Humanitarian Directed Violence in Afghanistan:

Neutrality and Humanitarian Space.

Andrew George Cameron Gifford

2007

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Institute of Development Studies at Massey University, New Zealand

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank to the following people who gave their time to the research: Leslie Boswell, Len Clift, David Cremoux, Jones, Ian Joseph, Stuart Lane, Phyl Redwood and Smith.

Thank you to my supervisors Dr. Barcham and Dr McKinnon. Special thanks to Dr McKinnon for her valued help and direction throughout the research and writing process.

Finally, thanks to my wife Danielle as without her tireless proof reading and support this would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF MAIN POINTS

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Acronyms

ACBAR	Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ANSO	Afghan NGO Security Office
BAAG	British Agencies Afghanistan Group
DFID	Department for International Development, UK Government
DIIS	Dutch Institute of International Studies
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK Government
GAO	The United States General Accounting Office
HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IAM	International Assistance Mission
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Service Intelligence
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non- Government Organisation
OSAC	Overseas Security Advisory Council
PDPA	Communist Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
UK	United Kingdom
UK-MoD	United Kingdom Ministry of Defence
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Childrens Fund
URD	Urgence Rehabilitation Development
US	United States (of America)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
WHO	World Health Organisation

Abstract

The increased violence towards humanitarian workers represents an insidious trend throughout Afghanistan. Humanitarian workers have become legitimised targets since the 2001 US led invasion of Afghanistan in *Operation Enduring Freedom.*

The increased identification of NGOs with Western military forces and the Afghan government makes the aid community a target by association, whether it is a real or perceived association by the belligerents. Neutrality for NGOs in Afghanistan has been lost.

Overwhelmingly, authors and aid practitioners make clear statements about NGOs being legitimised for violence due to the perception of complicity, propagated by either the armed forces themselves or Coalition political leaders. However, army officers involved in the civilian-military relationship are dismissive of the NGOs plight and believe the issue of NGO neutrality to be overplayed.

Indeed the Coalition's Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the NATO commander in Afghanistan believe that the lack of co-ordination or pooling of NGOs' resources with the military or one another is an impediment to development and improving the security in Afghanistan.

The Taliban have gained de facto military control over a growing number of provinces, emanating from the South with humanitarian space in that environment diminished so as to be non-existent.

The civilian-military relationship is not responsible for the loss of humanitarian space in its entirety. Opium production, warlord-ism, banditry, corruption, conflict of cultures, religion, and external funding of terrorism marry to produce a uniquely hostile environment not conducive to humanitarian intervention. The lack of heterogeneity between what NGOs agree is acceptable collusion in a civilian-military context also makes it unlikely that accepted operating procedures will be adopted by the civilian humanitarian community as a whole.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Research Issue

Twenty-eight Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) workers were killed in Afghanistan from January to August 2006, compared to thirty-one NGO workers killed in the whole of 2005 (ACBAR, 2006:5). It is argued by Human Rights Watch (HRW) that humanitarian workers in Afghanistan are suffering from a dramatic increase in violence, which highlights a rising threat to NGOs (Sheik et al, 2000:167; HRW, 2002:2). Modern international politics has changed the theatre in which humanitarian organisations operate, notably with the plethora of different development organisations and the increased presence of military forces in humanitarian contexts. The many organisations undertaking humanitarian work, from multi-mandate NGOs to the military, have complex repercussions for humanitarian organisations. The sanctity of humanitarian work has historically been central to their security. Acceptance of NGOs and humanitarians by controlling factions is what organisations have relied upon to generate security. Today's development environment is highly politicised and media sensitive. This was exemplified by the controversy around events such as the Danish news paper Jyllands-Posten, printing cartoons depicting Mohammed[1] (Rennie, 2006). After the cartoon's publication, Dutch NGOs and military personnel became more at risk from direct targeting and violence (Rennie, 2006)[2]. Humanitarian organisations are finding it difficult to ensure that others perceive a distinction between themselves and other actors from the political, military, and private sectors (Johnson et al, 2004:83).

A relatively recent trend seems to demonstrate a rise in the targeting of United Nations (UN) and NGO staff and operations by militia groups in humanitarian missions (Sheik et al, 2000:66; King, 2002:1; URD, 2006:12-13). The continuing work of NGOs in conflict areas is in jeopardy due to this escalation of violence directed towards humanitarian workers (Stoddard, 2003). Some examples of the increasing violence include the gang rape of an international aid worker in Afghanistan in 2002 that sent

---

[1] For a online copy of these cartoons see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyllands-Posten_Muhammad_cartoons_controversy
[2] For a web site counting deaths attributed to the cartoons printing see: http://www.cartoonbodycount.com/

shockwaves through the humanitarian community, precipitating the closing down of some humanitarian operations (BBC, 2002). In March, 2004, the director of The Red Crescent, Mohammed Isha, was shot dead while travelling to work (North, 2004). In June, 2004, five Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) aid workers were killed, the victims were three Western and two local staff (MSF, 2004). On March 6th of 2006 an Afghan National working for the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (HABITAT) was dragged from his car and shot dead by six armed men (IRIN, 2006b). These examples demonstrate the upsurge in humanitarian-directed violence directed towards different organisations.

The trend of rising violence has led some to argue that there is no longer humanitarian space in Afghanistan. Nick Downie is project coordinator of the Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO), an organisation that provides security advice to national and international NGOs in Afghanistan. Downie believes that a lot of the time the attackers do not know the affiliation of the people they are attacking and argues that the neutrality and independence of an organisation will not make any difference to its safety in Afghanistan:

> "I think they were targeted because they were valid, obvious targets. It doesn't matter in Afghanistan whether you are an aid worker, or whether you are working for a government program or whether you are working for Coalition forces. The point is they all happen to be driving the same vehicles and you know these people who carry out these attacks aren't going to stop the vehicles and try to find out who's inside before they start shooting," (Downie, cited in Esfandiari, 2005).

Downie appears to believe that the impartiality of NGOs in Afghanistan does little to protect NGOs and their staff. If a vehicle is obviously not local, by Downie's rationale, it is legitimised as a target by militants.

Downie's opinion supports those of Paul Barker, the Country Director of CARE International in Kabul. In May, 2006, a riot was sparked by a road traffic accident in Kabul caused by an out of control US (United States) military vehicle. A crowd gathered and started throwing stones and, according to a US military spokeswoman, the US soldiers fired warning shots into the air. However, Sher Shah Usafi, a senior Afghan police officer, said the soldiers fired shots into the crowd, killing seven people

(Walsh, 2006:1). A riot ensued through the city with an estimated two thousand people setting vehicles and businesses ablaze and looting and burning aid agency buildings (BBC, 2006a).   CARE International's offices were among the buildings targeted. Whilst Mr Barker admits the road accident was the catalyst to the riots, he believes that the wide spread violence that ensued was a strong indication of what he described as "simmering anger against foreign influence" due to "resentment against the perceived wealth of foreigners" (Barker, cited in Walsh, 2006:2). The rioting crowd deliberately focused on Western interests of hotels and aid agencies, which adds weight to Barker's argument that the Afghans are disillusioned with the speed of the promised development and security pledged by the West. NGO offices were targeted, Barker argues, because they are seen by the people as part of the problem and are themselves a specific target. However, Downie believes that NGO workers are caught up in violence due to the fact that militants do not actually know which foreigners they are attacking (Downie, cited in Esfandiari, 2005).

Violence directed towards the humanitarian community is a force that is bearing heavily upon organisations in Afghanistan, as illustrated by this statement on the Christian Aid website:

> "The targeting of local and international NGOs by armed militants is of deep concern to Christian Aid, especially as Afghanistan had the highest number of NGO casualties in the world last year. Christian Aid remains increasingly concerned for the safety of those implementing our projects" (Christian Aid, 2006).

Christian Aid is making it clear exactly how dangerous they perceive their operational environment to be, confirming that there is indeed a deadly issue specific to aid workers in Afghanistan. The statement gives the impression that if things continue to deteriorate work may become untenable.   Christian Aid is trying to publicly highlight the importance of this problem to encourage recognition and debate. The questions that arise are: are NGOs and humanitarian organisations being targeted for violence because of anger due to the lack of progress or due to a case of mistaken identity? Or is it, as some believe, because insecurity suits the goals of those whom thrive on illegal industries such as terrorism and the opium trade? Whatever the answer, it is clear from statements by Christian Aid, Downie and Barker that the ability of NGOs to operate

safely in Afghanistan is drastically diminished and if aid work is to continue in Afghanistan a deeper understanding of the issues is needed.

1.2 Rationale for Study

NGOs rely on their impartiality to act as a safe-guard against attack and to allow them access to the people who need aid most. NGOs and their workers have always run the risk of being caught in cross fire or have fallen foul of banditry in areas devoid of law, it is part of the job (Krahenbuhl, 2004:29). However, the situation is changing from a risk of danger to one that is realised. The change involves an increase in violence aimed at NGOs who are discovering that their modus vivendi is eroding, especially in Afghanistan. Johnson and Leslie, both long serving NGO and UN workers in Afghanistan, argue that in previous years, under the Taliban and prior to 2001, NGOs were allowed access and indeed worked in relative safety, largely unmolested (Johnson et al, 2004:93-94). This shows that the violence is a relatively new trend in Afghanistan. Since the planning stage of this research at the beginning of 2006, the death toll for humanitarian workers has been mounting at an unprecedented rate. On March 6th of 2006 a UN HABITAT aid worker was fatally shot. On April 10th, five Christian Aid workers were killed at a medical centre. On May 12th, two UNICEF workers were killed and another left for dead. On May 30th, four Action Aid workers were fatally shot whilst in their vehicle by gunmen riding motorcycles and, in a separate incident on the same day, two USAID (United States Agency for International Development) workers were killed by a remote controlled bomb. On June 8th one Afghan aid worker was badly injured and two colleagues were fatally shot by gunmen riding motorcycles. This is not an exhaustive list of the killings of aid workers in 2006. At only half way through 2006, sixteen aid workers had been killed and two badly injured. One may argue that banditry is to blame but, in most cases, nothing was taken and, in the case of an attack on an Afghan Development Agency vehicle, the victim said "men started shooting...when they realised it was an aid agency vehicle with a sign on the bonnet and a NGO green number plate," (IRIN, 2003). In a recent attack on a NGO on June 8th of 2006 "no valuable assets were taken by the perpetrators" (OSAC, 2006). The targeted vehicle, "a Toyota Land Cruiser, was marked only with the respective NGO's logo/insignia (non-white colour)" (OSAC, 2006). The lack of theft and the clear markings on the vehicles

suggests that the violence was aimed at NGOs with the sole purpose to injure and kill NGO staff and was not banditry.

It is important to identify the possible reasons for this aid-directed violence so as to mitigate future threat. This study investigates the change in impartiality or perception of impartiality of NGOs with reference to funding, corporate aid, military- humanitarian relationships and development progress within Afghanistan. Afghanistan is conspicuous by the sharp increase in humanitarian worker-directed violence and, as such, will be the focus of this thesis. The increased death toll of humanitarian workers is alarming and something the UN and NGOs cannot ignore (Torrente, 2004).

The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), whose mandate it is to provide "need-based assistance to the world's most vulnerable populations" (ECHO, 2003:3), recognises humanitarian space as being "at risk" (ECHO, 2004:7) and believes it is vital to protect and ensure the existence of humanitarian space (ECHO, 2003:3). ECHO defines humanitarian space as "the access and freedom for humanitarian organisations to assess and meet humanitarian need" (Guttieri, 2005:1). Authors such as Sheik et al, Shawcross and ECHO acknowledge that war and conflict have become more complex and the separation of militants, combatants, civilians and humanitarian workers are not as easily distinguishable as they once were. Indeed, civilians are no longer indirect victims of war but, in the modern day with the increasing prevalence of civil war, such as in Rwanda in 1994, they have become direct targets (Shawcross, 2000:104; Sheik et al, 2000:166; ECHO, 2004:7). Looking back over the last five years one can plot the rising trend of humanitarian directed violence. The fact that the increase in humanitarian directed violence has happened in a comparatively short period of time and the rise can be correlated closely with specific political actions and foreign policy changes by Western governments, such as the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, illustrates that this phenomenon is a new and dangerous one (Loescher, 2004). The bombing of the United Nations head quarters in Baghdad stands out, along with the attack of the head quarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the same year (ECHO, 2005:8). The bombing of the Red Cross was particularly notable as it was the first time in its one hundred and forty year history that it was the victim of a suicide bombing (BBC, 2003).

The riots in Kabul at the end of May, 2006, illustrated a feeling of simmering anger in the population, which boiled over in the attack on NGO offices of CARE International and the French NGO Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement. Humanitarian and NGO workers are no longer just getting caught up in violence, instead they have become the direct and sought target. There has been criticism of military action jeopardising aid workers' lives and access to local people by blurring boundaries between civilian and military personnel. The military politicisation of aid in an effort to win a "hearts and minds" battle is being cited as the main criticism (Gluck, 2004). The criticism stems from the military undertaking aid and development work, in some cases in conjunction with civilian aid agencies, making it hard for the local people to understand who is military and who is not. The Coalition forces have suffered criticism for doing development work and delivering aid due to an alleged lack of development knowledge and capacity. Military projects also receive criticism in the 2004 Save the Children Report for not having the necessary planning ability for the long term sustainability of projects (Save the Children, 2004). Opponents to military actors being involved in aid argue that there are intrinsic goals and ideology differences in why and how military actors, such as the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), undertake aid and development compared to civilian actors, which arguably makes the two actors incompatible (Slim, 2004). For example, an aid agency that wants to help the local people may find their morals compromised by allowing a military force, like a PRT, to help when the military's objective is to use altruism as a tool to gain information from the local people on the enemies' whereabouts. The NGO community have become increasingly disillusioned with the Coalition forces' tactics and behaviour, resulting in the alienation of NGOs, possibly jeopardising long term goals of peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan as well as the civilian-military relationship. However, little coverage has been given to the positive action of PRTs and the fact that PRTs are run by different militaries with different styles and modus-operadi, meaning that any criticism of PRTs should not be levelled equally between PRT groups as they are not homogeneous.

This research contributes to the civilian-military debate that is ongoing in the international community, whilst also exploring factors that destabilise peace and harm humanitarian space in Afghanistan.

1.3 Scope and Limitations

The research uses Afghanistan as a case study regarding humanitarian space and recent trends and effects. The main focus of this research is to analyse the reasons behind the violent targeting of humanitarian staff in Afghanistan by looking at military and NGO relations and partnerships, as well as other local and international political dynamics that have an effect on humanitarian space. This includes the opium trade, the political objectives of Al Qaeda and Pakistan, the rate of reconstruction, funding for reconstruction and the perception of NGOs by the Afghan people. The length of the research prevents an exhaustive exploration of all the contributing factors to the insecurity in the country but works to illuminate the main issues affecting humanitarian space.

The aim of this research is to identify what key factors in Afghanistan believed to be the main and pertinent factors that are resulting in NGO worker deaths in Afghanistan and to therefore offer suggestions on how to mitigate or reverse the continued decline of humanitarian space in the country. It is hoped that the research conclusions will be useful by adding to the growing literature on humanitarian space, highlighting its importance and will be made of use by the NGO community, as well policy makers and donors.

1.4 Methodology Overview

The research consisted of three stages. The first was reading literature surrounding the subject and secondary data collection. The second stage was field work and primary data collection from NGO and military staff through semi-structured interviews and, in some cases, questionnaires. The third stage was the analysis of interviews involving a critique of relevant arguments and points. On completion of the research, suggested actions aimed at preventing the further shrinking of humanitarian space in Afghanistan were formulated with information drawn from the research.

1.4.1 Stage 1: Literature Review

It was clear from the outset that the research topic was not purely a retrospective view of what has happened to NGO staff and their organisations in Afghanistan but what is

happening daily. Sadly, the murder of humanitarian workers continued throughout the research and news web broadcasts and articles from the BBC correspondents within Afghanistan were invaluable as the number of attacks were not published elsewhere. Time-sensitive news reporting for research data, as recommended by Fife, is invaluable as it enables one to get a picture of what was happening in the country, as and when it happened (Fife, 2005:53). Other organisations within Afghanistan, such as the Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO), publish weekly online threat and incident reports making it easy for one to keep abreast of the danger NGO staff were facing in different provinces. Tentative emailing of NGO staff working in Afghanistan bore fruit in the form of papers and articles written by various organisations being sent to the author. The literature review also involved reading historical literature to gather perspective and to fully understand how Afghanistan has arrived at its current juncture with its mixed tribal links and unaccepted borders. The literature on Afghanistan's historical past is plentiful, however literature on the shrinking of humanitarian space in Afghanistan is more sparse. Much of the literature surrounding humanitarian space is comprised of recent journal articles from humanitarian groups or publications. Reports from NGOs express their concern over the new violence such as the Save the Children report: *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian Relations in Afghanistan (2004).* Military journals were a valuable source of literature to gain an opposite perspective to the NGO reports. Thorough absorption of the literature on Afghanistan's historical past, the more recent troubles and differing views on the civilian-military relationship was vital before moving onto interviews. This was necessary in order to be fully equipped to ask pertinent questions and demonstrate a depth of understanding in interviews and questionnaires.

1.4.2 Stage 2: Field work

To gather information on the state of humanitarian space in Afghanistan information and opinions of NGO and military staff had to be sought. Logically, this had to be done in Afghanistan as that is where the highest concentration of aid and military workers with knowledge of Afghanistan would be found. It was necessary to contact accessible stakeholders in order to gather a portfolio of interviewees. The majority of contacts were made within aid agency offices in Kabul, the Afghan capital and home of many NGO head offices, which is perceived to be one of the safer areas in the country due to the large UN presence. These factors made Kabul the most potentially productive field

work venue and the safest venue within Afghanistan. Internet searches, prior knowledge and networking of academic contacts provided enough contacts and organisations to make up a good sample group. Contact with NGOs within Kabul was invariably made by email. The reply rate was high, almost one hundred percent, with positive feedback and interviews promised. The first main difficulty encountered was the prevention of field work in Kabul itself due to a deteriorated security environment.

The offices of CARE International, a NGO and field work venue contact to be visited were attacked and damaged during the Kabul May riots, sparked off by a traffic accident involving an American military convoy and civilian vehicles. As a result, the University hierarchy reversed their decision to allow the research to be undertaken in Kabul due to a perceived heightened risk to the researcher and deemed Kabul to be an unsafe environment to carry out field research. The increased instability meant that research in the country was also in-ethical as other lives could potentially have been risked if an intervention or rescue was required in the author's behalf (Scheyvens et al, 2003:163-164). This left the author with some unusable contacts for one-on-one interviews in Kabul and the challenge of sourcing more interviewees in a less hostile environment and in a reduced timeframe. After the cancellation of field work in Kabul, existing contacts agreed to accept questionnaires but the number of responses received was low, around two percent. This meant that interviewees with relevant experience in Afghanistan had to be sourced elsewhere in a reduced time frame.

With the field work venue changed, an area with a large target population of NGO and military staff involved in PRTs was sought. London was an obvious choice due to the density of NGO headquarters and NGO workers who had recently returned from work in Afghanistan. London is also close to the headquarters of a British Army regiment that had just returned from PRT duty in Afghanistan, offering more potential interviewees. The interviewing of PRT staff is vital to the research due to the PRTs alleged role in deconstructing humanitarian space by eroding NGO neutrality. The email approach of NGOs in the UK that had worked for NGO offices in Kabul failed. Many NGOs had standardised responses making it clear they had neither the time, nor resources to participate in academic research. It became necessary to return to the Kabul contacts and request, by email, the introduction to usable contacts within the UK, which was more successful. A limiting factor, however, was that these contacts were dispersed

throughout the south of England, which imposed financial and time constraints on the author. The lack of personal transport meant that the use of public transport had to be employed, incurring larger costs the greater the distances travelled to meet respondents. The sourcing of military contacts was incredibly hard and engineered deliberately to be so by the British Ministry of Defence (MOD).

The British Military has made it its *modus operandi* to remove all publicly available contact details for regiments. The army is clearly not keen on reporters or academics talking to specific officers about their opinions or their take on the situation, they would much prefer information to be taken from online resources and specific spokes persons. Military news published online through the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is the only publicly available information directly from a military source. This provides information on which regiments run the PRTs and how many mines and weapons they have seized. However regiments' contact details are conspicuous by their absence. This may be quite a sensible public relations and media protective tool, but is a staunch barrier for academic work. It was by chance that whilst reading and searching information online for The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry Regiment, whom had recently returned from a PRT tour and whose arrival back in the country was made known courtesy of MoD news, that a contact was made. On the twenty-ninth page of the search there was a posting for a 'wives of the regiment' picnic with a contact e-mail. Using this e-mail address and the subsequent convoluted route a contact was formed with the regimental secretary and eventually with the Major in charge of the Mazer-e-Sharif PRT.

The second military respondent secured for a questionnaire response was also difficult to obtain. The securing of this contact required emailing the British Secretary for Defence whose secretary forwarded the request, whilst pointing to the author out that academic requests were usually denied.

A military PRT perspective was sought to prevent the research from being biased towards a civilian organisational viewpoint. The Army officers were not concerned at all, contrary to the NGO staff, about the use of their names but wanted to make clear that the opinions expressed were their own and not necessarily the opinion of Her Majesty's Government. Having said that, these men were controlling the PRT troops on

the ground in Afghanistan and, even if their views are not that of the government, these officers are the ambassadors of the British Government and the British people. One could argue that their views and opinions, whether expressed directly or through their command strategy or style, will be seen as that of the British Government by the Afghan people and NGOs.

NGO interviewees were chosen based on their involvement in humanitarian work in Afghanistan and by the organisations they worked for. It was the author's intention to cover a cross-section of NGOs in relation to their stance on working with PRTs and the PRT itself. It was hoped the sample group would be larger, however the forced change of fieldwork venue late in the time frame made further contacts difficult to find. One noticeable difference between NGO offices in Afghanistan, be they international or local, and those in the UK were in their response to the request of supplying interviewees for academic work. A large number of the larger British NGOs in the UK have an automated response to e-mail enquiries that state that if the enquiry was either about academic research or funding there would be no further communication. This was disappointing as the issues being researched in this case are concerned with the safety of humanitarian workers and the continuation of their work. Time constraints were also a limiting factor to the number of interviews that could be carried out as the author's time in the UK was limited. The research hoped for a more diverse sample including the UN, US military, Afghan NGOs and a wider range of Western NGOs but this became impossible due to the change of fieldwork venue and inapproachability of some organisations. There were eight respondents which consisted of six NGOs staff and two British military officers with good experience in Afghanistan. Out of the eight respondents, four were interviews and four were questionnaire responses.

Questions:
The research itself consisted of semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of NGO stakeholders and military personnel. The semi-structured interview style was chosen to maximise the information gathered through relaxed conversation, whilst removing what Fife describes as "chatter" or "extraneous information" (Fife, 2005:95). The research was inductive and information was gathered outside the field of the research (not in Afghanistan) but gathered from people who worked inside the field. The sample group was small but as the research was inductive it did not detract from the integrity of the

findings (Walsh, 2005:101). It was decided that as the interviewees in this research were the primary stakeholders and their personal opinion and accounts of events would be valuable in understanding the threats posed to them during their work.

As Fife argues, it is too simplistic to believe that complex research issues can be put into multi-choice style questionnaire format (Fife, 2005:93). It was a key decision to seek the personal opinions of stakeholders through open ended questions in an effort to get a candid and personal response on the state of humanitarian space and gain a better picture of what was actually happening, rather than an organisational opinion. The method allowed snowballing of ideas and potential to cover new territory, as well as limiting the amount of personal bias the interviewer could inadvertently assert into the interview (Fife, 2005: 93-94). NGO and military literature was available in journals and reports giving official accounts and arguments on humanitarian space in Afghanistan, therefore personal opinions and accounts were also sought to give another perspective. The personal perspectives of the respondents could then be tested for validity against one another and the literature. All interviews were guided over several vital areas but the interviewees naturally covered these issues without prompting and before closing the interviewee were asked if there was anything they thought the author might have missed or be relevant to the research in order to generate new ideas.

The standardised interview questions and questionnaires have been included as part of the appendices. The questions posed to the NGO stakeholders were open ended and about how they would describe the security situation in Afghanistan for humanitarian workers. They were asked whether they believed it was getting better or worse and what was causing the changes. The interviews questioned NGO workers on the importance of NGO neutrality and military personnel were asked if they believed NGO neutrality was important for NGO workers' safety. If their organisation had been a victim of the violence, NGOs were asked why they thought they had been targeted. If their particular organisation had not been the victim of violence, another NGO was used as an example. Both military and NGO workers were asked what effect PRTs had on security in Afghanistan and the security of NGOs. The interviews for both NGO and military staff finished with questioning on what needs to be done, and by whom, to bring peace and security to Afghanistan and whether it is a feasible vision. The

questions were asked to test the hypothesis, based on current literature, that Afghanistan is becoming increasingly more dangerous for humanitarian workers.

A few questions were asked that only required a 'yes' or 'no' answer, such as "had the organisation had to curb their work due to violence or the threat of violence?" These answers allowed a quantifiable response across respondents. These questions were then followed on by asking why this might be happening. This allowed for qualitative responses after a quantitative question. Care was taken to minimise the possibility of the questions being leading and that they did not predispose the interviewee to a certain answer. At the end of an empirical question, where the interviewee offered their own hypothesis, the author took the opportunity to offer a contradictory hypothesis taken from the literature to ascertain if the interviewee could justify their hypothesis and thus get a more in-depth qualitative response on the causes and effects.

