle. The resulting high staff turnover then creates a further logistical problem.

Military personnel can also suffer from a lack of specific knowledge and training (considered in more detail in Chapter 4). Save for specialist forces trained in expeditionary operations such as U.S. Marines, military training does not encourage personnel to adjust their behaviour to suit conditions in the field. Combined with the soldiers lack of understanding of NGOs and IGOs (inter-government organisations), this has led to numerous problems (Weiss and Collins 2000:122).

It could be argued that a lack of 'appropriate' training or background knowledge has the tendency to allow 'attitude problems' among aid workers to emerge. There are a number of circumstances, however, which are conducive to inappropriate actions, even among seasoned aid workers. Firstly, the feeling of powerlessness can lead to aid workers not taking responsibility for their actions. Feelings of powerlessness emerge when staff feel they cannot do anything to change their surrounding situation. Anderson (1999:58) notes a common feeling:

I can't do anything to change this. It is the fault of my headquarters (or the donors or the local people or the evil warlords). Because I am

not in charge I cannot control everything that affects me, I am not responsible for the impact of my limited actions.

The ramifications of not taking responsibility for ones inappropriate actions are then explained as someone else's fault (Anderson, 1999).

Another coping strategy is presented when aid workers detach themselves from the situation they are working in. Terry (2002) suggests becoming detached from the people that aid workers are trying to assist eases guilt and frustration. Workers may isolate themselves or concentrate on more measurable tasks to help deflect attention from emotionally or ethically disturbing areas (Walkup, 1997; Terry, 2002:226). These authors argue, however, that once aid workers can no longer detach themselves they transfer guilt toward other factors such as donors, politics or even victims and recipients.

Aid workers may also act in ways that increase tension and suspicion of their actions. This may well be because they are afraid or apprehensive. Unfortunately the reaction may be to act too assertively or to act with superiority toward soldiers and warring parties, thus becoming provocative and increasing tension unnecessarily (Anderson, 1999). Although difficult to condemn due to the nature of many difficult situations aid workers are in, there is a real need to address this issue at a training level. Walkup (1997:45) accepts there are many constraints but argues numerous agencies are reluctant to admit that their policies or actions may contribute to the problem. Walkup (1997:46) attributes this in part to a notion that some have that benevolence should be above harsh scrutiny and judgement (This is expanded in Chapter 4).

A further attitude problem often arises relating to the mistrust and disrespect aid workers can have for other actors working in emergencies. Aid workers have often reported that they have bad-mouthed other agencies (Anderson, 1999:56). This can be because of differing religious outlooks, personality clashes among staff, politics or donor favouritism or because of dispute over methods used or competition (Anderson, 1999). While direct negative consequences regarding inflammatory effects on the conflict are arguably

negligible, it is suggested messages can be conveyed to recipient groups. It may appear that it is unnecessary to cooperate with people they do not like. Anderson (1999:56) notes these attitudes permeate and underlie the inter-group conflicts that shape the space within which aid is provided. Such behaviour can also be recognised by recipients as similar to that of warlords thereby discretely legitimising their actions.

### ***Relief as a Fuel for War***

Relief interventions in ethnic conflicts always have the best intentions but for many the negative consequences are inescapable. The argument that relief fuels war is widely discussed in literature<sup>41</sup> and among critics of relief work. Certain relief workers and agencies also accept, although hesitantly, that negative consequences are associated with relief workers in conflict situations.<sup>42</sup>

Theft is the most direct and widely recognised process whereby relief aid fuels conflict (see Table 1). Warring parties can steal food, medical supplies, vehicles or fuel, money, blankets and communications equipment to finance their efforts (Anderson, 1999). They can either directly use stolen resources to feed or equip combatants, or exchange or sell resources to purchase items such as weapons and ammunition. In 1994, aid agencies in Liberia had 74 vehicles, 27 trucks and 18 motorbikes stolen during ethnic conflicts. In Monrovia by 1996 over 400 aid vehicles had been stolen and over US \$20 million worth of equipment and relief goods were looted by warlords (Bryer and Cairns, 1997:366).

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<sup>41</sup> See Bryer and Cairns (1997); Anderson (1999); Rieff (2002); Terry (2002).

<sup>42</sup> Fiona Terry (2002), Director of research at MSF was the founding aid worker in the English-speaking world to publicise a book; *Condemned to Repeat*, about the consequences of good intentions.

**Table 1: Humanitarian Aid Contributing to the War Economy**

Type of Contribution	Level		
	Macro	Meso	Micro
Legal	Import Taxes  Immigration fees Warehouse rental Purchase of food  Taxation of salaries Airport/port charges Administration fees Exchange rates	Housing rental  Car rental Truck rental Purchase of locally manufactured products Taxation of salaries	Assistance to local authorities   Purchase of local raw materials  Taxation of salaries
Gray area	Obligatory employment of certain staff	Obligatory employment of certain staff Taxation of recipients	Employment of guards  Taxation of recipients
Illegal	Government misuse of aid Bribery and corruption Black market purchase and currency exchange	Checkpoint extortion  Looting materials from aid agencies Protection rackets  Inflated population numbers	Checkpoint extortion  Looting recipients after distribution trading in looted goods

Source: Terry (2002:35).

Theft of resources is one of the simpler forms of exploiting aid, requiring basic knowledge of storage or distribution points and small numbers of armed combatants. Also relatively simple is the confiscation or ‘taxing’ of aid at roadblocks or checkpoints. Anderson (1999) argues that in reality, where warlords control geographical areas, they have the right to expect aid agencies will comply with their rules, which may include taxes or restrictions. Armed groups allow relief convoys to pass only if they receive part of the cargo. This was common in Bosnia where the confiscation of at least 30 percent at checkpoints was normal (Bryer and Cairns, 1997:366). In Somalia some UN officials claimed losses of 80 percent (Terry, 2002:41).

Extortion by rebels is another means of acquiring funding and resources. This may include relief agencies having to pay to be allowed access through

checkpoints or to those in need. Kidnapping of relief workers and hijackings are also means of extracting funds and resources. More substantial 'taxing' has also been reported. Cremer (1998:4) notes that the governments of Ethiopia and Sudan de facto taxed expenditures by aid agencies by overvaluing national currencies. Charles Taylor also demanded 15 percent of all aid entering the territory he controlled in Monrovia in 1995 (Terry, 2002:39).

Less direct means of extorting resources from aid agencies for the purposes of war include manipulating the good intentions of humanitarian relief. Large aid distribution camps and refugee camps are ideal targets for warring parties. Combatants can acquire food by falsely registering as needy (Cremer, 1998). Relief camps can also provide safety zones and sanctuaries because of their protected status under International Humanitarian Law and Refugee Law allowing registered combatants to further extort food from legitimate camp dwellers (Terry, 2002). Walzer (1992:186) argues, if civilians had no rights at all, or were thought to have none, it would be of small benefit to hide among them. Combatants both camp dwelling and not, may also tax local employees working in camps.

Perhaps the worst case of combatants infiltrating refugee camps was in Goma after the Rwandan genocide when killers reinvented themselves as leaders of refugee camps, supported by aid agencies, under UNHCR (Hilsum, 1999). Hilsum (1999:318) argues the camps became safe haunts for war criminals, and bases for guerrilla attacks. Details of militia and terrorist attacks were scattered throughout the camps after they were broken up. Camps, like those in Goma, can also serve as recruiting grounds for rebel forces and may facilitate some in training initiatives.<sup>43</sup>

Terry (2002:7) argues that despite the serious implications of refugee camps becoming militarised there has been little recognition of the scale of the problem. The refugee camps in Rwanda and Zaire are perhaps the best known

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<sup>43</sup> For detailed analysis on the benefit of refugee camps to combatants, see Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo (1989) *Escape from violence*.

for harbouring warring parties but camps throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East have also provided sanctuary. Terry (2002:7) highlights how Kenyan refugee camps gave humanitarian sanctuary to some of Somalia's warring factions in the early 1990s and in 2003 Burundian rebels occupied camps in Tanzania, while Sierra Leonean rebels are allegedly in refugee camps in Guinea. In 1971 Pakistani refugees were trained in Indian camps before rising up to create the state of Bangladesh (Terry, 2002:7). There have been similar occurrences around the world including in Sudan, Angola, Ethiopia, Libya, Pakistan, Mexico, Thailand, West Timor and Papua New Guinea.<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, it can be argued aid agencies have little ability to stop infiltration by combatants and security in refugee camps can be difficult. UN official Fabrizio Hochschild (cited in Rieff, 2002:54) argues people would be screened in the ideal world but in reality the sheer number of people and limited staff negates this. In some circumstances, even where combatants or those guilty of war crimes are known within refugee camps, aid agencies are limited as to what they can do. The sustainability of many aid agencies (and refugee camps) is based largely on moral concern. If aid workers were to substantially address the issue of combatants or war criminals in camps, such as those in Bosnia, Rwanda and Afghanistan, it would, through the media, inevitably become a public concern and neither donors nor the general public would sit very well with providing funding for the 'undeserving' (Rieff, 2002).

Only compassion sells. It is the basis of fund-raising for humanitarian agencies. We can't seem to do without it (Jean-Francois Vidal cited in Rieff, 2002:55).

Another example of the manipulation of relief agencies is at the hands of warlord strategies. In extreme scenarios the allure of relief aid can provoke warring parties to take control of more territory and even turn on their own or their host population in an effort to attract humanitarian aid. It becomes advantageous if people are starving as their misery will bring humanitarian

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<sup>44</sup> See Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo (1989); Loescher (1992); Barber (1997).

agencies, which in turn means more food and resources available to feed combatants and fund conflict (Vayrynen, 1999:178). Unlike extorting food from an enemy population displaced by conflict, this type of campaign has a more calculated motivation that was rarely seen until the ethnic conflicts that emerged after the cold war.

While aid agencies can contribute to the cache of warring parties because of theft, coercion or extortion, perhaps the most controversial means by which relief can fuel conflict is where it can potentially legitimise conflict. As explained above, warring parties may informally tax aid agencies. However, drawing increased criticism is the paying of warlords for the right of passage or for protection, not unlike a protection racket.

Humanitarian aid in ethnic conflicts has become characteristically dangerous and aid agencies rely ever increasingly on protection. In many situations the UN provides protection but their relatively limited over-stretched resources and limited mandates (examined in more detail in Chapter 4) have not proved adequate. In regions controlled by warlords aid agencies have often turned to buying protection. For example, guards are hired for staff safety and protection for equipment, supplies and supply lines. However, this is a double-barrelled problem. It provides direct revenue for warlords and as hinted above, can also legitimise their actions. Payment for security and protection can be perceived as legitimising or condoning armed strategy and also legitimising the authority of the warlord. Legitimacy can also be bestowed upon a regime or warlord solely through aid agencies abiding by their rules. In doing so their authority is recognised as legitimate and in turn this is recognised by aid recipients and, where the media is present, potentially the wider international community.<sup>45</sup>

Aid agencies also report having hired private security companies for protection. The growth of this sector has been rapid but also problematic (Van Brabant, 2002). In the past a security guard may have protected a supply depot, however, security companies are now being contracted to provide other

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<sup>45</sup> Gaining international recognition can also be a specific goal of warring parties.

services such as personnel protection and training, and advising on the protection of convoys and recipient groups (Van Brabant, 2002:1). This gives rise to the argument that aid agencies can contribute to the privatisation of security. This can do two things. Firstly, the capacity, legitimacy and trust of local or national security forces in the host country may be undermined, thereby reducing their effectiveness.

Secondly, using private security has wider political ramifications. Introducing another armed party into the conflict may be perceived as threatening or partial by local warlords and rebels, particularly where security companies are perceived as mercenaries. It may also reduce their trust of aid agencies (Van Brabant, 2002). In the eyes of aid recipients, another armed party may be perceived as contributing to armed conflict, indirectly giving legitimacy to the tactics of armed parties. Unfortunately many aid agencies see no other way of administering relief. Without protection they are often faced with pulling out, a concept not welcomed by many agencies.

## **Summary**

Humanitarian ideals and initiatives are by no means a new phenomenon. While disparate and scattered in nature, their role was once different to what it is today. The nature of conflicts has largely changed and the profound increase in humanitarian actors reflects this. This has been no more evident than in the period since the end of the cold war.

This chapter has examined the changing role of humanitarian relief as it evolved to exist in today's era characterised by protracted ethnic conflict situations. There are multitudes of complexities associated with humanitarian action in these situations that this chapter has drawn out. The important and ever-increasing role played by humanitarian relief in the lives of millions of civilians necessitated examination of the relationship this had with development. The assumption that relief and development could and should exist separately was challenged. This thesis will argue that drawing the two together is necessary if they are to be successful, particularly in the creation of resilient social services

and infrastructure in regions suffering from ethnic conflict. This does not assume they should be combined into one mode of operation. It is crucial for relief operations to maintain a degree of independence and rather act in a manner conducive to future development without becoming the conditional bureaucratic structure that is development.

Following on from an analysis of the case studies, Chapter 6 will examine the potential of humanitarian relief and reconstruction, and development initiatives in post-conflict situations to bolster state development processes focused on social services and infrastructure, thereby increasing the resilience of populations in regions susceptible to ethnic conflict. In many regions, particularly in Africa, ethnic conflict cannot be seen as an interruption to normal processes. Rather, it is often protracted and exists more as a norm than as an exception. Therefore the strengthening of social services and infrastructure building resilience to conflict and minimising factors conducive to conflict is crucial. There is, however, a risk of maintaining centralised uneven development agendas increasing the risk of social tension.

In recent years, the benefits of linking relief and development have been acknowledged by relief and development agencies and by donors. Humanitarian relief, however, remains largely focused on meeting immediate relief needs. Although this is arguably the main premise of humanitarian assistance, the shortcomings of not looking beyond immediate needs are manifest in a series of trends that actually feed into and exacerbate conflict, and the conditions conducive to conflict, in which humanitarian agencies are required.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### HUMANITARIAN RELIEF ACTORS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the key actors that provide humanitarian relief in ethnic conflict situations. The apparent trend shift that has placed more emphasis on humanitarian intervention since the end of the cold war will be demonstrated by the roles played by donors, the UN and military contingents, and NGOs. Furthermore, the chapter identifies the important role played by local humanitarians in responding quickly and efficiently where needs prevail. The chapter then examines key criticisms specific to each humanitarian actor group identified above focusing predominantly on the coordination and cooperation problems that exist within and between the groups and the potential this has to exacerbate conflict.

#### **Donor Agencies**

The resources required for humanitarian interventions are provided increasingly by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. Public and private donations and funding provide a proportion of the funds needed for humanitarian organisations but rarely expand to cover the expense of humanitarian interventions.

#### ***Bilateral Aid***

Bilateral aid represents the large majority of official development assistance and for the most part is government-to-government aid. For example, of more than US\$6 billion spent on humanitarian emergencies in 1993 over \$4.5 billion originated from major donor governments (U.S. Permanent Mission to the UN, 1995:14). The period after WWII, which witnessed the reconstruction of

Europe, was the first significant manifestation of this form of aid and was largely with the assistance of the Marshall Plan.<sup>46</sup>

Bilateral aid has traditionally been heavily influenced by political relationships and conditionality that strongly reflects donor interests and priorities. However, despite its traditional government-to-government relationship it is becoming more flexible forming relationships with other actors and dispersing aid through UN agencies and NGOs (Weiss and Collins, 2000). Subsequently the political limitations and biases of bilateral aid are being skirted.

Humanitarian aid is distinctly different from the foreign development aid more commonly associated with bilateral donors in that it is not budgeted specifically to further social or economic advancements (Weiss and Collins, 2000:50). Bilateral provision of humanitarian aid has been a growing trend since the end of the cold war while the more dominant traditional foreign development aid continues to decline (Weiss and Collins, 2000).

Bilateral donors have begun diversifying their funding allocation based on numerous principals. For example, developing partnerships with development and humanitarian agencies in recipient countries allows better coordination with existing program needs. This includes the ability of NGOs to supersede government agencies in efficiency, responsiveness and flexibility. In certain circumstances where bilateral donors have been unable to reach the desired aid, recipient NGOs have been used to channel relief. In Rwanda and Sierra Leone for example, NGOs provided relief in parts of the country deemed off limits by the UN and in Burundi military activity kept the UN out of important regions in the country so NGOs were in the frontline delivering humanitarian relief (Bryans, Jones and Gross Stein, 1999; pers. comm. Oliver, 2003). Using NGOs is not a new strategy employed by donors but until the late 1980s and early 1990s it had been commonly associated with political aid and strategy. Stokke (1995) details how Chilean NGOs engaged in pro-democracy activities

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<sup>46</sup> The Marshall Plan was influenced by early modernisation theory and the belief in economic development as the basis for Western development.

while the country was under a military dictatorship received an estimated US\$50 million in foreign funding. Donors provided the funding for human rights projects, legal services, and related activities that contributed to the struggle for the restoration of civilian rule.

### ***Multilateral Aid***

Multilateral aid is channeled through international (or inter-government) organisations such as the UN and the World Bank. These organisations receive financial resources from their member states including voluntary contributions for particular causes (Weiss and Collins, 2000). Voluntary contributions may, however, reflect perceived national interests of member states although once money is received by a multilateral it is their prerogative as to how to regulate and utilise it, thereby diluting any political bias it may have been provided under.

The functional specialty of multilateral organisations is their flexibility and responsiveness, and their ability to coordinate development theory, policy and practice, as well as humanitarian interventions (Randel and German, 1996). The joint management of multilateral assistance also has other benefits, particularly to member states. It reduces the risks of carrying sole responsibility if things go wrong and also multiplies the effectiveness of any particular member's aid by combining it with others (Sogge, 2002:73). Multilateral assistance can also be perceived by both beneficiaries and donors as less imperialistic. Sogge (2002) argues other benefits such as increased transparency and quality have yet to be realised.

A major problem for multilateral organisations is that they are compromised when members do not make payments or if requests for voluntary payments are not met. Weiss and Collins (1996:52) cite Rwanda where only 13 percent of funds requested by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) were pledged and Iraq in 1995, where only 28 percent of the US\$139 million required was realised. During national budget cuts, it is also generally

recognised to be politically easier to cut funding to multilateral organisations rather than to bilateral agencies (Randel and German, 1996).

### **The United Nations and the Military**

The UN and state military contingents are separate but interrelated entities and their roles are addressed separately. The UN functions as a humanitarian actor through a number of its agencies (separate from military involvement) under the authority of the General Assembly, while it also coordinates and leads peacekeeping and military intervention through the Security Council. Military interventions, while largely operating under Security Council mandates, can also be separately operating under regional organisations such as NATO or individual states.

### ***United Nations Humanitarian Function***

The main agencies of the UN responsible for humanitarian action include primarily the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The UN Development Program (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are also involved albeit with lesser roles (Weiss and Collins, 2000:59).

UNHCR and UNICEF are the two main UN humanitarian relief actors and both are of an entirely non-political character (Weiss and Collins, 2000). Both agencies rely primarily on financial resources held in an emergency fund but additional voluntary contributions from members largely provide the main operating funds in the field. UNHCR responsibilities entail the protection and nurture of refugees, ensuring their right to seek asylum, resettlement into recipient countries or repatriation into their country of origin (UNHCR website, 2003). UNHCR operates in 120 countries currently assisting an estimated 19.8 million people (UNHCR website, 2003). UNHCR is also a coordinating body for relief agencies and provides funding for other UN agencies and NGOs.

UNICEF devotes approximately 25 percent of its operating budget to humanitarian relief providing largely material assistance including food, clothing and medical supplies.

In humanitarian situations the WFP mandate aims to meet refugee and other emergency food needs and the associated logistical support. Over the last decade the direction of WFP's resources has shifted from providing two thirds of food aid for development projects to providing 80 percent for humanitarian relief (WFP website, 2003). In carrying out its mandate the WFP also facilitates rehabilitation and development. WFP maintains a non-politically aligned agenda in order to ensure a neutral status, including for other UN agencies and NGOs taking advantage of its function as a multilateral donor.

Although UNDP interventions focus largely on development needs, the UNDP Humanitarian Emergency Response Program (and certain other ad hoc UNDP operations) focuses on humanitarian relief. The needs of UNDP's mandate, however, oblige it to take into account broader considerations than the immediate supply of relief assistance to avoid long-term dependency (UNDP website, 2003). The ability of UNDP to conduct humanitarian relief operations has broadened the ability and response of the UN as a whole as UNDP programs are widespread (operating in 166 countries) and operate in the majority of regions that lapse into conflict. UNDP can help enable humanitarian assistance due to its logistical planning ability and networks that are already in place. UNDP also provides expertise and implements emergency repairs necessary for efficient humanitarian relief operations that are led by other UN agencies including UNICEF and WHO (UNDP website, 2003).

The World Health Organization generally seeks long-term roles in providing assistance but also plays a vital role in attending to health needs of non-combatants during and immediately after emergencies (Weiss and Collins, 2000). WHO, the UN's specialised health care agency, acts as the directing and coordinating authority for international health work and health providers in an emergency, helping countries coordinate, implement and monitor health projects and infrastructure. Where requested by governments or the General

Assembly, WHO will also implement necessary health relief aid and health care facilities and services (Menu, 1996). In accordance with its mandate, WHO health assistance responds to the health needs of all affected groups irrespective of political boundaries (Menu, 1996; World Health Organisation website, 2003).

Enhancing the coherence and coordination of the UN's humanitarian function is the responsibility of OCHA. Formerly the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA), OCHA maintains a coordination function that is realised through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and can include all civilian humanitarian relief actors including the Red Cross and NGOs (OCHA, 2003).<sup>47</sup> The role of the OCHA also extends to coordination between civilian UN humanitarian relief personnel and military actors. This is largely through the Military Civil Defence Unit and the Logistics Support Unit established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and OCHA.

### ***United Nations Security Council and the Role of the Military***

It has been suggested that the UN not only has the right to intervene militarily to prevent humanitarian emergencies, but also has a legal duty to do so (Schermers, 1991; Rodley, 1992). The Security Council, however, ultimately makes the decision, and to date, the notion of a 'duty to intervene' is not present in international law<sup>48</sup> (Murphy, 1996:295). Nor is there a consensus among member states that the UN or regional organisations should adopt such legal duty.

The Security Council is made up of 15 members, five of whom are permanent (the United States, Russia, France, China and the United Kingdom), and is responsible for peace and security.<sup>49</sup> Since the end of the cold war the Security Council has focused much more intensely on humanitarian interventions.

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<sup>47</sup> See Appendix 2 for details of OCHA's responsibilities.

<sup>48</sup> The duty does, however, appear in the national laws of certain individual states.

<sup>49</sup> It is important to note that 'peace' and 'security' are not synonymous and in certain situations security will come before peace (Weiss and Collins, 2000:59).

Noteworthy is the fact that these interventions have often delved into the affairs of other states, a move formerly reserved for situations where one state was jeopardised by the aggressive acts of another (Weiss and Collins, 2000:59). The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, for example, was a case typical of those confronted by the Security Council prior to the end of the cold war but the decision to protect the Kurdish population from its own Iraqi government was a new type of intervention. This does not assume the Security Council set a new precedent, as it still makes decisions largely based on politics. Weiss and Collin (2000:59) note the Chechen struggle with the Russian army and inhumane treatment of Tibetans by the Chinese government as examples where the Security Council has not elected to get involved due in part to the status of Russia and China on the Security Council.

The UN distinguishes between two types of peace operations that employ military troops: peacekeeping and enforcement. Since its conception, peacekeeping has evolved to include what the UN describes as three phases of intervention. First phase intervention, reflecting the political restraints imposed by the cold war, is impartial and is likened to traditional peacekeeping interventions that existed prior to the end of the cold war. It is primarily charged with providing humanitarian assistance and creating conditions conducive to peaceful retreat and negotiation of warring parties and can include a large contingent of civilian UN personnel, particularly police.

Second phase intervention may run tandem to first phase peacekeeping but takes a preventative and protective role. When the Security Council decides to deploy second phase peacekeeping troops (sanctioned under Chapter VI of the UN Charter), they are recruited from member states as there is no standing army under Security Council control (Murphy, 1996). Second phase peacekeeping troops also maintain an impartial role fighting against neither side in a conflict. Their assigned role is the controlling of buffer zones, monitoring cease-fire agreements and protecting humanitarian relief supplies and deliveries (Pugh, 1997). Peacekeepers, unlike peace enforcement troops, are not meant to create the peace they are asked to maintain (Pugh, 1997). Increasingly peacekeeping tasks are also facilitating the construction of political

institutions, conducting elections (for example, in East Timor) and aiding the reintegration of fighters into society (UN website, 2003).

This type of peacekeeping has drawn peacekeepers into more complex conflicts that often have an ethnic dimension and which are frequently fought between non-state combatants. The characteristically messy and potentially costly nature of getting involved in ethnic conflicts arguably influenced the Security Council's reluctance to authorise peacekeeping operations (PKOs) nearing the end of the 1990's (Weiss and Collins, 2000). After the war in Kosovo in 1999, however, the UN initiated a new surge in PKOs and major missions were sent to East Timor and various African states.

Peace enforcement represents the third phase of UN sanctioned military intervention. Peace enforcement action differs from peacekeeping in that military force can be used to restore peace or to counter threats against UN personnel or specific acts of aggression or more general hostile actions that are deemed to be a threat to international peace (Pugh, 1997). The UN, however, rarely deploys troops for peace enforcement under its own command. More likely is Security Council authorisation for states or regional organisations such as NATO, to deploy forces under their own command in support of Security Council resolutions<sup>50</sup> (Murphy, 1996:305). The Australian intervention in East Timor in 1999, and the U.S. led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in Somalia from December 1992 to April 1993, for example, were both under Security Council authorisation.

It could be argued that one of the benefits of this approach is that it avoids putting the UN's 'neck' on the line in a risky (real and politically) intervention. Murphy (1996) notes that the UN often becomes involved or is re-deployed some months after a forceful intervention. This may allow the UN to maintain a degree of prestige and preserves the ability of the Secretary-General as an effective mediator (Murphy, 1996).

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<sup>50</sup> Security Council authorisation is sanctioned under chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Non-UN military contingents have long been involved in situations providing emergency relief. While many of these situations may have been natural disasters, the role of the military has diversified. Since the end of the cold war military operations, separate from any Security Council mandated missions, have increasingly provided humanitarian assistance in complex conflicts. Interventions may be negotiated by the military or political elites of a single state or as an ad hoc coalition of individual states (for example, the Australian and New Zealand force in the Solomon Islands). They may also be negotiated by regional organisations such as NATO, the European Union or the Organization of African Unity (Weiss and Collins, 2000:159).

There are various reasons for non-UN mandated military interventions in humanitarian emergencies. The argument for military intervention on political grounds is perhaps the most notable. Firstly, the actions of a state military or regional organisation such as NATO can be to ensure national or regional security and economic well being. This type of action is seen most predominantly in Africa. Furthermore, Australian Prime Minister John Howard argued, with reference to the recent military intervention in the Solomon Islands, stability of the Solomon Islands has important implications for regional stability and security. The direct goal in such instances may not necessarily be humanitarian relief, but this comes as a general by-product of regional stability in that human rights abuses are reduced and a degree of normality is restored.

Secondly, political decisions to intervene militarily can be necessitated by public opinion or the opinion of other political powers. This may be exacerbated by intense media coverage. The portrayal on nation-wide or global television of a dire humanitarian emergency can motivate public opinion and drive political response. The military therefore may become a visual and public response to the situation. This can be referred to as the 'push factor' of humanitarian values.

In certain circumstances a request may also come from a particular state requiring assistance to curb a humanitarian emergency. Furthermore, it is recognised of late that politics and policy are more concerned with humanitarian

issues since the end of the cold war. Weiss and Collins (1996:182) acknowledge that, "Greater attention to humanitarian values from policymakers and practitioners has not of course bought utopia, but it has made the world a somewhat more liveable place". Grounded more in moral humanitarian ambition, this type of action is also characteristic of the 'pull factor' of humanitarianism. Weiss and Collin (1996) suggest the political response to the 'pull factor' of humanitarianism demonstrates increased commitment to reducing the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality.

Less politically aligned motivations include the provision of humanitarian assistance due to insufficient or non-existent coverage by other actors. This is arguably most common during or immediately after militaries have been involved in traditional war-fighting roles and the lack of humanitarian relief actors on the ground requires the military to fill the void. This has been the case in Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003.

### **Non-Government Organisations**

Since the end of WWII there has been a substantial shift in the type of casualties of war. As explained in Chapter 3, the large proportion of war-related deaths recorded now are non-combatants. One argument for this is that new technology has produced weapons with superior power and weapons that are also indiscriminate (for example, cluster bombs and landmines). However, most wars since WWII have been civil wars that are relatively 'low tech'. This type of combat has involved civilians much more predominantly in fighting roles with minimal use of military hardware. Entire sections of populations in conflict zones have often become the enemy and massive human rights abuses and widespread displacement often ensued creating large humanitarian emergencies (Agerbak, 1996).

The role of NGOs has been ideally suited to the emergencies that have emerged out of this type of conflict. Many NGOs became involved essentially by default because of their location and tendency to work with civilian populations. The demands of the emergencies, the inability or unwillingness of

certain states to shoulder responsibility, and the policies of donor organisations that emerged voraciously during the 1990s drew NGOs into complex humanitarian interventions. These often included human rights and trauma work, and support for conflict resolution and gave them a high profile stake in today's world of humanitarian relief (Agerbak, 1996). This has seen NGOs operating in complex political situations shouldering a high level of responsibility (real or perceived) for people's suffering (Bryans et al, 1999). Arguably, this has been the ultimate form of charitable expression and humanitarian ethic.

The individualism and determination of humanitarian NGOs has seen them at the forefront of interventions in conflict situations, often in volatile circumstances inaccessible to other humanitarian actor groups. The apparent neutrality and impartiality of many NGOs remains their access key. In Afghanistan during Soviet occupation, for example, when virtually all other Western operations ended, NGOs, until 1988, were the principle means by which humanitarian relief was provided to areas held by the Mujahideen (Goodhand and Chamberland, 1996:39).

The ability of NGOs in this respect is attributed to their reluctance to become politically aligned (at least in the public eye), either with host governments, Western governments or rebel forces. MSF, for example, is reluctant to accept government funding and the ICRC maintains a strict impartial position. NGO popularity is further attributable to their ability to work cost effectively at the grass roots level and with a lesser authoritarian or threatening appearance - particularly toward host governments and warring parties (Edwards and Hulme, 1996). The expertise and experience, particularly of large international NGOs, also makes them ideal candidates for donor contracts, especially in politically complex circumstances or where donors are unwilling to channel resources through allegedly dubious recipient governments (Bennett, 1995:xii; Duffield, 1995). In fact, most NGOs depend on donors for an increasing proportion of their total budgets (Edwards and Hulme, 1996). The use of NGOs has also reduced criticism of Western donor governments in particular, as top-down unresponsive agencies unwilling to intervene in conflicts with little or no direct national implications.

On the other hand, humanitarian NGOs face a plethora of difficulties and criticisms. Coordination between NGOs has been poor in many instances increasing duplication and wasting resources as a result. Critics also condemn NGOs for inadvertently funding conflict and undermining local capacities and creating dependency. The criticisms of NGOs are addressed in more detail below.

Humanitarian NGOs have been encouraged to think beyond basic relief intervention over the past decade for ways in which their operations can facilitate better long-term development (Hulme and Goodhand, 2000). This has been met with varying responses. Many NGOs argue that linking relief with development removes any air of neutrality or impartiality they may have had thus reducing their ability to access and assist certain groups. Other NGOs have agreed that there is a need to operate in ways that facilitate future development.

Humanitarian NGOs have maintained a bridge between those who suffer the ravages of conflict and the wider world. Humanitarian NGOs do not install peace but rather they can reduce, in varying degrees, the adverse effects of conflict and, increasingly, they can contribute to building community resilience (coping strategies) to the effects of conflict (Hulme and Goodhand, 2000).

### **Local Humanitarians**

In conflict situations the access of mainstream humanitarian actors to those in the most need is often tricky and delayed and in some circumstances absent altogether due to security or logistical problems. Mainstream humanitarian actors such as those described above, however, do not constitute the entire population of willing help. Local groups and individuals driven both by a will to survive and by compassion for humanity play an important role in complex conflicts. The quick response times of local actors and their ability to work cost effectively, combined with an arguably increased level of staying power, often proves more effective than outside agencies, particularly at providing basic needs such as shelter and food. In Somalia a woman who realised looters were

not stealing cooked food set up her own soup kitchen during the conflict. This in turn was recognised by the Red Cross who contributed food and staff and used her example as a model throughout the country (Weiss and Collin, 2000:68).

The church can also play a very beneficial role providing both material relief and moral support. The Roman Catholic Church was a very important institution in East Timor. It was non-political and provided a high degree of support to those suffering the ravages of conflict. It was also regarded as one of the most reliable partners by NGOs due to its ability to consult on cultural matters and its links with local people (Haddon, 2002).

Local humanitarians may also include those in regions receiving refugees. Refugee flows can be sporadic and hard to quantify making planning difficult for agencies such as UNHCR. In 1999, UNHCR planned for about 100,000 internally displaced Albanians in Kosovo not the 800,000 that fled (Weiss and Collins, 2000:69). The hospitality of local people went a long way in aiding the refugees, many of whom stayed in the homes of Albanians and Macedonians.

### **Criticisms of Humanitarian Relief Actors**

This section addressed some specific criticisms associated with the humanitarian relief actors referred to above. The increase in humanitarian emergencies in recent times has spawned an expansion of relief operations throughout the world relieving peoples suffering and providing basic necessities. Associated with these interventions, however, has been a series of criticisms. The inherent difficulties associated with providing humanitarian relief, particularly in the midst of conflict are, as explained in Chapter 3, reasonably numerous. However, certain consequences or misjudged decisions are inescapable and despite the implications they may have are, to a degree, understandable. Many organisations, for example, operate in the field with inconsistent or dubious information. The criticisms, however, go beyond this and the broader problems examined in the previous chapter. Many relief interventions, for example, are criticised for being improperly planned from their

outset. The criticisms of relief actors outlined below focus predominantly on the coordination problems among the fragmented relief agencies and the lack of political will among governments and donor organisations. Vayrynen (1999:1) for example suggests, “the international [relief] community is too timid, divided and institutionally weak to mount an effective response”.

Since the end of the cold war, bilateral aid has suffered a degree of ‘aid fatigue’ while proportionately multilateral and NGO relief has increased. This has reduced the political uses of relief somewhat but it has also led to a higher number of actors in the field and increased problems of inter-agency coordination and competence, duplication and conflicting activities and poor exchange and flow of intelligence (Vayrynen, 1999; SAIS, 2003). The first criticism is characterised by the problems the UN faced in the Bosnia and Somalia conflicts in the early 1990s. There was a mismatch between the goals and expectations of humanitarian assistance on one hand, and the capabilities and the level of engagement on the other<sup>51</sup> (Vayrynen, 1999:9). Coordination has been a key problem facing humanitarian relief delivery. The crisis beginning in 1994 in Rwanda illustrates this. Byman (2001:97) notes how over 100 NGOs were active (with some estimates over 200 (Edwards, Hulme and Wallace, 1999; SAIS, 2003)), yet they did not inform one another or the international community of their presence or activities. The militaries assisting humanitarian relief organisations did not realise NGOs capabilities and Byman (2001) argues some officers ignored NGO knowledge of sanitation, water purification and other essentials.

### ***Coordination Within Each Humanitarian Actor Group***

Cooperation and coordination is critical both between and within each body of actors – donor agencies and governments, UN agencies and militaries, and NGOs. Given the lack of sharing mandates, guidelines, procedures and worldviews, cooperation and coordination is, however, undoubtedly difficult and

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<sup>51</sup> Vayrynen (1999) notes how the mismatch between the UN's stated goal of defending the ‘safe’ areas in Bosnia, and the scarcity of military resources exacerbated the humanitarian disaster.

efficiency and effectiveness suffer as a result (Weiss and Collins, 2000). Key problems highlighting deficiencies within each body of relief actors are outlined for Donors, the UN and military humanitarianism, and NGOs.

### *Donors*

Preparing and participating in humanitarian assistance can be a slow process for donor governments. Limited familiarity with other agencies and the associated strategic and operational chaos become increasingly characteristic in humanitarian relief interventions. Within states, there are barriers, bureaucratic structures and multiple seats of authority, which often do not have uniform views, restraining the preferences of government or opposition parties to participate in or abstain from particular operations (Weiss and Collins, 2000:55,164). State decision making, while democratic and subject, in part, to the preferences of civil-society, can be delayed.

Uncoordinated donor assistance can, at the very least, create the possibility of contradictory or duplicated projects or programs. A lack of coordination between bilateral donors may strain the capacity of a recipient government to implement, monitor or maintain projects (Congressional Budget Office website, 2003). The problem of donor coordination increased with the proliferation of multilateral donor agencies and the rise of 'aid fatigue' among bilateral donors. The competition that inevitably emerged (including between UN agencies) highlighted the lack of discipline and direction of numerous agencies and also saw certain member states threatening to scale down their contributions (Randel and German, 1996:24). It has been argued, however, that disciplined competition may solve inter-agency problems and get results quicker. For example, if a donor has a good idea for a project, waiting for the next coordination meeting or UN 'roundtable' could create unnecessary and counter-productive delays (Congressional Budget Office website, 2003). This would suggest that lack of discipline is an underlying problem that may sometimes be masked by better coordination and cooperation.

The rationale behind decisions on whether to provide humanitarian assistance or assistance to humanitarian agencies in complex politically charged situations have often been criticised for their grounding in self-fulfilling agendas and political interests or their unwillingness to commit financially or militarily due to public or political opinion. Feher (2000:74) argues diplomatic representatives from the international community obfuscated the nature of the Rwanda and Bosnia conflicts in order to minimise their costs of involvement. Constrained by the fiasco in Mogadishu, President Clinton, for example, concerned about hazardous involvement for U.S. soldiers, declined to assist the people of Bosnia. Terry (2001:1432) argues that the most appalling consequence of a limited political will is manifested in a 'limited mandate'. In Kigali, Kibeho, and Srebrenica, for example, troops stood by helplessly and witnessed civilians slaughtered because the mandate did not extend to providing their protection. Similarly, the mandate of U.S. forces in Kabul in 2001 and 2002 prohibited them implementing measures to ensure peace and security outside the city limits despite having information on known trouble spots. Furthermore, in 1999 and the best part of 2000, numerous Western governments, particularly NATO members, declared that providing humanitarian assistance to Serbia would be counter-productive to the foreign policy line regarding intervention in Kosovo. Withholding an intervention effectively undermines the human rights it should serve.

Likewise, a significant problem is also manifested by the deployment of ill-equipped, undermanned military interventions that mask a lack of political action. Political decisions to deploy missions that are incapable of immediate effectual response to threats against themselves, relief organisations or civilian populations have the potential to do more harm than good. Where humanitarian organisations are associated with the military, their neutrality and impartiality can be compromised and the danger to relief workers and civilians is increased when protection is limited. This is described in more detail below.

The rationale behind deployment of this nature is also the focus of criticism. Providing a limited response can be an excuse for failing to commit to political action. In many cases, while military humanitarian intervention may be a

debatable response, it gives the impression governments appear to be doing something in the eyes of domestic and international constituencies (OECD/DAC, 1998). In the former Yugoslavia UNPROFOR soldiers were deployed to provide safe passage for humanitarian relief aid and to curb violence. These missions served Western political interests – displaying a valuable and visual concern – without entering into the war (Feher, 2000:71).

Civilian humanitarian relief interventions have also been manipulated to serve political needs. This type of misuse of the humanitarian idea is termed the ‘humanitarian alibi’ and is defined by Rieff (cited in SAIS, 2003) as:

The misuse of the humanitarian idea and humanitarian workers by governments eager to do as little as possible in economically unpromising regions like sub-Saharan Africa.

#### *United Nations and Military Humanitarian Relief*

The UN has faced mounting criticism for being politically and operationally incapable of orchestrating unambiguous, sustained and successful humanitarian relief operations (Weiss and Collins, 2000; Thakur and Schnabel, 2001). The decline in UN mounted humanitarian relief operations by the end of the 1990s reflected the failures (both real and perceived), particularly of military operations (Weiss and Collins, 2000).

Weiss and Collins (2000:170) definitively outline implications associated with UN operations, which have led to institutional failures:

The humanitarian interventions of the early 1990s took place largely without conceptual guidance, clear and feasible mandates, flexible rules of engagement, or explicit definitions of the conditions under which missions would be terminated. In the absence of conceptual mooring and in the presence of increasingly violent and complicated conflicts, operational institutions and personnel struggled with designing practical plans...; coordinating among multinational

contingents, key humanitarian agencies and relief personnel; and resolving command and control issues.

The consequences associated with the above implications have been numerous and have included a degree of confidence lost in the UN's ability and its coordinating role by political leaders and military commanders. Unfortunately the UN does not have substantial power unless those member states in power switch it through the UN by choice (Barringer, 2003). An example of this was the by talk about the UN's irrelevance during beginnings of the 2003 Iraq conflict.

In April 1992, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 46/182 in an effort to improve the capability and the coordination of the UN's humanitarian assistance (Murphy, 1996). UNDHA (now OCHA) was created as a high-level coordinator answerable only to the Secretary-General. UNDHA did not, however, solve the problems faced by UN humanitarian relief and coordination, and operational implications persisted including under OCHA. Despite being answerable only to the Secretary-General, UNDHA/OCHA is one of many under-secretaries-general and in reality has limited ability to impose coordination mechanisms on other agencies (Murphy, 1996). This is a characteristic problem caused by the fundamental structure of the UN.<sup>52</sup> The UN has developed agencies to address sectorial problems but problems persist in coordinating these agencies (Murphy, 1996:331). A UN agency director-general, for example, can at any time and on any issue invoke his autonomy and decline to cooperate in a measure of coordination and legally be perfectly in order to do so (Urquhart and Childers, 1990:70).

The UN's administrative arm, the UN Secretariat, and the Security Council arguably have not had adequate resources to plan and organise large or in some instances, even modest humanitarian or peacekeeping operations (Murphy, 1996; Mockaitis, 1999:138). The failure of UN operations in Bosnia

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<sup>52</sup> Within the diverse UN structure no element has adequate authority to command, coerce, or compel any other element to do anything. This is a well-established reality of the UN, relating to its internal management structures and its governance arrangements.

(which was arguably saved only by NATO intervention) and Rwanda have been criticised not only for their shortcomings in country but also for the circumstances under which they were deployed. Furthermore, in Somalia, both UN Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) I and II were described as ill-conceived and were given unrealistic goals and expectations coupled with limited numbers of troops. The mandate for UNOSOM II, for example, was out of proportion to the means available to the mission (Mockaitis, 1999). U.S. ambassador Madeleine Albright stated, with respect to the UN led operations, "We are soberly conscious of the fact that this draft resolution engages the world community to provide the most comprehensive assistance ever given to any country, but to do so with few lessons and no models" (UN, 1993:22).

The compatibility and coordination of forces deployed on UN mandated peacekeeping or peace-enforcement missions have also come under scrutiny. Multinational operations have tended to have cumbersome and complex command structures. The U.S., for example, is reluctant to put its troops under foreign control and thus operational control may be split between the force command and special representatives. UNOSOM II suffered because of multiple command structures. Mockaitis (1999:63) notes that the force commander, Turkish lieutenant-general Çevik Bir had to obtain specific American consent to have tactical control of U.S. forces. Problems can also arise when certain contingents in a coalition force have incompatible equipment (for example, communications equipment) or inconsistent doctrines (Mockaitis, 1999).

During the cold war UN military interventions were largely confined to classical first phase peacekeeping. The end of the cold war, however, changed this situation dramatically. Between 1945 and 1985, only 13 UN peacekeeping missions were deployed. The next decade alone saw 21 missions deployed that were, on average, larger and far more complex (Mockaitis, 1999:2). The deployment of PKOs based on traditional methods into complex intrastate conflicts, particularly with the use of new inexperienced troop contributors (including the U.S.), has highlighted deficiencies and inadequacies in the UN's role in this new era (ibid.). Mockaitis (1999:2) remarks:

Gone were the days when lightly armed soldiers in blue helmets could stand on a cease-fire line at the invitation of the belligerents. They now found themselves thrust into active civil wars where there were no boundary lines and in which the belligerents recognized no neutrals. If the instruments and organs of the UN had been ill suited for traditional peacekeeping, they would prove woefully inadequate for the ethnic conflicts that exploded in the first half of the 1990s.

Classical peacekeeping, the interposition of a ceasefire observer between the belligerents, still has a role but it is a minor one (Guéhenno, 2003:2).

UN PKOs also face the danger of becoming regionally biased, compromising the well-being of would-be recipients. Many states and regional organisations have strong interests in their 'near abroad'. The Australian and New Zealand intervention in East Timor and the Solomon Islands and NATO in Kosovo can be defined, among other things, as in the interests of 'regional stability and security'.

Where no regional powers exist to intervene, however, as in the case of the majority of Africa, problems emerge (Guéhenno, 2003). If there is willingness to intervene on the part of non-regional contingents, it is frequently complicated by their regional obligations and interests. Britain and France, for example, show desire to intervene in parts of Africa but massive European assistance provided in Eastern Europe detract from the African context. Guéhenno (2003:2) states that while massive resources are poured into Eastern Europe "...only a battalion of Uruguayans might stand between chaos and genocide in Eastern Congo".

The role of non-UN mandated military intervention in humanitarian emergencies, as in Sinai, Lebanon and Macedonia, and recently, the Solomon Islands, have been relatively positive including with regard to other humanitarian actors. Criticism, however, has also focused on military forces involved in combat that also directly implement humanitarian assistance (ABC website, 2003; Christian Aid website, 2003). In Iraq, U.S. and British forces have been recently engaged in war, not a peace support operation. They

encountered difficulty restoring electricity and water supplies to an adequate level (particularly in Baghdad) even within three months and they could not control looting, displaying a lack of prior thought and planning.<sup>53</sup> Military personnel in battle-zone situations are battle prepared, and making an immediate transition is complicated operationally and psychologically. Military training and structures are designed primarily to support military operations and are not inherently conducive to peace operations or humanitarian interventions and they can offset the potential benefits they may offer. Humanitarian relief provided militarily is also often heavily politicised, which can partially contradict certain aspects of multilateral assistance that tends to dilute the political aspirations of individual states.

Military humanitarian interventions, whether UN mandated or not, are perhaps the most prominent humanitarian actors on the ground during an ethnic conflict, due to their logistical superiority, operational support, and capability to not only provide and distribute relief aid but also to protect or mobilise civilian populations. However, military interventions are heavily dependent on political willingness and commitment, without which they are vulnerable and cumbersome. Political support is a key factor to the success of a military intervention. The ramifications of withdrawn or insufficient political support were seen in Bosnia and Rwanda.

### *Non-Government Organisations*

Humanitarianism is, at its core, irrational and relatively unstructured when compared to traditional development and, inevitably, management and coordination will always be difficult (Bryan et al, 1999:4). This is important to acknowledge as much of the criticism directed at NGOs concerns their lack of coordination or managerial expertise, particularly in the field.

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<sup>53</sup> Contrast this to the immediate response by the Police during the August 2003 New York blackout when patrol cars immediately took to the streets with sirens going to deter looters.

Since the beginning of the 1990s NGOs have with increasing frequency been working as humanitarian relief actors in complex and often hostile conflict environments. The number and diversity of NGOs and their often-sporadic placement and evolving doctrines, however, makes coordination inherently difficult. NGOs are characteristically dynamic and for the most part operate under their own pretences with a limited level of accountability to any other organisation. Although, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, which largely fund NGOs in emergencies, may impose certain operational boundaries. Bennett (1995:xi) believes that for NGOs, coordination may at best entail a loose consensus, a tacit agreement not to tread on each other's toes.

Bennett (1995) identifies the three most serious and common criticisms of NGOs as their lack of accountability, mutual competitiveness and poor coordination. NGOs also tend to involve themselves strategically, choosing commitments carefully to ensure the two-way flow of benefits. The reliance on media coverage, addressed below, is central to their involvement in many cases.

This thesis argues that much post-intervention criticism is misguided as it presumes knowledge typically available only to the authors of such criticism, should have influenced NGOs decision-making and actions.<sup>54</sup> In reality, NGOs in the field often do not and could not have access to appropriate or relevant information. Bryans et al (1999) argues NGOs in 'complex emergencies' may never have consistent access to the comprehensive knowledge they may require.

The criticisms of NGOs concern both their operational and organisational structures and are both technical and strategic in nature. The technical implications include the interrelated problems of efficiency and effectiveness of NGO actions as well as coordination problems (Bryans et al, 1999). Problems

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<sup>54</sup> de Waal for example, while making valid points, criticised aid workers in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide arguing under no circumstances should relief assist perpetrators but neglected to mention the dilemmas faced by individuals and organisations on the ground (de Waal and Omaar (1997).

of this nature were evident in East Timor, for example, after the conflict in 1999. While NGO action helped the country immensely in its rise out of an emergency situation, this action was not characterised by its efficiency and coordination. The NGO potential, arguably, was curbed by obstacles that they created in part by themselves. Furthermore, there were numerous NGOs moving into East Timor, each of which had their own agenda and ideas as to what was required. Often this rush to administer humanitarian relief creates coordination problems. Inherent in this was the lack of willingness to negotiate, consult with and operate in conjunction with other NGOs (Haddon, 2002). The result was a high level of overlapping, and resource and expertise wastage.