The questions were based on the topics raised in the literature review. The outcome of the interviews, it was hoped, would bolster or contradict current thinking on these issues, allowing a continuation or rejection of previous hypotheses and forward thinking, allowing informed projections of future events to be made. It was also the aim that the interviews would also offer proposals of how to prevent or mitigate the shrinking of humanitarian space. Ethically, it was important to make sure that the research itself caused no harm to the respondents. Several questionnaire respondents currently working in Afghanistan did not want their names or organisations used as any publicity may predispose them to attack or simply negative press. It was imperative to the author that the research did not impact negatively on any of the respondents and that it has the potential to do good (Scheyvens et al, 2003:139). All respondents participated with informed consent. The interviews were to be kept to an hour long so as not to become burdensome to the respondents. However, interviews often lasted for two to three hours due to the respondent's verve, personal interest and desire to talk at length on the subject (Scheyvens et al, 2003:145-147). The time of day and venue was left to the respondents to fit in with their schedule, this mainly consisted of NGO offices but also included a visit to NGO staff members' homes.

Interview Sequence:

Robson's interview sequence, as quoted in Walsh, was used during interviews. They started with the introduction and explanation of the research and asking permission to tape and take notes. The second stage in the sequence was the "warm up" where non-threatening questions were asked, which then lead on to the main body of questions, leaving the more difficult questions to last (Walsh, 2005:204-205). The interviews finished with a few straight forward questions to diffuse any tension, a thanks and a goodbye. During interviews a dictaphone was used so the author could refer to the tapes to collect specific quotes latterly, whilst also taking notes of pertinent points at the time. This allowed the interviewer to take a more active role in the discussion without focusing too intently in jotting down every word (Scheyvens et al, 2003:58). This technique worked well as it was important not only to listen to the interviewee's opinion but also to challenge it, encouraging the interviewee to validate what they had just said. The notes were jotted down in a journal so as to be able to add comments, subsequent questions or thoughts to the notes in the hours or days preceding the interviews (Scheyvens et al, 2003:222; Walsh, 2005:9). With a qualitative approach and an informal style the author was aware that off-the-cuff remarks may be made by the interviewees without validation or perhaps strong supporting information. For this reason, the interviews focused on the interviewees experience and an effort was made to avoid conjecture and to challenge apparently unsupported hypothesis.

Questionnaires were sent to contacts currently in Afghanistan, which was a second choice to interviews for a three reasons. Firstly, answers are never as long or as in-depth without personal contact and answers are often stiff, formal and defensive. Secondly, people are less inclined to answer interviews emailed to them. Questionnaires may be deleted or put aside and forgotten about. Thirdly, the respondents' responses may require further questions on their meaning or supporting evidence, thus the process becomes time consuming for the respondent or simply incomplete for the author. The same sequence was used for the questions was used for the questionnaire, putting the harder, more in-depth questions towards the end, as recommended by Scheyvens, whilst keeping the questions "simple to understand" and "unambiguous" so to as avoid any misunderstanding and wasted questions (Scheyven et al, 2003:39). The next step in the process was the analysis and triangulation of data obtained from the sample group and literature review.

1.4.3 Stage 3: Analysis

In the analysis stage it was important to compare and contrast the interviewees' arguments with one another. This was important so that later when writing up the research, rather than just airing their viewpoint, comparisons with arguments included in the literature review could be made. Primary and secondary data triangulation was employed wherever possible to reduce inaccuracy, allowing the testing of the information received. This meant that interviewees' arguments and statements could be clearly seen to be either diverging or converging with the majority consensus. This enabled the views on the various main issues and to be compared and contrasted, tying all the information on one theme together. This was done by reviewing the tapes of the interviews and splitting responses under main themes. This allowed the respondents' opinions on the main themes to be compared and contrasted. As the literature review was also divided in the same way under similar themes it enabled the deconstruction of the individual arguments within specific topics of both field research and literature. This method made it possible to bring the credible arguments and information together to illustrate what the real threats and dangers are to humanitarian space in Afghanistan and what can and should be done to mitigate them. In the analysis, further questions arose which were outside the scope of the research, and these were included in the thesis. By asking these questions, the author hoped to give a guide of possible issues for continued research into understanding the causes and effects of the shrinking of humanitarian space. The stages of the research are mirrored in the layout of the thesis to give a linear and logical flow to the topics.

1.4.4 Bias

Travel to Kabul would have allowed the interviewing of more actors, including different military teams and local Afghan NGO staff. The inability to travel to Afghanistan has given the research a solely Western viewpoint. This fact does not devalue the information gathered but rather means that a perspective is missing that could have added another dimension to the research. It is also important to be aware of the possibility that the natural personal bias of the author during his research could have a bearing on interviewees and the outcome of the research. This was not a deliberate action as the author tried to remain objective and keep the questions unbiased. Further data bias may also have occurred by interviewing NGO staff who perhaps did not want to project a dim view of the country they are working in, down-playing the risks posed

to themselves by working in Afghanistan. The military contact also did not want to give the impression that any of their actions could potentially have a negative impact on development in Afghanistan or the security of humanitarian personnel. It is difficult to understand how the local people perceive NGOs and the military as the data gathered from military and NGO staff leaves a large margin for error or deliberate perversion of facts. The author has relied on the interviewee's responses to gauge how they are perceived by the locals. If the research had commenced in Afghanistan the author would have been able to talk to local Afghan NGO staff that may have been able to give a more candid perspective of how the local Afghans perceive NGOs and PRTs. The focus of the research may also be limited due to the fact that only the perceptions of returned workers was obtained instead of workers actually in the field.

1.5 Summary

This chapter outlines the importance of the research issue illustrating that there is a general consensus among the humanitarian community that there is a real and specific threat to humanitarian workers in Afghanistan. The argument that aid workers have always been attacked was discussed and found to insufficient in explaining the frequency and severity of the recent attacks on NGO workers in Afghanistan. This discussion shapes the questions that the research sets out to answer.

- What are the reasons for humanitarian directed violence in Afghanistan?
- Has the perception and neutrality of NGOs in Afghanistan changed?
- Does the military-humanitarian relationship have a bearing on NGO neutrality?
- What can be done to reduce the death toll of humanitarian workers?

Due to the deteriorating security environment in Afghanistan the use of Kabul as a field work venue had to be changed. The change of field work venue was a hindrance, offering challenges to the research, all of which were overcome. The structure of the thesis closely follows the stages of the research out lined in this chapter:

- Chapter one, the introduction, which is the rationale of the study using literature to support the argument that humanitarian space as a topic that needs to be researched. The research questions are outlined and description on the planning and implementation of field work used to answer those questions.

- Chapter two is a literature review of the history of Afghanistan, humanitarianism and humanitarian space. This chapter frames the country's history and explains the history and importance of humanitarian space setting the scene for the literature review and current debates.

- Chapter three is the literature review of the civilian-military relationship and the use of PRTs in Afghanistan. This chapter gives a critique of both NGOs and PRTs, offering a balanced account of their positive and negative effects on humanitarian space, making clear the current debates between the two groups.

- Chapter four highlights other factors taken from the literature that contribute to the shrinking of humanitarian space and instability within the country.

- Chapter five is a discussion of the main findings from the research. The chapter is split into topics so as to make the arguments of the respondents clear and allows the comparison of those arguments with those of the other respondents and the literature. The chapter finishes with a summary explaining the complexity of the Afghan situation and humanitarian space.

- Chapter six gives a condensed review and ties together the issues in preparation for the conclusion and recommendations of the research.

- Chapter seven offers recommendations on how to improve humanitarian space in Afghanistan, highlighting the author's opinion of what needs to be done, whilst offering further questions that need to be explored to fully understand the issues in Afghanistan. The research's value and limitations are discussed with a final conclusion returning to the research questions from chapter one.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY & BACKGROUND

This chapter gives an outline of the history of Afghanistan which is pertinent to the current ethnic and political climate. It is difficult to grasp the complexities of the conflict within Afghanistan without first understanding a little of the history of conflict within the country and the importance of ethnic and tribal links. Many of the difficulties the Coalition forces and the Pakistani Government are facing now had their seeds sown over a hundred years ago by the delineation of borders and dividing of tribes. This chapter is a summary of the social and political history of Afghanistan giving a chronological synopsis of outside involvement, politics and violence. The chapter describes the hardships the Afghan people endured before and during the Soviet occupation and the years of conflict and destruction of infrastructure that took place. It then describes the rise of the war on terror, in which Afghanistan played a pivotal role. To understand the shrinking of humanitarian space one must understand the Afghans' historical experience with outside intervention and the recent conflict that focused the world's interest and that of aid agencies and humanitarian workers. The second half of the chapter focuses on humanitarianism, historically and as a political tool giving an insight into the meaning of humanitarian space and the guiding humanitarian principles it is comprised of.

2.1 Afghan History

Afghanistan is a fragmented and fragile country and, after many years of conflict, the majority of the population are war-weary and eager for a change in economic and political security. Violence remains the largest barrier to Afghanistan's development (Annan, 2006).

2.1.1. Russia, Britain and *The Great Game*

In the eighteenth century, Afghanistan was by no means a country with defined borders. Schetter explains how Afghanistan was the area settled by the Pashtun tribes, recognised as such by the Persian speaking population (Schetter, 2005: 54-56). Afghanistan was delineated by Russia and Britain as it was the dividing line between these two warring colonial powers and acted as a buffer zone. The perpetually changing

borders moved with the advancing or withdrawal of colonial troops, which changed the boundaries of Afghanistan from those recognised as the Pashtun ethnographic area to a politicised area acting as the moat between the posturing Russian and British forces. This period in history became known as the *Great Game* (Ferguson, 2003:174-175; Schetter, 2005:56). Russia and Britain failed to solidify Afghanistan's borders until 1887-1893. At this time the borders were set to include an area which was further north of the land first understood to be Afghanistan at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This delineation of borders did not account for language, ethnicity, culture or religion and, according to Schetter, it left the country predisposed to ethnic tensions and unlikely to form a unified government (Schetter, 2005:57). Afghanistan's ethnic groups, such as Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara and Balouch, are the cornerstone to daily life and the loyalties that couple these local social structures. These ethnic divisions count in social and economic networks making them vitally important. The various ethnic groups consist of many tribes and these tribes are enduring social and political structures which have heavy influence over individuals and families (Lansford, 2003:14-25; Senalis, 2006:14).

Every leader that took power saw Afghanistan's heterogeneity as a barrier to progress as, ultimately, some aspect of society was alienated, resulting in different areas of the country falling to tribal leaders (Schetter, 2005:59). From 1747 the area known as Afghanistan was under the reign of Ahmed Shah Durrani, whose monarchy continued until 1973 (Rasanayagam, 2003:59-66). In July, 1973, Mohammed Daoud Khan seized power in a military coup, overthrowing the monarchy that had been weakened by accusations of corruption and illegal acts. This was coupled with the depressed economic condition of the country due to the previous two years of droughts. Daoud, having disintegrated the monarchy, made Afghanistan a Republic, placing himself at the helm. His failure to execute successful economic and social policies resulted in disillusionment and another coup, propagated by the Communist Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in 1978 (Edwards, 2002:41-43).

2.1.2 The Soviet Invasion and Occupation

Following the 1978 coup, Nur Muhammad Taraki, of the PDPA, took the Afghan presidency with the firm support of the Soviet Union (USSR). Socialist policies were implemented which upheld women's rights, banning the wearing of the burqa and the visiting of mosques illegal. The Afghan people, in retaliation, tried to disrupt industry

and cut the ties with the USSR. The government responded strongly to the saboteurs but soon found themselves swamped by the uprising and President Taraki was assassinated and replaced by Hafizullah Amin on September 14th 1979 (Vogelsang, 2002:296-315; Lansford, 2003:117-118). The Soviets reacted on Christmas Eve 1979 when Soviet troops were sent into Afghanistan to quell the rebellion and install a USSR-friendly regime (Kakar, 1995:14-17). The Soviets summarily executed Amin and installed their presidential candidate Babrak Karmal. However, by the late 1970s the socialist policies were growing unpopular and a guerrilla force was forming to fight the Soviets and the Soviet-backed Afghan government. These guerrilla fighters were the Mujahidin, or Islamic holy warriors, who fought a ten-year anti-communist war, from 1979-1989 with funding from the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia due to their anti-communist stance and, in Saudi Arabia's case, the Islamist cause (Johnson & Leslie, 2004:3; Kakar, 1995:26-27; Tanner, 2002:243-270). The Afghan war led to the decline in the recognition of state authority by the Afghan people resulting from a weakening of the state and its functions. With the escalating conflict, local people looked elsewhere for support and protection. The country became divided into a plethora of mock principalities ruled by warlords and tribal leaders whose rule rested on local loyalties and tribal ties. This state of relative lawlessness allowed illegal activities, such as smuggling and opium production to flourish as state borders lost their practical function as barriers to movement of people and resources (Schetter, 2005:60).

By 1988 Soviet citizens had become disillusioned with a war that saw the death of fifteen-thousand Soviet soldiers and thirty-seven-thousand wounded. Subsequently, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev pulled out his Soviet troops out of Afghanistan. The Afghan communist leadership eventually fell in the spring of 1992 after fourteen years of rule and Kabul fell into the control of the Mujahidin (Lansford, 2003:123-129). The war had devastated the country, leaving more than one million Afghans dead and five million had fled the fighting to become refugees in neighbouring countries. The country's economy had been immeasurably degraded with vast quantities of land and infrastructure destroyed by the war. The country was also left with the legacy of over five million landmines, causing a danger to people and livestock (UNDP, 2004:15).

2.1.3 Recent History and bin Laden

The forces of the Mujahidin that had broken the Soviet's resolve to stay in the country proved unable to unite together to form a leadership and instead fought tribal battles, jockeying for position, land and power. This led to the fragmentation of the country, with different areas under the control of several tribal warlords. In late 1994 a group of Islamic fundamentalist students, the Taliban, took control of Kabul, declaring themselves to be the government and imposed a severe and strict form of Islamic law. They were, however, not in control of one hundred percent of the country as they were opposed by a militia group called the Northern Alliance. This was in a reaction to their overly conservative laws, especially pertaining to the treatment of woman and the Taliban's effort to put the power solely in the hands of the ethnic Pashtuns. The Northern Alliance struck back as a representation of the Uzbek and Hazaras people, fighting for their right for recognition and against political and violent alienation (Schetter, 2005:61-8). This is a good example of tribal violence that is in part due to the British and their delineation of the borders continuing to play a role in the country's modern politics. The Taliban's strict Islamic code attracted attention from Western societies and human rights groups, however aid agencies and NGOs worked within the country without significant safety fears (Marsden, 2002:100-112).

In 2001, the US, concerned about terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, launched Tomahawk missile attacks against terrorist training targets from warships in the Indian Ocean. These training camps were thought to be run by Osama bin Laden, who was believed to be the leader of the organisation behind the Tanzanian and Kenyan American embassy bombings in 1998. United Nations economic and firearm sanctions were then imposed in reaction to the Afghani refusal to hand over bin Laden (Johnson & Leslie, 2004:10). Then, at midday, September 11th, 2001, terrorist group al- Qaeda, thought to be headed by bin Laden, launched an attack on the World Trade Centre. Within a month, US led Coalition troops were on the ground in Afghanistan. They removed the Taliban from power and started their search for bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorist network, a quest that continues. It is ironic that one of the key organisers behind the US financed Mujahidin fighters during the soviet war was Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden latterly formed al-Qaeda which is today, a global militant fundamentalist Islamic organisation (Lansford, 2003:157-168). The increased military focus on

Afghanistan also heralded a more intense humanitarian focus with increased funding and publicity for the plight of the Afghan people (Watts, 2004:3).

One can better understand the plight of the people and the destruction of the infrastructure and economy after twenty-seven years of continuous fighting. For many Afghans, outsiders, within living memory, have brought war and violence. Afghanistan's fragmentation of society is due to these historical hardships. The societal, tribal and familial segmentation encourages xenophobia, not just of outsiders but of different tribes. The need for aid and development to relieve the suffering of the Afghan people is apparent, however, humanitarianism in such an environment may be met with scepticism and insecurity over outsider motives by local people and, indeed, by the world at large. The scepticism may not be unjust as there are some who would argue that humanitarianism is not what it seems.

2.2 Humanitarianism

2.2.1 Humanitarianism: something to be proud of?

In between 1990 and 1995 the European Union's humanitarian aid budget was increased sevenfold. It is clear that this rise is not keeping pace with the amount of people who need it. Humanitarian intervention is often thought of as an altruistic success of mankind instead of what could be argued is an insufficient answer to an overwhelming problem. Humanitarian intervention is a poor cure for humanity's inability to control violence and conflict, argues Agier (Agier, 2004:311). Humanitarian action, in its most simple definition, is the endeavour to 'save as many lives as possible' but at its core it is the unconditional offer of assistance to allow survival to those whose lives are otherwise at risk (Bradol, 1994:21-22). Some argue the ability to offer assistance to those in need is under threat due to a loss of neutrality of the givers of aid.

Arguing that neutrality has been lost implies the neutrality existed in the first place. However, this is not entirely true as NGOs are not a uniform group that organises itself around a central pillar of neutrality. Some NGOs have political, religious or simply

liberal or democratic goals (EHCO, 2003:20; Slim, 2004:42). However, aid agencies believe themselves to be protected by the shield of humanitarian space on the strength of their altruistic actions. This assumption is increasingly being disproved in conflict areas around the world and especially in Afghanistan.

2.2.2 What is humanitarian space?

The concept of humanitarian space, it could be argued, was pioneered by Henri Dunant who, after seeing the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino in 1859, put impetus into the forming of the first Geneva Convention in 1864, the goal of which was to provide protection for medical personnel and their activities on the battlefield (Nobelprize.org, 2006). The symbol, which is now a red cross, marked a sacrosanct space where the injured could be helped in safety. This sacrosanct space has grown to include civilians due to the changing nature of today's battlefields. The guiding principle of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as outlined in the Geneva Conventions, is that those bringing help to the victims of conflict should not be targeted, nor the space they use. This fragile environment that humanitarians work in is beginning to crumble (ECHO, 2003:12).

IHL protects the rights of humanitarian workers to access those in need, however, states and governments prevent access for various reasons leaving humanitarians powerless to act with little possible recourse against these defiant governments. This is exemplified by the actions of the Sudanese government in Darfur in freezing the assets of Sudanese NGOs and creating petrol scarcity in Darfur to prevent the movement of NGOs (HRF, 2006). The blocking and hindrance of NGO groups in Zimbabwe is another example of humanitarian workers being prevented from accessing vulnerable groups so as to prevent the outside world from seeing in (Martin et al, 2004).

Humanitarian principles are vital in humanitarian endeavours to obtain humanitarian space. Those principles, according to ECHO, include the independence of humanitarian groups from political and military actors (ECHO, 2004:72). Humanitarian personnel are recognised as such in IHL under the proviso that their actions are impartial. The preservation of this impartiality and independence from political and military affiliations is often imperative for gaining approval and therefore entry and access. When humanitarian action is carried out by non-humanitarian groups the principles

underpinning humanitarian aid are lost. Examples include aid distribution by military or security forces and contractors working for private companies, the majority of which are state backed and therefore are neither neutral nor impartial (ECHO, 2004:72-73). In situations where this happens aid can become a tool of compliance, such as the US military's attempt to glean information on Osama bin Laden from communities by distributing leaflets that threatened the loss of aid if they did not inform on the Taliban to Coalition troops. This, firstly, lead the readers of the leaflet to believe that the aid is controlled by the military and, therefore, that aid agencies are complicit with the militaries' objectives. Secondly, that aid is given subject to receipt information, neither of which are true (ECHO, 2004:73). The NGO community described the attempt to link the military militia hunt to aid delivery as "despicable" and Kenny Gluck of MSF questioned if the actions broke international law (MacAskill, 2004b). Gluck, who ran clinics nearby to where the leaflets were distributed, said it was dangerous enough in southern Afghanistan without being linked to the military and now staff have to tell the locals that this is not how MSF operates (MacAskill, 2004b).

Pierre Krahenbuhl of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) agrees that humanitarian workers' lives consist of a certain amount of inherent danger and that on a day to day basis ICRC staff have to bargain for access to civilians from a variety of arms bearing factions in war zones all over the world (Krahenbuhl, 2004:29). The ICRC does everything within their power to mitigate threats to its staff but he admits that sometimes his staff are just in the wrong place at the wrong time and that simple reason is why the majority of his staff get injured or killed. However, the 2003 attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan were different. He believes that the attack in 2003 of his workers in Kandahar and the car bombing of ICRC offices in Baghdad was due to the perceived association between the ICRC and the political and military actors within the country and that the ICRC was singled out for a planned attack (Borders, 2004:29-31). Mullah Sabir Momin, a Taliban commander, made a statement to Reuters claiming responsibility for the deaths of two Britons and their Afghan translator saying that

> "the Taliban are killing all locals and foreigners who are helping the Americans to consolidate their occupation of Afghanistan," (Momin, cited in MacAskill, 2004b).

Momin is saying that supporters of the military operation in Afghanistan legitimise themselves as targets. The US leafleting of the local population linking aid delivery to the military would make NGOs a prime target especially as they are unarmed.

War is not humane, in fact the exact opposite, but the international community has long upheld the principle that looking after the weak and most vulnerable in conflict is basic and fundamental humanity. It is imperative that the most vulnerable victims of conflict around the globe in places like Iraq and Afghanistan must be able to be accessed so as to be able to receive help, which means that humanitarian space has to be safe guarded (ECHO, 2003:12). In order to ensure the safeguarding of humanitarian space assessment must be carried out on whether humanitarian space is indeed at risk and what can be done to mitigate that risk.

2.2.3 Humanitarian Space at Risk

The nature of war and conflict has changed since the time of Henri Dunant. With an increase in the regularity of internal and civil conflict in what Sheik et al describe as the "anarchy of weakened and collapsed states" (Huntington, 1993: 34-35; Sheik et al, 2000:166). Pierre Krahenbuhl, Director of Operations for the ICRC, recognises what he believes is a growing, vigorous, world-wide, polarised radicalisation of non-state actors against the state using unconventional tactics. This includes the targeting of civilians and the humanitarian organisations there to help them due to the fact that they are "soft targets" (Borders, 2004:28). Sheik et al argue that civilians and civilian protectorates or helpers become legitimate targets for violence, theft and abuse. Sheik et al undertook research believed to be the first of its kind, canvassing NGOs and UN organisations for information on the number and causes of deaths of humanitarian workers. Their study concluded that intentional violence resulting in the death of humanitarian workers is on the increase, with the UN bearing a seventy-five percent share of all humanitarian deaths (Sheik et al, 2000:167).

One the world's largest humanitarian aid donors, ECHO, attributes the shrinking of humanitarian space to the use of military and commercial interests to distribute aid, arguably confusing the who's who of aid distribution. This is further compounded by the incorrect use of the term "humanitarian" by journalists and politicians to describe all of the above actors (ECHO, 2005:7). ECHO goes as far as to say that it believes that

the mixing or confusion of roles between these different actors is dangerous and puts civilians and aid workers under increased risk. They identify the need that the implementation of aid programmes should be carried out by civilian organisations and any military involvement in aid delivery should be led by civilian organisations. ECHO makes a clear statement when it says that neutrality is fundamental to protect the access to humanitarian aid by those that need it and those workers that provide it (ECHO, 2005:5).

There is a general agreement across different actors, including those involved in the military, about what core humanitarian values should be. ECHO is a civilian organisation and it is interesting to compare an academic with a military background and focus who agrees on the same aspects regarding the importance of humanitarian principles as a civilian organisation. Guttieri, the Assistant Professor at the US Naval Postgraduate School in Monterrey, specialises in the civilian-military relationship and argues that humanitarian actors are guided by a common set of principles that are as follows:

> "· *Humanity:* The principle of *humanity* requires the preservation of the humanitarian nature of operations—i.e. to protect life and ease suffering.
>
> · *Independence:* The principle of *independence* implies independence from political as well as military actors.
>
> · *Impartiality: Impartiality* in principle requires that humanitarian action respond according to need, and *without discrimination*.
>
> · *Neutrality:* The principle of *neutrality* requires outside actors to avoid giving military or political advantage to any side over another." (Guttieri, 2005:1)

ECHO supports a similar set of principles, namely humanity, solidarity, impartiality, non-discrimination, independence and neutrality (ECHO, 2005:5). It is clear that one of the fundamental facets of humanitarian work is that of neutrality, independence and impartiality. Perhaps more questionable is whether this is always possible or even desirable? International NGOs bring with them the perception of loyalties to their home countries. US President, George Bush, on September 20th 2001, delivered an address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American people saying:

> "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." (Bush, 2001a).

Bush argues either back the US measures to deal with terrorism or indeed you are yourself a terrorist, which one could argue would make neutrality difficult. Guttieri, argues that when the military intervene in an environment that was once the domain of aid agencies and humanitarian groups, as happened in Afghanistan post-September 11th, the relationships between aid agencies and local communities changes and so does local political relationships to aid agencies due to their sovereignty and perceived alliances (Guttieri, 2005:2).