One of the key failings at this level was the lack of cooperation and even consideration by international NGOs to work with local NGOs. The outcome was often the unequal distribution and application of aid and humanitarian assistance because many NGOs knew too little about local communities. This often led to jealousy and anger within and between local communities (Teme, 2001; Hull, 2002, pers. comm.). President of East Timor, Xanana Gusmão, claimed the effectiveness of aid implementation was reduced by the lack of consultation (Haddon, 2002). The effects of uneven aid distribution were discussed in the previous chapter.

Strategic implications of NGO interventions, on the other hand, refer to NGO responsibility, and their ethics and standards. At the community organisation level there is often an attitude among social service and welfare workers and volunteers that because they are committed, motivated, hardworking and often unpaid or low paid, they are not subject to scrutiny or accountability for what they do, how they do it or what their outcomes are (Haddon, 2003, pers. comm.). There is often scepticism about educated/qualified people being involved in supervisory/management roles. The 'workers' often feel they should have the right to be promoted to these positions (Haddon, 2003, pers. comm.). It could be argued that human sentiment is the same for NGO relief workers. This concept was introduced in Chapter 3 and it is arguably evident throughout the majority of agencies that utilise volunteer staff and it is arguably becoming more apparent in stressful emergency situations.

A term borrowed from the development paradigm, but arguably common at all levels of relief and development assistance is the 'tarmac bias' of many NGOs. The 'tarmac bias' refers to humanitarian and development initiatives remaining within the boundaries of vehicle accessible regions where the roading networks (including fuel supplies) are satisfactory and further, where access to amenities (including accommodation), typical to the lifestyle of many international workers, remains (Chambers, 1983).<sup>55</sup>

This criticism was evident in the Tutuala district of East Timor where NGO assistance hardly affected local people (Teme, 2001:26). Certain regions in Bosnia also had assistance from a number of relief agencies with food and supplies over and above the necessary, while other regions were deprived. Unfortunately, however, some regions in war-torn countries are extremely difficult to access logistically and because of security concerns. Condemning NGOs for their limitations in these situations may be inappropriate and unproductive.

The 'tarmac bias', however, can arguably be linked to media coverage. A strong critique of NGOs, particularly relief agencies, is their tendency to follow high profile media attention, the majority of which tend to concentrate in urban centres. A Bosnian aid worker, for example, remarked, "Why do you think there are so many aid groups in Sarajevo? – [Because of] all the media coverage" (Rohde, 1995a:2). It is assumed by some NGOs that their inability to act decisively and visibly compromises their relevance (Commins, 1996). In the competitive world of NGOs, there is no assurance that an agency that lowers its profile and moderates its efforts for whatever reason will ever recapture forgone market share (Minear, 2003:1).

Many NGOs are essentially run as businesses and a lot of effort is put into promoting themselves. For many NGOs, it is necessary to operate in regions with high media attention in order to maintain their profile and thus attract

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<sup>55</sup> Chambers (1983) also notes the effects of 'dry season biases'.

funding from public and official donors, resources and even staff (Edwards, Hulme and Wallace, 1999). It was general knowledge, for example, that a large majority of international NGOs pulled out of East Timor and moved to Afghanistan late 2001. This was unofficially confirmed by the New Zealand military force in East Timor (Hull, 2002, pers. comm.). In many emergencies, NGOs are competing for funding and resources. During the Balkans conflicts UNHCR, for example, asked for tenders from agencies wishing to run their camps. NGOs therefore were competing against each other for UNHCR contracts (Cross, 2003:213). The lack of cooperation and coordination therefore can become amplified by competition as the tendency to work in conjunction with other competing NGOs is reduced (Commins, 1996).

A key criticism of relief NGOs is their conduct in country. There is no debate that NGOs have a responsible outlook. Rather, irresponsible actions are generally unintentional and often unwittingly executed. Typically, ignorance of local cultures, values and resource bases are the most common forms of irresponsible behaviour. It was not surprising, therefore, to see foreign aid workers in East Timor often confronted by protests concerning their cultural insensitivity such as holding meetings on days of traditional worship or religious ceremonies or because they utilised inappropriately locations or properties traditionally respected (Teme, 2001:133). Teme (2001) describes how shipping containers were placed in front of Motael Church disturbing mass services and where inappropriate swimwear was worn on the site of a 'King Jesus' statue. Community relations suffered because of these practices and the sustainability of NGOs in particular communities was jeopardised. Difficulties arose subsequent to this for other NGOs and development actors who, despite good intentions, were faced with hostility (Haddon, 2002).

### ***Coordination Between Different Actor Groups***

The lack of coordination between the main groups of humanitarian relief actors is examined on several key points. Firstly, the high level of complexity that exists within humanitarian situations, particularly where numerous agencies and funding sources operate, contributes to the problem. Byman (2001:101)

suggests international aspects of coordination in relief operations are inefficient arguing at times the UN takes the lead while at other times the host nation provides leadership. Furthermore, interested regional organisations might head the effort or individual nation states might assume *de facto* leadership. The division of labour among these actors is seldom spelt out clearly and can lead to confusion, redundancy and many gaps.

Civil-military coordination in conflict zones has also been criticised for a lack of unified effort. In Somalia, for example, the U.S. led UNOSOM II imposed top-down coordinating command structures on NGOs that had been in country longer and who subsequently resented the military. The operation was relatively unsuccessful and the potential of both the military and NGOs was limited.<sup>56</sup> Militaries also have distinctly different organisational structures and objectives (Byman, 2001:98). Their traditional training mechanisms and operational procedures are not focused on humanitarian objectives, and merging with NGO operations exposes incompatibilities and the lack of familiarity in civil-military relations.

NGOs in particular are often reluctant to share information or plan ad hoc or systematic interventions with the military. Furthermore, NGOs often emphasise impartiality and neutrality and resist being associated with the military. NGO apprehension about working with U.K. and U.S. forces in Iraq, for example, stemmed largely from their unwillingness to be associated with a partial intervening force. Even accepting U.S. government funds in Iraq may call into question the neutrality of a particular organisation's operations in other regions such as the Philippines and Indonesia where NGOs work in politically tense situations and with U.S. military presence (Minnear, 2003:2).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The U.S. led UNITAF (predecessor to UNOSOM II) was more successful co-locating the Civil-Military Operations Centre with the UN Humanitarian Operations Centre in Mogadishu allowing better coordination (Seiple, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> In Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002, constraints faced by UN and NGO humanitarian agencies have been partly attributed to the security concerns of field staff posed by their non-neutral status (as a result of association with coalition forces) (Stockton, 2002:1).

Planning for participation in humanitarian relief interventions raises a series of concerns, primarily by NGOs, with regard to consultation. NGOs often complain about the lack of clarity of UN, government (particularly the U.S. government) or military planned interventions or ad hoc operations. Relief efforts in Rwanda and Liberia are examples NGOs frequently cite. Davidson, Hayes and Landon (1996:2) note the Security Council does not always make clear its objectives, leading to confusion among NGOs and governments alike. Planning processes have also been criticised for failing to incorporate NGOs sufficiently. Furthermore, NGOs argue they are often asked too late and too infrequently for their input to make substantive contributions, despite their association with the operations planned (Davidson, Hayes and Landon, 1996).

A lack of coordination among regional command centres particularly where multinational forces are in place has also been blamed for inefficiency and confusion. Competition among NATO centres in Bosnia, for example, increased confusion among NGOs as to whom was in charge of what. There was an overlap between French, U.K. and U.S. sectors and the two Sarajevo-based centres established at the Implementation Force for the Dayton Peace Agreement and the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps headquarters (ibid.).

## **Summary**

The multifaceted realm of humanitarian assistance is made operational by a number of interrelated actors. Analysing specific tasks addressed by these actors, outside of their broad objectives is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis. This chapter has endeavoured to show that the three main humanitarian actor groups – donors, the UN and the military, and NGOs – are quite diverse in their actions and capabilities and are becoming more so. The varying contexts they operate in necessitate this flexibility.

Since the end of the cold war humanitarian actors embarked on a greater number of operations in more complex situations than at any time prior. The swelling number of ethnic conflicts also required a different approach than that

of the past and necessitated a rethink of the level of attention afforded to intrastate conflict by donors. This has expanded the reach of donors and facilitated NGOs. NGOs have come to be key players both in humanitarian emergencies and in the agendas of donors.

Unfortunately, the gains made in donor policies, and UN and NGOs capabilities, do not come without consequences. Building on the problems outlined in Chapter 3 this chapter brought to the fore the specific criticisms humanitarian actors face and create. There was focus on the lack of coordination and cooperation and a key issue was the fundamental mismatch between stated objectives and actual capability. Building on the lack of coordination is the failure of actor groups to cooperate with one another. Hulme and Goodhand (2000:20) suggest quite appropriately, “[aid] donors, may encourage NGOs to co-ordinate but cannot co-ordinate themselves”. Coordination and cooperation among the variable humanitarian actors needs to be a central objective of any humanitarian intervention maximising its potential for success.

The complexities humanitarian actors face and the consequences of their actions and inaction will be demonstrated in a series of case studies contained in the following chapter. This will provide a context to the debates about the dilemmas and the implications that come as a result of humanitarian actors intervening in ethnic conflicts.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHAOS AND DISSOLUTION: HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IN CONTEXT

#### Introduction

This chapter contextualises humanitarian intervention in ethnic conflict situations in three case studies. The purpose of the case studies is to analyse the theoretical causes of ethnic conflict examined in this thesis and the potential of humanitarian intervention to exacerbate conflict. Drawing on Chapter 2 each of the three case studies initially discusses the background to the conflict before explaining the course it took. Then, the actions taken by the humanitarian actors (examined in Chapter 4) that were involved in each conflict are analysed and the implications that emerged are discussed. Each case study portrays how particular aspects of humanitarian assistance can go wrong and how the ramifications may exacerbate or prolong ethnic conflict. The chapter critiques the lack of effective response by the international community and discusses the degree of political willingness and commitment to the conflicts.

The chapter puts the problems that can accompany humanitarian intervention in ethnic conflict in a realistic context focusing on inappropriate or ill-conceived actions and motivations. This thesis cautions against assessing humanitarian interventions solely on the end result of a conflict. Ethnic conflicts are notably unpredictable and despite appropriate and effective actions by humanitarian actors they can evolve with adverse effects and defining their success is difficult.

The first case study examines the violent conflict in Rwanda that began with the 1994 genocide and continued until 1997. The second case study examines the violent conflict in Bosnia that began in 1992 and continued into 1995. The last case study examines the Solomon Islands conflict that erupted in 1998 and continued with varying levels of intensity until 2003.

The chapter examines the case studies on a scale, measured globally, rating them from the largest humanitarian emergency in the case of Rwanda, to the most confined, represented by the Solomon Islands. On a local scale, however, all three conflicts have had serious consequences relative to their population size and economies. The scaling also includes the seriousness of the implications associated with humanitarian intervention. Again, the situation in Rwanda is widely recognised as representing one of the most serious failures of humanitarian intervention. Arguably, the Bosnian crisis was exacerbated by a diverse range of problems with the humanitarian intervention but the subsequent consequences were, in comparison to Rwanda, more restricted. The Solomon Islands situation, while it still resulted in outside military intervention, has been subjected to a much lesser degree of humanitarian assistance and a correspondingly lower instance of detrimental impacts.

## **Rwanda**

Very little about the Rwandan genocide is comprehensible. A Hutu elite came to believe that Hutu salvation necessitated Tutsi extermination. The Hutus enacted their conspiracy with startling efficiency (Barnett, 2002:1).

The genocide that began April 6 1994 saw over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate-Hutus assumed to be Tutsi-collaborators killed by Hutu extremists. The Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and the Interahamwe, translated to 'those who fight together', a militia group, led the slaughter.

### ***Recent Historical Background***

As with most ethnic conflicts, the cause of the genocide in Rwanda cannot be explained by a single or simple factor. The course of events that led up to the genocide and its aftermath includes the ethnic segregation and racism rooted in the colonial political system and the system of unconditional obedience to authority engraved deeply in society for over a century (Andersen, 2000:442).

This thesis, while not disputing any relevant historical explanations, is concerned with the most contemporary causal factors.<sup>58</sup>

A key moment of ethnic competition in the late 1950s has been termed by some scholars as the first phase of the Rwandan genocide (Jones, 2001). Emerging Hutu elites were given increased political and social status by the church and the colonial administration, tipping the balance of power in their favour away from the dominant Tutsi party, the Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR) (Andrews, 1998; Jones, 2001). Most historical literature agrees that in 1959, competition turned more violent when the Hutus, once targeted by UNAR for being fomenters of the Hutu 'revolution', began killing Tutsi elites in the capital Kigali and the surrounding countryside (Newbury, 1988; Jones, 2001). UNAR affiliates began fleeing to neighboring countries Uganda and Tanzania. In the first years after Hutus came to power, supported by the outgoing Belgian administration in a 1961 coup and following Rwanda's independence in 1962, thousands more fled (by 1990 there were 600,000-700,000 exiled Rwandanise Tutsis (Andersen, 2000:442)).<sup>59</sup>

The decades after Rwanda's independence were characterised as largely non-violent, including during the bloodless coup in 1973 in which Habyarimana, a Hutu, took power from Rwanda's first post-independence Hutu regime led by Kayibanda. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s Rwanda became a relatively successful economy in the turbulent region. Hutu-Tutsi violence within surrounding countries, particularly Burundi,<sup>60</sup> however, continued, maintaining long-term inter-group tension.

The large exodus population was important to the Rwandan civil war beginning in 1990, and the 1994 genocide. In 1990, Tutsi exiles in Uganda formed the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), an organisation dedicated to the return of exiled Tutsis. They began an offensive on Rwanda largely in response to the

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<sup>58</sup> For literature focused on historical impacts, see Smith (1983); Newbury (1988).

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix 3 for a chronology of events in Rwanda.

Habyarimana government's policy disallowing Tutsi exiles back into Rwanda (Andersen, 2000; Jones, 2001). Major-General Paul Kagame, military head of the RPF, stated that the timing of the invasion came from the failure of diplomatic efforts to resolve the question of refugees to return to Rwanda (Jones, 2001:28).

The invasion coincided with the severe economic decline, increasing land pressure, environmental destitution and population density causing social and political tension in Rwanda. By mid 1990 the Habyarimana regime was weakened (Jones, 2001). Following the RPF invasion there was an international intervention and a series of unsuccessful cease-fire agreements were signed and monitored.

### ***The Course of the Conflict***

On April 6 1994, President Habyarimana's plane was shot down entering Kigali airport and all on board were killed. This incident marked the beginning of the genocide. Within 45 minutes of the crash, roadblocks were in place and within 48 hours there was a barrage of assassinations and killings of Hutu opposition supporters and those suspected of making peace with the RPF. It is still unclear as to who shot down the plane, with some reports indicating it was the RPF or moderate Hutus who were in alliance. Others pointed to extremist members of the presidents own party who believed the president had conceded too much to the RPF in peace agreements (Huband, 1999:332; Jones, 2001).

The Hutu extremists in government generated and capitalised on popular fear that the Tutsis and the RPF were an 'evil other' that was intent on occupying Rwanda, seizing land and impressing oppressive slavery on Hutus (Jones, 2001). The desperate poverty and land scarcity the country faced provided a good base for this argument. Propaganda was disseminated through community meetings and radio stations. The radical hate-radio station Radio

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<sup>60</sup> In 1972, in Burundi Tutsis killed over 80,000 Hutus in retaliation to a Hutu insurrection. Prior to 1997 a further 270,000 people are believed to have been killed in ethnic conflicts (Andrews, 1998:40).

Libre Mille Colines, for example, announced, "The grave is only half full, who will help us fill it?" In various ways Tutsis were systematically dehumanised by the authorities as the Interahamwe rallied substantial popular support to 'defend' their nation against the Tutsi 'others' (Prunier, 1995; Andersen, 2000).

Fear also became a mobilising tool at the hands of the central authority. The fear of 'extreme consequences at the hands of the demonized other' was understandable, given the ample evidence in their societal history (Jones, 2001:40). In the early stages of the genocide, FAR soldiers and the Interahamwe used direct measures of force to compel civilian Hutus to partake in the killing of Tutsis. Brutal reprisals were taken against those resisting participation.

Over the next 100 days the unchecked genocidaires, led by the Interahamwe and FAR soldiers,<sup>61</sup> systematically massacred Tutsis throughout the country putting in motion the elaborate plan established prior by Hutu extremists and senior military figures in the Habyarimana regime (Jones, 2001:39). Jones (2001:39) argues,

It is critical to be clear that the genocide was not spontaneous, not an eruption of ancient tribal hatreds, as it was quickly portrayed by the Western media. Rather, this was a planned, coordinated, directed, controlled attack by a small core.

### ***Analyses and Explanations***

The controversial failings of the Security Council throughout the time of the genocide in Rwanda are recognised as one of the most serious in its history. The internal failure to coordinate and cooperate saw some staff begging for action while others postponed it, arguing for more time and information or backing complete withdrawal (Andrews, 1998). It was two months after the

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<sup>61</sup> The FAR had two tasks. The most loyal units helped implement the genocide while others maintained resistance against the RPF offensive that re-emerged after Habyarimana's assassination (Jones, 2001).

genocide began that the Security Council, on June 8, gave final authorisation to deploy, despite the UN's knowledge since April 29 that the situation was of 'utmost urgency'. "Each day's delay in April and May meant at least 10,000 more people dead" (de Waal and Omaar, 1997:7).

The criticism of the UN, supported by this thesis, is the UN preference to talk rather than take action and its desire to play the role expected of it, particularly by America.<sup>62</sup> For example, after the Security Council's authorisation to deploy finally came on June 8, peacekeepers were still without transport. Armoured vehicles did not arrive until June 23 and only then could forces begin training for their use. During this period the Habyarimana government collapsed and on July 9 the RPF took power and effectively ended the genocide (de Waal and Omaar, 1997). The RPF claimed complete victory and declared the war's end on July 17 (Feher, 2000: 73). Three months had passed since Habyarimana's plane was shot down and the death toll had reached 800,000 (de Waal and Omaar, 1997:8).

It is this slaughter that stands as evidence of the failure of the international community's efforts. This thesis argues that the Security Council, reflecting the interests of its members, was to blame for the inadequate political response and the response of the UN military contingent to the Rwandan situation. It does not assume the efforts of humanitarian actors and their actions and the risks taken to provide aid in adverse conditions on the ground during the weeks of the genocide are to blame.

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<sup>62</sup> The UN's 'scuttle diplomacy' became an international scandal that was supported in part by the U.S. government. Throughout the genocide the U.S. largely sat on its hands with a minimal imperative to do anything (de Waal and Omaar, 1997). Confined by their bungled attempt in Somalia the U.S. exercised its 'over-cautiousness' amounting essentially to in-action. de Waal and Omaar (1997:7) suggest the pentagon reportedly insisted that there was a slippery slope between UN involvement and the dispatch of U.S. troops so Pentagon representatives opposed any multilateral involvement. The positions fed into strong U.S. Advocacy for the April 19 pullout of UNAMIR. In fact, even when the UN Secretary-General convinced the Security Council to deploy 4000 troops the U.S. didn't provide any personnel and rather recommended just 850 troops.

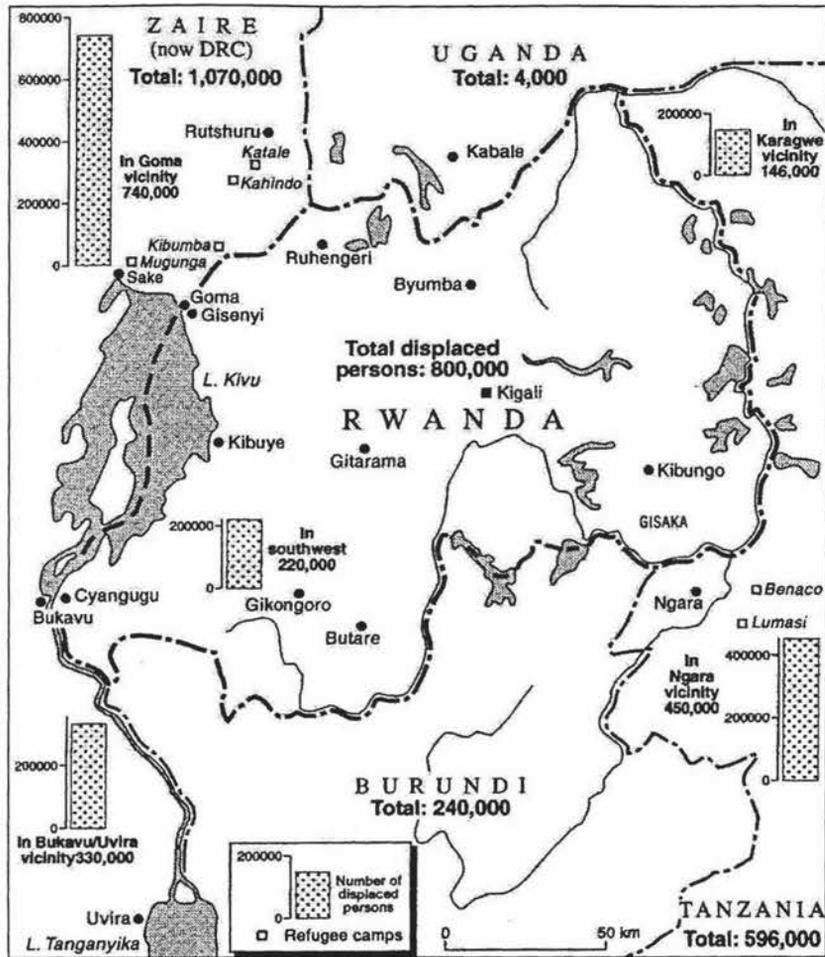
Unfortunately, this was not the end of the crisis. After Habyarimana's assassination the RPF launched a final offensive for control of Rwanda and by July 4 had taken Kigali (Jones, 2001). The offensive continued Southwest where it was met by the French military intervention 'Operation Turquoise'. A 'safe humanitarian zone' was established – Zone Turquoise – allowing refugees to retreat into the former Zaïre. However, it also served to protect and facilitate the movement of FAR troops and Habyarimana regime representatives implicated in the genocide, into former Zaire. Zone Turquoise effectively re-routed the RPF offensive Northwest forcing the FAR, which had created a wave of Hutu refugees, including those implicated in the genocide, fleeing the RPF and Tutsi reprisals into former Zaïre. On July 14 an estimated 1.1 million people were forced into refugee status in the former Zaïre in just 24 hours (Prunier, 1995:312). Nearly 800,000 refugees alone were concentrated in the Goma region (see Figure 2). The response to the Goma humanitarian emergency was the largest, most complex humanitarian operation ever mounted. It involved fifteen UN agencies, over 250 international NGOs, and several major aid-giving countries. It also involved military missions from the U.S., Canada, Ireland, Japan, Germany, Britain and Israel not for security or military purpose, but to assist the enormous logistical effort (Jones, 2001:139).

It is hard to know whether or not the FAR purposely pushed civilians into Goma as a human shield and for concealment. A study conducted by the U.S. Army concluded that the refugee crisis was, at least in part, deliberately caused (Newman and Kiley, 1996). Regardless, the lack of security in the camps in Goma was problematic.<sup>63</sup> Realising that camp security was needed, UNHCR negotiated with the Zairian government for security forces only to be told by the Secretary-General to put the plans on hold. The FAR and militia remained largely unchallenged and proceeded to re-organise and buy new weapons and meanwhile, Andrews (1998:49) notes, "[they] were nourished at the expense of the international community".

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<sup>63</sup> Human Rights Watch (1995) noted that UNHCR and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations prepared plans to separate refugees and combatants but the Security Council rejected them as too expensive and unworkable. See Jones (2001:141) for examination of DPKO initiatives.

Figure 2: Rwanda Map



Source: Pottier (2002:xvii)

The camps offered protection and opportunity for combatants to extort money and supplies from civilians and aid agencies, as explained in Chapter 3. Combatants also intimidated civilian refugees into remaining as 'human shields'. Newman and Kiley (1996:42) suggested this is the crisis that made it abundantly clear that civilians have become weapons themselves. Many camps were, in reality, controlled by remnants of the FAR, militia, or administrative or political leaders of the Habyramana regime (Andrew, 1998; Barnett, 2002). Reports of the ex-FAR military training were common Andrews (1998:50) notes, and in Goma itself there was one camp that the international community was banned from.

In the absence of security forces aid agencies continued to operate through paying 'kickbacks' and allowing a degree of aid to be 'skimmed' by militia. This

was not a new or abnormal phenomenon and despite the associated problems (as explained in Chapter 3) it was the 'price of doing business'. The Interahamwe, for example, blocked any attempt by CARE at conducting a proper census of the camps so as to allow them to 'cream off' large amounts of food and supplies (Newman and Kiley, 1996:43). However, feeding, supporting and employing perpetrators of the genocide, Barnett (2002:151) suggests, often left aid workers racked with guilt and knowing full well they were providing the means with which militia and FAR soldiers were continuing to attack Tutsi positions while maintaining a brutal reign of terror over civilian Hutu refugees. "Thus, humanitarian assistance was the handmaiden to the resuscitation of the genocide" (Jones, 2001:146).

In February 1995, the Zairian Camp Security Contingent was initiated to control the camps. This was not conflict management and while camp security was improved, the soldiers were under the control of the Habyarimana regime's closest ally, the then Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko (Joseph Desire Mobutu), and the threat of the Interahamwe and FAR soldiers was not a concern. Camps (particularly Mugunga camp) were still being used as bases for insurgency missions back into Rwanda and throughout 1995 and 1996 civilian killings in border areas intensified (Jones, 2001).

Two years after the genocide the international intervention was still floundering and refugee camps remained safe haunts for the militia. Barnett (2002:151) argues the paradox of international assistance had stretched from the UN peacekeeping operations to the UN relief efforts as UNHCR, Oxfam and other agencies continued to assist populations whose members included genocidaries.

The eventual break-up of the camps was mainly carried out by Zairian Tutsi fighters. Zairian Tutsis felt threatened by the Hutu genocidaires still at hand and with increasing harassment by Mobutu's troops and rebel opponents they began forming movements and training with the RPF. The formation of a coalition of Tutsi fighters named the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the

Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) emerged from the rebel forces fighting in Eastern Zaire (Andrews, 1998:53; Jones, 2001).

ADFL attacked Mobutu's forces in September 1996 and, with RPF allies, attacked the predominantly Hutu refugee camps on November 14. Many refugees fled and Hutu extremists retreated into the Zairian jungle using civilian refugees as human shields (Newman and Kiley, 1996). Andrews (1998:54) notes how these refugees were often attacked by Tutsi extremists and many were killed in mass murders. Estimates of the numbers killed begin at 50,000 (Jones, 2001:148).

The UN recognised the magnitude of the problem and in early November 1996 proposed a multinational force to secure 'humanitarian corridors' to provide safe passage for the repatriation of refugees (Andrews, 1998). Characteristically though, this was abandoned due to cost and the threats to soldiers, despite reports of over 200,000 refugees missing and tens of thousands being slaughtered. UNHCR continued to locate tens of thousands of refugees through to June 1997.

To summarise, the colonial legacy in Rwanda politicised ethnicity and this was exploited by elites in post-independence regimes. Hutus and Tutsis were pitted against each other breeding ethnic tension and eventually violent conflict. In 1994, after the plane crash killing Habyarimana, Hutu militias formed and began the orchestrated ethnic genocide. Meanwhile, as Rwanda digressed, the international community fiddled. The Security Council, characterising the UN's 'scuttle diplomacy', reduced the UNAMIR force and did its best to minimise the deployment of a new troop contingent.

Humanitarian actions in Rwanda began with all the right motives. However, the refugee camps quickly came under the control of the genocidaries who took advantage of the aid supplies being provided by humanitarian agencies (Newman and Kiley, 1996:42). The lack of immediate effective diplomatic response to the Rwandan crisis and the delayed peacekeeping response reflected the restrained political will and commitment of UN member states.

## Bosnia-Herzegovina

### *Recent Historical Background*

Unlike other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the former Yugoslavia became independent from the Soviet Union in 1948. Led by President Josip Broz (Marshal) Tito until his death in 1980, the unified Yugoslav State was a construct of six republics and two autonomous zones in the Serbian Republic<sup>64</sup> (see Figure 3). The multi-ethnic nature of Yugoslavia was characterised by authoritarian rule that maintained unity through a legacy of fear, violence and ethnic trade-offs.

**Figure 3: Yugoslavia 1945-1991**



Source: Sells (1996)

<sup>64</sup> Former Yugoslavia was made up of the six republics of Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia. The republic of Serbia comprised the two autonomous zones, Kosovo and Vojvodina.

After its break with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia began negotiating loans<sup>65</sup> from the IMF, the World Bank and foreign banks and had flexible foreign economic relationships operating in various diverse markets<sup>66</sup> becoming a mixed liberal economy (Woodward, 1995:25). Socialist Yugoslavia came to depend on the foreign economic and strategic environment and between 1960 and 1980 was claimed to be an economic success with an annual GDP growth rate of 6.1 per cent and a functioning welfare system (Chossudovsky, 1997:376).

However, the world debt crisis initiated the first phase of largely IMF installed macro-economic reforms in 1980 creating serious impoverishment for the Yugoslav population. The economic crisis aggravated ethnic tensions and also promoted political instability (Chossudovsky, 1997). Chossudovsky (1997:376) suggests, the reforms, accompanied by debt restructuring agreements with official and commercial creditors, served to weaken the institutions of the state, creating political divisions between Belgrade and the governments of the republics and autonomous provinces.

Yugoslavia negotiated a financial aid package from the U.S. in exchange for economic reforms, including a devalued currency, the restriction of government expenditure, and the ceasing of many socially owned enterprises, in order to service debt. However, Chossudovsky (1997:376) argues, this contributed further to the crippling of the state system, and revenues that should have gone as transfer payments to the republics and autonomous provinces were instead channelled into servicing Belgrade's debt. The republics were largely left to their own devices, thus exacerbating the process of political fracturing. Chossudovsky (1997:376) suggests,

In one swoop, the reformers had engineered the demise of the federal fiscal structure and mortally wounded its federal political institutions. The IMF-induced budgetary crisis created an economic

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<sup>65</sup> A reasonable proportion of economic assistance to Yugoslavia was orchestrated by the U.S. and this included U.S. military aid (Woodward, 1995:25).

<sup>66</sup> Yugoslavia had economic relationships with Western states, third world nations (particularly oil-rich nations) and the USSR (Woodward, 1995:25).

*fait accompli* which in part paved the way for the formal secession of Croatia and Slovenia in June 1991.

After Tito's death a political authority vacuum developed and while the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, renamed the League of Communists, remained, there was a breakdown of political and civil order compounded by the economic problems created largely by the policies meant to resolve foreign debt (Woodward, 1995). Woodward (1995:15) argued,

The conflict is not a result of historical animosities and it is not a return to the precommunist past; it is the result of the politics transforming a socialist society to a market economy and democracy.

This is a reasonably bold statement. While this thesis essentially picks up on the second part of the statement, it is, nevertheless, important to recognise that as with individuals, society itself is likely to be a combination/product of influences from its recent and distant past. Often the way people respond or react to a situation will be influenced by beliefs and attitudes passed on through generations. Typically, also, these responses and reactions will influence the way events unfold. The caution, therefore, is against making an absolute claim that "the conflict is not a result of historical animosities". As the thesis considers the recent severe conditions and disintegration of Yugoslav politics and economy as a major contributor to the ethnic tensions developing into violent conflict, it also endeavors to be cognisant of the influence of historical events and tensions.

### ***The Course of the Conflict***

Serbian leaders controlling the Yugoslav State recognised the potential disruption and disintegration of former Yugoslavia and made clear that they would not accept existing internal barriers as the basis for the republics seeking independence (Rudolph, 1997:138). On June 25 1991, the republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence and the Serb-dominated federal Yugoslav Peoples Army (JNA), proving their threat was not idle,

launched an offensive against Slovenia marking the beginning of the civil war (Murphy, 1996; Rudolph, 1997).<sup>67</sup>

Fighting in Slovenia, however, was short lived and this was attributed to a diplomatic intervention by the EC and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and also to the low density of Serbs in the population (Murphy, 1996:199). In effect, Serb authorities recognised Slovenia's independence. However, they were not willing to accept Croatia's independence and the JNA switched their focus to Croatia in July 1991. The war in Croatia lasted until January 1992 when, after the EC, under pressure from Germany, had recognised it (and Slovenia) as an independent state, UN Special Envoys secured a ceasefire, the Vance Plan, with the JNA. The campaign left the JNA with almost a third of Croatia on the Bosnian border under their control that was declared as Serbian territory (Rieff, 1995).

A crucial error in the Vance plan was the allowance of police units to continue functioning. Serbian soldiers swapped their uniforms for those of police and fighting continued, albeit on a lesser more discrete level (Rieff, 1995). By April 1992 fighting had begun in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bosnia-Herzegovina was the most diverse of the republics made up of neither a majority national nor religious group, but rather consisting of a population of 43.7 percent Muslims, 31.4 percent Serbs and 17.3 percent Croats. Although, importantly, 'Muslim' was a recognised national identification (Rogel, 1998). With the collapsing of the Yugoslav state and the expansionary ideals of Serb president Slobodan Milosevic, Alija Izetbegovic, the Bosnian leader, recognised the threat to Bosnia and in December 1991 asked for EC recognition and UN peacekeepers. Peacekeepers were denied but the EC insisted on a referendum on Bosnian independence (Rieff, 1995:17). While the overwhelming vote was yes, Serb leadership called on Bosnian Serbs to boycott the elections outside of the capital Sarajevo.

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<sup>67</sup> See Appendix 3 for a chronology of events in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia.

The boycott was successful and Bosnian Serbs, wanting to create an autonomous Bosnian Serb territory, continued to oppose the independence of Bosnia and in March 1992, Bosnian Serb irregulars began setting up roadblocks. By the end of the month, Bosnian Serb irregulars, openly supported by JNA troops, were seizing territory all over Bosnia and on April 6, the siege of Sarajevo began (Rieff, 1995:17).

Ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims, following a premeditated systematic strategy refined in Croatia, was Serb policy, implemented in Bosnia after independence was elected. This Serb policy was planned and coordinated at the highest political and military levels in the Yugoslav government (Hartman, 1999). The military-coordinated militia attacks were not sporadic or isolated and the military capacity secretly installed around Sarajevo was put in place over time and activated when Bosnia's independence was recognised internationally. The military goals were achieved through terror, directly targeting civilians and creating fear. Hartman (1999:55) suggests the horrors and the goals of this war were one, or, more precisely, the success of the war depended on its horrors. Serb leaders, including Milosevic, were aware that only ethnic cleansing could enable the successful occupation and control of Yugoslavia's diverse territories. Too many members of rival ethnic communities would have otherwise remained, and the more territories conquered, the more difficult it would have become to occupy and administer (Hartman, 1999:55).

Those who did not flee the harassment were tortured, mutilated, raped and murdered (Rogel, 1998). Typically, a town or village was shelled, installing panic. Paramilitary squads and militia then moved in pillaging and confiscating homes and property of non-Serbs and randomly killing and raping. In extreme, but frequent examples, men were sent to detention centers (concentration camps)<sup>68</sup> or executed while women were raped and sent to special 'rape centres' (Kaldor, 1999). Snipers became notorious, preying on civilians, and in

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<sup>68</sup> Detention centers came to UN attention in August 1992 and the UN Commission of Experts stated that they were the scene of 'the worst inhumane acts, including mass executions, torture, rape and other forms of sexual assault' (Kaldor, 1999:52). Evidence suggests widespread rape in detention centers may have been part of a deliberate strategy of psychological attack.

Sarajevo 'sniper alley' claimed many lives. Rogel (1998:33) notes how Muslim culture and history was systematically eradicated. Mosques, libraries, schools and public places were all targeted for destruction.

Ethnic 'cleansers' in Bosnia were largely Bosnian Serb irregulars. Following the proclamation of Bosnia as the Serbian Republic of Bosnia by Radovan Karadzic, leader of Bosnia's Serbian Democratic Party, the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) of 80,000 soldiers, transferred from the JNA after it 'officially' withdrew in May 1992, were also implicated (Kaldor, 1999). Initially, however, ethnic cleansing was carried out by Serbs from Serbian paramilitary groups, such as Arkan's 'Tigers' led by Zeljko Raznjatovic (Arkan), a prominent figure in the Belgian underworld (Rogel, 1998; Kaldor, 1999). By November 1992, up to 1.5 million Bosnians, a third of the population, had become refugees fleeing the ethnic cleansing (Rogel, 1998:32). Forced migration, ethnic cleansing and the terrorising of civilians became the primary principle behind the humanitarian imperative in Bosnia.

In 1993, the Muslim population became victims of double aggression. In Bosnia there were effectively three warring parties with varying degrees of cooperation. Until 1993, Muslims and Croats cooperated against the Serbs (Kaldor, 1999). After the publication of the Vance-Owen Plan in 1993 the Croats and the Muslims started fighting each other. The plan, based on 10 cantons - three for each of Bosnia's 'national' groups and a separate one for Sarajevo - was rejected in May 1993 by Bosnian Serbs as they wanted more, but not before Croats had 'cleansed' the regions they were offered under the proposed plan, sparking the Muslim-Croat violence (Rogel, 1998; Kaldor, 1999).

Croats, supported by the Croatian Defense Council and the Croatian Army, were encouraged by Milosevic to pursue a Greater Croatia including part of Central Bosnia where a Bosnian Croat majority of 800,000 lived (Hartman, 1999). This type of political control was used to acquire territory instead of violent military control. Violence was instead used to control populations. Croats employed similar tactics to Serb militias, albeit on a much lesser scale, including the tendency to engage civilian opposing forces (Kaldor, 1999). In

spring 1994, the Washington Agreement ceasefire between Muslims and Croats was installed and nearing the end of the war Muslims and Croats began cooperating again.

On October 12 1995, the war ended after a barrage of NATO airstrikes and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke's brokered ceasefire – the Dayton Peace Accords. The campaign of ethnic cleansing had almost been completed – 260,000 people had been killed and two thirds of the population were displaced (Kaldor, 1999).

### ***Analyses and Explanations***

There has been intense debate over whether or not the actions of Serbs in Bosnia can be construed as genocide and even whether their actions were considered unjustified. The opinions voiced during the debates have influenced both international public opinion and policy response.

Russian opinion was largely pro-Serbian to the point that certain aspects were considered bordering on absurd. The Russian Orthodox Church declared it was Serbs who were the genocide victims, not Muslims (Cigar, 1995:113). There is no doubt that Bosnian forces also committed atrocities but a report by the UN Commission of Experts concluded that 90 percent of atrocities in Bosnia were the responsibility of Serb extremists, 6 percent by Croat extremists with only 4 percent by Muslim extremists (Hartman, 1999:56). CIA figures closely mirror these statistics. One of the strongest advocates of the pro-Serbian view was Russian ultra nationalist Vladimir Zhirinouskiy. Zhirinouskiy believed the Muslim nationality in Europe was essentially an artificial creation that did not exist as a nation and was quoted as saying, “they should emigrate to Iran” (Cigar, 1995:113).

Many public figures in the UN and Western governments also downplayed the severity of the situation. Former Chief of Staff of UNPROFOR in Sarajevo, Major General Lewis MacKenzie, suggested the media exaggerated and trumped up the atrocities committed against Muslims. He also placed blame on

the Bosnian government arguing they allegedly contributed to the suffering of their own people in order to coax international sympathy (Cigar, 1995). While independent inquiries largely contradicted his beliefs, he continued to publicly voice them.

Numerous other UN officials also distorted the situation, reducing any sense of urgency, and most Western governments were quick to downplay the situation avoiding commitment. Cigar (1995:115) notes senior policy makers in both the Bush and Clinton administrations sought to soften judgements. They were reluctant to call the process in Bosnia 'genocide' and feared that a more direct approach might create calls for a stronger response by the U.S. In many media reports in, for example, the arguably politically aligned Washington Post, and in most government reports, terms such as 'population redistribution' and 'ethnic cleansing' were used but very rarely 'genocide'. In fact, many observers, journalists and policy makers alike did not believe genocide was being committed.

The objective to expel Muslims from certain areas was correctly assumed by many people but this did not negate the fact that genocide was a by-product or in fact a means to an end. Hartman (1999:54) argues that in Bosnia the killing of civilians was not a by-product of war because the goal of ethnic cleansing was the annihilation of civilians. This side of the debate argues the Bosnia case fits the criteria for both 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide' as defined in international law.<sup>69</sup> The first Foreign Minister and the then Prime Minister of Bosnia persistently argued, 'What is going on is genocide. In the West, many people choose to call it a war. But it's not a war, it's slaughter' (Rieff, 1995:17).

From the beginning of the conflict in former Yugoslavia there was a level of international interest (notably from France, Germany, U.K., Italy, Russia, U.S., NATO and the EU). The case of Bosnia was no different. Kaldor (1999) notes that great hopes were vested in the role of the international assistance that was

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<sup>69</sup> Cigar (1995) notes that genocide need not entail the eradication of an entire population nor is there a numerical threshold that has to be crossed. Rather, genocide is the willful killing of a large number of people not guilty of any crime other than belonging to a particular group.

divided into two distinct arenas. The first was the high-level political attention, while the second was the tangible humanitarian intervention comprising civil and military aid and assistance to the Bosnian population. Kaldor (1999) suggests that there have been many explanations for the failure of the international intervention to minimise the effect of the war.

This thesis expands on two factors that arguably represent the key failures. The first factor comprises of the misconceptions in the international political arena about the war itself, including the Serb instigated political and military objectives, combined with the apparent unwillingness on the part of several key actors to acknowledge the seriousness of the Bosnia situation. The second factor was the lack of coordination and cooperation, and at times, the contradictory action occurring in the relationship between the political institutions and the humanitarian actors on the ground.

#### *Misconceptions about the War and Lack of Acknowledgement of its Seriousness*

In examining the political shortcomings on the part of the international community it is important to acknowledge certain assumptions made by the governments involved. Britain, which was deeply involved in the first phase of policy making and negotiating regarding the war, was essentially pro-Serbia, assuming Serbia would win quickly, supporting the partitioning of the Yugoslav state (Hastings, 2001). Britain and the EU, in conjunction with the U.S., assumed that nationalist totalitarian ideologies in Yugoslavia necessitated the partitioning of ethnic groups and that there was no other solution.

The assumption continued that violence was predominantly between 'warring' parties and that civilians were caught in the crossfire. Upon deploying peacekeepers this assumption ran aground and the fear of being drawn into a conventional war was fully realised as it became evident that peacekeepers could not stand between warring parties and protect civilians when in fact civilians were the target (Kaldor, 1999). To fulfill their mandate, peacekeepers

would therefore essentially have to take sides, a prospect not welcomed by political superiors.

The problematic top-down diplomatic approach was waning as it tried to reach a solution for the problem of territories and boundaries rather than social and political organisation (Kaldor, 1999). UNPROFOR also drew criticism because it had allegedly created de facto borders and frozen the status quo established by violence and ethnic cleansing (Duffield, 1994:11). As conflict intensified, the international diplomatic intervention continued to wane. For example, U.S. policy on genocide was largely absent and the U.S. essentially refused to acknowledge it, while the EU continued to push their stance of partitioning Bosnia as a solution (Williams, 2001:275). The deployment of peacekeepers was arguably jeopardised by these distorted judgements. The U.S. had no appropriate policy under which such missions could operate and the EU policy of partition was, arguably, illegitimate (*ibid.*). In reality, a peace-making operation would have been preferable to the restrained PKO that was deployed with a limited mandate where there was no peace, as such, to keep.

Further confusion at an international political level arose when resolutions passed during 1992 gave UNPROFOR II, a peacekeeping force, a protection role to secure humanitarian aid delivery and, ironically, permission under Chapter VII (enforcement) to use 'all measures necessary' to do so (UN, 1993a). The use of armed force, however, was still deemed by the international leaders concerned as unadvisable, although as Duffield (1994) suggested, it appeared as if UNPROFOR interpreted the mandate as excluding force of arms.<sup>70</sup> In 1994, coordination between the UN and Western leaders over the protection of aid supply lines and the blurred boundaries of UN operations broke down to the point some governments threatened to withdraw troops (Rogel, 1998).

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<sup>70</sup> An example in 1993 ratified this. British soldiers escorting a convoy returned fire at Serbs in the hills and harassment subsided. However, General Morillon, UNPROFOR commander, was reprimanded for 'exceeding the mandate' (Kaldor, 1999:64).

Peacekeepers remained and were expected to stay neutral but use force if necessary. Their limited resources, however, coupled with the reluctance of the powers that be to provide the UN authorised NATO air support, frequently undermined their ability to move aid. UN troops were not fully able to protect aid convoys or the safe havens set up for civilian protection. As one Sarajevan put it, "they stood by like eunuchs at the orgy" (Kaldor, 1999:59).

The misconceptions in the international political arena and the unwillingness of key actors to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation contributed to an apparent powerlessness on the part of UNPROFOR. For example, the guerrilla tactics of Bosnian Serb irregulars and the BSA, and the difficult terrain, often exposed aid convoys to blockades and checkpoints, particularly in less secure regions where numerous crossings of military lines was necessary (Duffield, 1994). NGOs claim a loss of 30-40 percent of aid was normal and in more extreme cases vehicle confiscation or hostage taking occurred (ibid.).<sup>71</sup> "Bosnia was a place where any drunken lout with a Kalashnikov could stop an aid convoy indefinitely" (Rieff, 2002:135).

The majority of NGOs, however, were operating in more secure regions and the diversion of aid was done on an agreement basis whereby agencies bargained with Serb militias for access to areas in return for a fixed proportion of aid (Duffield, 1994). The end result, however, remained the diversion of humanitarian aid to the processes of the conflict. Duffield (1994:21) suggests that the support of conflict was predictable when considering the provision of aid. Food given to civilians, for example, was inevitably shared with civilian militias and family members involved in the conflict. The neutrality of civilian humanitarian actors became irrelevant. Duffield (1994:21) argued, "it is the inevitable consequence of a policy which has substituted the supply of humanitarian assistance for the attempt to forcefully press a political solution".

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<sup>71</sup> The confiscation of resources and personnel harassment frequently continued despite the written agreements often made between UNHCR and regional commanders or authorities (Duffield, 1994).

A further example of the international communities failure to empower UNPROFOR related to the establishment, by the UN, of six 'safe havens' in April and May 1993. These were prompted by the Bosnian Serb siege of Srebrenica in early 1993 that cut off all humanitarian aid to the town (Terry, 2002:30). Despite having UNPROFOR protection the safe havens were surrounded by Bosnian Serb held areas and, Terry (2002:31) argues, UNPROFOR didn't have the capacity to defend the areas when they were attacked. The Bosnian deputy Prime Minister, for example, was killed while in a UN vehicle supposedly under UNPROFOR protection. UNPROFOR's own soldiers were also prone to sniper fire and being taken hostage (Rogel, 1998). UNPROFOR was also limited in its ability to stop Bosnian Muslims launching attacks on Bosnian Serbs from within the havens despite their status as demilitarised zones.<sup>72</sup> It has been suggested that such attacks were intended to provoke retaliatory shelling by Bosnian Serbs in order to justify calling on NATO airstrikes.<sup>73</sup> If this is correct it is unclear whether such an action was by design at a political level, or the result of frustration in the field at the lack of direction and coordination from above. In any event, the creation of safe zones, motivated largely by the humanitarian objective, effectively made possible an escalation of the war and further exposure of civilians to bombardments (Woodward, 1995:32).

In July 1995, the safe havens of Srebrenica and Zepa were overrun by Bosnian Serbs (Kaldor, 1999:63). The necessity of NATO involvement was accepted by the EU and the U.S. only after the conflict in Bosnia had taken a massive toll over a period of three and a half years. Williams (2001:279), however, insists that this was brought about not by any pro-active initiative of the government agencies, but by CNN, BBC and public opinion pressure in general.

Finally, late in 1995, the U.S. and the European partners initiated the Dayton peace talks resulting in the Dayton Peace Accords. The Accords are an

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<sup>72</sup> The UN preferred the zones to be demilitarised rather than having to forcibly remove Bosnian Serb forces thereby appearing hostile and non-neutral.

<sup>73</sup> Refer to Susan Woodward (1995) for detailed examination of this justification.

amalgamation of the interests of the powers involved, but while maintaining peace in Bosnia and a loose government structure, they have limited scope for asserting justice. The proposals of the Bosnian delegation were largely ignored and the potential to enforce the Accords provisions are limited (Williams, 2001:279).

The conflict in Bosnia exemplified how the UN, Security Council members, and regional organisations including the EU and NATO can perceive events in a distorted manner and how the moral imperative can be lost. The top-down *realpolitik* approach failed to fully comprehend the Bosnia situation, that is, as a war of ethnic cleansing and even genocide, and this was subsequently reflected in the policy recommendations and actions. Perhaps, had the objectives of the war been realised for what they were, the humanitarian intervention would have been more successful in protecting civilians.

#### *Lack of Coordination and Cooperation Between Political Institutions and Humanitarian Actors*

Much criticism, especially journalistic criticism, was directed at the main actors on the ground, UNPROFOR and to a lesser degree UNHCR and humanitarian NGOs<sup>74</sup> (refer to Duffield (1994) for detailed analysis of NGO operations in Bosnia). It was perceived that they were failing to protect aid as it was regularly confiscated and often failed to reach the needy or did so in pitiful quantities. A common argument became 'we are fed today, but for what, so the aggressors can kill us tomorrow' (Duffield, 1994).