Guttieri believes the theoretical space that insulates humanitarian workers is becoming increasingly unsafe and backs Gil Loescher, a survivor of the United Nations headquarters bombing in Iraq, in arguing that there is no doubt that the separation of military and humanitarian activity is vital (Loescher, 2006). These arguments were made clearly in mid 2004 when MSF withdrew from Afghanistan, following the murder of five of its personnel and after twenty-four years of work within the country (Gluck, 2004; Guttieri, 2005:2). MSF laid the blame for the increased danger that humanitarian workers now faced on the US military, accusing them of blurring the distinction between aid workers and soldiers. MSF's operations manager, Kenny Gluck and MSF's secretary general, Marine Buissonniere, criticised the US military tactic of supplying aid to villages as an encouragement for information on Taliban fighters. They criticised the military's threat to the Afghan people that aid agencies might not be able to continue without tactical information being given to the military (Buissonnniere, 2004:2). Buissonniere accuses the Coalition forces of attempting to co-opt humanitarian aid as a military tool and, as a result, endangering humanitarian aid workers (Buissonniere, 2004:1-3; Gluck, 2004:1-3). In order to be able to operate aid workers need the respect of the local military groups as neutral organisations there to help the people and not to take sides.

It is clear that in Afghanistan this respect has been lost as a Taliban spokesman made a public statement saying that MSF would be the victim of more attacks in the future due to their work supporting American interests. This accusation MSF denies, saying that it has never served in the stead of any political or military objectives. Gluck believes that using aid to win *hearts and minds* is an appalling tactic that puts the flow of aid under threat and risks the lives of humanitarian workers, especially as soldiers are often out of uniform. Gluck was outraged at the US military's decision to distribute leaflets to local

people promising aid for information and says he has seen armed military personnel in white vehicles distributing medical assistance, backing Nick Downie's argument that Afghans cannot tell the difference between the military and humanitarians (Downie, cited in Meo, 2004:1). Subverting aid as a tactic to gain information and using military personnel out of uniform and in unmarked vehicles to do so makes it look as though NGOs have abandoned their neutrality. The ICRC admits that in the hot political situation in Iraq and Afghanistan it is impossible to negotiate for access with the different factions as communication is so difficult. The polarised situation in Afghanistan leads the ICRC to feel that they are expected to take sides and make their Western loyalties known, making it difficult to remain neutral and independent (Borders, 2004:30-31).

2.3 Summary

This chapter put Afghanistan in historical perspective underlining the importance of the Colonial legacy and its part the current problems within the country and revealed that humanitarianism can and is used as a political tool. The chapter outlined the important principles that humanitarians abide by and the reasons for their importance. These principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality are vital to humanitarian organisations to ensure their organisations' ability to work safely and unhindered and to maintain the humanitarian space that protects workers in the field. Although these principles are made clear in IHL they are not always upheld or respected by belligerent forces or hostile governments. The issue of neutrality, especially in relation to the civilian-military relationship in Afghanistan, has clearly generated animosity among some NGO groups towards Coalition forces. This animosity is due to the actions of Coalition forces on the ground who allegedly tried to use aid as a military tactic thus blurring the boundaries between civilian and military personnel. The stance that the US President took on the war on terror made clear to the world that you were either with the US or against it, which could arguably the choices of neutrality by governments and in turn its people, whether they be citizens at home or NGO workers in Afghanistan.

The crux of this research issue lies in the civilian military relationship. NGOs, such as the ICRC and MSF, perceive that there is a direct link between the Coalition forces' actions and the deterioration in their humanitarian space.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

Recently, the Pentagon was forced to apologise for dropping leaflets on villages which threatened to withhold aid unless information was forthcoming about al-Qaeda and the Taliban (MacAskill, 2004b). This chapter considers whether it is the military and, in particular, the PRTs which deal with military aid that are having a negative effect on NGO safety.

3.1 Provincial Reconstruction Teams & Humanitarian Space

It is clear that attacks on humanitarian workers are having a large impact on the ability of organisations to participate in aid work in certain areas and, in some circumstances, in Afghanistan at all. Buissonnière, MSF's Secretary General, described the security situation quite succinctly in a statement regarding the NGOs withdrawal, saying:

> "we simply cannot sacrifice the security of our volunteers, while warring parties seek to target and kill humanitarian workers. Ultimately, it is the sick and destitute that suffer." (Buissonnière, cited in Left, 2004).

In three weeks during February of 2004, eleven aid workers were killed in Afghanistan in four separate incidents. The death toll of murdered humanitarian workers during this three week period almost equalled the death toll of humanitarian workers for the entire previous year. Attacks on aid workers (not fatalities) rose sharply in 2003, and in some months there was almost one attack per day. These attacks are devastating in the fact that they are taking the lives of humanitarians, but the attacks have secondary repercussions. Aid workers and their organisations, in the aftermath of these attacks, often have to suspend or cease their work, slowing reconstruction and putting the lives of those in need at greater risk (CARE, 2004:2). The blame for these attacks, it is argued by some, lies in a change of perception of NGO workers caused by military intervention. To quote a MSF worker:

> "the line between aid and the military has been blurred since US soldiers, after the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, dressed in civilian clothes and drove around in the white Land-cruisers favoured by aid agencies." (MacAskill, 2004a).

3.1.1 Provincial Reconstruction Teams

In December, 2001, Kabul was liberated by the Coalition forces and the Coalition Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF) was set up. The role of the CJCMOTF was to take control of civil affairs and resources. In doing so, they set up Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Centres (CHLCs), whose mandate it was to support the US Agency for International Development (USAID) by supplying logistics and security. By the summer of 2002, increased stability within the country meant that the US was moving from a combat phase towards a reconstruction and security procurement phase and, as a tool, implemented PRTs, which are civil-military teams. The civilian components of the teams were, however, US government staff, employed by the US department of defence. In areas where neither ISAF nor the Afghan Army where present, NGOs were unable to operate due to security risks. These PRTs could deliver aid and projects and expand the legitimacy of the Afghan Government by supporting security sector reform and participating in reconstruction (Jurisic, 2004:1-3; Jakobsen, 2005:11).

Contrary to popular belief, military reconstruction in a country suffering from insurgency is not a new phenomenon. Field Marshall Sir Gerald Templer, tasked with the putting-down of the communist forces and regaining control of the Malaya during the Malayan Emergency of 1952, coined the phrase *"winning hearts and minds"* (Lapping, 1985:224). Lt General David Richards, Commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, is attempting to employ tactics similar to those inaugurated by Templer. Richards recently said:

> "we cannot go on alienating the people in the way that I know is happening" (Richards, cited in BBC, 2006b)

Richards also stated the need to become a more "people friendly force" as there have been complaints of male American soldiers breaking down doors in house to house searches and frisking Afghan woman, as well as widespread anger over civilian casualties in bombing operations and road accidents involving US vehicles (BBC, 2006b). He went on to say:

> "I will use military power, not necessarily just to defeat the Taliban, but just as importantly to secure the future of their villages and their localities." (Richards, cited in BBC, 2006b).

Richards's statements strongly resemble those of Templer in 1952:

"The answer (to the uprising) lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people." (Templer, cited in Lapping, 1985:224).

Templer used Special Air Service regiments to help win "hearts and minds" by moving people into newly constructed villages, offering incentives and supporting the communities by ensuring facilities such as schools and medical centers where available, as well as ensuring the people had titles to their land and ownership of the village. Templer famously said that the shooting side of the battle was only twenty-five percent of the trouble and the remaining seventy five percent "is getting the people of this country behind us" [3](Templer, cited in Smith, 2006:1-2).

While discussing very different eras both Richards and Templer refer to a fight that is not merely military. It could be argued that the criticism of the PRTs by their opponents, as a new force doing reconstruction and perhaps blurring boundaries, is a false criticism as military reconstruction and *hearts and minds* work had obviously been undertaken over fifty years ago, with some degree of success. Military reconstruction of civilian communities is not new. An example would be the Marshall plan in Europe and the rebuilding of Japan after the Second World War (Borders, 2004:7).

The Danish Institute for International Studies' (DIIS) report on PRTs recognised and contrasted the different approaches of the UK, German and US PRTs, identifying the use of PRTs as a more economical and troop-conservative option than actually having to provide a vigorous military force to cover the country. The fear for allied countries committing more men is due to heavy troop deployments elsewhere in the world stretching the capacity of the UK and US military forces in particular. Allied forces fear being bogged down in an entrenched stale-mate conflict, as experienced by the Soviets (Jakobsen, 2005: 7-11). The DIIS argument is that PRTs have resulted from a lack of funding and willingness to deploy troops and, in actuality, PRTs are a poor man's army trying to gain security in absence of true military might. The recognition of different operating styles from different nations, however, enables a critique of performance and

---

[3] To read more on Templer and the Malayan Emergency see Smith, S.C (2001) Gerald Templer and counter insurgency in Malaya: Hearts and Minds Intelligence and Propaganda. *Intelligence and National Security vol:16 No:3:60-78*

their subsequent effect on humanitarian space. The criticism comes from the fact that these military units are deployed into the more inaccessible and lawless areas to provide security without the military muscle to do so. They are neither equipped nor authorised to stop fighting between warlords by the use of force and nor can they act against the drug trade. The PRTs, however, do retain a reach-back effect where they can call in a rapid response military force for back up and air strikes in an emergency and PRTs have used flyovers of military jets as a successful deterrent to stop violent conflicts between rival warlords. PRTs are not a robust combat force, but more a robust force for diplomacy (Jakobsen, 2005:12).

The roles of the American PRTs have been criticised for a lack of clarity and, largely, their task seems to one of securing *hearts and minds.* This contrasts to that of the British PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif, whos clear operational boundaries include Security Sector Reforms, supporting institution building and the promotion of economic development. The criticism of the US PRTs is that they are carrying out reconstruction projects like the rebuilding of dams and roads whilst having combat troops working in the same areas. Both groups wear military fatigues and carry weapons and mobile medical clinics are set up to *win hearts and minds* and to gain intelligence. NGOs criticised the lack of consultation and cultural insensitivity, especially with reference to woman. The US troops display apparent apathy towards NGO and UN requests which have subsequently angered the humanitarian community (Save the Children, 2004:24; Jakobsen, 2005:19-27).

Local communities have difficulty in distinguishing between combat military forces and the PRTs. In the village of Peetai, US combat troops fired a rocket in pursuit of a terrorist. The rocket killed nine children and a young adult and, as it turned out, the suspect they were perusing was not actually in the village (Save the Children, 2004:23). Later on when a PRT went to the village to apologise for the mistake and offered to build the town a well, they were greeted with incredulous looks. The community wanted to know why they had been attacked as they had nothing of value and made it very clear to the PRT that they were not welcome saying: "We want them to leave- we don't want their help…let them keep their well" (Save the Children, 2004:23-24). The UK PRTs have, however, been praised by United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) for some aspects of their work, such as acting as back-up for

local police when making arrests and negotiating disputes between warlords (Save the Children, 2004:28-29). The issue of military personnel operating in civilian clothes and driving civilian four-wheel-drive vehicles is, arguably, attempting to take advantage of the security usually extended to aid workers whilst maintaining the capabilities of a fighting force (Jurisic, 2004:7).

The 2004 Save the Children report on civilian-military relations argues that the PRTs working in *hearts and minds* projects leads to the perception that the NGOs are working with the PRTs. This situation is compounded by the fact that indeed some NGOs have greater involvement with the teams than others. The fact that the local population sees the military as aid and reconstruction providers who are also combat ready changes the perception of people who are there solely to provide aid and reconstruction (Jakobsen, 2005:20). PRTs have security objectives and, in cases, this means undertaking mediation between warlords, which can be perceived by local people as toleration towards warlords whom the local people fear. The Save the Children critique the PRTs saying their time would have been better spent as part of larger forces actually engaging the enemy and making inroads in the counter-narcotics and insecurity, rather than giving the impression that aid workers are agents working for the military. This conclusion is shared by the DIIS in its report on PRTs (Save the Children, 2004:20; Jakobsen, 2005:17). There is, however, no evidence to suggest that, in the absence of PRTs, NGOs would be any safer as they could still be seen as an external force and possibly still be associated with the military. One of the reasons this associated link with the military might still be made is that the military and the NGOs have shared goals. Slim, the Chief Scholar at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, believes that the military and NGOs both have a vested interest in state-building, liberal democracy and social welfare. Slim goes so far as to argue that there is some common morality between Coalition forces and humanitarian workers (Slim, 2004:34).

3.1.2 Critique of Provincial Reconstruction Teams

One main focus of the concern about the PRTs by NGOs is to do with the confusion of identities between military and civilian personnel and comes down to two conflicting arguments. The working of NGO and humanitarian staff with or even in the same province as military PRTs is viewed by other NGOs as improper and the antithesis of the core principles of civilian or NGO humanitarianism; those of impartiality and

independence and aid given on the basis of need. It is clear that the military definition of humanitarianism or humanitarian actions, in the Afghan context, is not the same as that of NGOs or military authors such as Guttieri (Guttieri, 2005:1). The undertaking of what the military call *hearts and minds* operations that focus on winning the support and acceptance of the local people, such as the building of schools or the digging of wells, are similar to projects undertaken by NGOs. This causes confusion to the beneficiaries over the roles of the different civilian and military actors. The military *hearts and minds* operations are a fundamental tactic, trying to obtain security and stability for their troops. The military's humanitarian work in comparison to NGOs has fundamental differences. NGOs supply aid to those who need it, whilst looking at ways to bolster future sustainable development. The military, in contrast, undertake this work to win *hearts and minds* in an effort to gain political assistance, tactical information and reduce the probability of attacks or resistance to their personnel. This polarisation of motives and principles leads to alienation and, arguably, aggression. The criticism of PRTs by the NGO community has been a growing since 2002 and their perception is that their protests have been ignored. After the murder of the five MSF staff in 2004 and the increasing attacks on NGO staff the criticism was taken more seriously. The Save the Children's report calls for proof that PRT *hearts and minds* operations have a larger positive impact on security than the risk they pose to humanitarian workers and, until that time, they should cease (Save the Children, 2004:49-50; Jakobsen, 2005:20). The validity of the argument that PRTs should discontinue *hearts and minds* is all the more pertinent in light of the questions surrounding the lack of success and usefulness of PRTs. However, different national forces take very different approaches to the deployment of PRTs.

The German PRT operates in Kunduz, which is regarded as one of the safest areas within the country and one frequented by NGOs. It therefore makes little sense that the PRTs role there is to bolster security and spread the influence of the Afghan government as security is already present and so is government influence. In order to implement their role they would have to deploy PRTs in areas that need security bolstering and government influence. The British PRTs who work with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) have strived to stay out of areas where NGOs work and ensure they do not undertake projects that could be carried out by NGOs, thus helping to establish a clear division of labour and helping to give a clear

separation of the two groups (Jakobsen, 2005:22-26). The United States General Accounting Office (GAO), in its Report to Congress on the reconstruction of Afghanistan, points out that not only does the US strategy need to be improved but quick impact *hearts and minds* projects that were implemented by the US PRTs at a cost of eighteen million dollars had failed to achieve the goal of increasing local peoples' support for and trust in the Afghan Government. The Afghan people that were interviewed by the GAO did not realise that specific projects were supported by either the Afghan Government or the US Government. Thus, the US PRTs are failing in their task of spreading the influence of the Afghan government through hearts and minds operations. The US PRTs were criticised for lacking the resources or mandate to either improve security or take part in any meaningful reconstruction (GAO, 2004:19-20). Aid workers are becoming increasingly more sceptical of PRTs as the Afghan people are not aware of the positive results produced by PRTs. NGOs doubt PRTs' validity and are concerned that PRTs are seen by the Afghan people to be joined to NGOs in some way.

Hans Hatting, head of the unit for relations with the armed and security forces for the ICRC, believes that military "relations" are imperative as they need access granted by military controlling areas and access to prisoners of war. They also teach and assist in the knowledge of International Humanitarian Law to soldiers (Hatting, 2004:74). However, Hatting, an ex-Danish military officer himself, sees that ICRC's role as saving lives and protecting human dignity and that the job of maintaining security and settling conflict is that of the military. The ICRC cannot be "subordinated" to political or military objectives (Hatting, 2004:75). He believes there should be strong consultation and communication when the military and the ICRC are working in the same theatres of operations as its independence is paramount. He, too, is critical of PRTs for eroding neutrality.

3.1.3 Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Defence & Rebuttal

The criticism of PRTs as if they are one homogenous group is confusing and misleading. The difference between the different nations' PRTs is stark. The criticisms about PRT groups wearing civilian clothes and distributing leaflets threatening the withdrawal of aid if information on the Taliban was not forthcoming was done by American PRTs, not British or German (Jacobsen, 2005: 19). The British PRT is conspicuous among others for its even handed approach and its lack of preoccupation

with force protection, which is a cornerstone of the German and American PRTs that can make them appear aloof and threatening (Jacobsen, 2005:21-22). German patrols are thirty-men-strong, travel with an armoured ambulance and are prohibited from staying out overnight (Jakobsen, 2005:25-26). In contrast, the British Mobile Observation Teams is comprised of half a dozen lightly armed troops that do long distance sorties for a week or more at a time. These personnel do not wear helmets or protective vests so as to appear as approachable as possible. Their task is to build trust with the local communities and to track local politics and security and intervene as intermediaries where necessary. The DIIS report recognised the UK's approach as being the most relaxed towards force protection as part of the UK PRTs strategy to be more approachable and less threatening. This is done by living within small villages to improve relations with the local Afghan people (Jakobsen, 2005:27). The British PRTs are similar to others in the fact that they are made up of military, political and development sections, but differ in the fact that these sections share joint leadership. The military section's task is well defined as security sector reform and the support of security. The other two sections are made up of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and DFID, who deal with political reform, tasked with institution building and economic development and reconstruction, respectively (Jakobsen, 2005:21). Thus, the military looks after security and has negligible involvement with the development and reconstruction with DFID, reporting back to its own organisation and not through a military chain of command. The main criticisms of American PRTs were regarding the blurring of boundaries between civilian and military actors. However, the British teams have deliberately opened channels of two-way communication with NGOs in their areas so as to prevent the blurring from happening. The use of unmarked vehicles by British teams did spark some concern from the NGO community however (Save the Children, 2004:29; Jakobsen, 2005:22) Overall, the British PRTs are regarded as being effective in bringing about security by long-range, soft-patrolling and anti-opium measures, whilst keeping its separation from civilian workers clear for beneficiaries (Jakobsen, 2005:33). The recent actions of soldiers from Western military forces in Afghanistan and other countries may be helping to undermine the Coalition's acceptance by the local people.

3.1.4 Losing Hearts and Minds

There has been a lot of news coverage regarding Western military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last five years and particularly over the closing six months of 2006. Much of it has not been positive. An example in Iraq would be the human rights violations in Abu Ghraib prison and the torture of Iraqi civilians. It also transpired that sexual abuses had taken place in Abu Ghraib and that children as young as twelve were being held. Senior officers were party to the holding of "ghost detainees" who were held without charge and without any record of them being there (BBC, 2005). More recently, a US soldier has admitted to raping an Iraqi girl in collusion with four other US soldiers. The soldiers planned and carried out the rape and then killed their victim and her family (BBC, 2006d). In Afghanistan in October 2006, scores of Afghan civilians were killed in a NATO bombing raids with a count of sixty civilians dead in one village. Mr Laity, NATO spokesmen, whilst apologising for the civilian deaths, offered the explanation that during a fight against insurgents "things can happen" (BBC, 2006e). In the previous week in Kandahar a further twenty-one civilians were killed. Collateral damage reflects badly not only on NATO and its troops but also on the Government of Afghanistan as it appears to locals that it is unable to protect its own people. This information is used by the Taliban for propaganda to cause resentment of the Coalition forces (URD, 2006:35-36). As the fighting intensifies between NATO and the Taliban, the civilian casualties are mounting and so is the negative military press. In the German news paper, *Bild*, photos were published of German soldiers in Afghanistan posing with a human skull, one of which showed a soldier posed with the skull next to his exposed genitals (BBC, 2006f). Days later, pictures emerged of German Special Forces, the KSK, in the German newspaper *Stern* showing German patrol vehicles in Afghanistan with the Nazi symbol of Hitler's Afrika Korps painted on the side (BBC, 2006g; *Stern*, 2006). The troops responsible will be brought to justice but that will do little to assuage the growing feeling of resentment that the Afghan people are feeling towards the foreign military presence. The Taliban are not differentiating between the military and other British staff in the country which means that these military actions reflect on all British personnel in Afghanistan.

British journalists recently managed to get interviews with the Taliban in Helmand. The Taliban stated the view that:

> "We see the English as our enemy since the time of the Prophet Mohammed…we will fight them to our death, we will not let them into our country, they can't deceive us about their propaganda that they are here for reconstruction or rebuilding this country" (Taliban spokes person, cited in BBC, 2006h).

The interview makes it clear that the Taliban want to expel all British and will use deadly force, regardless of what they are doing within the country, as it is all supporting the Coalition and the Afghan Government (BBC, 2006h). NGOs, in light of the bad military press, do not want to be associated with the military, however according to the Taliban spokesperson it would seem that distance and neutrality from military actors will now do little to stop the violence towards NGOs.

One of the upshots from the BBC's interview with the Taliban in Helmand was criticism from the UK conservative government. In particular, that of Dr Liam Fox, the Shadow Defence Sectary, who believed that interviewing the Taliban whilst British troops where in Afghanistan fighting them and being killed by them was "obscene" and stated that:

> "We have become used to a non-stop anti-war agenda from the BBC but broadcasting propaganda on behalf of this country's enemies - at a time when our armed forces are being killed and maimed - marks a new low." (Fox, cited in BBC, 2006h).

The BBC defended their actions, saying that they have often reported on what British officers and troops think and that this was simply the other side of the story. Somewhat surprisingly, the Taliban have been honing their public relations skills in previous months, allowing themselves to be interviewed by the BBC and have also launched a new website. They have been handing out spokespersons' phone numbers to journalists in an attempt to discredit the Coalition forces and win the support of the people (Purvis, 2006:12-12). The issue here is that Fox felt that the BBC's loyalties lay with British troops on the ground in Afghanistan and not in telling both sides of the conflict. The BBC is a neutral press corporation and public criticism of the BBC's reporting by the British Shadow Defence Sectary sent out the clear message that he expected loyalties to be shown and indeed a side to be taken by the BBC, compromising its neutrality. This is important because the BBC and its correspondents are supposed to be neutral reporters of the facts and in conflict areas they make clear that they are press so as not to be

targeted, in effect using their neutrality as protection in the same way as NGOs. What the Shadow Defence Sectary is doing in this case is arguing that publicly backing the NATO troops in Afghanistan is more important than neutrality. NGOs feel a similar pressure to show loyalties and are becoming increasingly concerned with the military's involvement in aid delivery.

3.2 Military and Aid in Afghanistan

After the September 11th bombings The United Nations Security Council denounced the murderous actions of the terrorists, sanctioning the US's right to self defence. From its inception "operation enduring freedom", the name given to the US military invasion of Afghanistan, became a destructive confusion between the US's right to self defence and the giving of aid the vulnerable Afghan people. (Calas et al, 2004:80-81). The first American military aerial bombardments were shortly followed by American military food ration drops for the civilian population with leaflets asking for information on Osama bin Laden with a promise of more food supplies if the civilians stayed where they were. The US said they were trying to limit civilian deaths by dropping food and demonstrating that it was not a war on the Afghan people or Muslims, but a war on terror. The food drops were, as the US President put it, a demonstration of "the generosity of Americans" (Bush, 2001b; Calas et al, 2004:80-81). Calas, head of mission for MSF in Iraq, believes the altruistic reasons which the US President gave for the food drops were a deception. Calas argues that the aid drops were an effort to gain information on terrorist targets and prevent a mass exodus of Afghan refugees to the Pakistan border. Calas believes that if indeed the US's aim was one of aid, then far more could have been done as the amount of supplies dropped was minimal. In fact, in total, there was only enough US food aid dropped to feed one thirtieth of the country's population for one day (Calas et al, 2004:82; CIA, 2006). Calas saw this as military tactics disguised as altruism and in doing so the very first aid the Afghans received after the start of the war was linked to the military and the hunt for the Osama bin Laden.

Those first leaflet and food drops laid the foundations for the confusion between civilian and military aid and their agendas. Calas criticises the American delivery of aid arguing that the air drops meant that a lot of the aid landed in mined areas and the parcels

themselves were remarkably similar in size and colour to fragmentation bombs that were being dropped. The fragmentation bombs are massed produced and designed to be dropped to cover a large area. Due to their cheap production they have a ten percent failure rate on impact. The bombs detonate on impact with objects and the ground but the failed ten percent are still live and act as anti-personnel mines as they still detonate if moved by people or livestock. This led to Afghan civilians risking already mined areas to retrieve the yellow aid parcels making deadly mistakes were made whilst collecting them. There was no way to tell the difference between food parcels dropped in mud and snow or the failed fragmentation bombs (see figure 1) (HRW, 2001; Calas et al, 2004:82).

Calas' other criticism is what he believes was the co-option of humanitarian and NGO workers. He sees the request to discard their impartiality and neutrality and unite with Western Coalition forces as co-option, what the British Prime Minster, Tony Blair, describes as "military-humanitarian coalition" (Calas, 2004:82). The US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, shadowed Blair's sentiments at a NGO conference saying:

> "I am serious about making sure we have the best relationship with the NGOs who are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team… is not the same as co-opting you" (Powell, 2001).

Gluck directly attributes the endangerment of the lives of humanitarian workers and, more specifically, the death of five MSF staff in 2004 to the American-backed Coalition's "attempt to co-opt humanitarian space" (Gluck, 2004:2). The dictionary definition of a *force multiplier* is:

> "a military term referring to a factor that dramatically increases (hence, "multiplies") the combat-effectiveness of a given military force."(Wikipedia).

Calas argues that this is a call for NGOs to politically back the Coalition forces, putting NGO neutrality under jeopardy and, subsequently, their ability to provide for those in need in conflict areas like Afghanistan (Calas, 2004:82).

The Coalition forces in Afghanistan have come under some criticism for putting humanitarian workers under threat in an effort to win *hearts and minds*. US forces, in an effort to "gain the trust of the population" ,according to US Marine Colonel Gary Cheek, have been implementing reconstruction projects to win popularity with the local people (Cheek, cited in Coghlan, 2004). The US military are running or funding

reconstruction projects whilst simultaneously pursuing their primary objective of seeking out Taliban forces. The criticism comes from NGOs who believe that by having a dual role as military force and giver of aid, the neutrality and impartiality of aid is perverted and lost (Coghlan, 2004). Colonel Cheek points out that the military are often the only organisation that can work in some of the more hostile project areas and, as such, there is little choice of who can best deliver aid and run projects. The Colonel also makes another point that NGOs' argument that they are being targeted due to blurring of boundaries is flawed. He believes the extremists hate not what you do but hate instead who you are, regardless of which organisation you are with (Cheek, cited in Coghlan, 2004).

Dr. Jean-Herve Bradol, President of the French MSF, argues that in a world where the most powerful players use military force to intervene in sovereign states to bolster their own interests, the militaries' motives behind the giving of aid is questionable. Bradol believes that military aid has two benefits for the donor; the first, is a more media-acceptable justification for the ensuing war and violence, including civilian casualties, and the second, a way of oppressing the indignation of the crimes it commits (Bradol, 2004:16). International aid organisations, whilst going about their trade in the parts of the world that the international community has failed to protect, such as Rwanda, inadvertently act as a puppet to divert the Western World's attention from an impotent international political system to the perception of action portrayed in global media (Bradol, 2004:17). Pierre Krahenbuhl, Director of Operations for the ICRC believes that either deliberate or accidental "instrumentalisation" by state actors of the ICRC into its toolbox for the war on terror is putting his staff at risk. The way that governments of the US and UK describe what they are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan as reconstruction or humanitarianism conflate NGO and the military tasks in the eyes of onlookers. Krahenbuhl agrees with Bradol's sentiments in that PRTs pose a huge perception issue for humanitarian workers in the field (Krahenbuhl, 2004:30-31). The military, however, are in a tough position being entrenched in a guerrilla war in an inhospitable environment, in a deeply fractured society. Is the military suffering unfair criticism in a highly difficult working environment?

3.2.1 Critique of NGOs

NGOs are quick to criticise and blame the military for the increased targeting of their workers by militia groups due to an alleged blurring of boundaries between the two groups. However, Hugo Slim, Chief Scholar at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, argues that NGOs, in their clamour to separate themselves from the military, display abhorrent disgust at the military's actions and fail to see the similarities between the two groups. The putative arguments levelled by NGOs at militaries about their part in the erosion of impartiality and neutrality are often spurious, Slim argues (Slim, 2004:34-35). Many of the agencies that are working in Afghanistan are there to help build the capacity of local infrastructure, empower women and help to secure alternative livelihoods for opium farmers. If one follows funding to these various NGOs one would find, Slim argues, that multi-mandate NGOs get their funding from the same sources as the PRTs such as DFID and USAID or other government funding (Jurisic, 2004:6;Slim, 2004:34-35). NGOs are playing a key role in implementing national programs across Afghanistan like the Basic Package of Health Services. NGOs are subcontracted by the Government of Afghanistan as implementers and facilitators (URD, 2006:33). According to Slim, these multi-mandate NGOs are not the same as simply humanitarian organisations such as the ICRC, whose sole purpose is to care for vulnerable people's needs, especially during war.

Taking the ICRC as an example, they are not there to shape a country or help create a better society but simply create a better war by caring for the weak and vulnerable (Slim, 2004:36). Multi-mandate NGOs, on the other hand, are not there just to ease the present but indeed to help shape the future with concerns over poverty, human rights and justice. Slim believes that multi-mandate NGOs have a plan for a society that they are going to help shape. NGOs like CARE International, the International Afghanistan Mission (IAM) and other multi-mandate NGOs share the same liberal ideologies, that of liberal democracy and personal freedoms of speech, education, religion, healthcare and gender equality (Slim, 2004:35-37). There is then no clear separation of agendas between what the Coalition describes as their *end state* for Afghanistan and the multi-mandate NGOs' plan for the future society of Afghanistan. Slim makes it clear that both the Coalition forces and the multi-mandate NGOs share one liberal ideology; their methods of achieving their goals is where their moralities, values and tools to do the job diverge. Slim criticises the NGOs saying they hypocritically criticise the military as

being a politicised tool when they themselves are in the same boat. The NGOs are liberal and democratic bodies and, quite clearly, the militant factions in Afghanistan are not (Johnson et al, 2004:101). Slim does not want to be misunderstood in this observation, stating he is not criticising these NGOs for their work. They may well, in times of war, suspend their liberal agenda development plans so as to offer humanitarian assistance similar to that of the ICRC. However, once the country has become calm and safe enough and the people are less vulnerable the plans will be recommended to pursue and push a liberal agenda within the country.

The role these NGOs play is recognised by Slim as vital and important work in Afghanistan and around the world. The fact that these organisations have more in common than they would like with the Coalition forces seems to make them uncomfortable and they make the effort to distance themselves. Slim believes it is not the confusion between military and civilians that make NGOs a target but their fundamental ideology that is the same as the Afghan Government and the Coalition forces (Krahenbuhl, 2004:30-31; Slim, 2004:37). NGOs like the ICRC are not ignorant to the fact that they do become a target as they are part of the wider effort to stabilise the country or indeed help in its transition, even though they are not multi-mandate. The ICRC also realises that purely for the reason that the NGO is perceived as Western due to its logo (a cross), funding and the locality of its headquarters makes the organisation more easily mistaken as a Western political or military actor (Borders, 2004:30-31). Borders mirrors Slims point of view as he finds NGOs self-righteous in their criticism of the Coalition. NGOs seem to believe that the Coalition has ulterior motives to develop the country and improve the well being of its people. Borders and Slim both believe that it is pompous that NGOs think they are the only group that can undertake development work for the right reasons and that any other group is somehow underhand or subversive. Borders also makes the point that a civilian-military partnership in development is not new (Borders, 2004:7; Slim, 2004:38-39).

The Coalition is not the only group trying to win *hearts and minds* and acceptance. The multi-mandate NGOs are trying to work in a country at war, a country being fought over by insurgents and counterinsurgents with the humanitarians at the centre trying to gain access and acceptance of the people. Slim argues that, contrary to the sentiments of some NGOs, the military is not synonymous with immorality of lack of ethics.

Borders argues that there is a modern viewpoint that war is only waged on the basis of greed and subversive reasons. Borders believes this is obviously untrue as war is often fought to safe-guard people and their values. Slim argues that it is arrogant of humanitarians to think they are the only group righteous enough to pursue development for a better future for the Afghan people. Slim takes care to note that although their goals and morals may overlap, the means by which the two groups achieve their goals are often diametrically opposed (Slim, 2004:44-45). The argument over whether the civilian-military relationship is endangering lives is far from being clear cut. Authors such as Borders argue that the debate is of no real consequence in Afghanistan because the security situation and the fact that the radical extremists do not respect NGO neutrality or government authority means that regardless of perception, NGOs will be targets (Borders, 2004:10). This would mean that security, not neutrality, is the overriding issue of humanitarian space in Afghanistan.

3.3 Summary

The issue of neutrality is clearly vital to the security of NGOs. The loss of neutrality can not be attributed solely to the military's actions. However, the military made abhorrent mistakes and decisions that some NGO staff, such as Gluck, believe have severely damaged NGO neutrality. NGOs cannot pretend that they are perfectly neutral entities and not a product of the liberal societies they come from. NGOs should not allow themselves to be co-opted by political or military goals as it will damage their humanitarian space. The fear that Borders highlights is that in Afghanistan neutrality may no longer matter. NGOs may be targets regardless, which means that humanitarian space is dependent on the security environment and everything that affects it.

CHAPTER FOUR: SECURITY AND POLITICS

Kofi Annan, former Sectary General of the UN, spoke at the London conference on Afghanistan in January 2006, saying:

> "From a nation held hostage by terror and by terrorists, Afghanistan is a nascent democracy…It is in the interest of the entire international community to provide assistance as the country consolidates its moves towards peace, democracy and, above all, security, which underpins advancement on every other front" (Annan, 2006).

Annan believes that above all security is the key to Afghanistan future.

4.1 Security

4.1.1 Importance of Security

Security is the key issue in Afghanistan as the country cannot become stable and more prosperous if insecurity prevails. Insecurity hampers the speed and effectiveness of the Afghan government, the UN and aid organisations in their ability to reach the communities worst hit by the conflict. Insecurity impedes the rate of reconstruction and, for the people of Afghanistan, erodes confidence in the Afghan government. If the economy and restructuring does not grow at a rapid enough rate, the majority of Afghan farmers will return to increase the production of the only crop that they know to pay, opium. This will only foster conditions in the country for the reproduction of terrorism and lawlessness (CARE, 2004:1).

The root causes of insecurity must be addressed. Taliban and al-Qaeda terrorist groups are a major source of insecurity, but not the only source. Warlords, violent criminal factions and local rivalries are being fuelled by the booming drug economy. The Afghan people have lived for many years in fear of one belligerent force after another and, if the country is to move forward, this fear must be abated (CARE, 2004:2). The DIIS 2005 report criticises PRTs, describing them as only a stop-gap measure in ensuring security, a way to buy time, while other instruments are put in place to directly address the militia threat posed by the Taliban and al-Qaeda (Jacobsen, 2005:31-32). This includes the pervasive lawlessness of local warlords and criminal groups, some of whom are

supported by thriving opium production. Lack of progress in managing to control the local warlords' disregard of the law is apparent and the PRTs have failed in their task to make progress. This failure leads in turn to warlord infighting, drug trafficking and other criminal activity such as banditry and human rights abuse. The molestation of NGO and humanitarian groups trying to implement projects has risen markedly with the death toll of humanitarian workers doubling between 2003 and 2004 (Jakobsen, 2005:31-34). All of the elements that contribute to the deterioration in security are also a contributing factor to the shrinking of humanitarian space. As the insecurity increases, so too does the death toll of humanitarian workers. The factors that contribute to the insecurity are varied and many, but there are a few key factors that may have dramatic results if they were to be taken in hand.

4.1.2 Ghost Border

The Pakistan-Afghan border forms the Durand Line which was created by the British in 1893 to divide the Afghan tribes that had become a thorn in the side of British India. The border delineation that exists today is the same border that was imposed and never accepted by the Afghans back in 1893, which purposely divided both Baloch and Pashtun tribes. In 1949, two years after the end of British India, the Afghan parliament refused to recognise this imposed border and declared it void. This border dispute still has importance today as Pakistan is looking to solidify its right to the land on its side of the Durand line and the Balochs are fighting a guerrilla war against the Pakistan authorities as they believe that it should be part of Afghanistan. This existing conflict makes the border areas very inaccessible and difficult to control for the Pakistani authorities (Hasnain, 2006:28-30; URD, 2006:26-27). The Coalition forces have been patient with the Pakistani authorities in their hard task of trying to patrol and control the vast expanse of the border joining the two countries, which the insurgents take full advantage of by striking in Afghanistan, then taking flight and refuge back across the border in Pakistan.

The border is more fictitious than literal as it appears on maps but with little on the ground to define it as the area has cross border economic and cultural ties (URD, 2006:7-8). The border areas are also used for recruitment and radicalisation of young Muslim men in the refugee camps of Pakistan, fed by the Afghans that have fled over the past twenty years of war. This is where the insurgents are grooming their new

troops and suicide bombers, a tactic which is worryingly on the rise (BBC, 2007). However, in a leaked report from the British Ministry of Defence, it alleges that the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan's secret police, is helping aid the insurgents to carry out violence. This allegation was not denied by the Pakistani President Musharraf when spoken to by General Richards, NATO's commander in Afghanistan. The President did say, however, that he believed it was "former ISI officials" that were fuelling the insurgency. General Richards believes that the next six months is critical and if Afghans' lives do not start to improve over that time they will start to support the Taliban (Maas, 1999:69; BBC, 2006b; Khan, 2006). In a country racked by poverty, the Afghan National Army only pays its soldiers $4 a day compared to the $14 per day Taliban troops get paid. It is not difficult to understand why the Taliban's numbers have grown by four-thousand men over the last year, nor is it hard to understand that in order to stop this, the border needs to be better protected and Taliban support from Pakistan needs to be cut (Time, 2006:14).

4.1.3 Opium growth and Insecurity

The precarious nature of the large majority of the population who are employed in agriculture is due to the nature of their crop: opium poppies. Afghan poppy cultivation goes to make heroin, producing ninety precent of the world's illegal opium, most of which ends up in the UK and the US (Jakobsen, 2005:31). The trade in Afghan opium causes the deaths of over a hundred-thousand people annually, either directly or indirectly (Furniss, 2006). Opium is cultivated in all thirty-four of Afghanistan's provinces, accounting for an estimated quarter of the economy. The farmers in these areas have little or no access to external markets through loss of infrastructure over the last twenty-three years of conflict and have little choice but to produce opium for which there is a ready market supplied by the warlords (Johnson et al, 2004:112-113; Furniss, 2006:37-47). The drug trade fuels corruption and bank-roles warlords and terrorists who are working to undermine the newly elected government, perpetuating violent conflict. Afghanistan's problems will get worse with increased drug production if the state remains weak and the rural economy is limited to opium (Johnson et al, 2004:114-117; CARE et al, 2005:1-3). What is needed, in conjunction with security and infrastructure, are alternative livelihoods for the poppy farmers. Opium cultivation is farmers' only access to credit, which leads people into a cycle of borrowing against the

next year's crop and the only way to raise the money is by the growth of the high earning crop (CARE, 2005,1-7; Simpson, 2005).

In 2000, the Taliban banned production of opium, calling it un-Islamic but after the fall of the Taliban in the following year production began to rise sharply once more. The opium production has a potentially devastating consequence on the country's security and that of aid workers (CARE, 2004:3). The criminal factions and warlords who produce opium will not benefit from security, law and order as it would expose their clandestine business practices and seal borders for smugglers (Johnston et al, 2004:120-123). For these warlords and criminal groups, it is in their business interests to try and prevent the Afghan government and their allies from maintaining law and order. Terrorist groups also profit from opium production and are supported by Taliban-sympathetic warlords. The relationship between terrorists and opium producers becomes symbiotic as both benefit from insecurity and the lawlessness and the wealth derived from the opium crop (Leithhead, 2006). The year of 2006 broke all previous records for the opium harvest in Afghanistan with an increased growth of almost fifty percent from 2005, which suggests the millions that have been poured into opium eradication schemes have been unwisely spent (Johnson et al, 2004:128-133; Norton-Taylor, 2006:1). The Taliban's divergence from their anti-opium principles they expressed whilst in power, as they deplored opium production as un-Islamic, is illustrative of the Taliban's need to gain popular support from the Afghan people. Norton-Taylor argues that the rise is due to the Taliban who profit from opium growth and offer protection to opium farmers from the eradication teams who have distributed leaflets to farmers detailing promises to that effect (Norton-Taylor, 2006: 1).

Opium production has an effect on every level of peace keeping within the country as it fuels the insurgency, Leithhead argues (Leithhead, 2006). Trying to stop the production is going to make the threat of being caught too great, whilst offering a viable alternative. The Groupe Urgence Réhabilitation Développement (URD) a non-profit humanitarian advocacy organisation, state in their 2006 report that no viable alternative has been provided, leaving the local population in more severe poverty than when the Coalition arrived (URD, 2006:6). The hardship of the local people is being compounded by the recent drought that grips Afghanistan, with UN assessment estimating as many as 1.9million people at risk of starvation. (BBC, 2006j). The URD believes the eradication

process exacerbates the deterioration in the security situation and the Coalition forces and the Afghan Government they support become the aggressive force in the eyes of the Afghan people. The Taliban has been offering farmers protection from the eradication teams in exchange for support, in some cases in the form of an opium tax, helping to turn popular support to the insurgents (URD, 2006:21:35-36). The Coalition troops were hailed in 2001 as protectors against the Taliban. Now the Taliban and the Coalition have swapped places in the eyes of the people and now the Taliban are taking the role as the farmers' protectorates.

The local people's outrage at what they perceive as an injustice is compounded by what the URD report describes as endemic corruption. The URD alleges that there is evidence that the Afghan Army and Afghan Police have been taking bribes not to eradicate fields of poppies while Coalition troops are present on site. The farmers that are suffering from poverty and drought are enraged that the government and, what appears to them to be, complicit foreign troops are taking money from them. This can in turn lead to further disillusionment with the Coalition but also militant-ism, argues the URD. Poppy farmers have laid land mines supplied by the Taliban in their fields to catch eradication teams. This tactic destroyed four Coalition vehicles over eleven days in March, 2006 (URD, 2006:45-46). The farmers' resentment towards the foreign troops is fuelled by broken promises.

In 2002, British government officials promised money to farmers who voluntarily destroyed their crops. That money never went to farmers even though crops were destroyed at an agreed price and the farmers have the documentation to prove it. There is an outstanding bill for the British Government of twenty-one million dollars which has soured relations between UK troops and local people, creating distrust (URD, 2006:47). A mix of ill-conceived alternative livelihood strategies, broken promises, lack of funding, corruption and aggressive eradication processes is alienating the Afghan people from the Government, coalition forces and foreign aid workers. The five years of development has failed to bring any significant changes for the majority of the population, making the eradication life threatening for these farmers. Why has five years of development work changed little?

4.1.4 The Pace of Progress and Funding

The slow pace of development has caused resentment. There is criticism that the promises made at the 2002 Tokyo Donors Conference on Afghanistan Reconstruction have not been kept (Calas, 2004:85). NGOs and aid organisations need funding. Many aid organisations and NGOs get a large majority of their funding from donor governments, governments that have a military force involved in the conflict area in which the NGOs are working. Jurisic, a widely experienced author on the civilian-military relationship argues that, in cases, NGOs work in countries in need, accepting governmental funding, allowing governments to shirk their political responsibilities by promoting a media image that things are being done (Jurisic, 2004:6). The NGO thus becomes a politicised tool and not an independent or neutral actor simply as an excuse for state inaction (Jurisic, 2004:6). Afghanistan has received less funding than many other recently conflict-riddled states such as Yugoslavia, East Timor, the West Bank and Gaza and Rwanda (Rashid, 2006). The lack of security, especially in the southern states, has meant that the UN and NGO reconstruction teams have been unable to access the areas in which they need to implement their projects (Rashid, 2006). The Afghan Government's plan for reconstruction asks for one-hundred and eighty-two US dollars per capita, per year, which is well below the level of reconstruction capital given to the other countries mentioned above. Rashid believes that if reconstruction and funding for an effective state is not implemented, complimented by civil society and civic pride and confidence in their government then the population will become disillusioned and bitter at yet another failed leadership and return to opium production.

Rashid believes that "the West's refusal to invest in agricultural schemes in Afghanistan" (Rashid, 2006:1) has been a major contributing factor to the return to poppy cultivation by a large number of impoverished farmers. This is vital in a country where seventy percent of the population relies on agriculture for a living. Nawa bolsters Rashid's argument with criticism of inappropriate agricultural projects and the non-communication with local people about their needs (Nawa, 2006). These failures to communicate with the local people and the inappropriateness of the projects have resulted in abandoned buildings and silos and these buildings act as visible markers to the Afghan people to see exactly where their aid money has been wasted. The lack of thought displayed by some of the project implementers leaves Nawa in shock. For example, a project implemented by Chemonics and funded by USAID built irrigation

channels for farmers in Helmand province. Helmand is the largest poppy growing area in Afghanistan and, despite the project implementers best intentions, the irrigation was used to grow more opium. This holds a certain irony as Chemonics' task was to offer alternative livelihoods to farmers so as to reduce opium production (Nawa, 2006:21-23).

The reconstruction has been recognised by some to be simply a box-ticking exercise rather than participatory and locally owned projects. Slim is very aware of the scepticism that surrounds the awarding of lucrative contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan to American and British companies when it would bolster the economies if more local firms could be used (Slim, 2004:44-45). Senlis, an international policy think tank undertaking research on counter-narcotics, military, and development policies and their consequences on Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts, agrees with slim. It is the opinion of Senlis that the visible gap between international expenditure on security in comparison to reconstruction is a sign of the US-led Coalition's real agenda. The focus has been on security and the pursuit of insurgents and not addressing the poverty of the Afghan people. This preoccupation with security, Senlis argues, is due to the US's need and desire for homeland security, which is clearly where their focus lies. Five years on, the people of Afghanistan are plagued by poverty and now a drought threatens to kill many. Despite the millions spent on security the country has slipped further and further into chaos, not only resulting in Coalition soldier and aid worker deaths, but the deaths of local people. The military funding outstrips the development budget by over nine hundred percent. Senlis argues that one of the key problems is that the country has not been given a stabilised base of poverty relief and now all the trappings of democracy, opium eradication and security efforts rest on a shaky base of a starving and disillusioned Afghan populous (Senlis, 2006b:191-192).   The other main issue is that out of the twenty billion dollars pledged by the international community, only 7.3 billion dollars has actually been given as development aid (Senlis, 2006b:203). The amounts of money being spent on reconstruction in the country fall very short of the estimated amount that the World Bank and United Nations Development Program believe will be needed. The fact that there is no mechanism to oversee pledges to payment means that there is currently a thirty percent discrepancy between pledges and disbursement (Senlis, 2006b:203).   Senlis also believes that it is bizarre that the international community is trying to bolster the power, capacity and reach of the Afghan Government, yet only twenty-five percent of international aid is dispersed officially

through the Afghan Government, which undermines its legitimacy. The second argument is that, due to the inefficiency of the aid process due to money loss in various levels of contractors, the process may well be more efficient if distributed through the Afghan Government (Senlis, 2006: 203). The more legitimacy the Afghan government looses the more support the insurgents gain.

4.1.5 Taliban and al-Qaeda Re-emergence

Ahmed Rashid, a veteran reporter and BBC correspondent in South East Asia for twenty-five years and author on subjects from the Taliban and the Afghan Jihad, criticises the US led Coalition forces for not deploying into southern Afghanistan in sufficient numbers, despite the fact that the south is the Taliban's heartland. This lack of control by the US in the southern provinces, Rashid argues, created a security vacuum that was left to be filled by re-emerging Taliban forces (Rashid, 2006:1). Pakistan's inability or lack of inclination to suppress the movements across its borders and open militancy in its border towns have given lawless and terrorist factions a safe haven where they can gather strength, resources and troops, as well as a staging post from which they can launch attacks into Afghanistan and retreat to safety. The Taliban has not only proved elusive, but tenacious and resourceful. Violence is not their only tool. The Taliban's propaganda machine has been set in motion and is acting to undermine the Coalition forces almost as much as the violence itself. The Taliban have initiated a fear campaign using Shabnama, or night-letters, striking fear into the heart of communities and undermining the Coalition's impact and central government. Baker reported a grim picture in some rural parts of Afghanistan where the people wake up to fresh Shabnama pasted on the walls of their mosques or public buildings, preaching death to those who do not heed their warnings and follow their instructions. Police officers fear for their lives and have no faith in the government to be able to protect them from the Taliban. The letters warn the reader to be of no help to the foreign forces occupying their land or there would be serious repercussions. These threats were realised in June when the Taliban detonated a bomb on a bus full of Afghan labourers on route to their work on a US Navy base, killing eight people. This was an unprecedented attack on civilians working for the Coalition on a large scale. The night letters are having an impact, government services have been impeded, including police work, and reconstruction halted (Baker, 2006: 24-25). Areas previously untouched by insecurity are now being encroached upon including the once relatively safe north. The

foreign community of contractors and civilian-military contractors are also helping to alienate the afghan people forcing a switch of support away from the coalition and towards the Taliban.

4.2 Politics

Afghanistan suffers from complex politics of corruption, some of which is Western corruption of building contractors and unregulated private guns for hire. The more ammunition anti-government and Coalition elements have against foreign influence within the country, the easier it will be for them to derail the security process and turn the local people towards Taliban support.