It is argued that, in effect, relief aid became a substitute for political action and incompetent policy. The reality in Bosnia was that humanitarian action was disproportionate to the level of political commitment. The problems were manifestations of deeper bureaucratic bumbling at the heart of the UN and Security Council member states and the EU. UNPROFOR and the aid

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<sup>74</sup> In the popular Bosnian mind UN aid agencies and NGOs were often both regarded as UNPROFOR and as such, aid workers were tarred with the same brush (Duffield, 1994).

agencies had become scapegoats of sorts for the shortcomings of others. UN agencies, as in Rwanda, had a lack of clear operational goals for deployment and the definition of their role as 'neutral' was blurred. The result saw the UN become another party to the conflict (Deacon, Hulse and Stubbs, 1997). UNHCR, charged with protecting refugees, faced this type of dilemma, which the High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, explained in November 1992:

In the context of a conflict which has as its very objective displacement of people we find ourselves confronted with a major dilemma. To what extent do we persuade people to remain where they are, when that could well jeopardise their lives and liberties? On the other hand, if we help them to move, do we not become an accomplice to 'ethnic cleansing'? (Cited in Minnear, 1994:64).

UNPROFOR never got fully up to operating strength, and NATO monitoring of no-fly zones and Western European Union (the defense wing of the EU) naval forces monitoring the arms embargo were never properly implemented. Furthermore, it took three and a half years before decisive military action was taken against the aggressors (Kaldor, 1999). Meanwhile humanitarian aid remained obstructed, uneven and inconsistent.

Overall, this problem appears to be a fundamental incompatibility and lack of coordination both within the UN and the regional organisations. The UN and associated organisations were fumbling with neutrality, arguably because they were trying to play the 'neutral' mediator while at the same time considering forceful peace-making and military action against one side<sup>75</sup> (Murphy, 1996). There was no effective decision made and the UN and its members and the regional organisations attempted sitting on the fence. The role of humanitarian agencies including UNHCR was an extension of the indecisive role of the UN and its political masters. UNHCR and its 'implementing partners' (a phrase

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<sup>75</sup> This was problematic because of the unclear distinctions among UN agencies and the role they were meant to, or were perceived to be playing.

used for the NGOs they fund) filled a void that was created by the failure of diplomacy and the meager ability of UN PKOs (Rieff, 2002).

## **Solomon Islands**

The Solomon Islands case study differs from the two above in that the humanitarian intervention is a recent and ongoing development. The case study examines the potential complications the intervention faced and those associated with a potential failure of the intervention to maintain its commitment.

### ***Recent Historical Background***

The Solomon Islands, an archipelago of 990 islands with a current population of over 500,000 (Solomon Islands Census Office, 1999; CIA website, 2003),<sup>76</sup> was a former British protectorate before gaining independence in 1978. Predominantly Melanesian, Solomon Islanders are grouped into nine provinces including the main island Guadalcanal and the neighboring more populous Malaita (Amnesty International, 2000).

Violent ethnic conflict, beginning in October 1998, developed out of tension between ethnic groups from the main islands of Malaita and Guadalcanal. The mounting tension was a product of divisions in society that began during the colonial period when large numbers of Malaitans were moved by those trading in labour for plantation owners on Guadalcanal, as well as around the time of WW II when many Malaitans were moved to Guadalcanal to work at the American airbase. Following the war thousands of Malaitans moved to Guadalcanal and the developing capital Honiara, attracted by prospects of work in government departments and in new businesses (Dinnen, 2002). Increasingly, Malaitans began occupying many of the top jobs in both the private and the public sectors and became the dominant political force in the now Malaitan dominated Honiara (Kabutaulaka, 2002). The traditional ties to

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<sup>76</sup> The Solomon Islands population figures are estimated based on the 1999 census.

the land of the Islanders minimised the benefits they received from the expanding employment (Dixon, 2000).

Immigration and occupation, however, do not stand alone as the instigators of the conflict. A centralised pattern of development that the colonial installed Westminster political and economic systems provided with almost no accommodation of indigenous social and political systems, promoted a series of uneven benefits (Turnbull, 2002:191). Since independence these have been exemplified by politicians and bureaucrats taking advantage of them. Those who prospered in this introduced system are often considered by other Solomon Islanders to be 'self-serving and without the interests of the people at heart' (Otter, 2002:46).

### ***The Course of the Conflict***

In October 1998 the uprising started when a group of Guadalcanal men, allegedly representing indigenous Guadalcanal islanders, began harassing settlers in regions near Honiara (Kabutaulaka, 2002:2).<sup>77</sup> Emerging between March and October 1998, this militia group, known as the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), formed with between 500-2000 members, many of whom were child soldiers. The IFM forced out Malaitans from rural Guadalcanal and the outskirts of Honiara, extorting needed support from indigenous Guadalcanal villagers (Amnesty International, 2000). The campaign of intimidation resulted in over 100 killings, many injured Malaitan settlers, and an estimated 20,000 fleeing their homes seeking refuge in Honiara or outside of Guadalcanal. As a result, Amnesty International (2000:2) noted, Honiara became a virtual Malaitan enclave surrounded by roadblocks cutting off rural areas under the control of the IFM. Up to 10,000 indigenous Guadalcanal residents of Honiara fled into rural regions where the Royal Solomon Islands Police faced serious challenges dealing with the tension and eventually lost control outside of Honiara (ibid.; Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, 2003).

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<sup>77</sup> See Appendix 3 for a chronology of events in the Solomon Islands.

Since the beginning of the conflict the perceived legitimacy of the government contracted due to its failure to achieve reconciliation and its inability or unwillingness to deal with militias and criminals (Otter, 2002:47). Social services collapsed, including the police, and corruption was rife. The economy in the Islands ceased to exist in any substantive form and squatter settlements grew around Honiara, causing conflict with local Guadalcanal residents. Liloqula and Pollard (2002:2) note indigenous villagers resented the acquisition of land by migrants, in particular Malaitans. The resulting tension, in conjunction with the resentment of the Malaitan domination of business and political affairs in Honiara, resulted in anger being directed not just at the small Honiara elite responsible for much of the political and economic marginalisation, but at the wider community of Malaitan descent (Dixon, 2000).

In mid 1999 violence increased with the emergence of the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF), an armed political group of about 150-300 Malaitans displaced by IMF operations (Amnesty International, 2000). Numerous Malaitan police officers had reportedly joined and were training the MEF. Following armed action a state of emergency was declared in Guadalcanal in June 1999 and Commonwealth Special Envoy, former Fijian Prime Minister Sitivani Rabuka, brokered the Honiara Peace Accord<sup>78</sup> (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, 2003). However, the Accord failed and conflict continued despite the Multinational Police Peace Monitoring group operating. The Accord did, however, compel the government to address the concerns of rural Guadalcanalese and act on militia intimidation.

Government action was minimal and largely perceived as ineffective and subsequently the MEF, led by newly announced leader and spokesperson, Andrew Nori, a former MP, increased their activity and refused to attend peace talks. On June 5 2000 the MEF took over key buildings in Honiara and detained Prime Minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu demanding his resignation, on the grounds of failure to resolve the conflict, to which he submitted on June 14

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<sup>78</sup> Ironically, Rabuka was, in fact, the leader of two military coups against democratically elected governments in 1987.

(Dinnen, 2002:288). The MEF, armed with weapons, many of which were seized during a raid on the police armoury in January 2000, declared it was using military force in order to increase pressure on the government to pay compensation for Malaitan loss of lives and property from earlier IFM attacks (Kabutaulaka, 2002).

Fighting between the IFM and the MEF escalated, as Nori had threatened, until the newly formed government, which had reconvened two weeks earlier, elected Manasseh Sogavare, former Finance Minister, as Prime Minister. This was on June 30 literally hours after Nori threatened 'all out war' (Amnesty International, 2000:2). Prime Minister Sogavare, assisted by Australia and New Zealand, negotiated a ceasefire on August 3 providing the momentum that led to the 'Townsville Peace Agreement' negotiated in Townsville Australia in October 2000 (Dinnen, 2002; Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, 2003). The agreement initially saw a pullback from full-scale civil war and an end to the high-level violence that had lasted almost two years, although the situation, particularly in the capital, remained insecure (Global Security, 2001). Unrest was ongoing and the peace process began to slow after the agreement. The weapon amnesty's progress slowed and hundreds of guns were left in the hands of militia.

In December 2001 a new government was elected with the mandate of slowing the decline (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, 2003). Prime Minister Allan Kemakeza worked with Australia and an expatriate police commissioner funded by the EU, to stem the worsening situation. A series of major setbacks, combined with social unrest, however, was constraining. The killing of a government minister, Father Augustine Geve, in August 2002, allegedly by militant leader Harold Keke, was the first major setback. This was followed by the murder of peace activist and former police commissioner Sir Fred Soaki in February 2003. In May 2003 Seventh Day Adventist missionary Lance Gersbach, an Australian, was beheaded (O'Callaghan, 2003).

The Solomon Islands arguably became the Pacific's 'first failed' state and it appealed to its neighbours for help. In late July 2003, an international police

and military force, with support from prime Minister Kemakeza, led by Australia with help from New Zealand and other Pacific nations, began Operation Helpem Fren marking the first stage of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The deployment of 2,300 personnel was welcomed by Solomon Islanders and in its first six months was reasonably successful in curbing violence, maintaining some form of order and collecting and destroying 3700 weapons.

### ***Analyses and Explanations***

The underlying problem faced by the intervention, however, is multi-faceted and calls have been made that it is too little too late. There was an apparent reluctance on the part of regional leaders to become actively engaged in pre-emptive diplomacy despite earlier calls for assistance from the Solomon Islands government. Kennedy (2003:11) argues prevention has been a concept lost while throwing millions at problems that may have been avoided or ameliorated is the order of the day.

The Solomon Islands has essentially been allowed to slip into a state of civil war with only limited attempts at halting it through poorly maintained peace agreements and a constrained international police presence (Ansley, 2003). In counter argument, Australian Foreign Minister Alex Downer states, "foreigners do not have answers for the deep-seated problems afflicting the Solomon's" but also argues Solomon Islanders don't either. Downer states that it was only upon the direct request by the Solomon Islands that an intervention was deployed. It was not because of any other obligation other than that, "It is in our national interest to help, and we will look a great deal worse to the world if we decline" (Downer cited in *The Australian*, 12 July 2003:10).

In watching the Solomon Islands fall into a state of conflict, limited preventative action essentially became an extension of the uneven system of development - the country's stumbling block. A throwback to the colonial era, the system of development was the handmaiden of the state's social and economic policy. The policies and strategies adopted by the state often failed to develop the

capacity of social development and the wider economy, focusing rather on a few large-scale industries (mainly logging, palm oil and fishing) (Otter, 2002). Otter (2002:47) argues economic management models appropriate for a small, fragile developing country were ignored in favour of high-profile, quick return projects.

It can be argued foreign development aid safeguarded the system of uneven development pursued by the state. Hughes (2003:1) suggests that aid donors contributed to escalating budget deficits by permitting bilateral funding to be considered as revenue. The goals of the Solomon Island's governments and the ingrained corruption ensured that large portions of aid were not invested in development but dissipated in their recurrent programs (Dixon, 2000; Hughes, 2003:22).

The failure of aid in the Solomon Islands, however, has not been countered or substantially addressed. Australia, for example, a major donor to the Solomon Islands continued, despite criticism, to tie up to 70 percent of its aid,<sup>79</sup> the winners of which were Australian development institutions (Huetter, 2003; Hughes, 2003). An example of the failure of the aid program is the \$17 million contract to Australian company GRM to rebuild the capacity of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. O'Connor (2003:2) argues that over the project's four-year operation positive results have been negligible and accountability is limited.

Huetter (2003) suggests there is short-term potential for this type of aid but argues the unstable nature of the Solomon Islands (among other near neighbours), exacerbated by failed development, may threaten Australia in the future. This point is echoed by the argument that the Solomon Islands may potentially re-erupt when Operation Helpem Fren and RAMSI withdraw. Community Aid Abroad (2003) backs this argument drawing attention to the

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<sup>79</sup> Tied aid is the policy by which a nation offers economic aid to another nation with the condition that the nation receiving aid purchases certain products and services from the nation giving aid.

underlying causes of the tension emphasizing the fact that they may resurface if not properly addressed.

The intervention must evolve or be replaced with long-term social development and reconstruction initiatives to avoid a lapse back into violence but while facing a new, arguably complex, challenge. A long-term commitment to rebuild the country and its government and social services necessitates in-depth involvement by provisional authorities. This brings with it the risk of being perceived as neo-colonial, the ramifications of which can be seen in Iraq. The tendency of the Howard government to prevaricate in its commitment to the Solomon Islands was due to its unwillingness to be seen as a neo-coloniser infringing on the sovereignty of the Solomon Islands, particularly with current sentiment seeing Australia as part of the U.S. imperial alliance (The Australian, 12 July 2003:10). Wainwright (2003:9) suggests this is a real and serious risk arguing Australia must avoid the “perils and mistakes of neo-colonialism”. Australia’s position was not helped when President Bush described Australia as the ‘Pacific’s sheriff’<sup>80</sup> (Solomon Island Broadcasting Corporation website, 2003). Australia was apprehensive about committing to the intervention without the visible political support of New Zealand and other Pacific nations because of the imperialist connotations that may otherwise arise.

To summarise, any limitations faced by the intervention in the Solomon Islands<sup>81</sup> arguably result not from shortcomings on the ground but from preceding political decisions. The recurring theme of political restraint seen in each of the case studies, while manifested differently in the Solomon Islands, remains problematic for humanitarian interventions. In the case of the Solomon Islands the problem was the inaction during four years of conflict characterised by recurring, predictably ineffective peace talks and a following upsurge in violence. Political action in the form of peace agreements never properly

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<sup>80</sup> Prime Minister Howard made it clear that President Bush had not actually anointed Australia as the United States’ ‘sheriff in the region’.

<sup>81</sup> Downer, distancing Australia from any potential problems, boldly argued there would be “no implications for the future” for the intervention as it was the result of a formal request and not the action of an outside actor assuming the appropriate action (Ansley, 2003:2).

recognised or addressed the cause of conflict but rather served as a degree of action for a hands-off detached agenda. This was also seen in the other case studies.

To some extent, agreements contributed to the problem by reinforcing the uneven system of power and control. The 'Special Constables' (reservist police) employed after the Townsville Peace Agreement, through a UNDP initiative, in an effort to keep ex-militants busy proved to be a drain on resources and also facilitated the militant agenda of some of those employed (UNDP, 2003).

The engagement of RAMSI necessitated the provisional authority commit the time (probably five to ten years), resources and personnel to tackle the deep-seated problems. Reducing its commitment early will, in all likelihood, leave a partially rebuilt yet unstable country with every potential of lapsing back into its condition prior to Operation Helpem Fren. An insufficient commitment by the provisional authority will essentially leave in place a system of centralised power similar to the previous system, underpinned by weak social services, development initiatives and security forces. The danger faced can be paralleled with Britain's involvement in Iraq in the 1920s that withdrew early leaving the same system of governance and power in place only with different leaders, thereby reinstating the potential for conflict.

## **Summary**

On April 22 1993, during the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, President Clinton suggested one of the main lessons of the holocaust was that the U.S. and other countries should have done more to prevent it or rescue the victims (Valentino, 2003). As President Clinton spoke, the worst violence in Europe since WW II was occurring in Bosnia and despite his commitment during his presentation to address the Bosnian situation, ethnic cleansing continued.

Twelve months later the Rwandan genocide - the worst since the Holocaust - occurred and, as with the Holocaust, Valentino (2003:565) notes, the “international intervention arrived too late to save many victims [and] was not furnished with the mandate to stop the killing”.

The lack of effective response by the international community, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, has arguably, become the primary limitation for humanitarian relief and a key cause of its failure. Two key explanations are identified by this thesis for the repetitive failures evident in each of the case studies above and throughout many other ethnic conflicts that the last decade has witnessed.

Firstly, it has long been claimed by UN member state administrations that intelligence and detail about conflict development or intensity is often unconfirmed or fragmented and as such, policy recommendations and humanitarian assistance initiatives have been constrained. In a 1998 speech in Kigali, President Clinton explained that the U.S. failed to stop genocide in Rwanda because it did not comprehend the extent of the violence and the speed with which the country was engulfed (Valentino, 2003:566). A similar excuse was offered for the Bosnian crisis.

This justification has become difficult to sustain given the intelligence capabilities of many UN members particularly the U.S. and Britain. The credibility of the explanation is also confronted by reports such as those from Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, UNAMIR commander in Rwanda, who sent the ‘genocide fax’<sup>82</sup> to UN headquarters on January 11, 1994 detailing high level intelligence about the genocide planning (Valentino, 2003:567). Rather than prompting the UN, this report, and others similar were rejected, UNAMIR was not reinforced and was ordered to remain neutral.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> The well known ‘genocide fax’ never actually contained the word genocide but referred to ethnic cleansing and massacres.

<sup>83</sup> The Belgian ambassador also warned his government of the danger of Radio Mille Collines but to little avail.

The second explanation, relevant to all three case studies, is the lack of political willingness and commitment by outside states to become involved in ethnic conflicts. The case studies suggest that the UN and the intervening states should have taken pre-emptive diplomatic measures to prevent or at least mitigate the effects of the conflicts. The lack of political will, however, prevented such action. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, reflecting on the Rwandan genocide, highlighted the crucial importance of swift intervention in a conflict and, above all, of political will to act in the face of catastrophe (Report of the Secretary-General, 1998:34).

It is suggested that the three case studies demonstrated that the lack of commitment and political will in supporting and maintaining humanitarian interventions has become the most important problem. This view is supported by other examples from around the world during the 1990s including, notably, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia. This does not, however, assume simply that the provision of political support automatically guarantees success. The 2003 Iraqi situation, for example, demonstrates that difficulties can remain despite strong political commitment.

Examination of the case studies has also highlighted the role played by uneven centralised models of development and their tendency to encourage violent conflict. Inequality, a fundamental consequence of uneven centralised development, is a characteristic condition conducive to violent conflict. Uneven centralised development arguably serves as a catalyst for violent ethnic conflict exacerbating or creating ethnic tensions promoting disparity between groups.

Humanitarian relief has provided assistance to populations ravaged by the effects of conflict. However, humanitarian relief is not the suitable response to inequality and underdevelopment. Each of the conflicts examined by the case studies were, at least in part, a manifestation of uneven centralised development and the provision of humanitarian relief can arguably exacerbate the conditions characterised by social and economic inequality that are conducive to violent conflict. This is a central paradox of humanitarian action. The provision of aid is inherently unequal and the benefits are therefore

misrepresented. In Rwanda and Bosnia, for example, relief allocation was largely determined by security concerns and access which in effect limited the benefits to portions of the populations. Illegitimate parties (combatants) also misappropriated aid at the expense of legitimate recipients.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

In the chapters above, the diverse causes of ethnic conflict were described and various implications of humanitarian relief were examined. Throughout the case studies, contained in the previous chapter, four main themes emerged that characterise, arguably, the most important processes that define ethnic conflict and humanitarian intervention. These are examined in this chapter.

Firstly, the chapter examines the relationship between development and conflict. Drawing on Chapter 2, the objective of this section is to examine how uneven centralised models of development, characterised by top-down political and economic processes, have contributed to underdevelopment furthering inequality, thereby initiating or exacerbating the conditions conducive to ethnic tension and violent conflict.

Following this, the chapter analyses the importance of political decisions and the role they play in humanitarian interventions. It is suggested that the commitment of Western states and political institutions has a profound effect on the success of humanitarian intervention and the outcome of a conflict. This was evident in each of the case studies.

The chapter goes on to consider how the lack of coordination and cooperation among humanitarian actors, exemplified by the lack of commitment and willingness expressed by international political actors, remains a central problem. The provision of humanitarian relief inherently creates innumerable problems, many of which remain specific to particular conflicts. The lack of coordination and cooperation, however, is evident across the majority of conflict situations maintaining the potential of humanitarian interventions to prolong the process of conflict.

Lastly, the main premise of humanitarian intervention is to provide emergency assistance to civilian populations in need. However, humanitarian interventions face problems that can limit their effectiveness and essentially support the processes of conflict. The final section of the chapter examines whether humanitarian relief actors can promote the reconstruction and development of social services and infrastructure after the initial emergency phase, in an effort to increase the resilience of recipient populations to the processes of conflict.

### **The Development-Conflict Relationship**

The concept of development is varied and broad with many different facets and connotations. Arguably, the main premise of development is the betterment of humankind and human potential - the escape from underdevelopment (Esteva, 1992; Cowen and Shenton, 1995). To assume that all development is positive, however, is naïve and the Rwandan and Solomon Island's case studies demonstrate this. Gunder Frank (1966:9), for example, suggested economic development generates underdevelopment through its development of capitalism.

Development became a central process of colonialism in the 19th century based on the premise that those who were developed (although self-determined) believed they could act to develop those deemed less developed (Cowen and Shenton, 1995:28). Eurocentric development models began replacing, or at least co-existing with the 'old imperialism' - exploitation theory (Cowen and Shenton, 1995:147). Colonialism established firmly on the world stage uneven centralised development, installing political systems focused around capitalism, exploitation and uneven specialisation. Elsenhans (1991:18) argues the countries of the 'South' are socially deformed because of the repressive political systems and exploitation that colonial Europe supported. The social control and development policies, discussed in Chapter 2, that were created by colonial administrations and transferred to indigenous elites, reinforcing territorial administrations, were evident in the Rwandan case study. Traditional systems of control were exploited creating uneven access to

economic, social and political resources due not only to the spatial distribution of populations, but also to the inconsistent allocation by colonial administrations and indigenous elites.<sup>84</sup>

The inherently uneven colonial-installed centralised development models seen in Rwanda and much of Africa compounded the pre-existent problems of colonialism. The disruptive presence of arbitrary borders and ethnic settlement patterns drawn up by colonial powers provided a hotbed of ethnic succession and separatist groups (Taras and Ganguly, 2002:212). Chapter 2 explained how ethnic and cultural sensitivities were ignored and the non-differentiating borders fostered state resentment.

The expansion of conditions conducive to ethnic tension, that colonially inspired uneven centralised development created, were subsequently manifested in unstable post-colonial administrations.<sup>85</sup> In Rwanda and the Solomon Islands authoritarian power structures of colonial rule tended not to include indigenous populations in governing structures (other than as local ethnic elites). Arguably, therefore, post-colonial rule had little immediate experience of democratic government. After a multi-party period, Rwanda, for example, became a single party state, like many other African countries that were maintained by violence and military strategies. Thus, post-colonial rule was often fragmented and characterised by violent force in efforts to control the population. Political oppression and exploitation by political elites manipulated ethnic and communal loyalties and established common cause with particular groups. In Rwanda and the Solomon Islands societal divisions emerged and ethnicity was transformed into a violent force.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Chapter 2 explains how the implications of inconsistent applications of development and the absent-present existence of colonial administrations, characterised by their domination of political and economic resources, yet their sparse involvement in welfare, health and education services (missionaries often provided health and education services instead), prolonged inequality and were transferred to post-colonial administrations.

<sup>85</sup> Chapter 2 identifies key instigators of ethnic tension that were originally manifested under the conditions of post-colonial administrations.

<sup>86</sup> Violent ethnic conflict in post-colonial Africa has also occurred in Congo, Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo), Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Liberia, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Togo and Mauritania.

Colonial authorities did not encourage 'indigenous development' as a means to building strong economies, and power and wealth was largely accumulated by colonial administrators. Post-colonial ruling elites generally chose not to reform these colonial structures and the legacy of colonialism continued to breed uneven arbitrary state structures in Rwanda and the Solomon Islands. As a result, independence and the opening of the post-colonial economy to external forces had adverse long-term effects. For example, changes in international commodity prices and high levels of dependence resulting from the internal problems restricted development planning and directly and indirectly caused high levels of displacement. This resulted in further economic degradation and disparity. Such internal economic limitations and external economic shocks caused an economic crisis in Rwanda in the 1990s, exacerbating pre-existing tensions.

Typically, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia experienced investment booms in the post-independence period as rapid industrialisation was pursued. This was partly facilitated by the oil boom years, throughout which there was excessive lending to 'developing' states, superseding the relative importance of direct investments of multi-national corporations (MNCs), and the official development aid programs of many Western states were superseded (Elsenhans, 1991). Industrialisation was also a manifestation of the large-scale centralised economic development models. The inequalities and divisions along ethnic lines resulting from these models are typical catalysts for conflict.

For example, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and the Solomon Islands remained focused on industrialisation<sup>87</sup> and the growth of GDP. However, social development had not paralleled economic development despite assumptions that social conditions would improve with economic

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<sup>87</sup> Industrialisation in the Solomon Islands, however, was not typically focused on capital industry but rather on export crops.

development.<sup>88</sup> The traditional economies and institutions were downplayed or rendered invalid due to the impediments they posed to modernisation processes. The centralised focus of these processes, however, failed to reinstate any adequate social networks and inequality, poverty, and economic disparity and regression, particularly among periphery regions, remained. Brazilian President da Silva argued economic stability has turned its back on social justice (Murray, 2004).