4.2.1 Politicisation of NGOs

Mojumdar, a journalist who has been reporting from the South Asian region for sixteen years specialising in conflict environments, believes that Afghan politicians are cashing in on anti-NGO sentiment, using it as a tool to gain popularity. Slow progress, misplaced aid priorities and the misperception that the international community is one large, blundering, single entity, Mojumdar argues, makes NGOs in Afghanistan an easy target for political gain. Former Planning Minister, Basher Dost, is a politician gathering popularity by criticising NGOs as fraudulent, describing them as a "mafia" out to support their own "luxurious lifestyles" (Mojumdar, 2006:1). Mojumdar criticises Dost as she believes Dost is manipulating Afghan's xenophobic disposition from years of suffering at the hands of foreign invaders. This prejudice is reinforced by the restrictions, especially those put on UN staff due to security fears, who have to travel in secure vehicles and live in compounds excluded from the outside community. This makes them distanced and alien from the communities they are there to help (Mojumdar, 2006:1). This polarisation of humanitarian workers and the local people they have come to help is widened by recreational activities such as the consumption of alcohol, which is illegal for Afghanis under their constitution, however a blind eye is turned to expatriate consumption of alcohol in Kabul's restaurants (Johnston et al, 2004:23). The mingling of men and women in public also attracts criticism from the more traditional sectors of the Afghan community where public fraternisation of men and women from outside the family group is prohibited. Furthermore the distinction

between military reconstruction projects that use private contractors and UN or NGO projects leave little to be distinguished by any onlooker, thus blurring the identification of individual groups and reinforcing the impression of the conglomerate of Westerners moving as one homogenous group. This misconception has allowed NGOs to be deemed as legitimate targets when agitators want to express anger against NATO- led international security forces or even central government. It is a vicious circle where people are disillusioned with the lack of progress and express their anger through violence, which then forces NGOs to scale back operations in dangerous provinces and make the progress even slower, compounding the original problem (Mojumdar, 2006:1-3).

Aid agencies have strongly criticised the ineffectiveness of the Afghan Government. MSF in particular quoted the Afghan Government's "unwillingness or inability to provide credible investigation…and provide sufficient legal follow-up in terms of arrests and prosecutions", talking specifically about their disappointment of how the case of the murder of five MSF staff was handled by the government (Gluck, 2004:1). The disappointment in the lack of ability or inclination shown by the Afghan government to deal with the perpetrators of this crime led MSF to the conclusion that they could no longer stay and work in Afghanistan. What upset MSF the most was that the government led them to believe that they had information on which commanders from the Badghis province had actually committed the crime, yet they did not act to apprehend them, nor did they even take steps to make a statement to publicly condemn their actions. MSF perceived this as an indication of the lack of dedication the Afghan Government has to the safety of NGO workers. Without government condemnation, MSF felt it sent out a message that it was okay to kill aid workers, making their position in the country untenable (Gluck, 2004:1-3). MSF had built up a reputation over the last thirty years for working in some of the toughest conflict environments around the world and it was seen as a watershed decision when they decided to pull out of Afghanistan. The humanitarian community feared a mass exodus of humanitarian staff from Afghanistan which never came. However, the lack of agencies to follow the MSF example begs the question as to why the rest did not go. Has the security situation improved? The number of murders of humanitarian workers does not support that line of thinking. Does this mean that humanitarian agencies in this modern, high risk environment are accepting higher levels of risk than ever before and the consequences

that go with them? The fear is that insecurity and badly implemented development and government corruption will eventually make these tenacious NGOs follow MSF's lead. This in increasingly more likely as corruption and substandard development is alienating the Afghan people from all foreign influence.

4.2.2 Funding, Corruption and Contractors

Jean Mazurelle of the World Bank said that that thirty-five to forty percent of all international aid is badly spent during an interview with Fariba Nawa in Kabul in 2006. Mazurelle lays the blame on private companies which he believes are scandalous and the actions of which he describes as "looting". He believes such companies are souring the relations between Afghans and the development community (Nawa, 2006: 4). The fact is that three-quarters of the international funding entering into Afghanistan is for private projects and, as such, are not under the scrutiny of the Afghan Government, or any other regulations but their own. Alastair McKechie, the World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan said:

> "Experience demonstrates that channelling aid through government is more cost-effective. For example, a basic package of health services contracted outside government channels can be fifty percent more expensive than the package contracted by the government on a competitive basis. Furthermore, the credibility of the government is increased as it demonstrates its ability to oversee services and become accountable for results to its people and newly elected parliament."(McKechie, cited in Nawa, 2006:5).

Nawa, an award-winning Afghan-American journalist specialising in Muslim communities, is strongly critical of the funding process for several reasons. One of the problems is that there are so many agencies coordinating aid money that do not coordinate with one another. When aid is bi-lateral the money is spent by that government while fulfilling the expectations of that government, rather than that of the recipient country. Bi-lateral aid is often pooled into funds and managed by a single organisation such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund or the United Nations Development Program. The bulk of aid pledged to Afghanistan goes to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which is then spent by the Afghan Government. The World Bank criticises the US, as well as other countries, for bypassing this system by distributing aid money, instead, through USAID and the pentagon, including through the army engineering corps. The result is aid money being

spent on projects that the recipient government would not have necessarily given priority, given the choice.   What ensues is confusing ebbs and flows of various aid money and projects which has made accountability all but an impossibility, jeopardising the efficiency of aid (Nawa, 2006:5-6; URD, 2006:203).   The criticism that the ten billion dollars donated to Afghanistan has been misspent and wasted, Nawa believes, can no longer be ignored.   Nawa also believes that the local people are losing faith as they see the upscale homes, vehicles and lifestyle of foreign contractors that seem to be consuming the money that was sent there for them and in the five years since the reconstruction began, the Afghans' lives have changed little. Projects are implemented and buildings start to crumble scarcely before they are even finished (Nawa, 2006).

The money for projects has trickled down through so many agencies and contractors by the time it meets the ground there is only money left to buy the cheapest materials. An example would be the US funded road in the Northern provinces, for which USAID gave fifteen-million dollars to the United Nations Office of Project Services who then hired the Berger group to consult (Nawa, 2006:8). The UN also hired a Turkish company, Limak, to actually build the road. Limak then hired a partner in the Afghan American Construction Company. The road had started to fall apart before it was finished (Nawa, 2006:8). Nawa accuses the US of using Afghanistan as a massive money laundering machine. For example, USAID gives contracts to American companies, and so too does the IMF and World Bank. Those companies skim off large quantities of profit then hand the project on to other subcontractors who in turn do the same. When the money gets converted into actual action there is very little left, the result of which is sub-standard and cheap work (Nawa, 2006:28). This is possible because follow up work is minimal; especially due to the fragile security situation where it is often difficult to travel and audit work.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), the agency in charge of studying the expenditure of the US Federal Government and reporting back to congress and the American people, undertook a study of Afghan reconstruction. It found that

> "because of staffing constraints and competing priorities, USAID did not perform annual contractor performance evaluations in any sector as required by USAID policy directives in 2004 and federal regulation" (GAO, 2005:44).

The GAO complains that:

"Throughout fiscal year 2004, staffing problems and security restrictions limited on-site project monitoring."(GAO, 2005: 48).

What transpired as a result of these monitoring "constraints" was that when contractors were sent in to finish off projects that were unfinished, they arrived to find the site did not exist or projects had not even been started. Not only that, but contractors and non-profit organisation charged by USAID to build projects in specific sites arrived to find the sites were "sheer mountain slopes, a dry riverbed and even a graveyard" (Stephens, 2005).

Nawa appreciates the security situation is hampering reconstruction but believes that is little excuse for inefficiency, substandard work and what she considers to be theft from the Afghans' aid budget. The wasting of aid and the visible farce that has become the reconstruction effort, with school buildings collapsing whilst they are being built, angers local people as they can see where their money is being squandered (Stephens, 2005; Nawa,2006: 28).

The level of Afghan corruption and what is described as organised crime is also taking its toll on the country. In October of 2006 the head of customs at Kabul airport, General Aminullah Amrkhel, was sacked for, as he claims, being too good at his job (BBC, 2006i). When Amrkhel was in charge of customs the number of arrests at Kabul airport rose sharply. Amrkhel believes he was close to cracking a smuggling ring that was using Kabul airport as a conduit to get heroin out of the country. He believes that "mafia" have become so powerful that they are able to have him removed from his job (Amrkhel, cited in BBC, 2006i). Amrkhel made previous claims of being impeded in doing his job and he substantiated these claims by realising a video showing the arrest of a woman carrying several kilos of heroin. The woman became aggressive and demanded to be released as she had powerful friends, her threats proved to be accurate as shortly afterwards she was released. Amrkhel was doing a good job at stemming the flow of Afghan heroin through an important transit point and now finds himself redundant with his government bodyguards having been removed and in fear of his life (Lyon, 2006). Amrkhel's mistreatment has not gone unnoticed by the Afghan parliament. Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, the head speaker of the Upper House, demanded an investigation into the sacking of Amrkhel and threatens resignation if nothing is done. Mojaddedi is a senior Islamic cleric who is respected by the local people and

criticises the government for hiring weak people and firing the strong as he believes corruption is increasing, hindering the country's move to stability (BBC, 2006i). The government runs the risk of loosing its good ministers as they become increasingly disillusioned with corruption and the weakness of other members of parliament. The Afghan Government is not alone in its alleged corruption and criticisms of its staff. Similarly, the US military has suffered criticism over staffing shortages and the behaviour of staff in their employ.

4.2.3 Military Contractors

Military contractors are not new, especially in the US military, but the huge increase in use of military contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq is new. The US military is spread thin, which has resulted in the need to hire civilian-military contractors. There is concern that military contractors are not held accountable for their actions under military uniformed regulations (Werve, 2004). These contractors undertake convoy security and combat assistance. Schakowsky, the US Representative and member of House Committee on Intelligence, argues that companies that supply military-contractors are focused by profit. Conflict is simply their bread and butter and their goals are not necessarily one and the same with Coalition troops. Contractors have been implicated in the Abu-Graib abuse scandal, as well as other legal and financial wrong doing (Schakowsky, 2006). Contractors have been linked to prostitution, the drugs trade, unlawful killing and are, for all intents and purposes, employed by Coalition countries' tax payers (Schakowsky, 2006). When these armed units commit crimes or abuses they are not part of a hierarchy that can hold them accountable, their code of conduct and actions may differ hugely from uniformed troops (Traynor, 2003). The action of these armed groups cannot help but be perceived by the Afghan people as that of Coalition troops and rightly so as they are employed by the Coalition. Therefore their actions affect the Coalition's foreign policy goals and perception from the local people and Schakowsky is concerned over the lack of monitoring and accountability of non-state personnel in state business (Schakowsky, 2006).

In June, 2004, David Passaro, a military contractor hired and working for the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was indicted for committing acts of torture in Afghanistan (HRW, 2005). These private security contractors are not military personnel and, therefore, do not wear military uniform but instead carry arms whilst in civilian

clothes, sometimes protecting military convoys or compounds. This could lead to two confusions. One, that they are military personnel and that their actions are that of Coalition soldiers or, two, that they are not military personnel and something different like NGO staff. This boundary can further be confused when civilian-military contractors are guarding civilian contractors working on road reconstruction or school rebuilding under the directions of Coalition forces. To the outsider it would look as though aid or development workers were using their own armed guards, being detrimental to perception and understanding by local people of how NGOs work.

These private security firms are in wide use all over Afghanistan. Nearly every contractor hires security staff to protect its workers. Some foreign security firms are employed to train the Afghan police (Nawa, 2006:14-15). What is of concern with these armed contractors is that if they break the law there is no system for them to be punished or held accountable. The lack of a governing body or permit scheme means that they are basically foreign armed forces acting with impunity and under the radar. This was illustrated by Jack Idema's illegal detention centre and prison in Kabul but, more recently, there have been other incidents (BBC, 2004c). A US company called USPI who has secured many contracts in Afghanistan is criticised by Nawa for hiring staff that are unqualified, ill-trained and for hiring local ex-militia and brokering deals with local warlords. Nawa argues that by approaching and paying local warlords for protection and giving power to local militia groups they are undermining the power of the local government and helping to arm belligerent factions within the country (Nawa, 2006:14-15). An American security contractor who recently shot his interpreter in the head over a drunken argument was helicoptered out the next day and has been subjected to neither Afghan, US military law, nor US law (Associated press, 2005; Nawa ,2006:15).

One of the major contractors used by the US military worldwide is DynCorp, which has a tarnished record on human rights and its staff's conduct. In 2001, a group of its workers employed in Bosnia were caught running a sex industry, buying and selling woman as prostitutes. DynCorp were then forced to pay one-hundred and ten thousand pounds to a UN police officer that DynCorp contracted by a British Employment tribunal, due to unfairly sacking the officer for reporting the illegal sex ring that included girls as young as twelve. DynCorp employees were also accused of video

taping the rape of one of the woman (Barnett, 2003). In the same year in Columbia packages sent by DynCorp employees were found to contain traces of heroin (Muse, 2005). The company has developed a reputation in Afghanistan as being aggressive and unfriendly towards the local people. A DynCorp official tried to play down the allegations saying how they tried to run an "ethical ship" and that "we are all ambassadors of America" (Nawa, 2006:15-18). Nawa believes that is the problem. Not only are they ambassadors of America but of any other foreign soldier or aid worker involved in reconstruction, aid projects or security contracts. A BBC journalist, Crispin Thorold, witnessed a DynCorp guard slap the Afghan Transport Minister and said that they were aggressive and were feared, not only by Afghans but also by visiting European diplomats (BBC, 2004a; Nawa, 2006:18). These men outwardly work with and represent the Coalition forces in and out of uniform but act with little recourse for their actions and are a danger to the perception of foreign contractors and aid workers within the country. Their actions serve to provoke and alienate the Afghan people, causing confusion of what role they play and, arguably, shrinking humanitarian space.

4.3 Summary

If NGO neutrality has indeed been lost and humanitarian space relies on improved security and development through the actions of the Coalition and the Afghan Government the future seems bleak. NGOs clearly cannot operate successfully without a secure environment. The barriers to security are opium production, misplaced eradication policies, lack of development funding, institutionalised Afghan Government corruption, banditry, uneconomic and substandard reconstruction, unrestricted profiteering by development contractors, aggressive and unruly civilian-military contractors, uncontrollable borders and the growing frustration of the Afghan people who's suffering increases the longer these issues go un-tackled. What has been lacking in Afghanistan is accountability. The accountability of substandard development contractors, civilian-military contractors, Western donors and Afghan officials needs to improve to allow security and development to proceed. Authors, such as Nawa and Senlis are critical of current progress and sceptical of future progress.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The findings are split in to eight topics so as to allow clear analysis of each subject. Each topic section starts with common ground shared by interviewees and questionnaire respondents and then moves on to compare and contrast any differing opinions. Respondents' opinions are also compared and contrasted with arguments from the literature. The findings cover all the main themes that were raised in the research and the literature that are seen to contribute to the shrinking of humanitarian space in Afghanistan.

5.1.1 Background and Chapter Structure

Two of the questionnaire respondents asked for their organisational and personal anonymity in the research. The recognition of inherent danger in the job of being an NGO staff member in Afghanistan was apparent in all my respondents and these two respondents did not want to risk exacerbating an existing risk. These men and woman work in war zones as a profession and the presence of danger is no surprise. The research aim is to find out if the incidents of direct targeting of NGOs has risen and, if so, whether these men and woman recognise that fact and the possible causes. It was clear from the literature that some NGOs blamed PRTs for a blurring of boundaries between civilian and military personnel, therefore it was important to allow representatives of the PRTs to offer a rebuttal and voice their own opinion. Afghanistan is also becoming more dangerous for NGO staff due to the increased fighting between insurgents and Coalition and government groups. The reason for this upsurge in violence was thought to be best understood and explained by the military personnel themselves, whose job it is to increase security and battle the insurgency and posses a good understanding of the situation.

The main themes of this chapter are:
- Security.
- Neutrality.
- Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).

- Religion

- Poverty

- Alienation of a people.

- Is NGO tolerance for risk increasing?

- What is needed for peace?

The analysis is structured in this way because when dealing with qualitative data one has to illustrate that the findings are replicated by respondents or by the literature for verification of results on the different topics (Walsh, 2005:100). As recommended by Fife, for analysis of data the division of subjects into macro groups makes the conceptualisation of the research easier (Fife, 2005:119). The research naturally separates itself out into main topics allowing the analysis of each in turn.

5.1.2 List of Respondents:

Leslie Boswell   Lieutenant Colonel, Officer in command of the British Army PRT in Meymanech in 2005, also tasked with looking at UK future operations in Kandahar and Lashkaghar. He has good operational knowledge of the country and overview of issues.

Len Clift   International Assistance Mission (IAM), a regional manager with a logistical security role in Afghanistan. For the past four years Len has been in charge of IAM security in Afghanistan and has an extremely good knowledge of the security problems and issues.

David Cremoux   Medecins Sans frontiers (MSF) head of mission in Afghanistan for the Swiss section in 2001. He is in contact with colleagues from other NGOs working in the country (as MSF no longer has a presence there).

Ian Joseph   HOPE Internationals Afghanistan Line Manager and Managing Director of Hope Worldwide (London). He has personal and organisational experience in Afghanistan.

Jones (anonymous)   International NGO Programme Manager in Afghanistan.

Stuart Lane   Major, Officer in command of the British Army PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2006. Lane had not been back long when I interviewed him and had a very recent experience of working with NGOs as part of a PRT. He also had recent first-hand experience of the security situation and is well versed in the literature surrounding the civilian-military relationship.

Phyl Redwood   International Assistance Mission (IAM) Project Leader with four years experience in Afghanistan spread between Heart and Kabul. She is currently working in Afghanistan and has up-to-date knowledge.

Smith (anonymous)   International NGO Logistics Co-ordinator in Afghanistan.

5.2 Issues Covered in Primary Data Collection

5.2.1 Security

Without exception all respondents, including the military officers, thought that insecurity was growing. In order to examine occurrence of attacks on NGO staff to see if the fear of attack is a valid one they were asked if their organisation had been attacked. The PRTs are all attacked and it is part of their job to find belligerent elements and most PRTs lost soldiers in fighting. Therefore, the Army respondents were not asked this question. Out of the four NGOs that the respondents came from, each one had knowledge of an attack or kidnapping within their own organisation or a local partner NGO working on their behalf. The consensus was that security is regionally specific and periodically improves and declines but, country-wide, it is worsening. International NGO staff Redwood, Clift, Joseph, Jones and Smith, when asked what the security situation was for humanitarian workers in Afghanistan, all referred to the South being inaccessible and the previously quiet North seeing increasing violence. Joseph, HOPE International line manager in Afghanistan,

explained succinctly that: "the south is very unsafe. I think it is fair to say that the south is Taliban run". It seems humanitarian space has vanished in the South and, as Smith, an international NGO logistics coordinator in Afghanistan explains, it is completely "inaccessible" for humanitarian workers.

All NGO respondents recognised security as a pivotal and vital factor for the continuation of their work. This recognition highlights the fact that the continuation of humanitarian work in Afghanistan is under threat. Dr Mills, Director of the Brenthust foundation[4], author of *The Paradox of Power in an Age of Terror* (2005) and on secondment to ISAF in Afghanistan, has military statistics for violent incidents in Afghanistan at his disposal. The statistics are not just those of humanitarian workers solely but all military personnel, Taliban and local people, giving a gauge of the country's violence holistically. Mills says that the security environment in Afghanistan overall is becoming more dangerous. He justifies his argument by quoting figures that show that one thousand people had been killed by June in 2006 alone. He singles out May 2006 as a particularly bad month as half of those thousands deaths occurred during May and in the same month Kabul witnessed the worst rioting since the fall of the Taliban (Mills, 2006:17).

Both the literature and interviews confirm that the security situation for humanitarian workers is clearly dangerous. All of the organisations interviewed had to cancel or curb projects due to insecurity, which in turn means that the threat to NGO workers is having a secondary impact by preventing aid and development from reaching the people. Why these attacks are being focused on NGOs that have previously been seen as impartial is the real question. Why do these NGO workers believe they are in danger and what has eroded their humanitarian space? Many of the NGO staff were pragmatic in their self-assessment of the increased risk. Smith, for example, gave the explanation that "although most NGOs would consider themselves as independent, the AGEs (Anti Government Elements) will see them as allied with the government or to Coalition forces". Clift, who is in charge of security and logistics for IAM, recognises the fact

---

[4] The Brenthurst Foundation is a think tank contributing to a debate around strategies and policies for strengthening Africa's economic performance. It is aimed at the creation of an environment conducive to positive economic change.

that what his organisation is doing should not be perceived as neutral, he asked the question:

> "how are you neutral, because what you're doing is building up the infrastructure of a country that supports the government...and that is how you are perceived by insurgency forces" (Clift, 2006).

Clift's views of compromised neutrality of NGOs is one that is shared by authors such as Slim and Krahenbuhl, illustrating that NGO staff are not naïve of the fact that by implementing government programs their neutrality and impartiality becomes compromised (Krahenbuhl, 2004:30-31; Slim, 2004:35-37). The loss of neutrality by working with government programs validate them as targets in the eyes of the insurgents as they essentially then become pro-government and Coalition.

Redwood, IAM project leader in Afghanistan, argues that some NGOs that are new to Afghanistan do not attend security meetings or take the advised precautions. Redwood believes that some NGOs are "naïve" to "basic personal safety" and some do not have the necessary security guidelines in place to protect their staff. The respondents believed that one of the reasons that humanitarian space was shrinking in Afghanistan was because the neutrality had indeed become compromised. They did not believe that their organisations were taking sides but because their organisations' goals of peace and security coincide with the goals of the Afghan Government and Coalition forces, making them non-deliberate allies. Clift argues that it is the NGOs' individual responsibility to maximise the security of its own staff members through established standard operating procedures. Clift and Redwood both believe neutrality and perception play a large part in the erosion of humanitarian space but it is made considerably worse by NGOs who do not take security seriously or who lack experience in conflict environments.

5.2.2 Neutrality

The definition of neutrality used earlier in chapter two is:

> "The principle of neutrality requires outside actors to avoid giving military or political advantage to any side over another" (Guttieri, 2005:1).

Most NGOs make public the importance of neutrality as one of their guiding principles in their literature and web pages but, in practice, neutrality in a conflict area such as Afghanistan may be impossible. Joseph, an international NGO programme manager in

Afghanistan, offered the explanation that most NGOs believed in neutrality but that it was a "sliding scale". NGOs and humanitarian organisations do not all subscribe to the same neutrality ethos. There are different layers of what neutrality means practically to different organisations. Cremoux, head of mission for MSF in Afghanistan in 2001, stated that neutrality and impartiality is "the key...it's the basic principle". He clarified his point by saying that: "neutrality means we don't want to be assimilated to any other groups". Cremoux was determined in his view that he did not believe that if the NGOs were seen to be neutral that they would not be attacked. He also argued that the military "should not have anything to do with" humanitarian work and that funding has a part to play in your neutrality as it should be independent to allow freedom of action. This would mean that receiving a large percentage of government funding or working with PRTs would be unacceptable to MSF.

Cremoux's views are clear but when Clift was asked for his view on the importance of impartiality and neutrality he quickly responded "well it didn't work for MSF". Clift was referring to the attack and subsequent departure from Afghanistan of the aid agency, which is viewed by Joseph as possibly the most staunchly neutral of all the aid organisations. Clift believes that the local people's perception of you is what counts, rather than your neutrality. Wherever the local people get their information from is what is important. Clift believes that whoever supplies the local propaganda controls the local people's perception, arguing: "if they are seeing you in a certain way, that's the way its going to be". Clift, with his experience in Afghanistan, is pragmatic in his approach to neutrality and says that he would not work with PRTs on the ground as that would be seen as an open military connection that would change the local peoples perception of his organisation. Krahenbuhl, of the ICRC, argues that PRTs and the military perversion of humanitarianism is a problem because perception is such a big issue. He strongly believes that security is inexorably bound to the perception of the organisation, echoing Clifts sentiments. For this reason Krahenbuhl, like Clift, affirms his belief in independence and impartiality, arguing that they are not "an old recipe for a new world" but by affirming its principles in adversity, access can only be obtained by being independent and neutral with clear separation between themselves and political decision making (Krahenbuhl, 2004:32). However, as Clift points out, neutrality is of no protection if you are not perceived as neutral.

Cremoux argued that this perception change in NGO neutrality was partly to do with PRTs and that the military should not take part in humanitarian work. In contrast, Clift believes that the PRTs' work was actually helping humanitarian space by removing the military hardware from the insurgents, saying: "if they hadn't done their work then we would have had these guys rolling around in tanks and all sorts". Clift thinks that if the PRTs had not been disarming people, NGOs would be increasingly caught in the crossfire between all the various groups. Clift's argument is that if it were not for the PRTs actively disarming communities and warlords the fighting would be worse and the ability of various groups to inflict violence on the NGOs would be much greater. Therefore, Clift believes that in their disarming role PRTs have helped to protect humanitarian space in Afghanistan.

Joseph's, HOPE International Afghan line manager, view on PRTs was that they could certainly have a negative impact on the perception of the neutrality of NGO workers, supporting what Clift believes. However, Josephs expressed less conservative views than Cremoux on the topic, saying: "humanitarianism, if you like, surely is not just the preserve of the aid community". Cremoux, however, strongly believes that humanitarianism should solely be the preserve of the aid community. Joseph's argument mirrors those of authors such as Slim, being that if you are in a position to perform an act of altruism to help another then you should take that opportunity, whether you are military or not (Slim, 2004:38-39). Joseph goes on to argue that he believes that if the military are there and have the right resources for the job, there is no reason why they should not undertake humanitarian work as long as it is clear who is doing it. Conversely, Joseph believes that the quick impact *hearts and minds* projects as a strategy for altruistic force protection is not helpful as it implements bad projects with lack of planning that can reflect badly on aid organisations implementing similar projects elsewhere. However, Joseph also believes that if the military project is legitimate and well planned, delivering resources or infrastructure to those who need it then it is positive and should be done. Joseph stresses the importance that the distinction between the military and development organisations must be clear to the local people, which is arguably not the case in Afghanistan.

Joseph is extremely critical of Colin Powell's "force multiplier" speech, that attempted to link NGOs to the US led war on terror, describing NGOs as part of the US's "combat

team" (Powell, 2001). Joseph was shocked that Powell put NGO workers at risk by his statement and that the NGO community should unite and offer a stern rebuttal in situations such as those. Joseph then went on to illustrate another point, saying the problem is that certain NGOs, especially American NGOs, in hearing Powell's speech, might actually be thinking "yeah, great", rather than sharing in Josephs disgust with Powell's statement. Joseph's point is that NGOs are far from being a homogenous group and have different views on neutrality, different agendas and different political affiliations and goals. The extent of how neutral an organisation is varies widely and therefore so too will the perception of NGOs. What is acceptable for neutrality between different NGOs is different for others. MSF, for example, would be appalled at being described as being part of the US's combat team and a force multiplier but some NGOs may welcome that title.

To exemplify what Joseph and HOPE International deems as acceptable collaboration with the armed forces two examples he gave are worth noting. The first was when HOPE International got a project to build a hospital in Afghanistan in 2002 and needed to get some generators in to start up the hospital. The British military helped, by putting in a quick impact proposal to DFID who granted them the money required to do so. The army arrived with the generators and installed them in a single day and then left. Joseph believed that it did not clash because it was a "one off...not like they were there everyday". He asks: "What's better? To not have them help or get the hospital up and running". This shows Joseph's and HOPE International's pragmatic approach that was displayed in another illustrative example. During a very bad winter in Kabul two years ago there were refugees in the mountains around Kabul dying due to lack of food and blankets. One of HOPE International's staff went to various organisations, pleading for food, blankets and medicines and got none. The last door she tried was the US military, who said "yeah, we have stuff we don't need" and they delivered it to the camps. Joseph says he has the up most respect for MSF but to save lives he would rather be pragmatic. Joseph believes that MSF would never approach the US military for help in that situation. He went on to say that he believed that it might be perceived that HOPE was in cahoots with the US saying: "hopefully not...In certain situations you have to be pragmatic". Indeed it may be perceived that HOPE International had a close relationship with the military if they accept their help to get a hospital up and running and are seen receiving help from the US military to deliver aid to refugee camps. The choice comes

down to using the militaries help or the local people suffering the consequences of non action. Some organisations such as MSF would indeed choose the road of non action rather than work with the armed forces so as to retain their neutrality as stated by Cremoux of MSF. This poses a juxtaposition between morality and neutrality and Joseph would risk neutrality to help.

Clift and Joseph share a pragmatism and understanding that neutrality will not discount you from being a target and if you are part of a government scheme you are not neutral anyway. The loss of neutrality of a NGO if working as part of a government scheme was recognised by Jones, a NGO program manager in Afghanistan, who believes in the importance of neutrality for NGOs. Jones also understands that:

> "The Afghan government is so involved with the US, conflict is often also against the government. In our work, we have to work with the government at all levels, and this can make us appear sympathetic to their cause and therefore I guess we're not purely neutral and, in this case, can never be".

This sliding scale that Joseph speaks of is very apparent, even in this research's small sample. The workers all believed in neutrality and every organisation had a different level at which they believed neutrality to be practical, with a stark contrast between Cremoux and Joseph. Clift believes that the most important neutrality is that perceived by the local people. Clift argues that no matter what your organisation does with funding or PRT or government partners,

> "it's the locals' perception of your neutrality which counts because they're the people. Most of these attacks have some local backing".

Warlords have taken the place of governmental power structures and for anyone to operate or gain access to an area the local warlord must give permission, Clift argues. Outsiders need local information to coordinate an attack and gain access and therefore it is the local perception that has the largest bearing on personal safety. Clift gives an example of a team who went into an area to set up an eye clinic and got permission for access from the local warlord. A few weeks later a military special operations patrol turned up and came and talk to them. To the local people the perception is that they are the vanguard for the international forces, Clift argues. Clift believes subsequently what you say or do is of no consequence, the perception has been changed and your humanitarian space altered and therefore your organisation's safety becomes compromised. It is apparent that the military can have a large bearing on perceived

neutrality of NGOs on the ground but there is perhaps a question as to whether this is respected and appreciated.

The two army officer respondents, Lane and Boswell, both of whom are recent PRT commanders in Afghanistan, were asked what they thought about the importance of neutrality for humanitarian workers. Their response was dismissive. Lane believed the locals did not differentiate between foreigners as they were "all just white fellas", where Boswell argued that "as an issue, I think this is overplayed". Boswell went on to say that, in his experience, the dying do not discriminate as to where their aid is coming from as long as it comes. People such as Hatting, a long serving ICRC staff member and ex-Danish military officer, argue that neutrality is about saving the lives of humanitarian workers and not whether or not the needy care where their life saving aid is coming from (Hatting, 2004). If Hatting is right then Boswell's argument is missing the point.

Lane actually seemed offended by the notion of neutrality, as if it was a way of dodging responsibility. Lane thought neutrality was a selfish act saying that "we" (the military) "don't take credit" for the development work that we do to support the Afghan Government. He went onto say:

> "we promote the Afghan Government, the Afghan Governor and central government. Why? Because it brings rule of law. They (the local people) see the benefit of supporting their government".

He then criticises the NGOs saying that:

> "if you work in isolation then how are you promoting the government of Afghanistan? You're not...If NGOS do not toe the line with what the government of Afghanistan wants then surely they're working against them".

Lane's view does not appreciate the concept that NGO neutrality and separation from the government is their protection, indeed the only protection NGOs have. Lane seemed frustrated with the lack of military control over the NGOs and argued that the military had nothing to do with the NGOs being attacked and that they were only ever a positive protection of NGOs. He used language that portrayed the NGOs as childlike:

> "regardless of the military being there or not, we are all one and the same as far as they (local Afghans) are concerned so why try and have space apart? Who comes crying when they get hurt? They (NGOs) do. Who do they (NGOs) rely

on? Us (British Army). Do we have any reliance on them? No. I don't rely. On that operation I didn't rely on NGOs one iota. Why? Because they are doing their own thing and we can't direct them".

For an officer in charge of a PRT his understanding and sympathy for the need for NGO separation and neutrality seems to be lacking. Lanes disregard for NGO neutrality is shocking as Lane is a PRT officer who only a short time ago was liaising on the ground with the Afghan people and NGOs. Some NGOs are heavily critical of the military and if Lane's views were expressed to NGOs during his work it may help to explain some NGOs disillusionment with the military. It also illustrates that the major issue of neutrality that all of the NGO respondents deemed as important, but to differing degrees, is not taken seriously by at least two of the British PRT officers in Afghanistan. If they do not take neutrality seriously then it is likely that the PRTs would not take into account NGO neutrality in their actions or dealings with NGOs.

Boswell shares Lane's bemusement with the need for independence, voicing his confusion by saying:

> "I also see it as unarguable that all actors in theatre should coordinate their
> activities to avoid waste and duplication and ensure that effort is prioritised.
> Amazingly to me some (NGOs), perhaps many, value their independence above
> such a goal".

Boswell argues that he is unwilling to see or to try to understand the importance of NGO neutrality. He does not seem to comprehend the fact that some NGOs strongly disagree with the Coalition force's actions in Afghanistan and Iraq and would not work with them on principle. Boswell and Lane explain their frustration with the fact that they see a large international force in Afghanistan with the resources to make a real difference, if only they were better coordinated and working in unison. Boswell spoke of such frustration saying:

> "I tried to help coordinate a development effort in Faryab through the offices of
> the UN representative but it is very difficult to do because of the varying
> agendas of the many different actors. Some, out of principle, would refuse any
> contact with the military. Others wanted our intelligence and assessment and
> would then decide what to do and some even asked for our protection which I
> always gave, within reason, if it was going to lead to some positive action for the
> Afghan people. Finally, there was a category of organisation who could not be

coordinated because only they knew why they had come to Afghanistan to address a perceived need that only they understood".

Boswell sees the resources are in place to make a difference but lack common coordination through various NGOs. He does not appear to see that organisations such as MSF, IAM and HOPE do not want to be seen as working side by side with the military as ultimately they are civilians that will become a military target.

Lane was also critical of the lack or coordination between the military and NGOs making the point that:

"NGOs will not address all the problems of the country. They specifically hit their skill base, be it World Vision or whoever. They all hit what they are good at and they do it in isolation. That creates significant dramas".

Lane is correct in the fact that NGOs will not directly engage the security situation as this is not their mandate, they are a neutral, peaceful force. Lane may also be correct about the duplication of jobs by various organisation due to lack of coordination and separate agendas not making the best use of skills and resources but, as Cremoux argues, for the NGOs there is no other way. Lane is clearly frustrated saying:

"maybe I am a bit naive and idealistic but if we are there to help these people we should be doing it together, not going off to our own little stone pipes and doing it in isolation because, inevitably, it will definitely waste resources and will also send mixed messages and sometimes it damages your end state, what your trying to do. Perhaps that's the bigger question. Should they (NGOs) have their own battle space? (He meant humanitarian space)".

Lane believes that all the various groups should work together and that NGOs should perhaps not be allowed to work on their own, which would remove independent and neutral humanitarian action from Afghanistan all together.

Lane and Boswell's view that the military and NGOs have the same end goal is a view shared by The Chief Scholar at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Hugo Slim. The Coalition forces and NGOs share an end goal for liberal democracy, winning the support of the local people through securing public goods and marginalising the insurgents, whilst building the local support for the Afghan Government, promoting peace and security. Multi-mandate NGOs and the military share the same goal of peace through effective development (Slim, 2004:42). Lane and Boswell's thoughts follow

similar lines and have no sympathy for any arguments that suggest that NGOs should not work with the military. Cremoux, Clift and Joseph believe NGOs and the armed forces openly working together risks NGO workers' lives. Do the benefits outweigh the cost in the civilian military relationship?

Lane sees the positive aspects of NGOs that worked with him and described them as "fantastic" as they could "see the advantages" of working alongside the military. However, other NGOs that he describes as "misguided" believe that: "the military is some sort of evil empire that wants to take over the world and murder, death, kill". He sees NGOs that are not linking themselves to the government or the Coalition as an impediment to reconstruction as they are not helping to spread the influence of the government and, in turn, the rule of law that he sees as the country's only way forward. Lane went to Afghanistan with the intention of bolstering the Afghan government and helping to spread the rule of law and, in the process of doing so, he and his men raised money and helped a local orphanage. They also recovered eighty tonnes of high explosives, ten-thousand anti-tank mines and fifteen-thousand antipersonnel mines. During that tour of duty he lost two of his men during a road side ambush and several others were injured. His men paid a high price and he finds it hard to understand why everyone does not just join together to get the job done.

However, Clift argues that if you step back you realise that NGOs cannot afford to be linked to the military, not just because of their safety in Afghanistan but because of every other conflict environment they work in. Lane himself admitted that the lack of differentiation between NGO and military meant that "we all reflect on each other". With the negative press that the military have had since 2001, aligning your NGO with the military or Coalition could have deadly repercussions for your staff in parts of the globe, Joseph argues. Boswell struggles to understand how some NGOs are happy to work closely with his PRT and others will not and has no sympathy for NGOs that have become "competitive" due to a clamour for funding when "efforts are not coordinated".

The polarisation of views between the military respondents and that of Cremoux of MSF is distinctly apparent. Cremoux believes NGOs should not participate in humanitarian forums that the military are a part of due to the risk of being associated with the military agenda. Cremoux also believes that the military doing humanitarian

work is wrong because they are not transparent and there are political motives for project success. For example, Cremoux said he believed the military give an unjustifiably positive picture of their projects in Afghanistan as publicly they cannot afford to be seen losing another country to militants in the same way that Iraq has. Cremoux argues that military projects are insufficiently planned and do not develop local ownership of the projects, nor long term plans. Projects are not used or disintegrate without a sustainable plan, thus damaging the local people and their perception of aid projects.

Cremoux's arguments reinforce the arguments made by Nawa who was critical of the military and US Government's development programmes as a box-ticking exercise rather than true development (Nawa, 2006). Humanitarian work for selfish means, Cremoux believes, is recognised by recipients and confusion is spread in a population that was bombed by a military force one week, then provided with aid by the same force the next. Boswell does not hide the fact that he believes aid has a "practical use" to win trust and support, however Cremoux and Joseph see this as false, arguing that it just serves to spread confusion and anger that then can be mistakenly projected onto the aid community. Cremoux argues that "acceptance is our main strategy" and when that is compromised things become dangerous. Cremoux cites the introduction of PRTs as having a "strong impact" on the change in acceptance of NGOs by communities and, as such, are a contributing factor to the attack of MSF. Cremoux, when asked if the military should have any involvement with humanitarian work, did not hesitate in sharing his view that "I am convinced that they should not have anything to do with that side (humanitarian work)". Cremoux's opinion is diametrically opposed to that of Boswell and Lane's and illustrates the clash of opinions between NGO and military doctrine. Neutrality and impartiality are principles of humanitarianism but in practice are they possible?

Border, a US Army officer who served in Afghanistan, mirrors points made by Joseph and Clift by arguing that one must view aid from a "pragmatic standpoint". Opposition to military aid on the grounds that it is not impartial and is not supplied purely on the basis of need, with no strings, ignores the reality of the situation and the need of a population for food, water, healthcare and security (Border, 2004:43). Border criticises NGOs for their idealistic views as it is not they but the people who are in need that will

pay the price. Borders makes the point that radical extremists do not respect NGO neutrality, an argument also used by Lane, Redwood, and Clift. Border argues that the brutal attacks have stopped NGOs working in certain areas, meaning that either PRTs must operate, or no one at all. The blurring of boundaries is a moot point if the insurgents do not consider there to be a difference between the two groups. Neutrality is a dynamic ideal for many NGOs and serves a different purpose to different NGOs, to differing degrees. Whether NGOs do or do not work with the military or Afghan Government almost certainly changes perception of organisations and therefore safety repercussions for NGOs on the ground in Afghanistan. Border believes that it has now reached the point where every NGO worker is a target purely because they are working for a NGO and they are foreigners in Afghanistan. This argument is also made by Jones, Clift, Lane and Boswell. The question is not should the military and NGOs work together but how humanitarian space got to this state?

5.2.3 Provincial Reconstructions Teams

PRTs are pivotal to the humanitarian space debate as it is argued that PRTs are one of the core ways in which NGOs have lost their perceived neutrality (Jakobson, 2005:20). Kenny Gluck and Marine Buissonnière, MSF project leader in Afghanistan in 2004 and the Sectary General for MSF in 2004, argue that PRTs and the military are a cause of the change of perception of NGOs and working together will only compound the existing problem (Gluck, 2004). To add to this debate it is important to find out if the PRTs perceive there to be a perception issue for NGOs working with PRTs and compare and contrast the PRTs view with the view of NGOs and humanitarians themselves. Boswell and Lane made it clear previously that they did not consider NGO neutrality to be an issue worthwhile discussing. However perception of the civilian-military relationship by local people may be different. If the two groups are in agreement then positive steps can be taken within a relationship of mutual understanding and respect. However, if the PRTs and NGOs have differing opinions on the importance of perception for NGOs by the local people and the risks posed to NGOs by a civilian-military relationship, this will be a conflict between the two groups.

When the army officers, Boswell and Lane, were posed the question of whether they thought the PRTs were having a negative impact on NGO security and the shrinking of humanitarian space, their answers were dismissive. Boswell said: "it is very difficult to

seriously make the argument that PRTs have had a negative effect on NGO security" Boswell gave the impression of NGO naivety of the situation on the ground and that criticism of PRTs was no more than projected anger from fear of their situation, saying:

> "Perhaps they (PRTs) are a cheap target for NGOs who desire a secure and stable environment and encounter a reality that is enormously more complex and uncertain that they imagined."

Boswell is dismissive and unwilling to entertain the idea, even though he makes clear in his answer that: "I have read the Save the Children Report and the Danish one". The reports that Boswell is making reference to are the 2004 Save the Children report *Provincial reconstruction teams and humanitarian-military relations in Afghanistan* and the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) report *PRT's in Afghanistan: Successful but not sufficient* by Peter Jakobsen. These reports clearly argue that military *hearts and minds* operations implemented by PRTs "blur the lines between humanitarian and military actors" (Save the Children, 2006:47). The report by Save the Children criticises the fact that "these concerns have gone largely unheeded" by the military and only after the murder of the MSF staff has the subject had the attention it requires (Save the Children, 2004:52). While the reports are critical they also give a balanced account, drawing on positive aspects of PRTs. The Save the Children report gives credit to the PRTs for having been "successful in mediating and diffusing tensions between local commanders" (Save the Children, 2004:29). The DIIS report similarly praises the British PRT as "a success" because it: "facilitated reconstruction and helped to extend the authority of the central government" (Jakobsen, 2006:34). However, Jakobsen outlines criticism of the PRTs due to soldiers wearing civilian clothes, carrying hidden weapons, using un-marked vehicles and doing quick impact *hearts and minds* projects like mobile health clinics, outlining the argument that PRT units:

> "blur the lines between the military forces and the humanitarian organisations exposing the latter to increased risks" (Jakobsen, 2006:20).

Jakobsen warns that PRTs need to win the *hearts and minds* of humanitarian organisations and that some of the PRT practices, such as leaflets threatening to withhold aid, only serve to poison the civilian-military relationship and halt development. Despite the fact that Boswell makes reference to reading these articles, he makes light of the arguments in the papers and criticises NGOs saying that occasionally the military makes mistakes but then suffers "criticism from those afar in safety", insinuating a removed naivety to what is actually going on the ground. Dismissal and

unheeded criticism is what both reports warn will sour the civilian-military relationship. Boswell is dismissive in his belief that the military is having a negative effect on NGO security. Save the Children wrote the report to raise awareness within the military in particular on their effect on humanitarian space. Boswell's argument is that there is no topic to debate and clearly believes the Save the Children report lacks validity.

Major Lane is more pragmatic in his approach saying he does not believe PRTs blur the boundaries between NGOs and the military. He argues the boundaries were never there, saying:

> "to be brutally frank, the Afghans in northern Afghanistan did not differentiate between the PRTs and the NGOs. Why? Because it's international community, you're all white fellas".

This is a view partially shared by Clift, who argues that it does not matter if you are a neutral NGO, it makes no difference "if you've got white skin". Clift was arguing more that it did not matter if you were neutral because you are perceived to be helping the government if you were white and so being white-skinned predisposes you to attack. Lane, on the other hand, was arguing that the local people could not tell the difference between the military and NGOs. Either way, both men believed that neutrality did not matter if you were seen to be white, regardless of affiliation to a PRT, you were going to be a target. This may be true that regardless of any civilian- military connection that being white or perceived as Western or even Christian maybe enough to make a NGO worker a target.

5.2.4 Religion

Religion was a topic that was left out of questions asked in questionnaires and interviews due to the fact that NGOs have had access in Afghanistan before 2001, without fear of religiously motivated attacks. However, religion is a vital topic brought up by respondents in the interviews.The increased awareness of the religious divide and militant Islam globally since 2001 may have changed the importance of religion in Afghanistan[5].

---

[5] The debate on religion and the radical Muslim threat is a large topic that would require in-depth study and a dedicated thesis of its own

Clift, when asked if he thought Afghanistan could ever be peaceful, answered in a broader sense. He spoke of the "clash of cultures" and religious polarisation between "the Western lifestyle and the Islamic brotherhood". He believes that the conflict in Iraq and Lebanon should not be seen as separate conflicts and are all part of the same thing. He describes the rising religious conflict as:

> "the extreme Muslim brotherhood are taking on what they see as a corrupt Western society in what ever way they can, in whatever areas they can".

Clift says that local issues can cause a flashpoint but there is an underlying cause which is seen as worth fighting for. Clift believes that a globalised radicalisation of religious tensions is fuelling the war against the Coalition troops in Afghanistan, as well as other countries. He argues that this is helping to shrink the humanitarian space of humanitarian workers who are Western and perceived as Christian, thus becoming a legitimised target as part of a global religious war. Other NGO staff believe that violence is not simply to defeat an occupying force but a larger moral battle against the west.

Redwood reinforces the idea of violence directed at Western targets rather than just a military ones, but does not make a clear parallel with religion saying,

> "resurgence in the South of anti-government elements who are anti the West. Humanitarian work is seen as Western and both foreign and local workers, as well as beneficiaries, may be targeted".

Redwood said that in the past neither foreigners nor humanitarian workers were the target, although sometimes work was affected because there was fighting. Now the "West" is the target and humanitarian work is perceived by anti- government elements as "Western". Clift and Redwood are not alone in their thoughts of a clash of culture and religion. Joseph also sees the religious link with other Muslim countries and argues that: "it's just not right, in my opinion, that the US just let Israel continue to bomb Lebanon". Joseph sees Tony Blair (UK Prime Minister) and George Bush's (US President) decision not to intervene in Lebanon as inexcusable. He believes that actions such as these have repercussions all over the Muslim world, Afghanistan being no exception. Joseph argued that: "the US and the UK don't do themselves any favours in this kind of thing". Joseph is saying is that there is a global conflict between Western, supposedly Christian, values and radical Islam. The lack of intervention by the UK and US in Muslim Lebanon, Joseph believes, will be seen as a statement to Muslims

everywhere, including Afghanistan, that the West is against Islam. Joseph believes the lack of action by the US and UK in Lebanon will act to spur the militants on to continue or increase their war on Western targets in Afghanistan and globally. This anti western religiously motivated violence is becoming increasingly recognised as factor in the shrinking of humanitarian space.

Redwood recognises the role of religion saying that:

> "those that carry out the attacks believe they are doing Allah's will. They see the West as evil and if NGOs are the West then they are viewed as evil".

She goes on to say the one of the country's main barriers to peace is the fact that "fundamental Islam is also unwilling to accept moderate Islam". Clift argues that religious violence has increasingly been the propellant for war and conflict all over the world. Bin Ladens considerable wealth has been traced to joint ventures between his front companies and the Sudanese government that used 'Islamic charities' to bank-role Jihad. Third World Relief, an Islamic charity, was found to be filtering money from bin Laden's accounts to Muslims in the Bosnian conflict. Arabs trained in Afghanistan were also sent to fight with their Bosnian Muslim brothers[6] (Rasanayagam, 2003:229-230).

Western culture and the strict form of Islam practised in Afghanistan are diametrically opposed. Johnson et al describe how men who have never seen exposed female flesh in public and now have satellite TV being beamed into Afghanistan with pornography amongst the viewers choices (Johnson et al, 2004:25-27). These alien cultures are colliding and the Western culture is seen as a perversion. The conflict in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and the lack of action in Lebanon are part of a larger battle of religion. The respondents recognise that violence in Afghanistan cannot be viewed in national isolation as there is religious conflict world wide but the contrast of Western culture meeting strict Islamic culture is particularly pronounced in Afghanistan. In short, violence against Western targets, including NGOs, is a defence of not only a country but of a religion and set of values alien to Western society. The radicalisation of young men in Afghanistan to fight for the Islamic cause is made all the more easy by the prevailing poverty within the country. Afghanistan lacks employment for the vast

---

[6] For an in-depth look at the international funding of terror read Loretta Napoleoni's 2003 book "Terror Inc: Tracing the money behind global terrorism"

majority of people and becoming a militant is one of the only sources of employment that pays.

5.2.5 Poverty

In the United Nation's list of Least Developed Countries[7] Afghanistan is in the top fifty, making it one of the poorest countries in the world (UN-OHRLLS, 2007). Afghanistan has suffered from a quarter of a centaury of war. Johnson believes that if the Afghan people are continuously denied the chance of a better future, a future without grinding poverty, they will ultimately become desperate and that desperation, particularly in the youth, will turn to militantism (Johnson et al, 2004: 214). Johnson is making the point that poverty in Afghanistan is the second battle against terrorism that must be fought to secure peace. Is poverty reduction actually happening five years after the initial promises of aid?

Following the riots in May 2006 when the CARE offices were targeted by a mob, Paul Barker, the CARE International country director, said he believed "simmering anger against foreign influence" was the cause of the targeting of his offices and others in the violence (Barker, cited in Walsh, 2006). Barker believes "There's a lot of resentment against the perceived wealth of foreigners". Although six and a half billion pounds in Western aid has been spent in Afghanistan since 2001, many Afghans are angry with the pace of progress and the lack of poverty alleviation (Walsh, 2006). The continued increase in Taliban support and civil unrest in Afghanistan shows that the local people are unhappy about the rate of change. Joseph feels that the perception of the international community and NGOs in particular is not helped by their use of expensive four-wheel-drive vehicles with all the latest "gadgets". Joseph shares Barkers belief that the perceived wealth of NGOs is causing resentment towards NGOs and foreigners. Joseph spoke of when he worked in Afghanistan, saying that he chose a vehicle that did not exude wealth, as some of the other NGOs. Joseph argued that he felt that it was wrong for his organisations to be seen spending money on expensive new vehicles, which he believes helps to build resentment in a people who are living in poverty. Joseph and Barker are aware that the Afghan people know that money is coming into

---

[7] The UN office in charge of these statistics is: The UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)

the country but, due to the violence, NGOs find it impossible to work in many places and effect development. This means that people see NGO vehicles and comparatively wealthy Westerners and believe that NGO organisations consume the money meant for the people.