Free market policy and the benefits of globalisation were central objectives particularly of the governments of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. However, inadequate attention was paid to the effects of free market forces on domestic markets and enterprise. Industrial competitiveness and numerous external conditions were unaccounted for and consequently long-term industrialisation was unsustainable. Economic deprivation, particularly for marginalised or peripheral groups, was not addressed and for many the situation worsened. Land scarcity and competition in the labour market was exacerbated and social development was often minimal. Arguably, industrialisation did not live up to expectations of these nations.

Increasing world inflation, increasing interest rates, and the threat of a global financial crash initiated by the oil crisis exacerbated the declining ability of many states to repay debt (Amin, 1990). This debt crisis substantially reduced the level of foreign investment capital in countries such as Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia further exacerbating debt-servicing problems. The former Yugoslavia, burdened with debts of \$20 billion, had to focus all its attention on foreign liquidity. There was no debate that Yugoslavia was going to default on its loans. Rather the question was whether to restructure and refinance the debt (Woodward, 1995:49). The required restructuring led to food subsidies

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<sup>88</sup> The reduction of development to economic growth was addressed in the late 1950's and the 1960's. The Economic and Social Council of the UN recommended the integration of both economic and social development in 1962 at the outset of the Decade of Development (Esteve, 1992:13). Despite optimism, 'social development' initiatives remained secondary to the quantitative indicators of economic development and many economists referred to the social factors as 'social obstacles' (ibid.).

and health and welfare services being slashed, increasing poverty, hunger, and relative deprivation.

The removal of import barriers and subsidies (including food subsidies) that followed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia pushed many small enterprises out of business and decimated large portions of the agricultural industry. Commercial and export farming for foreign revenue pushed many farmers off productive land and food production fell. In the former Yugoslavia, all imports not critical to production were prohibited (Woodward, 1995:51).

In this thesis it is argued development has changed and expanded over time and no longer focuses solely on macro models of development. It has encompassed local level development and also operates at a project level. It is suggested, however that a reasonable proportion remained over-reliant on the economic growth models and quantitative indicators of social development, which have been largely irrelevant when referring to lower socio-economic groups. Although the benefits of foreign development aid have been realised in many regions, they have not often reached their expected levels. Rwanda and the Solomon Islands are no exception.

There is little examination of the relationship between foreign development aid and conflict in the literature despite the inherent problems. The case studies highlight how foreign development aid contributed to shaping the processes conducive to ethnic conflict. It is also important to recognise instability can be exacerbated by ethnic or cultural factors in relation to foreign development aid. Development projects can ignore social, cultural, religious or ethnic indifferences or regions and subsequently, the effectiveness of these projects can suffer. Furthermore, the ignorance of such factors may breed animosity towards foreign development aid and may exacerbate pre-existent tensions through the unequal provision of benefits.

To summarise, uneven models of centralised development did little to increase human betterment on a broad scale. The escape from underdevelopment was not realised for developing populations such as those in Rwanda and the

Solomon Islands and to some extent in former Yugoslavia. The consequences of economic disparity and social inequity have been widely manifested in ethnic succession and resistance movements and political mobilisation by ethnic or separatist groups. Uneven socio-economic development led to increased deprivation and inequality, which, in turn, led to tension and violent conflict in Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands. The instability in the post-Tito political and economic situations and in post-independence Rwanda was arguably the catalyst for the ethnic conflict but it is important to acknowledge historical ethnic animosity that may have been lurking beneath the political/economic problems.

While economic development has been de-linked from colonisation, at least rhetorically, development, as a construction of capitalist venture and economic growth, has remained and the processes conducive to tension within populations have not been dispelled. Duffield (2001:115) suggested history has shown conflict is a result of developmental malaise while Esteva (1992:18) suggests, "the emergence of economic society is a story of violence and destruction often adapting genocidal character". Amin (1990:180) also argues history has shown the unequal character of capitalist expansion can, at worst, cause revolt of genocidal proportions. While admittedly damning words, Esteva and Amin reflect the resistance that appeared in Rwanda, former Yugoslavia and the Solomon Islands.

### **Politics of Relief: Political Decisions and Policy**

Some of the difficulties in providing aid are created by the nature of most contemporary conflicts. Some are created by the providers themselves (Bryer and Cairns, 1997:363).

The decision to intervene in an ethnic conflict is a complex process necessitating a high level of commitment. In this thesis it is argued that the unwillingness of political institutions to commit to humanitarian interventions remains the largest impediment to successful humanitarian intervention. The case studies, particularly the cases of Rwanda and Bosnia, highlight the lack of

political willingness and commitment by outside states to become involved in conflict and further, the lack of commitment to interventions once deployed.

Political decisions to deploy a military humanitarian intervention are generally based on a reasonable expectation of success. This pre-condition effectively limits the number of interventions before any further factors are considered. Research suggests the higher the level of casualties being sustained in an ethnic conflict the lower the probability that an intervention would be successful<sup>89</sup> (Regan, 1996). Security Council apprehension about deploying in Rwanda or Bosnia, for example, can be contrasted with the less apprehensive intervention by Australia and New Zealand, and other Pacific states in the smaller scale Solomon Island's conflict.

Militarised humanitarian interventions are selectively undertaken dependent on national interests. The Australian led intervention in the Solomon Island's, for example, had at the forefront of its motivations, the maintenance of regional security for the benefit of Australia. Similarly, UN mandated interventions often do not escape the national interests of member states. Any degree of independent authority displayed by the UN is frequently rhetoric. In reality, it is suggested, the UN is not characterised by its even-handedness and typically, decision-making control is maintained and exercised by its powerful member states, particularly the five permanent Security Council members.

The ramifications of political decisions over whether to intervene militarily in an ethnic conflict for the purpose of (or under the guise of) humanitarian relief are characterised not by what an intervention does, but by what it does not do. For example, typically the Rwandan and Bosnian cases demonstrated how Security Council members responsible for humanitarian intervention often failed to comprehend the seriousness of the situations effectively reducing their commitment to them. Ignorance of the Bosnian conflict was displayed by UN member states' assumption that violence was largely between warring parties

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<sup>89</sup> Regan (1996:347) also found conflicts with tangible causal factors have a higher probability of successful resolution than those with intangible causes including ideological grievances over ethnic autonomy.

rather than directed expressly at civilian populations. Upon realisation of the true nature of the conflict, initial political response was then limited and, arguably, could be attributed to an unwillingness to commit further as well as to a lack of imperative and policy.

A more serious argument is that political institutions deliberately downplay the implications or seriousness of a conflict in an effort to minimise the potential for their involvement. The tendency for political institutions to misinterpret or obfuscate ethnic tension and violence maintains the neglect of early intervention in many cases. The previous chapter noted how members of the UN and the Bush and Clinton administrations distorted the perceived situation in Bosnia reducing the urgency to respond. The UN also failed to acknowledge the explicit warnings of the Rwandan genocide and consequently minimal preventative action was taken. This failure was largely manufactured by Security Council members, particularly the U.S. and France (Feher, 2000). Feher (2000:76) notes that since Western states did not want to oppose Serbian aggression in Bosnia, special envoys were to act as if the aggression did not exist. This is a somewhat deliberate and calculated example of downplaying the seriousness of a situation.

Public opinion, both national and international, is also a key influence, alongside national interests, in the decision to intervene. The tendency to distort or play down the seriousness of a situation can have the effect of reducing public pressure to act. Furthermore, limited political will is clearly manifested in the configuration of limited mandates. The primary objective of UN mandates in most conflict and post-conflict situations, including those in Bosnia and Rwanda, is to ensure the provision of food and medical assistance to civilian populations. As a pre-condition of achieving this objective, peacekeepers are required to remain neutral and impartial and thus are not authorised to engage with warring parties unless they are targeted directly. Peacekeepers, therefore, are generally lightly armed. As explained in Chapter 4, this type of mandate serves the political agenda of Western governments and the UN, displaying an involvement and apparent commitment to the conflict. However, it can be a shield for political neglect, as discussed below.

In ethnic conflict situations, characterised by the targeting and involvement of civilian populations, the restrictions of a mandate limited to food and medical provision become quickly apparent. Such provision does not extend to the protection of civilians, even where objectives of the mandate include securing weapons or cease-fires. The protection of civilians requires becoming a party to the conflict, something that governments are reluctant to do. The slaughter of civilians in Bosnia and Rwanda while UN peacekeepers stood by helplessly, for example, was a consequence of this. The Bosnian conflict demonstrated the inherent contradiction of a limited non-confrontational mandate. The requirement to remain neutral prevented peacekeepers forcibly maintaining safe passages for aid and preventing warring parties coercing and exploiting aid. Furthermore, limited mandates typically result in the repeated employment of PKOs as stop-gap measures.

One of the more serious consequences of deploying peacekeepers under limited mandates is the degree of false security it conveys to recipients. While limited mandates often fail to fully protect aid supplies and flows, peacekeepers by their very presence offer a sense of protection that in reality may not exist. In fact they can be helpless to protect civilians they work among.

A peacekeeping intervention that fails to actively prevent a warring party attacking civilian populations, arguably, indirectly legitimises the actions of that party. In Bosnia, for example, the UN constantly shielded Serb militias by condemning all sides for resorting to violence rather than acting to stop the Serbs continual unilateral attacks on civilian populations. Arguably, the traditional humanitarian position of neutrality is not always suitable. Ratifying military action against one side can be an appropriate response where it is necessary to halt illegitimate violence against civilian populations.

The deployment of forceful PKOs, however, should come only after all diplomatic efforts at resolution have been exhausted provided this is achieved within an appropriate timeframe. The severity of the Rwandan and Bosnian conflicts, however, reached a point at which diplomatic efforts were limited in

their ability because of the violent nature and ethnic connotations taken on by the conflict. Arguably, it was the lack of pre-emptive diplomacy, attributable to the lack of will and commitment to mediate, and the deliberate or unintentional misconstruing of causal factors of the conflicts and their seriousness that enabled tension to evolve into violent conflict in the first place.

In this thesis it is argued early diplomatic efforts are crucial to pacifying tensions, particularly in ethnically diverse and underdeveloped regions that are conducive to conflict. Early diplomatic interventions supported by international institutions (for example, UN, NATO, or OAU) offer relatively cost-effective remedial measures in comparison with large PKOs. For example, there are, allegedly, requests by the Solomon Island's for diplomatic intervention in the mid 1990s to mediate tension and ensure it did not erupt into violence (Wainwright, 2003). Response to the requests appeared negligible<sup>90</sup> and violence subsequently broke out necessitating the Australian led intervention in 2003.

Typically, however, forceful military humanitarianism creates problems that go beyond the direct objectives of the intervention. It could be suggested such intervention, UN mandated or not, can weaken the position of non-military humanitarian actors including UN agencies. Macdonald (2003:5), for example, suggests, "the cruel realists in Baghdad don't appear to see much difference between GI Joe and his UN buddy". The majority of military humanitarian interventions are followed up by or co-exist with relief, reconstruction and development initiatives. Opponents argue employing a forceful PKO to protect aid and civilians can compromise the impartiality of humanitarian agencies. These agencies inevitably become associated with the military intervention either through direct consultation or cooperation (including logistical operations) or simply through their presence (discussed in Chapter 4). On the other hand, the benefits accruing to humanitarian agencies from passive neutral PKOs may fall short in situations where the provision of aid is not possible or adequate

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<sup>90</sup> Australia adhered to the principle that the problems in the Solomon Island's are their responsibility, not Australia's (Wainwright, 2003:6).

because of security concerns for aid workers or because of restrictions imposed by warring parties. This was the case in numerous places in Bosnia and Rwanda.

The decision to deploy forceful PKOs in itself often faces political problems. For example, deployment is often rejected by Security Council members due to the risks peacekeepers and other personnel face when becoming an active party to the conflict. The day in October 1993, when 18 American soldiers were killed on a peacekeeping mission in Somalia had a profound negative effect on the commitment of Security Council members to peacekeeping efforts in general. Furthermore, public and political opinion from at home and abroad often results in Security Council members becoming reluctant to deploy PKOs in risky volatile situations. This apprehension was evident in the Rwandan and Bosnian conflicts. A NATO intervention in favour of the Bosnian army, for example, was held off until 1994 due to the risks to UNPROFOR peacekeepers<sup>91</sup> (Feher, 2000:71). These problems are still extant as is demonstrated by the way U.S. troops were withheld from Liberia in 2003 until African peacekeepers had secured the capital Monrovia.

The preference of political institutions to provide a passive neutral PKO with a non-confrontational mandate arguably offers the institutions the repute associated with becoming actively involved while minimising not only the financial cost, but also the costs associated with casualties and potentially, failure, as seen in Rwanda. During the 1990s, as the need for and the costs of PKOs increased the willingness of political institutions fell accordingly.<sup>92</sup> These types of considerations are, of course, external to the needs of the conflict itself.

The evasiveness of political approaches to forceful PKOs - peace-enforcement - has ramifications that extend beyond the consequences beneficiaries may face by not receiving needed assistance. As noted above, and seen in the Rwandan

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<sup>91</sup> The powerlessness of UNPROFOR, however, was addressed by French President Jacques Chirac when he succeeded Mitterrand in 1995 (Feher, 2000:79).

<sup>92</sup> UN member states were slow to pay troop-contributing countries and continually delayed reimbursement dampened the enthusiasm for peacekeeping (Jett, 1999:12).

and Bosnian cases, legitimacy is ascribed to warring parties by PKOs not taking steps to stop illegitimate actions or atrocities. Humanitarian interventions can also serve to facilitate the processes of a conflict where a passive peacekeeping approach fails to restrict warring parties from appropriating aid resources made available by relief efforts. The large-scale exploitation of aid and equipment, and taxing of local employees, seen in Rwanda and Bosnia, often needs to be prevented forcibly, minimising any support or potential benefits warring parties may receive by furthering conflict. Maintaining conflict, for example, can maintain the influx of aid while continued instability creates conditions conducive to theft and hijacking. This was also apparent in Somalia and Liberia.

This gives rise to the controversial debate surrounding the option to withdraw aid. In a conflict situation where resolution efforts have failed and the ability of PKOs to protect aid supplies and beneficiaries is restricted allowing access by warring parties to the benefits of aid, should aid be withdrawn? This is the paradox of humanitarian intervention and as suggested by Terry (2002:2), "[humanitarian relief] can contradict its fundamental purpose by prolonging the suffering it intends to alleviate".

In Rwanda and neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, refugees, including women and children, were rounded up in camps and shot or macheted by Rwandan army allies and Interahamwe militias, with assistance from Zairean rebels, launching raids from refugee camps run by the UN on the Rwandan-DRC border. No outside state was willing to send armed forces into this 'dangerous quagmire' and those responsible for genocide remained living with impunity in the camps run by the United Nations (Terry, 2002). Terry (2002:2) suggests the very system established to protect the refugees became the source of their peril. The vast amount of aid resources that flowed into refugee camps was diverted by militia leaders into their own activities maintaining the power and mobility of those culpable.

This dilemma initiated the NGO MSF, and later, the International Rescue Committee's decision to withdraw their assistance from the Rwandan refugee

camps. The division among MSF staff about the decision to withdraw reflects the wider debate. Advocating withdrawal is centred on the argument that a humanitarian actor should pull out where their presence facilitates conflict. Terry (2002:3) notes with regard to MSF that, "lacking the power to ensure what is just, we should not participate in what is obviously unjust; thus our only recourse was to refuse the unacceptable and withdraw".

The other angle of the debate assumes pulling out due to serious implications is in fact unjust and maintains the status of those in need. In this thesis it is argued that it is a moral fallacy that because aid can do harm, providing no aid will do no harm. It is not possible to provide widespread aid in an ethnic conflict and not support a certain element of the conflict in some way. Advocates of this line of reasoning, particularly NGOs, suggest many agencies and staff believe the responsibility for ensuring the protection of aid and recipients lay with those with the capacity to intervene at this level (Terry, 2002). This is an important argument and creates a dilemma when states refuse to provide the protection required or more controversially, where they withdraw commitments as, for example, the U.S. did in Somalia in 1993 and UN peacekeepers did in Angola in 1999.

Despite the ramifications, the unwillingness of political institutions to ensure the protection of aid and recipients, therefore, remains a central problem to humanitarian intervention. Here it is important to identify the distinction and the disparity between diplomatic and military interventions for the purpose of humanity, and those for the purpose of national security, or political or economic interests. When deploying in an ethnic conflict situation the risks to personnel and the costs remain central deterrents. However, these deterrents and their acceptable margins arguably become much more liberal when contemplating interventions for the latter reasoning (national security, or economic or political interests). Interventions therefore are not based in accordance with the greatest need but rather according to national and political priorities.

Iraq provides a contemporary example of this disparity. Over 500 U.S. troops have been killed since March 2003 and the American administration is adamant

that while political and administrative structures will be withdrawn in 2004, the troop contingent will remain until at least 2006. American motivations in Iraq are not necessarily solely or substantially humanitarian. If, hypothetically, the American occupation in Iraq was only on humanitarian ideals then maintaining their troop commitment for so long would probably be less likely. In Liberia in 2003, on the other hand, where the U.S. did send troops based on humanity under international pressure, they remained offshore until African peacekeepers ensured their security. Furthermore, U.S. troops withdrew early before the deployment of peacekeepers despite the insecurity in the country. The 2003 Australian intervention in the Solomon Islands also supports the argument. Australian resistance to intervene was eventually reversed by the perceived security threat a failed state in the Pacific had for Australia. The support to Sierra Leone and Kosovo in 1999 can also be compared. Civilians in Sierra Leone were in greater need than those in Kosovo<sup>93</sup> yet by mid 1999, America had committed just \$15 million to Sierra Leone compared with \$13 billion to the political hotbed in Kosovo. Donor governments gave \$207 per head in response to the UN appeal for Kosovo compared with \$16 per head for Sierra Leone<sup>94</sup> (Terry, 2002:23).

The apparent disparity between the tendency to commit to a conflict for security, political or economic interests, and that for humanitarian ideals can arguably also be attributable, in part, to issues surrounding the sovereignty of nation states. While state sovereignty is not the barrier it was during the cold war, UN member states do not have a framework setting out to what degree the domestic jurisdiction of a sovereign state can be overruled for the purpose of humanitarian intervention (Danish Institute of International Affairs, 1999:39). Article 2, paragraph 7, of the UN Charter states, 'Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state' (Annan, 1998:56).

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<sup>93</sup> The difference was based on objective criteria (Terry, 2002:23).

<sup>94</sup> See also 'Kosovo and Sierra Leone' *International Herald Tribune* (1999).

The argument that traditional notions of state sovereignty should be set aside in cases of human rights abuses and genocide is gaining stature. The globalisation of communication, for example, has rallied global constituencies to pressure for action that governments are finding increasingly difficult to ignore (Annan, 1998:57). However, Annan (1998:56) also notes that violations of sovereignty remain violations of the global order. It can be argued sovereignty, therefore, is more likely to be circumvented when national interests or international security concerns are at stake rather than for purely humanitarian ideals. Humanitarian interventions therefore start on the back foot.

### **The Failure of Coordination and Cooperation**

The implications of a lack of coordination and cooperation were examined in Chapter 4. The problems are not reserved to any particular characteristic of a given conflict nor are they limited to any particular humanitarian actor or actor group. The difficulty this creates is that it does not allow any particular actor group to naturally assume a lead coordination role in a conflict situation.

Arguably, the UN is generally recognised as a central authority in many conflicts. However, Rwanda and Bosnia illustrated the shortcomings that can result from a UN lead. Furthermore, coordination problems within the UN, more specifically between passive UN humanitarian agencies and PKOs, have not strengthened the support of this approach. During the 2003 Iraq conflict the UN's credibility came under fire for its apparent irrelevance and inability to prevent the U.S. running rough shod over it. It was criticised by war supporters for failing to support the war and by opponents for failing to prevent it (Albright, 2003). It could be argued that the political dimension is at the heart of the incompatibility between passive and military humanitarianism. The power exerted by permanent Security Council members, maintained by their Veto authority, can effectively nullify the Security Council's effectiveness. The U.S. dominance over the UN during the 2003 Iraq conflict illustrated this.

Coordination among Security Council members remains a central objective in an effort to maintain any concerted approach to humanitarian intervention,

particularly military intervention, at an international political level. It would appear the restriction exists, however, in that the power and influence of the U.S. enables it to bypass the UN leaving the remaining permanent members stranded essentially paralysing the Security Council.

It is suggested that the goal of maintaining Security Council ability, necessitating cooperation among all permanent members, however, runs the risk of permanent members succumbing to U.S. pressure. The Security Council may, therefore, become little more than an extension of U.S. hegemony and foreign policy. Thus the legitimacy of the UN, which arguably remains largely intact, may therefore, be compromised.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that there is a distinct lack of willingness to be accountable for a humanitarian intervention. A lack of coordination is manifested most seriously in a lack of accountability. The lack of accountability has not necessarily been an intention of many agencies but it might have been a by-product of their conduct. It is argued that there are certain NGOs, for example, that assume the dignified intentions of their actions are more important than the secondary impacts that may ensue. The tendency for humanitarian actors to operate largely independent of one another, however, arguably complicates the degree to which they become accountable to each other. It is suggested that the apparent lack of willingness of humanitarian actors to coordinate effectively is due to the apparent threat to their autonomy. Humanitarian actors act largely unilaterally and many arguably resent being subordinate to other agencies. This is evident throughout the UN, the military and NGOs. Blame for humanitarian intervention failure therefore has been bounced between the various actor groups party to a conflict.

This thesis takes the position that the coordination of humanitarian actors must necessitate a degree of political coordination. A fragmented wave of humanitarian actors all with a different set of ideals and objectives is not the most efficient way of providing humanitarian assistance. NGOs, for example, which frequently outnumber other actors and are often first on the ground in conflict situations are often fragmented and ad hoc in nature making their

coordination difficult. A central coordinating body identified at the outset of a humanitarian intervention arguably has a higher probability of maintaining some degree of directive authority in an effort to minimise overlapping mandates and the unclear division of responsibilities and to maximise the fair allocation of benefits. An approach at this level may enable a degree of dialogue with recipient governments to ensure agencies allowed to operate in a country are capable and credible. Rwanda, for example, began screening agencies in the years after the 1994 crisis prior to their acceptance in country in an effort to minimise the negative efforts of irresponsible humanitarian agencies.

### **Relief and Development Initiatives**

Humanitarian relief provided during a conflict or in a post-conflict context can have a stabilising effect, yet it can also feed into pre-existent problems moulded by uneven development models. Chapter 3 examined the relief-development paradigm referring to the traditional existence of relief and development as two ends of a continuum. It was also suggested in Chapter 3 that while there has been a shift in thinking, and relief and development are increasingly becoming more compatible, the linking of the two has not yet become a mainstream practice. Some complications need to be overcome before relief and development can become successfully linked, at least operationally, rather than rhetorically.

In conflict or post-conflict situations the potential exists for relief, where linked operationally with reconstruction and longer-term development objectives, to initiate better long-term development processes. Uneven centralised development models are often disrupted or destroyed by intra-state conflict creating an opportunity for different models of development, or at least reconstruction objectives that put a heavier emphasis on rebuilding social services and structures previously neglected.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> This particularly the case where there is a change in government.

However, the challenge of reinstating development approaches and agendas cannot come as a direct result of conflict and subsequent relief, reconstruction and development activities. In addition to complications created by linking relief with longer-term development, various practical problems can hinder progress. Firstly, the nature of ethnic conflict often makes humanitarian relief intervention difficult because of security concerns. Secondly, there are often logistical problems. For example, access to remote regions can be limited by a lack of or damaged roading infrastructure or transport operators, and air transport, while inherently expensive, may also suffer from organisational or infrastructure problems.<sup>96</sup>

In recent years security has become a substantial limiting factor. The lack of recognised impartiality displayed toward humanitarian agencies has reduced their willingness to deploy in non-secure regions. The Red Cross and UN headquarter bombings in Iraq, for example, and the thirteen aid workers killed in Afghanistan in 2003 reiterate this concern. The consequences of these limitations see humanitarian agencies increasingly operating in centralised locations while remote regions receive less assistance. This was the case in certain regions of Rwanda, Bosnia and also in parts of the Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and East Timor. Furthermore, the possibility of illegitimate forms of authority and warlordism are increased in remote regions lacking humanitarian intervention, particularly the presence of peacekeepers.

The centralised provision of humanitarian relief can also create a by-product contributing to increased population shift and a furthering of dependency. This phenomenon has been a consequence of aid camps for decades where people have converged on aid distribution points from outlying areas, with few provisions left, in order to get food or medical assistance. This was evident in Goma after the 1994 Rwandan crisis where people gathered in overcrowded camps on the roadside. The nature of aid camps can also mean any livestock need to be sold or abandoned.

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<sup>96</sup> In certain situations fuel and equipment for maintenance may also be inaccessible.