Joseph sees the creation of a false economy as a problem to the perception of NGOs and Westerners. Joseph gave the example of housing and rented accommodation occupied by NGO and UN staff that came into an area in Kabul, paying higher than normal rent, causing housing prices to rise. He argues that this means that local people cannot afford housing because the prices have been raised artificially by foreigners. The influx of Westerners into Kabul has meant an inflation of other commodities as well. Joseph offered the example of taxi prices saying that doctors now drive taxis because it is now better paid than practicing medicine in Kabul. This creation of a false economy actually serves to harm and alienate the very people that the NGO's and UN came to help by making their financial hardships even worse. The marginalisation of the local people and the increased financial strain that is seen to be being brought by foreigners only adds to insecurity.

The lack of poverty relief and displays of wealth by UN and NGO staff serve a purpose for the Taliban, Clift argues. The poverty makes people desperate to do anything to be able to feed their families and the resentment of the NGO displays of wealth poison the local people against them. Clift says that the Taliban are paying people to carry out suicide bombings or to attack police posts, government buildings or NGOs doing government projects saying:

"They (the Taliban) are recruiting because people are so poor".

The Taliban funding that enables them to pay people to join them and to carry out acts of violence, Clift argues, is coming over the border from Pakistan from the secret police (ISI). Clift strongly believes this flow of financial support for the Taliban must be stopped to remove the Taliban's ability to wage war. Clift also believes that opium that is sold over the border is used to fund the insurgency and, therefore, the border must be controlled, which Clift appreciates will be a very hard task. Clift's concern over opium production and the role it plays in funding insurgency, not just in Afghanistan but throughout central Asia, is a sentiment shared by Johnson (Johnson et al, 2004:128-129). Clift's belief that the Pakistani secret police are helping to fund the insurgency

matches the arguments that were leaked in the British MoD report in late September 2006, shortly before General Richard's visit to Pakistan (BBC, 2006b). What is curious about this leaked report is that Clift shared his views in his interview in mid July 2006 saying that it had been common knowledge for a long time. Maas, an Afghan specialist at the German Institute for International Policy and Security, described the Pakistan ISI as the "godfather" to the Taliban in military and logistical support terms in a journal article in 1999 (Maas, 1999:69). This means the Coalition forces have known about this illicit funding and support by Pakistan for a long time and have been paying out political slack, so as to avoid fallout with a local ally. Clift and the British MoD both believe that the stemming of the flow of opium, people and financial aid across the Afghan-Pakistan border is a key factor in creating peace. The greater the peace in the area, the more development can be done by NGOs as their working environments will be safer. The more development done, the more poverty alleviation takes place and the local people will more aware of the changes that aid is bringing to Afghanistan. When the people feel the impact of poverty alleviation brought by NGOs the resentment towards them will drop, Clift and Joseph argue. Clift, Joesph and General Richards recognise the enormity of the task to control the border and realise that it will not be easy or quick (BBC, 2006b). The longer the border is not controlled, the more violence there is, causing more poverty due to insecurity. Poverty is not the only issue that alienates the people of Afghanistan from NGOs and the Western presence.

5.2.6 Alienation of a People

Clift believes that Afghan-Islamic culture and Western culture are vastly different and NGO staff have a part to play in limiting the culture shock between the two groups by reducing offence caused in such a conservative society. However, Clift sees that in many instances this has not happened and what Clift describes as a "clash of cultures" is taking place. NATO, for example, relies on the PRTs to endear the military forces to the local people and Clift believes that all foreigners are seen as part of the same team by the local people and their actions reflect on one another. Specifically, the actions of PRTs reflect on NGO staff, especially when PRTs work with civilian actors such as DFID.

Boswell was asked for his opinion on the possible reasons that the Coalition forces seemed to be losing Afghan local support. The question posed some suggested reasons

for loss of local support such as the disillusionment of the local people due to heavy handed and culturally insensitive military tactics. Barker believes that surveys carried out in Afghanistan show that a major barrier to acceptance of PRTs and troops is the implementation of "rough and culturally insensitive searches" and "mistaken detentions" (Barker, 2004:2). Barker believes if the PRTs moderated that particular behaviour and concentrated more on security than on *hearts and minds* projects, more local support for the PRTs would be won (Barker, 2004:2). Boswell was asked if these factors were pertinent to the ongoing insecurity in Afghanistan. Boswell, an officer in charge of a PRT whose goal is to spread the reach of the Afghan government, increase security and win the backing of the local people, responded candidly, saying:

> "it is quite difficult to kill people with a light touch and in a culturally sensitive way".

Boswell is making the point that he does not agree with criticism of insensitive military tactics. As he sees it, his job does not offer an alternative approach.

Boswell's view, however, is the opposite to General Richard's, the man in charge of the NATO forces in Afghanistan and also that of Paul Barker, the country director of CARE International. According to Richards, the perception of the PRTs and Coalition forces is vital to prevent increased support for the Taliban. Richards argues that to prevent disenfranchising the local people any further that NATO troops have to become "a people friendly force" and that they would "accept more risk" when driving so as to prevent a repeat of the May riots (BBC, 2006c). The contradiction of Boswell's view with that of General Richards, who is essentially Boswell's boss, would cause concern to NGOs such as CARE International and HOPE Worldwide. In the news the civilian death toll is rising due to Coalition air strikes and the May 2006 riots in Kabul (BBC, 2006a; BBC, 2006e). The riots in May and the civilian casualties caused by mistakes in strategic bombing are all part of what Barker believes is insensitive and careless treatment of the Afghan people by the military. General Richards agrees and fears that if there is not a change in military tactics, the local population will change to supporting the Taliban (BBC, 2006b). Boswell's personal opinion on the military tactics pertaining to the sensitive treatment of the local people makes one wonder how successful Richards will be in implementing a people friendly force. It is not just the military who are helping to alienate the local population by their culturally insensitive actions, so too are the NGOs and UN staff.

Joseph expressed his annoyance about the negative impacts of the behaviour of Western NGO and UN workers who, whilst in Kabul, go to restaurants and unmarried men and woman openly drink alcohol together. The consumption of alcohol in Afghanistan is actually illegal and Joseph's concern is that these un-Islamic acts of the Westerners fuel the feeling that the Westerners are promoting an immoral degradation of society. Although the change of government brought a relaxation of the harsher interpretations of Islamic Sharia Law, the rule of law in is still conservative Islam with no drinking and strict laws regarding women. The Coalition's self-proclaimed emancipation of Afghanistan from the Taliban not only brought democracy but more interestingly, porn. Joseph and Clift both point out that the Coalition's democratic freedoms brought other trappings such as the freedom of the press, which included satellite and cable TV channels that are trying to quench the country's new-found thirst for porn. Johnson argues that in a country where men are comparatively very conservative with their dress and most women are still covered from head to toe with Burqas and live their life by strict moral codes, the apparent moral degradation seen by local people and religious leaders must be overwhelming.

The Taliban's portrayal of the Coalition and Westerners as evil, Clift and Joseph argue, is not hard to do due to changes in television and the flouting of Afghan laws by the foreign visitors. Clift argues that their actions give credence to the Taliban propaganda regarding the immorality of the government and its allies. Redwood argues that attacks are increasing on Western targets due to the perpetrators perceiving the West as "evil" and if NGOs are perceived as Western then they too are evil. This hypothesis of Clift, Joseph and Redwood's is the same as that of Johnson et al who have seen the change from pre-to-post Taliban rule (Johnson et al, 2004:23-25). Clift, for example, is critical of the female staff who work at the British embassy in Kabul. He says that they dress "like they are back home". Clift says the staff justify themselves by saying they never leave the compound and therefore do not see any local people, but Clift argues that they are guarded by Afghans and local people constantly pass the gates. Clift spoke of an attack on a NGO and the group that was attacked had an outspoken American team member who was, according to Clift, "a very Western dresser". He could not be sure if it was the main contributing factor for the attack but he felt sure it did not help. Clift believes the way foreign troops, NGO workers, UN staff and contractors behave and

dress when they are in Afghanistan gives a perception to the local people of what Westerners are like. Foreigners in Afghanistan, regardless of their role, have to respect the local customs and laws so as not to alienate the local people.

The military's heavy handed tactics and aggressive driving techniques in Kabul, mounting civilian casualties, creation of a false economy with spiralling rent and commodity prices, Western culture of dress especially in woman, alcohol consumption and perceived risqué media on television will all help to alienate the people of Afghanistan. If the feeling of resentment grows and violence towards humanitarian workers increases at some point NGOs may decide to halt operations, as MSF did, as the danger to humanitarian workers becomes too high. This then raises the question of whether the threshold for acceptable danger increased in recent years due to the more competitive funding competition between NGOs. Is one of the reasons NGO deaths are increasing because NGO workers are prepared to take greater risks in more dangerous environments than previously?

5.2.7 Is NGO Tolerance for Risk Increasing?

Aid workers' deaths are increasing but whether this is due to an increase in the numbers of aid workers operating throughout the world or the number of crises that aid workers respond to is unclear. Joseph and Clift recognise that the increase of aid worker deaths in Afghanistan within the last five years, however, has increased dramatically over a small time scale showing a more specific trend. Either NGOs have lost their neutrality or perhaps with foreigners in Afghanistan neutrality no longer matters as being foreign makes them a target. Are aid workers taking more risks?

The question of an increased risk threshold within NGOs and their staff was posed to Clift. Clift was in charge of security for IAM and therefore has a very good idea about the level of danger NGO staff face. Clift believes that the competition for funding that Boswell spoke of is making the aid business and NGOs more aggressive in their hunt for funding. Clift says that the bigger NGOs enjoy the luxury of what Clift describes as "cherry picking" and the smaller NGOs do not have the best choices and therefore may work in areas more dangerous than they would like. Lane talked about the funding process with DFID and the PRT where they would all sit down with local governors, NGOs and the military and discuss the local areas needs. The organisation with the best

capabilities to complete the project, whether they be military or NGO, would then be given the funding. This means, however, that any NGO that refuses to be allied the military and sit on the board due to fears of erosion of neutrality will not get the opportunity for DFID funding. These independent NGOs are then pushed to work in other areas, often more dangerous areas so as not to duplicate resources and services provided by other NGOs.

Clift believes that NGO staff are, what he describes as, a "funny breed" and are often adventurous and "spirited". He argues that they do not want to be tucked up somewhere safe, but out taking risks. Clift sees part of his job as hanging on to the "coat tails" of these NGO adventurers and hauling them back out when there is a problem. Clift describes some NGO staff as wanting to go to the most dangerous places and push further out into the field. Clift points out that the safer areas often get over filled with NGOs and many staff want to push the boundaries to the areas in most need of NGO assistance but where the risk to their safety is also higher. Clift believes that it is not just the staff that push the boundaries but the competition for funding. The data is not available to make a solid conclusion as to whether NGO workers are taking more risks but if they are, Clift sees funding competition as a key factor. Joseph was unsure if aid workers were taking more risks but felt secure in saying that the environment they were working in is more dangerous than ever before.

NGO workers have always taken risks but while Joseph believes that NGOs' working environments have become more dangerous, it is not clear if this is due to other political factors such as the war on terror and an anti-foreigner sentiment in Afghanistan or that NGO workers are operating with higher risk thresholds. Clift knows that in such a working environment it takes such people to risk their lives in the effort to help better the lives of the Afghan people. It is clear, however, that the ability of theses humanitarian workers to continue their work whilst the death toll of their colleagues rises is in jeopardy. Afghanistan has to be made into a more secure operating environment for the military, government and NGOs so the lives of the Afghan people can be improved but how will this be done?

5.2.8 What is needed?

All respondents were asked what was needed to get Afghanistan back on track in order to gain a broad spectrum of opinions from different stand points on what the country needs.

Cremoux's answer was that he did not want to see the Coalition forces in Afghanistan, but was not sure if a withdrawal was the solution. This is a controversial view as most spectators of the current situation would not consider coalition withdrawal as prudent or desirable option, believing that the Coalition is vital to the secure future of the country. Joseph, for example, thinks that if the military pulled out of Afghanistan humanitarian space would only shrink further. Joseph's beliefs oppose those of Cremoux as Joseph believes that more troops are needed and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the international stabilisation force in Afghanistan led by NATO troops, need to fill the country, giving the insurgents no opportunity to breath and controlling the warlords. This view is shared by Boswell, Redwood and Clift. NGO staff see warlords and their related endemic corruption as a severe impediment to development.

Joseph sees the power of warlords as a huge problem, especially when these men have gained places in the new government with seats in parliament or as local governors. Opium production and supply is undertaken by these men and their corruption, Joseph believes, is a "huge threat" to Afghanistan's future. This opinion is reflected by, Furniss and Mojaddedi, a speaker for the upper house of parliament in Kabul (BBC, 2006i; Furniss, 2006). Joseph argues that infrastructure, both physical and in the form of capacity building such as of civil servants, needs to be strengthened with wages increased to reduce corruption. Joseph firmly believes that security is vital but will be gained partly by the government acting and seen to be acting with probity. Joseph argues that this is the same for NGOs and the UN who have to be careful about creating a false economy while externally being perceived as exuding wealth.

Boswell believes in the need for a military force followed by coordinated aid support and development in tandem with improvements in security. Lane follows Boswell's belief in military solution and believes in the PRTs, stating that "security is overarching and from that everything else comes." The PRTs help in training the local police forces

and army, constructing infrastructure such as police stations and court houses, whilst supplying them with the resources from radios and motorcycles to weapons. He illustrates his point by saying if the illegal oil fields in Sari Pull province were shutdown, warlords would not get their revenue and the same is true if the Afghan police and border guards had control of the borders. Lane believes that good border guards and an effective border control would prevent money and goods going to insurgents. Confiscation of illegal goods and weapons and an operating customs team, in conjunction with police force, would actually generate money to support government infrastructure through border charges and taxes on legal goods. Lanes' belief that security is the primary piece needed to secure the country is shared by Erik, Clift, Joseph and Redwood. What is disheartening is that all of the respondents hoped that the country would improve through increased security and reconstruction but all were sceptical as to whether the Coalition, Afghan Government, UN and NGOs would actually be successful in turning the country around and gain security.

5.3 Summary

The chapter illustrates the complexities of the security situation in Afghanistan which is summed up succinctly by General Richards, the head of NATO forces in Afghanistan. Richards describes Afghanistan's security issues as follows:

> "The current insurgency is complex, multi-faceted and extraordinarily dynamic. It is being waged across national borders and tribal divisions and is aggravated by religious and secular factors. On top of this is overlaid the cynical manipulation of the situation by criminal factions, especially the narco-warlords of whom so much has been written. In a country largely unfamiliar with central control and the rule of law, this situation is compounded by the fact that very often it is the authorities, in the form of corrupt local officials or power brokers, who are fuelling the problem" (Richards, 2006:11).

These complexities and various actors make it difficult to pin down exactly who carries out the attacks against NGO groups. From the findings however it is clear that NGO staff are being attacked and they believe the attacks are increasing which would be supported by the figures drawn from the literature. The respondents also believe to differing degrees that the loss of neutrality is a major factor. The issue is that different

NGOs apply the use of neutrality to differing degrees. All the NGO staff interviewed understood that working with the Afghan Government or being seen to be working towards the same end goal as the Afghan Government compromised their neutrality and made themselves targets. NGO respondents agreed that open, sustained collaboration with the armed forces in the field was an unacceptable risk that they were not willing to take. PRTs were criticised by the NGO respondents arguing that the military doing humanitarian work did indeed confuse the boundaries between civilians and military. Having said that, the PRTs were also praised by respondents for helping the security situation, which allowed the NGOs more security to do their job.

The respondents spoke of external factors that they believe are contributing to the shrinking of humanitarian space. These factors included the overseas bank-rolling of terrorism, opium trade, lack of development, poverty and incompatible Western cultures clashing with conservative Islam. Global politics and the perceived war on Islam and the subsequent resentment of Westerners is believed to be making all Westerners in Afghanistan a target, according to several respondents. What emerges from these various factors is the fact that NGOs are being increasingly targeted. The military does have a role to play into the confusion or the perception that NGOs are working with the military through the use of civilian personnel and *hearts and minds* projects. The statements from the army officers made it clear that collaboration is what they desired and so to did the public statements made by Colin Powell. This is all damaging to humanitarian space.

The most daunting thing about the research findings is the interconnectedness of all the negative factors contributing to the shrinking of humanitarian space. Each factor feeds into and is inexorably bound to the next ultimately culminating in worsening security and the shrinking of humanitarian space. It is a vicious cycle with each factor returning to reinforce the violence which in turn prevents development which in turn promotes violence. The NGO staff admit that partly the loss of neutrality is down to working with Afghan government projects or just having a liberal agendas. Respondents also admitted that staff do take risks which fuels a desire for funding and to get to areas that desperately need help.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF MAIN POINTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the main points from the literature and interviews. Topics are tied together, illustrating the linkages between them. Primary and secondary data is utilised to prove the importance of the topics below. It is clear that humanitarian space has shrunk and insecurity is growing (Mills, 2006:17). The main reasons for the insecurity and the loss of humanitarian space are highlighted in this chapter.

The premise of this research was to answer these questions:

- Are humanitarian workers being increasingly targeted for violence in Afghanistan, constituting a shrinking of humanitarian space?
- Does the recent violence we have seen against humanitarians in Afghanistan have anything to do with a loss of neutrality?

6.2 Distribution of Aid and Funding

One factor that is increasing the disillusionment of the Afghan people towards foreign NGO workers in Afghanistan is the slow pace and wastage seen in development projects. The local people's disillusionment is possibly a contributing factor to humanitarian-directed violence, an example being the attack of the CARE International offices in Kabul in 2006. It is argued that the source of aid funding and the resulting quality of projects has a direct consequence on humanitarian space (Nawa, 2006).

There has been criticism of the awarding of contracts to powerful companies in the US and UK that have considerable political power, especially as USAID funding has been given to companies that do not posses the best skill base for allotted projects (Nawa, 2006). The head of USAID, Andrew Natsios, in 2001, made it clear that aid was not all about altruism but a key foreign policy instrument:

"Foreign assistance...helps nations prepare for participation in the global trading system and become better markets for US exports" (Johnson et al, 2004: 100-101).

The very fact that donor countries continue to insist on bi-lateral aid and not pooling their money allows governments to have tighter control on aid funding, thus limiting NGOs' ability for independence of action. Closer ties with specific governments erode NGO neutrality. President Bush and Colin Powell compounded the problems further by making it clear that sides must be chosen and that the NGOs are part of the Coalition's fight against terror (Bush, 2001a; Powell, 2001).

Funding in Afghanistan is an important issue as the alleged wastage of funds through convoluted layers of contractors, each taking their cut undermines development, prolonging the development process and therefore insecurity (Nawa, 2006:4-6; URD, 2006:203). The mechanisms for funding in conflict areas such as Afghanistan, Nawa believes, have to be changed and the cooption of the humanitarian organisations by political means must be rebutted in the strongest terms by a collective NGO voice. Joseph, HOPE International's Afghanistan line manager, believes that NGOs must make it clear that making a statement implying complicity between the military and NGOs, like the statement made by Powell, will be denounced sternly and quickly. This is vitally important in the increasingly fragile environments of failed states and internal conflict which NGOs are now finding to be their theatre of operations. These theatres of operations are made more complex due to the close proximity environment that NGO and military actors have to operate in (Richards, 2006:15).

6.3 The Civilian-Military Relationship

Throughout the research parallels have been drawn between the increased civilian-military relationship and their working proximity and the attacks on aid workers. For the shrinking of humanitarian space to be fully understood, so too does the civilian-military relationship.

The nature of conflict has changed. Armies no longer line up on battle fields or dig trenches and engage in clinically dispatching one another. The prevalence of guerrilla

style tactics has increased with combatants imbedded within communities and with civilian populations being used as shields, camouflage and becoming the direct target of genocide or ethnic cleansing (Sheik, 2000:166). This is becoming more apparent in the wake of conflicts in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, East Timor, Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon. The guerrilla warfare has reduced the geographical separation between combatants and the civilian community and, therefore, the separation between the military forces and the humanitarian community there to help the civilian population (Guttieri, 2005:2). This new forced proximity of humanitarian actors and military has lead to conflict. General Richards, the commander of the NATO forces in Afghanistan, argues that the army can no longer win conflict through the use of military power alone. He understands the importance of development in conflict stating:

> "experience has shown that a key combat multiplier is for military commanders, at various levels, to have access to funding for Quick Impact Projects in order to mitigate a potentially damaging situation or take advantage of fleeting 'hearts and minds' opportunities. This is a resource which will be urgently required if NATO is to harness the support of the Afghan people" (Richards, 2006:15).

Richards argues that civilian-military partnerships undertaking reconstruction and development have been a considerable success in what he describes as "shaping the battle space in our favour" (Richards, 2006:15). Richards believes that civilian-military development projects help NATO to win wars by gaining the support of the local people. The Coalition's armed forces in Afghanistan understand that to win the support of the local people their lives have to be improved, not only by increased security, but through poverty reduction and an increased standard of living. Civilian humanitarian organisations are tasked with the job of reconstruction and aid delivery by governmental development agencies like DFID, USAID and the Afghan Government. NGOs find themselves compromised as in the eyes of the insurgents and the local communities they are part of the Coalition's war in the country. It is clear from Richards's statement that he does see NGOs as an asset in shaping "battle space" and that:

> "All agencies, both civil and military must act in concert to achieve the priorities set by the campaign plan" (Richards, 2006:11).

Richards publicly stating that NGOs should be part of the "campaign plan" removes NGO neutrality, giving the impression that NGOs are another arm of the Coalition. One way NGOs are incorporated into the campaign plan is through PRTs or "civil military co-operation" (Richards, 2006:15). Opponents such as Gluck argue that PRTs actively

mix civilian and military personnel, creating confusion in the eyes of the local population (Gluck, 2004:1-3).

The increased involvement of military actors in aid and development work is clearly going to continue as Richards makes clear the importance of *hearts and minds* operations to shaping battle space. Indeed some NGO staff, such as Clift and Joseph, despite reservations over the possible negative outcomes of this relationship, remain pragmatic in their interactions with the military. One cannot say that NGOs should not work with military actors when needs must. Joseph, in his pragmatic approach, chose to use military assistance in the short term, rather than not act at all. However, he does so in the knowledge that it might compromise his neutrality (Joseph, pers.com, 2006). The disparities between various aid organisations' level of pragmatism and involvement vary greatly, from non-interaction to supportive roles and requests for protection. NGOs' heterogeneous approach to military collusion makes any clear-cut recommendations difficult. What is clear, however, is that boundaries are blurred in Afghanistan and the humanitarian community have laid a proportion of the blame on the civilian-military relationship (Buissonniere, 2004:1-3; Gluck, 2004:1-3; MacAskill, 2004, Cremoux, 2006). Debate resulting in policy must continue to define boundaries between humanitarians and the military in future conflict environments as the two actors are inevitably going to be increasingly sharing the same theatre of operations. However, a widely accepted and cohesive framework for interaction with military actors for NGOs is unlikely as a consensus is not apparent among NGOs themselves. The likelihood of a positive continuation of the civilian-military relationship becomes increasingly more unlikely with every attack that NGOs suffer. The fact that the General Richards, in charge of troops on the ground in Afghanistan, sees NGOs as a force protection tool makes the continuation of a civilian-military relationship even less likely. This is because the vision of NGOs by Richards jeopardises the perception of NGOs as neutral.

The military has played a role in blurring the boundaries and diminishing NGO neutrality. MSF was one of the outspoken opponents of the civilian-military blurring and after the murder of five of its staff members said that:

"MSF denounces attempts to use humanitarian aid to win hearts and minds" (Gluck, 2004).

Conversely, Richards believes:

"a key force multiplier is to take advantage of fleeting 'hearts and minds' opportunities" (Richards, 2006:15).

There is clear conflict between what the military and NGOs see as acceptable when it comes to *hearts and minds*. The military's staff being out of uniform during *hearts and minds* operations and the use of aid delivery as a bargaining tool to extract information on Taliban fighters is an example of differing opinions on what is acceptable (Meo, 2004). It is the perception of neutrality that is at stake for the NGOs. Every NGO respondent argued that the local perception of neutrality was vitally important for NGO safety.

6.4 Neutrality

The importance of neutrality for NGO safety is exemplified by the attacking of MSF staff in 2004, which was linked to alleged military collusion. NGO staff make it clear that they draw parallels between the loss of neutrality and increased violence. For example, Gluck, MSF's head of operations in Afghanistan in 2004, is an outspoken advocate of the importance of neutrality for the safety of his staff members. The research and literature review underlines the importance of neutrality but also illustrates that no organisation is one hundred percent neutral but, as Cremoux argues, one should endeavour to be "neutral enough to act".

In Afghan context, some NGOs rely heavily on government funding as their sole means of survival (Joseph, 2006). Some NGOs' main purpose within the country is to undertake projects of the Afghan Government (Smith, 2006). NGOs that opt out of government or PRT funding in an effort to safeguard their independence risk the loss of large scale funding (Clift, 2006). If the NGOs choose to accept funding of this type they become incorporated in to the political machine at work within the country and, as such, loose neutrality and independence (Redwood, 2006). The acceptance or at least understanding that funding has a great effect on neutrality or perceived neutrality emerged from both the literature and the research. Smith spoke of the compromised

neutrality of her NGO saying that their ties with the Afghan Government and the Afghan Government's close ties with the US-led Coalition means that "we're not purely neutral and in this case never can be". NGOs whose majority of funding comes from governmental sources should perhaps try to diversify their funding base in order to maintain a more independent stance. Again, however, having a mandatory percentage of funding coming from non-government agencies for NGOs is highly unlikely as governments have the most funds available.