In relation to the logistical problems, many people who need food receive it, but dependence on aid is increased and stress on the resources (including social and economic services) of local aid distribution points is increased. High or increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced people exacerbates the difficulties of reconstructing services and infrastructure. Repatriation can also be difficult in post-conflict areas for the same regions. Refugees and IDPs may return to decimated homes with little or no means of production and may remain dependent on aid for another season. Their homes or land may also be occupied (for example, by opposing ethnic groups as in the case of Rwanda) compounding their reliance on external assistance.

In Rwanda and Bosnia intensive relief operations, particularly by international NGOs, tended to focus on densely populated areas that were more secure and more easily accessible, thereby foregoing assistance to many remote regions.<sup>97</sup> The inherent nature of humanitarian relief to focus predominantly on central regions (which are often urban) is not a deliberately biased approach, nor is the insufficient attention to many remote regions intentional. Yet a longer-term reconstruction and development approach requires a capacity building role that centralised approaches inherently contradict through the (unintentional) creation of dependency.

The potential of relief interventions, followed by reconstruction and development objectives focused on building local capacities, localised economies and social development, to interrupt more traditional uneven development models is limited, in part, by coordination and cooperation problems. Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands were examples where following intense violence, state mechanisms for administration, coordination and reconstruction and production were limited. It is suggested that humanitarian interventions have the potential to coordinate aid that bolsters the capacity of a government's public sector. Financial aid, for example, can be tied to the reconstruction of social infrastructure and social services, and also to human rights issues.

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<sup>97</sup>For many international NGOs this is necessitated by their reliance on media coverage and donor funding as examined in Chapter 4.

Another way of addressing the limiting factors is for an intervention to acknowledge a government's central role in reconstruction and development in conflict or post-conflict situations regardless of whether it is the pre-conflict government or a new government. In a purely short-term relief context the acknowledgement of government is less important, although the implementation of reconstruction and development objectives necessitates some level of government involvement, consultation or partnership to ensure sustainability, even if only at a local or regional level. Regan (1996:348) suggests that the efficiency of any intervention is increased when the intervention supports the sitting government.<sup>98</sup>

The input of local stakeholders must also be accounted for. Beyond the initial provision of emergency humanitarian relief, stakeholder consultation is crucial when building local capacities. Patrick (2000:16) explains how, in the past, humanitarian interventions, preoccupied with speed, frequently designed recovery programs through their own (or other foreign) agencies and service providers, failing to consult or utilise local input or actors who might have performed tasks more efficiently and economically.

Building local capacity is an important aspect of aid and alienating local people from the processes of aid is counter-productive. For example, large influxes of aid can displace local mechanisms and capacities creating further dependence. Aid agencies typically set up efficient delivery systems utilising fleets of trucks, warehouses and distribution centres. However, they are often large-scale systems centrally managed by foreign staff utilising imported equipment and often overwhelm local capability (Anderson, 1998). Efficiently addressing the requirements for aid necessitates a level of local involvement. Local knowledge and labour systems should be utilised ensuring they do not become dormant. Characteristic of the centralised delivery model is the perception of recipients as 'needy victims'. The role of a 'victim', however, to help manage or assist aid

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<sup>98</sup> Although this does not assume that because a government is a conduit for outside assistance that it necessarily becomes the recipient of aid.

requirements or delivery systems is limited as they have become consigned to a passive role (Anderson, 1998:140). Failing to recognise the capacity of recipients reduces the longer-term benefits of aid as well as maintaining the status of recipients as passive victims, minimising their potential for capacity building, and in turn, increasing their dependency.

Creating a forum at the local level, as well as at a government level, to discuss developments, frameworks, and needs assessments is a practical method to increase coordination among actors. Maintaining policy dialogue at a government level minimises the tendency for any public expenditure, devoted by governments to reconstruction, to decline as reconstruction and development aid increases (Patrick, 2000). Post-conflict Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands amplify the importance of this as marginalisation from the wider regional and global economy minimised trade opportunities and revenue flows.

Without appropriate political and financial support, however, the ability of relief interventions and subsequent reconstruction and development objectives to deliver coordinated public sector assistance outside a rhetorical realm is limited. This type of intervention requires long-term commitment that translates into an increased financial commitment by donors. This is not the characteristic trait of donors generally associated with relief intervention.<sup>99</sup>

## **Summary**

Throughout the literature review (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) a series of arguments outlining the causal factors of ethnic conflict and the negative impacts of humanitarian relief were identified. This chapter has drawn out four main themes that were re-emerging issues reflected in the case studies.

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<sup>99</sup> Although donors have continually pledged themselves to longer-term commitments and support, these pledges have largely been rhetorical and in reality commitment begins to wane and coordination and cooperation between actors limits the impact of assistance (Patrick, 2000).

Despite the capricious nature of ethnic conflict, uneven centralised development models have assumed an eminent role in the construction and exacerbation of ethnic tensions. This was demonstrated, for example, by the case of the Solomon Islands. This chapter outlined the central issues that have created the non-prestigious relationship between development and conflict. The destabilising effect of economic and political change and the associated creation of uneven social and economic structures conducive to tension were presented. Arguably, development has been mal-aligned and consequently the escape from underdevelopment has been constrained with violent conflict becoming a powerful manifestation of inequality. While inequality has become a catalyst for conflict, it has also become an extension of humanitarian relief. The unfair allocation of aid, an inherent problem of humanitarian relief, creates an imbalance between the beneficiaries of aid and those in the population who do not receive assistance.

It was then argued the failure of will and commitment on the part of Western states and political institutions is at the heart of the difficulties of providing humanitarian relief. The chapter presented the options considered by political institutions contemplating an intervention into an ethnic conflict and the justification employed to defend decisions to withhold or withdraw humanitarian assistance. It was argued that the willingness of political institutions to commit to an intervention is based largely on national interests and public and political pressure. The examination of PKOs displayed the tendency to deploy limited missions in order to minimise the risks to personnel and financial cost while satisfying pressures to intervene. Unfortunately PKOs deployed with limited mandates have been responsible, at least in part, for serious failures in numerous ethnic conflict situations, including Rwanda and Bosnia.

The lack of coordination is manifested as both an operational and an institutional shortcoming reducing the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian intervention. Despite the fragmented construct of humanitarian actors that constitute most humanitarian interventions there remains no framework in which they should operate or allocate a central coordinating

agency. Individual agencies operate according to their own code of conduct<sup>100</sup> and the principle coordinating agency for relief administration often becomes UNHCR by default due to its role as a donor and its inherent capability in the field.

The chapter then assessed the capability of relief, reconstruction and development initiatives beyond immediate emergency relief, to co-ordinate public sector assistance and promote the reconstruction and development of social infrastructure and services in post-conflict situations. It went on to demonstrate how the focus on relief and development interventions promoting social orientated state development processes presents the opportunity to address the problems initiated or exacerbated by uneven development. It is suggested that there are reciprocal effects from the catalyst effect uneven development has on ethnic conflict. Therefore, the initiation of longer-term development systems designed to bolster the resilience of recipient populations can potentially mitigate conflicts detrimental impact on development and the recovery process. However, it was also suggested that relief aid exhibits potential to sustain and reinforce centralised uneven development models thus contributing to long-term complications. These problems go beyond those immediate in a conflict and can be manifested in the creation of long-term dependency and the tapering off of government public expenditure as aid inputs increase.

The arguments presented in this chapter maintain that for humanitarian interventions to be consistently successful, as opposed to their present ad hoc success, they need the full and uncompromised commitment of political institutions both before they deploy and throughout. Political support and commitment also remains the central factor determining the ability of relief and reconstruction and development objectives to manipulate state reconstruction and development processes in post-conflict situations. Political commitment remains crucial in the Solomon Islands situation. The military humanitarian intervention to curb violence in the Solomon Islands regained peace but the

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<sup>100</sup> Although, increasing numbers of agencies work to the Red Cross code of conduct.

non-functioning economy and poor social services necessitate a long-term reconstruction effort of six or perhaps more years to jumpstart the country and minimise the chance of a relapse into violence. The maintenance of peace, as well as long-term commitment hangs on political support from intervening actors. An enduring (political) stability is necessary for successful reconstruction and development objectives as, in short, peace and development are mutually reinforcing.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined a series of key issues relating to ethnic conflict and the provision of humanitarian relief. Humanitarian interventions cannot be separated from the diverse contexts in which they are provided, and so have evolved to become as complex as the ethnic conflicts in which they operate. Recognising this, the thesis deconstructed the processes within ethnic conflicts and humanitarian interventions to explain the diversity of the connections and the relationships between conflict, relief and development. This chapter summarises the main conclusions of the thesis, linking them to the specific objectives outlined in Chapter 1, adding critical review, and offering suggestions relating to humanitarian interventions and research in the future.

#### **Summary and Critical Review**

The initial objective was to examine the causes of ethnic conflicts, the understanding of which is an essential precondition for effective humanitarian intervention. As was emphasised in Chapter 2, typically the development of an ethnic conflict is not motivated by any single factor. It is usually a result of a combination of factors. An assumption by some political actors that ethnic conflicts have purely 'ethnic' disputes at their roots has characterised the political responses of the international community to many ethnic conflicts since the end of the cold war. President Clinton's initial understanding of conflict in the former Yugoslavia, for example, was that it was based on deep-seated ethnic hatreds with their roots in historical antagonisms. Unfortunately, the misinterpretation of many conflicts has seen UN member states and regional organisations consider them unsolvable due to their supposed primordial ethnic nature (Schnabel, 2002). The tendency to intervene therefore has been limited. Schnabel (2002:219) suggests the assumption has been that little can be done to solve historic animosities from outside. As a result, naivety, poor judgement and poor policy decisions on the part of international political actors has often

contributed to the rapid deterioration of numerous ethnic conflicts. It would appear that policy makers and politicians do not therefore, account for historical factors, on the basis that these are matters which cannot be delved into. There appears to be a degree of 'institutional amnesia' with political institutions remaining condemned to repeat their failures because of this approach. In a sense, therefore, it is arguable that it is the inability of political actions to take appropriate account of ethnic tensions, rather than these tensions themselves, that should be seen as a causal factor.

One of the more predominant causal factors, this thesis argues, is the effect of uneven centralised development. This appears to be one of the most relevant forces exacerbating the conditions conducive to conflict. Furthermore, this factor has displayed the tendency to permeate and influence many of the less dominant causes of ethnic conflict.

Centralised development models, legacies installed by colonial administrations and sometimes socialist regimes, and promoted by economic development agendas, have become key catalysts for ethnic conflict. Uneven centralised development, including urbanisation and industrialisation, often creates inherent economic disparities and uneven allocation of resources. Competition over resources is often divided, by default, along ethnic lines due to local geographic and social factors. As seen in Bosnia and the Solomon Islands, there is a tendency for oppressed or marginalised people to identify themselves with local ethnic identities as a means for political mobilisation and group support. Once competition between groups assumes ethnic identities, material interests can be surpassed by ideological and identity fears that redraw the lines and the motivations of conflict (Schnabel, 2002). Competition for access to and influence over resources becomes competition for ethnic self-determination and existence.

These factors, along with the increasing scale, complexity and ferocity of ethnic conflicts have made interventions difficult, risky and volatile and have necessitated a high level of preparedness and coordination. This gives rise to the second objective which was to examine humanitarian actor groups, the

criticisms directed at them, the difficulties and restraints they face and how they respond in the face of these problems.

The ability of humanitarian interventions to exacerbate the conditions conducive to conflict, as a significant criticism, was examined in Chapters 3 and 4 in a series of criticisms of humanitarian relief and its actors. Problems created by humanitarian actors have characterised humanitarian relief in many of the failed interventions in ethnic conflicts. The need for aid continues but its providers are increasingly forced to question whether the exploitation of their aid outweighs its benefits. This thesis argues the allocation and distribution of humanitarian relief and the potential of these factors to reinforce divisions in society, exacerbating ethnic tensions, bolsters the argument that the fair allocation of relief can be more important than the substantive content of the relief itself. Where aid agencies directly or indirectly fund conflict (through providing food or resources or by paying for protection or safe passage) they can be perceived as partisan thus discrediting their attempts at fair aid allocation. Where relief is allocated to only one side of the conflict fair allocation remains an important issue. For example, in these situations it is common for relief to be channelled into elite or political groups rather than to those most in need.

Dependency on relief as an extension of inappropriate relief allocation and distribution is also a problem. The propensity of aid to provide or free up resources for the processes of conflict was another problem discussed. A further problem humanitarian relief faces is the way ethnic conflict and civil wars in the post-cold war era predominantly involve civilians as a source of economic extraction, military shields and bargaining chips, and as strategic objectives for the opposition. Where humanitarian relief agencies or peacekeepers become involved in ethnic conflict situations they often face a two-fold danger. Firstly, where the deliberate causing of stress for civilians is a strategy of the opposition during conflict, attempts at addressing this stress, with humanitarian assistance, can quickly result in humanitarian actors becoming a threat to the control of the

inflicting party and therefore they may be perceived as an enemy.<sup>101</sup> Secondly, as demonstrated by Rwanda and Bosnia, humanitarian organisations, like civilians can become a resource for exploitation. Theft and/or less direct approaches, like the manipulation of distressed populations, are common means of exploiting humanitarian agencies.

Another problem for humanitarian agencies is that while a primary objective is to assist populations in need, in doing so they can directly contribute to the likelihood of these populations being attacked, deliberately starved or further displaced. The blockade of food aid for Bosnian-Muslims by Serbs in Bosnia was a prime example. On the other hand, providing relief assistance to a particular population or party can also increase the likelihood of the opposition population being attacked or facing further distress where the aid, in fact, fuels militia or rebel forces, as it did in the refugee camps in Goma after the Rwandan crisis. Humanitarian aid, therefore, can become a contributor to the economy of war.

Aid workers consistently face moral dilemmas regarding the recipients of assistance. It is important to note also that victims can be victims but not be innocent. Rwandan Hutus in 1994 were desperately in need of assistance yet so many were guilty of mass murder. Likewise Rwandan Tutsis who were survivors of genocide became the killers in 1996. In order to continue providing assistance many aid workers report that they put the facts to the back of their mind, concentrating on the premise that the needy are innocent victims of war (Rieff, 2002:55). This distortion can be a deliberate strategy that often serves as the only way to respond to such moral dilemmas.

Humanitarian actors increasingly question whether the side effects of their aid in ethnic conflicts, where its abuse is almost a certainty, outweigh their responsibility to recipient populations. The question then becomes whether or not to intervene or whether to withdraw their support from a given situation.

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<sup>101</sup> The murder of 30 Boy Scouts assisting NGO camp managers in Eastern Zaire in Katala camp in 1994, for example, was a clear message from militia leaders to the humanitarian community that it would tolerate no alternative power structures (Bryans et al, 1999:10).

There is little dispute that humanitarian relief aid can prolong ethnic conflicts and in doing so exacerbate human suffering to some degree. It can also be argued that strategies to provide assistance may undermine strategies to provide protection. However, the decision to withhold, or particularly withdraw, assistance in ethnic conflict situations must only be made where the security risks to humanitarian relief agencies and staff is such that providing assistance is not feasible. It is irrational that because aid provided to a population feeds into a conflict this aid should be stopped thus exposing beneficiaries to further negative consequences.

Another significant criticism of humanitarian actors, illustrated in the case studies, is the poor coordination that exists among and between these actors. A lack of coordination is reflected in the complexity of the conflict situations and the number of humanitarian actors present. A key concern raised in the coordination argument was the lack of organisational clarity, particularly among UN agencies, and the inconsistency of command chains. However, the accountability of humanitarian actors to ensure coordinated relief is often limited and the efficiency of humanitarian interventions can be reduced. Successful coordination of humanitarian intervention and the limitation of the negative impacts, however, are easily oversimplified. For example, humanitarian actors are motivated by differing ideals with a multitude of different guidelines for success, all operating in situations that are evolving, politically charged and contextually specific.

A third objective of this thesis was to examine the importance of political commitment and willingness as a prerequisite for a successful humanitarian intervention. Lack of commitment and political willingness has manifested itself in various ways. The case studies highlighted a lack of coherent policy and integrated military and political responses accompanying PKO deployments, particularly in the case of Rwanda and Bosnia. A series of UN failures to win peace (for example, in Rwanda, Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Somalia) compounded those situations and led member states, including the U.S., to withhold further military, financial and political support. Subsequently the decreased efficiency and military ability of the UN made peacekeeping

operations more cautious.<sup>102</sup> This, in turn, is reflected in increased risks to humanitarian agencies and potential beneficiaries.

Risks to peacekeepers have often resulted from inadequate staff and resources committed during deployments and particularly the restrictions posed by limited mandates. Limited mandates employed by hesitant Security Council members are frequently cited as constraining, thereby endangering the lives of peacekeepers and beneficiaries through limitations on using (armed) force. In Rwanda and Bosnia the protection of civilians against militia and rebel attack exceeded the mandate of peacekeepers and they were forced to stand idly by as ethnic cleansing progressed, helplessness or ineffectiveness often being another result of lack of commitment.

Commitment and political willingness is also often driven by public opinion. Security Council member states, conditioned by public opinion, are typically reluctant to send in peacekeepers on operations where the conflict poses little or no risk to their national interests or to regional or global security. The loss of U.S. soldiers in Somalia in 1993 has been a key incident, or deciding factor, in this approach. A helping hand cost the United States more than it wanted to pay to restore Somalia's political and economic structure (Michaels and Graff, 1994). The American people did not want to see 'their' soldiers die for what they perceive as no clear-cut objective. In Bosnia, for similar reasons, there was a reluctance to cross the 'Mogadishu line' (active engagement) into peace enforcement (Munslow and Brown, 1999:4).

Aid agencies rely on UN protection in many parts of the world for their operations, including aid convoys and distribution, and for protection for staff and beneficiaries, as well as to restrict the diversion of aid. The majority of relief agencies are not equipped to perform peacekeeping or protection roles themselves so rely on the commitment and willingness of the UN and/or

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<sup>102</sup> In Sierra Leone in 1999, for example, peacekeepers from Kenya and Guinea surrendered at least 110 assault rifles, several rocket propelled grenade launchers, four Armoured personal carriers and communications equipment putting up little resistance to RUF ambushers (Malan, 2001:104).

member states. The reluctance of Security Council members to get directly involved in peace-enforcement increases, therefore, the risks to aid agencies as illustrated in Rwanda and Bosnia.

Restricted UN capability can also require agencies to turn to other sources for protection. This protection can be provided by national or foreign security companies or in extreme examples, by warlords or faction leaders. The politics of humanitarian relief agencies hiring armed protection are complex. Hiring private security rather than relying on state or UN forces compounds the privatisation of security debate about security becoming a privilege available only to those who can afford.

On the other hand, in situations where tensions are stretched already, another armed party in the equation may exacerbate the tension. Often seen as a necessity to provide relief in many regions, it can also be perceived as undermining local capacity and control, particularly by leaders at the local and regional level and by local militia or rebel forces. Alternatively, utilising local non-government forces or even bribing warlords or rebel leaders creates a double-edged moral dilemma. It sparks the debate over whether relief aid should be provided, ensuring recipients have the ability to survive (a point argued by the International Committee for the Red Cross) or, as African Rights coordinator de Waal argues, perhaps there should be more withdrawals or disengagements, particularly where relief assistance serves to facilitate or prolong conflict or tension.

This thesis has argued that political unwillingness and a lack of commitment to the processes of pre-emptive diplomacy and the deployment of effective PKOs is based on a series of factors. Firstly, the tendency of ethnic conflicts to present any direct negative consequences for Western political powers or permanent Security Council members is generally minimal. Intervention, whether diplomatic or military, has been restrained where there is no perceived threat to the security of these states either physically or economically, or where there is no threat to global security. Western political actors display a preference to remain unconnected.

As a continuation of this preference a second key reason is the avoidance of casualties. After the fiasco in Mogadishu in 1993, a profound change in the approach to military deployments occurred. Avoiding large-scale casualties has become paramount and any measures possible to minimise the risks to personnel have been taken. Unfortunately the easiest way to accomplish this is to refrain from deploying PKOs and this was illustrated by the hesitant attitude of Western states when contemplating intervention in Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands. A third restraint is the financial cost of deploying. While, arguably, diplomatic interventions are not restricted by cost, PKOs are. Australia, for example, did not want to accept the costs of a deep engagement in solving the Solomon Islands tenacious problems.

Lastly, the premise of state sovereignty can be viewed as a political impediment when contemplating humanitarian intervention. State sovereignty is the framework in which a large majority of international relations exist and operate. While interventions are becoming more obtrusive than in the past, there is still no substantial framework in which interventions can be decisively established. There is no clear-cut line to be crossed that essentially calls for international intervention. Despite this, this thesis argues that the lack of a framework must not be used to justify a failure to intervene. While this shortcoming needs to be addressed, a decision not to intervene arguably amounts to an extension of a state decision to refrain because it is not in their interests to intervene and they accrue no tangible benefits when doing so. For UN capability to remain a feasible concept, it is argued, their efforts must establish a framework defining the parameters for humanitarian intervention, particularly military humanitarianism.

International political actors have chosen to let the processes of many ethnic conflicts proceed with little effort made to help resolve or mediate tension. This was the case in Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands. A lack of effective pre-emptive diplomacy essentially allowed these countries to lapse into a state of violent conflict. War, after all, is the manifestation of political failure.

The fourth objective of the thesis was to illustrate the relationship between relief and development. The linkage between relief and development remains ineffective in mainstream practice with the challenge of integrating longer-term reconstruction and development initiatives with humanitarian relief being constrained by a number of factors. The fundamental problem, however, is the coordination and cooperation problems that exist between agencies. These are most seriously manifested in the ineffectual allocation of benefits and the creation of dependence among beneficiaries. The creation of dependency is essentially the continuation of the status quo, which in effect undermines the fundamental premise of foreign development aid and thus limits the capacity of longer-term development agendas.

The case studies have demonstrated the very real need for a developmental approach that bolsters the social sector in conflict and post-conflict situations. The reconstruction of social services and infrastructure is a crucial factor in not only building resilience to the processes of conflict, but also in mitigating the processes conducive to tension. Arguably, in Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands the inequality and the ethnic divisions that were both instigators and products of the conflict maintain the potential for tension. Such situations necessitate an intervention that promotes and facilitates the progress of longer-term reconstruction and development initiatives in the social sector in an effort to construct a strong civil society capable of resisting the detrimental impacts of those processes of ethnic conflict examined in Chapter 2.

Humanitarian intervention, however, continues to face a paradox at the highest level. This thesis illustrated the ramifications of a top-down approach to development. The creation of an uneven centralised model of economic modernisation furthered the processes of social and economic inequality creating a catalyst for ethnic conflict. This in turn has necessitated the intervention of humanitarian relief actors to administer assistance to subdue the effects of conflict. The difficulties faced by humanitarian actors inherent in ethnic conflicts, however, can necessitate military assistance in an effort to ensure the protection of beneficiaries and the providers of aid. The dilemma remains, however, that the success of military intervention and humanitarian

intervention as a whole relies on political will and commitment due to the potential it exerts towards changing the conditions of a conflict. A top-down approach has become both the instigator and the remedy and represents a conceptual paradox that remains, thus far, unsolvable.

### **Proposals for Humanitarian Intervention**

In the previous chapter a series of fundamental issues relating to ethnic conflict and humanitarian relief were examined. In this section a series of proposed directions for humanitarian intervention in the future and the need for continued research and development into these concepts are outlined.

The initial proposal reflects the concept discussed in Chapter 6 that uneven development became a potential cause or catalyst for conflict, a point illustrated by each of the case studies. In an effort to address this issue, the thesis examines two key points that require further review. Firstly, it is appreciated that half a century of mal-aligned development processes cannot be retracted. Rather, it is suggested that development as it exists at present should reflect the problems, both institutional and practical, that characterise its history. The fact that certain development has been responsible for conflict assumes that it needs to be more accountable for its actions. Thus, there is a need for increased analysis, particularly of the conceptual framework development models are based on and the impacts of development initiatives on the ground. Previously it was argued that there appears to be a degree of 'institutional amnesia'. While it is appreciated that development models have evolved since their introduction, there still appears to be an often consistent and predictable return to inappropriate standardised concepts and the subsequent problems. It is possible that the theoretical concept maybe appropriate but the implications are often manifested in the apparent ignorance about practical concerns. Analysis and understanding of local situations and necessities remains a key issue. Failure to address this must be met by demands for accountability by the international community.

Building on the first point, the second point emphasises the importance of a micro-level focus on local development. The traditional macro-level economic development model has failed to create equality among many populations. The most serious consequence of this has been the creation or aggravation of conditions conducive to conflict. Locally based development, on the other hand, can be proactive as well as reactive to conflict in complex situations. Realigning development practices to focus on the local level arguably bolsters the capability of development to address more effectively, and earlier, conditions that are conducive to conflict. One problem that remains with this approach, however, is that this notion of development is inherently messy and fragmented and does not fit the rationally planned structured model of development that arguably still exists.

The remedial capability of development operating at the local level can also address certain conditions that foster conflict. In the post-conflict environment, development objectives focused on locally based initiatives have the potential to minimise tensions, particularly over resource and economic inequality. This concept is not new but is yet to become mainstream. The main limitation it faces is the lack of political commitment combined with the inherent coordination problems among actors. The concept of development in conflict is examined in more detail below. The key argument, however, is the need to review the capability of development institutions to operate at the local level, including in adverse situations. Overton (2000:151), for example, suggests, “development needs to be able to live with conflict”.

Another proposal concerns the role politics have in humanitarian interventions. The politics involved in a humanitarian intervention are inherently complex and inevitably controversial. It is suggested in this thesis that political institutions must endeavour to focus on pre-emptive diplomacy or diplomatic efforts at conflict reconciliation. The averting of human rights abuses characteristic of many ethnic conflict situations should stand as the primary objective. It is appreciated that altering the objectives and motivations of political institutions, however, is inherently difficult. The thesis goes on to suggest that realistically a re-evaluation of the analysis undertaken prior to a humanitarian intervention is

often required. Similar to the suggested analysis by development institutions regarding viability, the evaluation of humanitarian intervention is crucial in an effort to avoid the recurrent political failings that have resulted from misconstrued and inappropriate assumptions and decisions. The unique characteristics of each ethnic conflict necessitate that any intervention is specific to the particular conditions. As such, reinforcement of analysis and evaluation of a proposed intervention is critical. Furthermore, accompanying analysis, it is suggested, should be the review of previous interventions that display any similarities and thereby allude to any potential problems or judgements, or successes that could be built on. Continual reassessment and overview of any intervention or political decision made regarding an intervention can potentially improve understanding and minimise misinterpretation of events.

A more diligent approach to analysing the specific conditions of an ethnic conflict therefore allows more appropriate and, consequently, more effective responses. However, diplomacy will not always be successful and peacekeeping or forceful military humanitarianism remains important to humanitarian intervention. The presence of peacekeepers has proved to be an effective method of addressing conflict and securing the delivery of humanitarian aid. In Bougainville, for example, peace was maintained by the presence of unarmed peacekeepers. In Bougainville it was illustrated that another armed party to the conflict could create unease and exacerbate tension. The need for substantive analysis and evaluation of the specific conditions is important in identifying such factors.

In situations where diplomacy or peacekeeping fails, humanitarian aid or development, while constrained, should not be suspended. Forceful military humanitarian intervention therefore becomes an option but should remain a last resort. Furthermore, it must only be deployed with full political commitment and a mandate drafted for the specific conflict rather than one that is generic in nature. Moreover, operational control must be maintained by the state or coalition subcontracted specifically for the operation in an effort to ensure maximum coordination.

The second political initiative proposed by the thesis is the commissioning of a UN standing army or a quick response military contingent for deployment into difficult ethnic conflict situations requiring immediate peacekeeping or for the protection of civilians or aid agencies. This concept has been debated in the past. As early as 1950 Secretary-General Trigue Lie proposed a UN legion of soldiers as a reserve force although its creation was blocked by the cold war. More recently, in 1992, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali also proposed a UN standing army. He argued such a force would bolster the power of persuasion exerted by the UN (Guenter, 1993). The first Bush administration, however, opposed the idea and the concept was never realised.

The present political arena, characterised by a series of constraints and boundaries, has created an appreciation that an upheaval of the international system of military humanitarian intervention is required. This thesis advocates the need to develop a mode of operation that addresses the present problem instigated by violent ethnic conflict, while also recognising present political determinants. The thesis does not present a comprehensive proposal of the specifics of a UN standing army. Rather, it acknowledges the strategic and operational requirements of such a force.<sup>103</sup>

A standing army can be mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Article 43 provides that members make available to the Security Council, 'armed forces, assistance and facilities'. Article 47 considers the provision of a military staff committee responsible for the direction of armed forces at the Security Council's disposal. The proposal of a UN standing army has two key incentives. Firstly, creating a voluntary force of soldiers<sup>104</sup> that can deploy at shorter notice than an otherwise ad hoc fragmented contingent of forces from various member states, may be a deterrent to potential warring parties. Not unlike a regular police presence, the mere existence of such a force may deter

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<sup>103</sup> Refer to Conetta and Knight (1995) for detailed operational and design guidelines.

<sup>104</sup> A force of voluntary soldiers willing to fight in ethnic conflict situations could be attracted by a tax-free salary or by EU or U.S. citizenship. Guenter (1993:10) notes that only one in six volunteers are accepted by the French Foreign Legion illustrating the availability of willing applicants.

human rights violations. Although this is optimistic and is not guaranteed, the potential for short-term deployment would allow forces to intervene much earlier in a conflict situation in an effort to quell tension and conflict before it escalates further. The second incentive, and arguably the most important factor influencing a decision by UN members to accept the proposition, is the potential of a standing army to circumvent the problem of member states hesitating to intervene because of the risks to their soldiers. It is suggested that a standing army could separate soldiers, and therefore states, from public and political scrutiny and criticism where they are deployed in situations that are perceived as illegitimate due to the absence of national interests or security concerns. UN forces become designated solely for the purpose of humanitarian intervention. Furthermore, the disengagement of forces from specific states may also circumvent state sovereignty issues. This is an important attribute as one of the warring parties in many ethnic conflicts is often supported by a legitimate government. As stated above, the premise of this thesis is not to design or explain the operational guidelines of a UN standing army. Rather, the objective is to draw conclusions about the potential and the necessity of such a force and identify the need for further research and development of the concept.

Many humanitarians, however, particularly NGOs, oppose military humanitarianism and consider it an oxymoron. There will always be a fundamental indifference between passive civilian humanitarian intervention and military intervention. The key is not to assume one mode of operation combining the two, but rather, to maximise the coordination and cooperation between the two and ensure political support and recognition of the necessity of both.

A further proposal of the thesis suggests the need for better coordination among actor groups. Coordination problems have characterised humanitarian interventions from a political level to an individual aid agency level. In an effort to better coordinate between humanitarian actor groups it is suggested that UN member states establish a framework whereby an administrative body can be installed in ethnic conflict situations. Such a body should be responsible for the provision of humanitarian relief and reconstruction. While this body may remain administratively separate from military intervention, it could assume

responsibility for the coordination of civilian humanitarian relief provision, including NGOs and UN agencies. This model could be similar, for example, to the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, which was modelled on the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, and was endowed with overall responsibility for humanitarian assistance and the development of civil and social services (Gorjao, 2002). Despite the apparent benefits of this approach, it has yet to be accepted as a mainstream procedure. Rather it remains an ad hoc approach.

Furthermore, the proposal suggests that for military humanitarianism, an effective coordinated approach to a conflict by the permanent Security Council members should delegate a certain power or regional organisation such as NATO to undertake an intervention under a Security Council mandate. Inherent in this type of approach is an increased degree of coordination as a result of centralised authority and planning organisation. A limitation, however, could be the unwillingness of member states to commit to an intervention outside of any direct national threats. The importance of regional powers, therefore, remains central to this approach due to the increased relevance that conflict in their region may have.

The second point made by this proposal is the need for better coordination within humanitarian actors and among staff. The concept of competitiveness among humanitarian agencies (examined in Chapter 4) creates certain implications. Agencies often lose sight of their most fundamental objective – to be successful so as their inputs strengthening local capacities and bolstering resilience to conflict are no longer required or evolve necessitating only a level of support. Instead, they often jealously guard their patch to ensure continued funding and longevity beyond their requirements. Arguably there is a constant fear of losing their integrity. They can become inward looking – focusing on perpetuating the agency more than focusing on the best outcome for their target group and the objectives of the donor.

There exists a clear need for professionally trained staff with the tenacity to maintain an objective outlook. In addition to utilising professional staff in

supervisory/management roles, there is a strong need to maintain properly trained relief workers. The high staff turnover and rapid deployment of staff in emergencies can sometimes be unavoidable. However, increased training regimes preparing staff for the rigours of relief work can reduce potential problems associated with inexperience. Clearly there must be a balance between the level of training extended to staff due to cost but a well managed agency, staffed by professionals at policy, administration and field operation management levels should be able to achieve organisational success. Stability for the agency and successful outcomes for the recipient population must remain the key objectives.

Another suggestion is the need to re-evaluate the approach to relief and development. The traditional linear relationship between relief and development is often inadequate in conflict situations, particularly where conflict is protracted. It is argued humanitarian relief and development processes need to become more flexible to facilitate coordination between the two and allow a more proficient approach in conflict situations.

The first point is that humanitarian agencies should support public sector and social actors in regions potentially facing or consumed by ethnic conflict. The thesis has argued that humanitarian intervention has the potential to address a recipient population's vulnerability to the effects of conflict. Conflict and subsequent humanitarian relief cannot necessarily break the processes of centralised uneven development. However, relief, reconstruction, and longer-term development initiatives focusing on social services and infrastructure can strengthen the position of recipient government's public sectors. Humanitarian agencies, particularly non-politically aligned agencies, can be important campaigners for the change of state policies and processes in ethnic conflict and post-conflict situations. The development of social services and infrastructure in an effort to bolster the resilience of populations to conflict and minimise the conditions conducive to violence is an important measure. This is particularly important in regions where ethnic conflict is not so much an interruption to normal processes but an ongoing process.

This approach has the opportunity to essentially re-invent certain processes of humanitarian intervention. Placing emphasis on the reconstruction of social services and the public sector, promoting local strengths and minimising the consequences of conflict, is arguably more viable in the present than before. Humanitarian actors exist in greater numbers and are spread throughout more regions than at any time in the past. This has strengthened their operational position and allowed them greater access to populations. The nature of global politics and the reduction of communism have also relaxed the constraints previously faced by many humanitarian agencies and have given more weight to their diplomatic efforts and their political influences. The recurrent problem associated with this approach, however, is arguably the position held by many humanitarian agencies against state-led development programs. This position is not unanticipated given the dubious historical record of many programs led or supported by developing country governments.

The second point assumes that, typically, concepts of humanitarian intervention have a tendency to address conflicts at a macro-level. Examination and consideration of causal factors of conflict at the micro-level are often disregarded. The imperative of an approach focused on social reconstruction and development at a micro-level, however, has the potential to address certain active and residual tensions and problems at a community level, reducing the tendency of a conflict to re-emerge. Development is undermined by the mistrust and factionalism that tension and conflict breeds and efforts at nurturing reconciliatory processes are key to maintaining peace and encouraging social networks and economic enterprise.

The role of the military as a 'development' agency in post-conflict situations can be important at the community level due to their logistical and technical expertise. Despite the complications involved (examined in Chapter 4), the military appears to be accepting this diverse role, if only by default, because of their placement and capacity, as was demonstrated by the Australian and New Zealand militaries in East Timor. Civil-military coordination, however, is becoming more sustainable and the appointment of liaison positions,

particularly in the military, to provide an interface with civilian authorities will further their potential as development actors.

The concept of furthering social reconstruction and development, however, is difficult and highlights the different sets of requirements and procedures every conflict situation requires. As with above, it also necessitates forming the link between relief and development objectives. While this link has been gaining popularity it remains removed from mainstream thinking and so is not yet a central objective of many agencies.

To summarise, once tensions have escalated into conflict, it appears that the complexities surrounding dealing with the situation also escalate. It appears too that there are no standard answers. Each conflict, indeed each local situation within a conflict, will likely need careful and specialised consideration. Typically, however, this appears not to happen, arguably for the same reasons that preventative diplomatic intervention was either non-existent or failed. There is a strong case for the use of specialised independent investigation, analysis and advice that is free of external or internal political agendas. It is arguable that if peace is restored at a local level through an understanding of local issues, such resolution of the tensions and problems is more likely to pave the way for future lasting political, social and structural changes than is an intervention that is perceived as a display of power, imperialism and the forceful imposing of another groups or another governments will.

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## APPENDIX ONE

### CHAPTER TWO ANNOTATIONS

#### **The Roles of Ethnicity**

Roles of ethnicity and ethnic conflict were largely ignored at the political level prior to the end of the cold war. This is attributable to a number of reasons:

1. The East – West ideological battle took precedence over seemingly smaller-scale ethnic conflicts. Inter-state battles were high on the agenda, including the issues of disarmament, the global economy, and strategic interests of the superpowers (Taras and Ganguly, 2002).

2. Both Western liberals and Eastern Marxists alike believed that ethnic identities (and conflicts) would disappear in the face of social change. For liberals, it contradicted their emphasis on individualism. Marxists, on the other hand, saw the ethnicity issue as a glitch in a move to communism and therefore largely overlooked it (Ryan, 1990).

3. Within the realm of American and English scholarly disciplines and international relations, ethnicity issues were not high on the agenda. Inter-state relations took precedence. The study of ethnicity and race, religion and national minorities were problematic. Firstly, politicians were not eager to deal with these issues because of what many saw as dysfunctional unsolvable problems that did not fit in pre-existing political structures. Secondly, studying ethnic conflict raised key issues relating to international relations. Primarily, raising the debate about ethnic conflict and nationalistic tendencies tended to assume that solutions to the problems would also be reached. This created a dilemma between resolving desperate ethnic conflict emergencies and accommodating the requests, claims or demands of the parties involved, many of whom were inappropriate or unworthy (Christie, 1998; Taras and Ganguly, 2002).

4. After the Cold War the huge increases in ability and accessibility of media coverage and communication brought the reality of the humanitarian emergencies created by ethnic conflicts all over the globe into the world's living

rooms. The 'CNN' effect and the civil reaction to it gave a lot more coverage to ethnic conflicts that was previously unseen.

### **Non-neutral States in Ethnic Conflicts**

Until late 1989 the government of Bulgaria, for example, suppressed all political dissent, like most communist states, allowing participation only through mass organised parties (Gurr, 1993). People of Turkish ethnicity, however, were discriminated against and their collective identity denied. They were forced to take Slavic names (and identity cards) and speaking Turkish was disallowed (Gurr, 1993:46). If assimilation was rejected by (Turkish) Bulgarians, Bulgarian policy disallowed political participation, and political positions and privileges.

The policies of dominating political groups can be directly discriminating against ethnic minorities or majorities. The Kurds have been involved in a series of conflicts, of which numerous can be attributed to state discrimination. In the 1920s in Turkey, Kemal Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkish State, stated that Kurds were actually 'Mountain Turks' and had no claim to an independent identity. Notwithstanding the '1923 Treaty of Lausanne', by which Turkey accepted its responsibility to protect its minorities, Kurds did not benefit from these provisions (Stavenhagen, 1996:164). In 1980 Turkey's constitution prohibited any 'expression of opinion which counters Turkish national interests, the integrity of the Turkish state and nation and the principles and reforms of Atatürk' (ibid.). This included the prohibition of Kurdish language and political parties based on non-Turkish criteria.

## **APPENDIX TWO**

### **UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS**

OCHA's functions are; (1) policy development and coordination in support of the Secretary-General, ensuring all humanitarian issues are addressed; (2) advocacy of humanitarian issues with political organs, notably the Security Council; and (3) coordination of humanitarian response, by ensuring the appropriate response mechanism is established on the ground (OCHA, 2003).

## APPENDIX THREE

### CHRONOLOGIES OF EVENTS

#### Rwanda: A Chronology of Events

**1890** - Rwanda became part of German East Africa.

**1916** - Belgian forces occupied Rwanda.

**1923** - Belgium granted League of Nations mandate to govern Rwanda (Ruanda-Urundi), which it ruled indirectly through Tutsi kings.

**1926** - The Belgians introduce ethnic identity cards.

**1946** - Rwanda became UN trust territory governed by Belgium.

**1957** - Hutus issue manifesto calling for a change in Rwanda's power structure to give them a voice commensurate with their numbers. Hutu political parties were formed.

**1959** - The Belgians switch their support to the Hutus. Tutsi King Kigeri V, together with tens of thousands of Tutsis, were forced into exile in Uganda following inter-ethnic violence.

**1961** - Rwanda proclaimed a republic.

**1962** - Rwanda became independent with a Hutu, Kayibanda, as president and many Tutsis leave the country.

**1963** - Following an incursion by Tutsi rebels based in Burundi, 20,000 Tutsis were killed.

**1973** - Major Habyarimana takes power in a military coup and creates a one party state ousting President Kayibanda.

**1978** - A new constitution was ratified and Habyarimana was elected president.

**1989** - The International price of coffee collapses, causing severe economic hardship to Rwandan farmers.

**1990** - Forces of the rebel, mainly Tutsi, Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invade Rwanda from Uganda.

**1991** - New multiparty constitution promulgated following pressure from abroad over aid forcing Habyarimana to agree to the principle of multi-party democracy

**1990 – 1992** - The Rwandan Army creates Hutu militias (the interahamwe.). The RPF attacks Rwanda, resulting in the killing of innocent Tutsis by the interahamwe.

**1993** - The RPF attacks the Rwandan border and French troops are called in to help the government. Fighting continues and peace negotiations start. President Habyarimana signs a power-sharing agreement with the Tutsis in the Tanzanian town of Arusha, ostensibly signalling the end of civil war. UNAMIR mission was sent to monitor the peace agreement.

**1994 January - March** - Tension rose and Human Rights agencies warned the international community of the likelihood of violence. The UN general, Dallaire, tells UN headquarters that he has been informed that the Hutus are planning 'a genocide' against the Tutsis.

**April 6** - Habyarimana and the president of Burundi are killed, after their plane is shot down near Kigali.

**April 7** - Systematic killings begin of opposition politicians and pro-democracy Hutu and Tutsi. Ten Belgian peacekeepers are killed. Extremist Hutu militia and elements of the Rwandan military begin the systematic massacre of Tutsis. Within 100 days around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus are killed.

**April 9** - A large-scale massacre occurs and the international community prevents peacekeepers from acting. The RPF begin to fight the Rwandan Army.

**April 11** - Foreign nationals and then the Belgian peacekeepers are evacuated from Rwanda.

**April 30** - The UN discusses events in Rwanda but does not use the word genocide in its public statement. To have done so would tie the UN into action.

**May 17** - UN Security Council agrees to send 5,500 troops into Rwanda, but there is disagreement over who should go and costs.

**June 22** - French forces enter into Southwest Rwanda and set up 'safe areas' in the Government controlled areas. A UN commission states that the massacres were pre-planned and an act of genocide.

**July** - The Rwandan army is defeated and flees to Zaire. A cholera epidemic kills thousands in the refugee camps, leaving aid agencies under pressure as to whom they should help. Thousands of those in the militias flee to the French zones, in other areas some Tutsi are still being killed.

**November** - The UN establishes the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

**1994-96** - Refugee camps in Zaire fell under the control of the Hutu militias responsible for the genocide in Rwanda.

**1995** - Extremist Hutu militias and Zairean Government forces attack local Zairean Banyamulenge Tutsis. Zaire attempted to force refugees back into Rwanda.

**1995** - UN-appointed international tribunal begins charging and sentencing a number of people responsible for the Hutu-Tutsi atrocities.

**1996** - Rwandan troops invade and attack Hutu militia-dominated camps in Zaire in order to drive home the refugees.

**2000 April** - Ministers and members of parliament elect Vice-President Paul Kagame as Rwanda's new president.

**2001 December** - A new flag and national anthem are unveiled to try to promote national unity and reconciliation.

**2002** - Presidents of Rwanda and DRC sign a peace agreement. Under the deal Rwanda will pull troops out of DRC and DRC will help disarm Rwandan Hutu gunmen blamed for killing the Tutsi minority in Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

**2003 May** - Voters back a draft constitution banning the incitement of ethnic hatred designed to prevent genocide.

**2003** August - Paul Kagame claims a landslide victory in the first presidential elections since the 1994 genocide.

*Source: Adapted from BBC website (2003); Holocaust Memorial Day website (2003).*

## **Bosnia: A Chronology of Events**

**1945** - Bosnia-Herzegovina became a republic within the Yugoslav Socialist Federation.

**1980** - Tito dies.

**1991** - Following collapse of Communism, nationalists win first multi-party elections and form coalition government despite having conflicting goals. Muslim nationalists want centralised independent Bosnia, Serb nationalists want to stay in Belgrade-dominated Yugoslavia, and Croats want to join independent Croatian State.

**June 25** - Croatia and Slovenia proclaim independence from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav army responds by attacking Slovenia.

**June 27** - Croats and Serbs begin fighting in Croatia.

**1992** - Croat and Muslim nationalists form tactical alliance and outvote Serbs at independence referendum. Serb nationalists are incensed as constitution stipulates that all major decisions must be reached through consensus. Civil war breaks out and Serbs quickly assume control of over half the republic. Ethnic cleansing was rampant in newly proclaimed Serb Republic but also widespread in Muslim and Croat-controlled areas.

**April** - The Bosnian Serbs began siege of Sarajevo.

**1993 March** - As tension rose Bosnian Croats and Muslims began fighting over the 30 percent of Bosnia not already seized by the Bosnian Serbs.

**April-May** - The UN Security Council declared six 'safe areas' for Bosnian Muslims: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde.

**1994 March** - US-brokered peace accord is signed by Bosnian Muslims and Croats.

**February** - NATO jets shoot down four Serb aircraft over central Bosnia marking the alliance's first use of force.

**1995 July** - Bosnian Serb forces overran the safe haven of Srebrenica. Thousands of Bosnian Muslim men and boys were separated from their families and massacred, despite UN presence.

**August - September** - NATO air strikes against Serb positions helped Muslim and Croat forces make big territorial gains, expelling 180,000 Serb civilians on the way.

**November** - Dayton peace accord was signed in Paris creating two entities of roughly equal size, one for Bosnian Muslims and Croats, the other for Serbs. An American military contingent was proposed. U.S. officials predicted that getting public support for the American troop deployment would be "like pulling teeth through the back of your head." Russia agreed to participate in the NATO peacekeeping operation.

**December** - After three-and-a-half years of trying, but failing to keep the peace in Bosnia, the UN turned command over to NATO. U.S. troops were approved by President Clinton to deploy in Bosnia.

*Source: Adapted from BBC website (2003); Time website (2003).*

## **Solomon Islands: A Chronology of Events**

**1976** - Solomon Islands (formerly British Solomon Islands) became self-governing.

**1978** - Independence granted within the British Commonwealth.

**1997** - Bartholomew Ulufa'alu was elected Prime Minister

**1999** - Islands placed under state of emergency due to racially related unrest. The MEF is formed in response to the actions of the IFM and the government's inability to resolve the conflict. Fighting broke out between MEF and IFM around Honiara. The Honiara Peace Accord and the Memorandum of Understanding between Solomon Islands Government and Guadalcanal Provincial Government are signed.

**2000 January** - A group raided the Police armoury in Malaita and stole the weapons it contained.

**June** - Hostility between rival ethnic groups leads to a coup. Rebels seize Honiara, place Prime Minister Ulufa'alu under house arrest. Ulufa'alu resigns at gunpoint. Truce declared between rebels and government. Manasseh Sogavare becomes Prime Minister.

**October** - Townsville Peace Agreement brokered by Australia was signed although Rebel leader Harold Keke refused to sign. Under the Agreement, Australian and New Zealand unarmed peacekeepers are deployed.

**2001 September** - The murder of a prominent IFM leader threatens the peace.

**December** - Sir Allan Kemakeza elected Prime Minister.

**2002** - Economic and social problems worsen. The government is unable to pay wages to civil servants.

**March** - Australian-led peacekeepers withdraw due to deteriorating conditions.

**August** - A government minister is shot dead allegedly on the orders of an Isatabu militia leader, Harold Keke.

**2003 January** - William Morrell from Britain is appointed as Police Commissioner.

**February** - Former Police Commissioner Frederick Soaki is murdered.

**June** - Kemakeza flies to Canberra to ask Australian Prime Minister John Howard about the possibility of more assistance from Australia. Howard announces combined plan with New Zealand to send a warship, up to 1500 soldiers and police, and administrative staff to the Solomon's. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff announce they will work together on plans to help to restore law and order in the Solomon's. South Pacific foreign ministers meet in Sydney as the Pacific Island Forum membership and agree to intervene at the request of the Solomon's. Downer urges Keke to surrender.

**July** - The parliament approves the peacekeeping plan. The regional peacekeeping force is deployed. Warlord Harold Keke announces a ceasefire as a response to a proposal that Australia, New Zealand, and other Pacific nations send 200 police and 2,000 troops to Guadalcanal. A 21-day weapon amnesty takes effect to collect illegally held weapons. A total of 3,700 firearms and 300,000 rounds of ammunition are collected

**August** - Harold Keke surrenders and is taken into custody by the Australian-led peace force along with three other militants.

**October** - Australia and New Zealand scale back their military contributions, citing progress in restoring order. Peacekeepers declare the Weather Coast, an area badly hit by lawlessness, safe.

*Source: Adapted from CNN website (2003); Women War Peace website (2003).*