Another main issue of neutrality that emerged is that multi-mandate NGOs are not neutral, regardless on their sources of funding (Slim, 2004:34-35; Clift, 2006). Liberal NGOs that promote liberal ideology, from equal rights to freedom of speech, are promoting Western, arguably Christian, liberalism. Western liberalism is the antithesis to the hard-line Islamic fighters of the Taliban. Regardless of where an NGO gets its funding from, if it supports the education of woman or any other principle opposed by the Taliban they will become targets (Slim 2004:37; Clift, 2006). The issue of compromised NGO neutrality is not simple or clear cut. Although there are strong arguments about the civilian-military relationship blurring boundaries, critical and introverted exploration of NGOs' principles of liberalism and of funding are needed to fully understand the diminishing humanitarian space (Krahenbuhl, 2004:30-31; Slim, 2004:37). Other factors concerning the origins of NGOs in Afghanistan are also playing a part in their acceptance and humanitarian space.

Redwood argues that NGOs in Afghanistan are perceived as having Western origins and, as such, can be deemed to be evil or a corrupting Western influence making it hard for NGOs and their staff to be accepted by the Afghan people. Clift, for example, was particularly critical of Westerners in Afghanistan dressing insensitively and consuming alcohol, a view supported by Johnson et al (Johnson et al, 2004). Joseph agued further that displays of NGO wealth in one of the world's poorest countries helps to cause resentment in the people they are there to help. How can a NGO remain neutral when they are espousing Western culture and ideology in a country whose religion opposes the Western way of life? Clift argues they are not and believes that in Afghanistan being Western undermines your perceived neutrality and you become a target. The shrinking of humanitarian space is a complex and single causes cannot be blamed as it is a myriad of contributing factors.

6.5 Complexities Affecting Humanitarian Space

Having discussed specific factors affecting humanitarian space, there are other factors that affect the security situation in Afghanistan and therefore have repercussions on humanitarian space.

The humanitarian space issue in Afghanistan is more complex than a simple confusion between military and civilian staff and a subsequent loss of neutrality. The civilian-military relationship is important but there are many other contributing factors. Richards describes Afghanistan as:

> "a highly complex political and tribal mosaic, and a capable enemy often indistinguishable from the population" (Richards, 2006: 14).

There are criticisms of the military's culturally insensitive tactics by authors such as Johnson but one must understand the military's predicament fully to launch criticism. Soldiers are operating in an environment where they do not know if the people around them are the enemy until they are fired upon. The enemy are the Taliban, foreign militants and opium farmers that do not benefit from a military presence. It has been established that the NGOs' criticism of the military for shrinking their humanitarian space is valid. However, NGOs need to field criticism of their own from the military. Richards, for example, argues that:

> "the multifarious agendas of the many NGOs - well meaning but uncoordinated and lacking in strategic direction - and you have a recipe for confusion, disaffection due to promises undelivered and aggravated distrust of Western intentions among the Afghan population" (Richards, 2006:12).

Richards sees the NGOs' differing agendas and lack of actual final goals as a hindrance to development, rather that a tool for it. NGOs doing different things and fundamentally pulling in different directions, Richards believes, must look like an uncoordinated mess to the local people, as they see their money being spent in a haphazard manner. Richards therefore believes that NGOs are contributing to the resentment against themselves and the shrinking of their own humanitarian space through lack of coordination, an argument supported by Boswell and Lane. The lack of development decreases humanitarian space as the slow pace of progress causes disillusionment and increased insecurity. The increased insecurity and militant activity does not just increase the attacks on NGOs but on the military as well. The less devolvement that

takes place, the more the people of Afghanistan will turn to militant-ism, either due to anger against foreign influence and inaction within the country or simply to earn money. Mohammed Atta, a Mujahiddin guerrilla leader and now governor of Balkh province, describes why Afghans turn to violence:

> "Pakistani mullahs provoke young Afghans in their Madrasas. Some other people of course fight for money, while there are some approaches adopted by the government and ISAF which have alienated people" (Atta cited in Mills, 2006:18).

Either way, lack of development equals more militants attacking the Coalition forces and increased illegal economic activities to support their cause. Richards, Boswell and Lane see the uncohesive method of development employed by neutral and independent NGOs as hampering the security situation. Fundamentally Richards, Boswell and Lane believe that the NGOs refusal to pool resources and coordinate is contributing to deaths of Coalition soldiers. The slow pace of development leads to more violence, culminating in more soldiers being killed. Arguably, they could criticise NGOs lack of team work and collusion with the Coalition for shrinking the military battle space.

6.6 Warlords and an Emerging 'Mafia'

Any factor that decreases security increases the risk for ISAF soldiers and increases violence within the country. Any increase in violence makes access and operation of NGO projects more difficult, impeding development. The increasing participation of warlords and other men of power in illegal economic activities actively decrease security to protect their businesses. Due to these illegal economic activities humanitarian space suffers.

Militants tax opium crops in the provinces they control and use the money to fund their war and engage in other black market smuggling (Leithhead, 2006; Norton-Taylor, 2006:1). The prevailing insecurity in the country gives ample opportunity for men of power to use the security vacuum for their own gain. The absence of law has allowed rival warlords to continue fighting over their various differences and undertake lucrative illegal activity, ranging from opium production to smuggling and dealing in black market goods. It is in the best interests of warlords whose existence relies on an un-

scrutinised lifestyle to make their province as insecure as possible, so as to discourage Western witnesses or Coalition prevention of their operations (Wills, 2006:25). The increased fighting between warlords increases the chances of NGOs being caught in the crossfire and contributes to the shrinking of humanitarian space (Clift, 2006). The opium trade is used to fund the militants who keep the areas insecure so the warlords can operate their illicit trade. The cycle then perpetuates itself increasing conflict which slows development and jeopardises Afghanistan's future making NGO development impossible due to a reduced humanitarian space.

6.7 Corruption and Weak Government

For the illegal economy to flourish on the scale that it is, support is needed from powerful players within the country. Government officials and ministers have been accused of benefiting from and taking part in the illegal economic activities that are undermining the development of the state and decreasing humanitarian space.

Warlords, as power brokers with considerable influence in their provinces, have secured themselves seats in the new parliament and at various levels throughout the Afghan Government, either due to personal power, tribal links or nepotism (Richards, 2006:11; URD, 2006:45-46). Government corruption and implication in the opium trade has lead to the disillusionment of local people with the government resulting in a growing lack of trust in their new leaders (Furniss, 2006:47). Mojaddedi, a member of the Afghan parliament, openly criticises the government for hiring "weak" people (BBC, 2006i). Corruption serves to disillusion the people leaving them little choice but to support the Taliban militants (URD, 2006:21-46). The NGOs that run government projects shoulder the responsibility of having the anger for the government projected onto themselves, jeopardising their own neutrality. NGO staff Clift, Smith and Redwood recognise this fact but, in a country that desperately needs centralised government to bring peace, the NGOs find themselves in a catch-twenty-two situation. NGOs that do not undertake government projects keep their neutrality but still risk the danger of becoming victims of violent crime due to pervasive lawlessness or anti-Western sentiment. If NGOs help government projects and schemes they are helping spread the influence of the Afghan government by bringing development to the people. This brings

a secondary hope of increasing security but the NGOs are seen as complicit with the government and become a legitimised military target (Border, 2004; Clift, 2006). NGOs must evaluate the positives of working the government, against the negatives of compromised neutrality and the safety of their workers. Neutrality is still not a guarantee of security.

The absence of law will always give rise to opportunists who will use the insecurity as cover for theft and lawlessness. NGO staff are targets of violent theft making it hard to know what is an insurgent attack and what is not. NGOs are a comparatively lucrative target as they display a disproportionate amount of wealth compared to the local people. NGOs are unarmed and the robbery would not cause any tribal conflict as robbing one's neighbour might. Lawlessness makes it easy for opium producers to operate without hindrance. The porous border also helps as a conduit for people, drugs, combatants and black market goods, as well as helping to fuel the country's insurgency with fresh fighters from the Madrasas in Pakistan and funding from Pakistan's ISI (BBC, 2006b). The weak border is a propellant to the conflict and the preparatory elements needed for the conflict, helping to undermine security and, in turn, humanitarian space (Mills, 2006:17).

6.9 Opium

As mentioned in the previous topics, the huge boom in the production of opium since the toppling of the Taliban has permeated through Afghan society, from the government corruption and warlords to the local tenant farmer (Furniss, 2006:42). The benefits of the opium crop for warlords are large due to the high price the crop fetches in Pakistan or Iran (Clift, 2006; Leithhead, 2006). Tenant farmers get given little choice about what to grow and even if they did have the choice nothing would pay as well as opium (Clift, pers.com, 2006). The militants place a tax on the opium to fuel their insurgency and offer protection from eradication to the farmers (Norton-Taylor, 2006:1; URD, 2006:35-36). The opium industry is opposed by the Coalition forces and the new government which is seen as a major threat. NGOs try to implement alternative livelihoods projects as they know poppy eradication is going to increase poverty but are seen as complicit with the eradication schemes and become a target for aggression. This is especially

problematic when eradication takes place in areas before any sustainable livelihood scheme is actually in place, which only servers to exacerbate the Afghans' disillusionment with the Afghan Government, the Coalition and its allies. Thus, locals look to the Taliban for support, perpetuating the cycle (Mills, 2006: 24; URD, 2006: 6).

6.10 A Disillusioned Populous and Failed Development

As mentioned in the research findings, Clift believes that NGO acceptance by the local population is the largest protection against NGO attack. If this is true, the more disillusioned the people get and the more the resentment of foreign workers in Afghanistan grows, the smaller the humanitarian space gets.

The insecurity problems and the lack of humanitarian space limit the amount and effectiveness of development work done in the country. The problem is that the more time that passes without a major improvement in people's daily lives, the more disillusionment there is and more local people look to the Taliban as the only form of law in their area. Lack of positive change fuels resentment towards the broken promises of the government, the Coalition and the international community at large (URD, 2006:45-46). Richards strongly believes that the government and the international community are "running out of time" to meet the expectations of the Afghan people before they loose a grip on the country all together (Richards, 2006:11).

Civilian collateral damage caused by Coalition forces is unacceptable on the scale we have seen and justification of targets must be better (BBC, 2006e). Possible collusion with Afghan Government input into intelligence gathering and valid target selection may help to reduce this collateral damage. Collateral damage, however, is a repercussion that is untenable for humanitarian organisations that live by the principle of *do no harm* (Makintosh, 2002:13). Collateral damage is another factor that makes it hard for NGOs not to be seen as allied with the military in PRTs. The lack of cohesion between the civilian and military is due to a moral divergence of what is a justified means to a justified end to both groups.

The unfulfilled promises of funding, bad performance of contractors, collateral damage and the Coalition's preoccupation with military answers to security problems compounds the already existing problems. The longer development takes to affect the lives of the Afghan people, the more the resentment builds towards foreign interference and the smaller the humanitarian space becomes. The resentment is not purely due to lack of reconstruction but respondents also suggest it is due to what Clift and Huntington refer to as a "clash" of civilisations and culture (Huntington, 1993; Clift, pers.com, 2006).

6.11 Religion

The religious fervour whipped up by Mullahs to galvanise young men into combat in Afghanistan, armed in the knowledge that the Christian West is evil and that they are doing Allah's will makes any Westerner or organisation perceived as Western as a target. Accusations of NGO Christian proselytism adds to this fervour (Rashid, 2001; Mills, 2006:18; Redwood, pers.com, 2006). Clift believes that there is a strong clash of cultures happening in Afghanistan that are simply incompatible. Joseph believes that this alienation and clash of cultures is happening on a more global scale and political decisions made on topics such as Lebanon or the wearing of the veil in London have just as much bearing on humanitarian space in Afghanistan as an aid worker seen drunk in Kabul would.

Clift believes that globally, in the Muslim community, there is a growing image of a Western or US war on Islam, rather than terror (Clift, pers.com, 2006). The War in Iraq, in Afghanistan and the recent apparent, what Joseph describes as, apathy for the call for the US and UK to flex some political muscle to bring an early stop to the conflict in Lebanon has been interpreted by some in the Muslim community as a public anti-Muslim sentiment (Joseph, pers.com, 2006). Recent debates in the UK press over whether it is acceptable for school teachers or school children to wear Burqas or Hijab at school has resulted in a political backlash from the Muslim community. A debate was sparked by Jack Straw with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown defending his position, arguing that the wearing of the veil is a barrier to integration into British society (BBC, 2006k). In France and Germany school teachers have already been banned from

wearing headscarves and veils as it is argued that the children in state education should be protected from "political symbols" and "fundamental influence" (BBC, 2004b). In Europe the Muslim community feels that it is being unfairly persecuted possibly due to the wars against Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan. This conflict is being fought over Muslim rights within European countries to practice their religion and culture as they see fit, including the wearing of veils and headscarves. This public battle has perpetuated the feeling within the Muslim communities that they are being targeted for religious persecution.

A survey conducted by the British Times and the British television channel ITV of British Muslims illustrated a religious divide in British communities. There are 1.6 million Muslims in the UK and six percent of those polled believed that the terrorists that targeted a London bus and underground trains in the July 2005 bomb attack that killed fifty two people were acting in the true principles of Islam. When questioned, seven percent thought that suicide bombing on civilian targets in the UK could be justified. That figure rose to sixteen percent if the target was military (Frean et al, 2006; Wishart, 2007:40). These percentages may seem small but that works out at one hundred and twelve thousand British citizens that believe the killing of innocent countrymen and women is justified under Islam. Two hundred and fifty six thousand British Muslims believed suicide bombings against British military targets to be justified. This illustrates the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims of the same nationality. This is an illustrative example of how the battle against radical Islamic extremism in the UK that has been waged since 2001 is failing (Wishart, 2007:40). Battling Islamic extremism in a foreign country at war, one that opposes an evil Western culture being imposed by a foreign force, whilst poverty alleviation and development flounders, is an infinitely harder task (Johnson et al, 2004; Clift, 2006; Joseph, 2006; Redwood, 2006). Religion is playing a militant role on the streets of Western countries as well as in Afghanistan. No one has posed a similar questionnaire in Afghanistan. One can only speculate about the possible percentages that could justify violence against Western civilian and military targets under the name of Islam. The survey exemplifies two issues, one, the fact that fundamental Islam is incompatible with Western culture is a global issue and, two, that the importance of religion in what appears to be a global fundamental Islamic resistance to Western culture will surely be playing a large role in Afghanistan and surely affecting humanitarian space.

The mounting collateral casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan and the lack of action recently in Lebanon all play an undermining role. Muslims being disenfranchised was a fear of Coalition's leaders. President Bush, in his 2006 October 7th presidential address, made public the fact that as well as striking targets in Afghanistan they also drop food. American physiological strategists made clear this was to let the population "as well as Muslims all over the world" know that the war was not directed at them but at the Taliban and terrorist groups (Calas et al, 2004:81). This sentiment has now lost credence in the intervening time.

6.12 Behaviour of Foreigners and a Clash of Culture

As mentioned earlier, perception and acceptance is an important aspect of NGO safety. If the perception of NGO workers is immediately one of unacceptable behaviour, dress and culture then acceptance will be nil, thus endangering the NGOs humanitarian space.

There is perceived moral degradation inflicted, by what can only be seen as an alien culture, embodied by foreigners drinking in bars and NGO workers and contractors wearing clothes deemed to be non-conservative (Johnsen et al, 2004:24-25; Clift, pers.com 2006). This is having an effect on the acceptance of foreigners in a country where religion is fundamental to everyday life. The newly available TV stations broadcasting porn as images of Western society is seen as a perversion and immoral (Johnsen et al, 2004:25). This clash of cultures is increasing the targeting of Westerners including humanitarian organisations by an appalled conservative population. These arguments by Clift and Johnson mirror arguments made by Samuel Huntington in 1993. Huntington wrote an article entitled "The Clash of Civilisations". The article projected that:

> "The clash of civilisations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between
> civilisations will be the battle lines of the future." (Huntington, 1993:22).

Huntington argues that the incompatibility of Western and Islamic culture and the future tensions are inevitable. He does not believe that this conflict is either new or unforeseen and argues that it has being going on for one-thousand three-hundred years (Huntington, 1993:29-31). Clift also argues that the historical conflict between Western and Islamic

cultures makes any solution very difficult. The fact that Huntington wrote the article in 1993, long before the September the 11th bombings, lends credence to his projections due to what has already has unfolded in Iraq and Afghanistan and is playing out in every Western country with a Muslim population. Huntington's arguments are supportive of Clift and Johnson's and predicts that:

> "This centuries-old military interaction between the West and Islam is unlikely to decline. It could become more virulent."(Huntington, 1993:31-32)

If Huntington is correct then everything must be done to limit friction within Coalition forces and Western workers in Afghanistan but sadly this does not seem to be happening.

Civilian-military contractors, for example, are criticised for alienating the people of Afghanistan, turning them against foreign influence. Their overzealous violence and lack of accountability has made them conspicuous for specific criticism by General Richards. Richards describes:

> "The preponderance of unethical, poorly regulated Private Security Companies (PSC), often all too ready to discharge their easily sourced firearms, is a serious additional cause for concern" (Richards, 2006:12).

Richards clearly sees civilian-military contractors as damaging to the perception of the West. Civilian-military contractors were heavily criticised in the literature for being rough with Afghan politicians, being culturally insensitive and unlawfully killing (Barnett, 2003; Schakowsky, 2006). Nawa makes the valid point that all foreigners are ambassadors of the West whilst in Afghanistan and everyone's actions reflect on the rest. This means that the actions of unruly, unregulated armed contractors are particularly damaging to the perception of Western society in Afghanistan (Nawa, 2006:15-18). In isolation these separate issues could probably be tackled or at least more easily approached but they are not in isolation.

6.13 The Vicious Circle

It is the combination of all the factors in this chapter that makes up the unique situation in Afghanistan that has contributed to the shrinking of humanitarian space. Security will not improve without development showing the local people that the new government is

having a positive impact. Development is impossible in areas where the security situation is poor as the work is to dangerous for aid workers. This turns into a vicious circle that makes it difficult for any progress to be made in either security or development.

The various factors have been separated out to illustrate how each one contributes to the deteriorating security and loss of humanitarian space but it is vital to understand that topics are not separate from one another. Factors interplay and feed in to one another and make up the complex and interwoven mechanism that contributes to insecurity and the shrinking of humanitarian space. For example, opium fuels the insurgency, corrupts officials and turns farmers away from supporting ISAF. The factors that combine to make opium production possible are corruption, porous borders and a ill-thought out eradication policies. These issues all interconnect making groups of issues inseperable. As such, no one can point at one individual factor as the culprit. These factors combined are the culprit and for the problem to be tackled it has to be challenged on all fronts simultaneously. Having said this, there are approaches that will have a more immediate effect and that is to close the Afghan-Pakistan border, prevent ISI funding and prevent opium leaving the country so as not to give the militants the money to wage war. Clift, with his detailed knowledge of Afghan security, quoted these factors as the most important issues to be tackled. Clift's views concur with those of Mills who believes that:

> "the current stress on hunting the Taliban militants did not address the root causes of the violence. We must engage systematically in disarming terrorism by stopping their sources of money, training, equipment and motivation" (Mills, 2006:17-18).

This can be done by securing the border but would this really work at bringing peace to Afghanistan?

Redwood stated in her questionnaire that:

> "Afghanistan has always been unconquered and those that have tried to conquer it have eventually been defeated".

Joseph fears a protracted trench war, supporting his argument with the statement "no one has ever won in Afghanistan". This sentiment is reiterated by Johnson, saying that:

"The long history of warfare in Afghanistan suggests that it will never be possible to beat them (the Taliban) militarily" (Johnson et al, 2004:22).

The often used image of Dr Brydon half dead, slumped on his horse approaching Jellalabad, the sole survivor of sixteen and a half thousand British soldiers on the retreat from Kabul in the winter of 1882 in the first Afghan war, is illustrative of a long history of Afghan repulsion of foreign governance. The image immortalised by Elizabeth Butler in the painting *Remnants of an Army*[8] is a reminder of a previous military defeat of a Western army in Afghanistan, a victory the Afghans still celebrate annually today. The Soviets did not suffer such a massacre but lost the war of attrition and were eventually dispatched home. What became apparent to both would-be-conquerors was that invading the country by superior arms and men was not the obstacle but imposing an alien government on a fragmented, proud society that always seems to unite against the invaders would not be tolerated. What is different in this case is that NGOs are seen as part of, or complicit with, that conquering force. Although things can be done to reduce their risk they will, despite their best efforts, remain a target within the country until either reconstruction and aid turn the country in to a functioning, accepted democracy through poverty reduction and increased security, or until yet another imposed regime fails.

---

[8] A copy of the painting can be seen online at http://www.britishempire.co.uk/art/butlerremnants.htm

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Recommendations for Increasing Humanitarian Space

There is no doubt that the humanitarian space in Afghanistan is shrinking and that Afghanistan has become one, if not the most dangerous theatre of operation for humanitarian workers in the world. Exact comparative figures are not available but the annual rise in the humanitarian death toll in Afghanistan over the last five years is a telling benchmark. Johnson, an NGO worker who has experience within Afghanistan, speaks of the relative safety of aid workers in Afghanistan before 2001 and the deposition of the Taliban (Johnson et al, 2004). After the US forces deposed the Taliban in 2001, the death toll of aid workers went up to twenty-four dead in 2004 and thirty-one in 2005 (IRIN, 2006). Afghanistan should not be seen as an isolated anomaly but more as a case study. In Sri Lanka, seventeen aid workers were killed in August 2006. In Dafur, Sudan thirteen aid workers have been murdered since May of 2006 with the hijacking or attack of over twenty-five humanitarian vehicles. These killings seem to represent a wider rising trend in violence towards aid workers that has been seen in Somalia, Iraq, Chechnya and the Democratic Republic of Congo over the past three years (Egeland, 2006). Humanitarian workers in Afghanistan have become legitimised as targets due, partly, to a perceived complicity with the US-led Coalition forces. The fact that NGOs have become have legitimised target is unarguable as Taliban spokes persons have released statements to that effect (MacAskill, 2004b).

The question now is how can the number of aid workers being targeted be diminished and how can the trend be reversed? Lessons then need to be applied to other conflict areas around the world so to prevent the duplication of mistakes made in Afghanistan. The other purpose of the recommendations is to offer ways to reverse the insecurity jeopardising humanitarian space and increase the chances of future security within the country. Due to the complex mix of factors and motivators of violence, humanitarian space in Afghanistan is tightly bound with the country's overall security. Any factor that undermines security also undermines humanitarian space. For example, links between Afghan-Pakistani border control and the shrinking humanitarian space may not be immediately apparent but due to the security issues that cross into one another,

border control becomes a major issue in improving humanitarian space in Afghanistan. Insurgents deem humanitarians as legitimate targets and controlling the insurgents' movement and supplies over the border becomes vital to protect and improve humanitarian space in Afghanistan.

The following recommendations are arguments that have been made by research respondents and authors from the literature and have been highlighted as vital to improving either humanitarian space or security within Afghanistan. In essence, these recommendations are suggestions derived from the research of ways to mitigate the shrinking of humanitarian space. These factors are recognised as the main reasons for the increase in humanitarian-directed violence in Afghanistan and are answering the research questions as set out in chapter one in *Rationale for study*.

Recommendations:

1) Money pledged from donor nations must be regulated to ensure it is given and that governments that pledge money do not latterly shirk responsibility. The money should also be publicly ear-marked so development funding cannot end up in defence budgets. Nawa is a strong proponent of the need to regulate and monitor funding to ensure the right amounts go to the right places (Nawa, 2006). Coalition governments must ensure the sustainability of their donor money over a long time frame to ensure Afghanistan's development reaches fruition. It will cost the Coalition forces' governments more dearly to have to return to Afghanistan or stay longer than is necessary due to lack of progress or failure through poor development funding. Richards, head of NATO forces in Afghanistan, made clear the argument that failure would cost the Coalition more dearly than staying to finish the job properly would (Richards, 2006).

2) Poverty elevation must be tackled with as much vigour and funding as the insurgency. Authors from the literature, NGO respondents and military staff all drew attention to how poverty alleviation is critical to the security situation (Clift, pers.com, 2006; Joseph, pers.com, 2006; Senlis, 2006; Senlis, 2006a; Richards, 2006) The more time that is allowed to pass without widespread poverty alleviation, the more support the Coalition loses from the local Afghan population. The Taliban gain support, leading ultimately to the Coalition's utter loss of legitimacy. The riots in Kabul in May 2006 were a warning. Poverty reduction is security enhancement (Barker, 2004).

3) Opium reduction must be tackled but eradication should not take place until there is a viable and sustainable livelihood alternative available. If opium crop eradication continues without alternative sustainable livelihood strategies in place, livelihoods will continue to be taken from the most vulnerable Afghans. Clift and Joseph both argued that eradication will not work without being backed by robust, sustainable livelihood programmes and were supported by the literature (Clift, pers.com, 2006; Joseph, pers.com, 2006; URD, 2006). Local people whos crops are destroyed with nothing to take its place have no alternatives, driving the local population to turn to the insurgents for support.

4) The Afghanistan-Pakistan border is a pivotal issue. Funding from the Pakistani ISI, the illegal smuggling of opium, black market goods and radicalised insurgent fighters across the border is one of Afghanistan's single most potent threats to a secure future. The border must be controlled to ensure peace by cutting the support of the insurgents and their ability to wage war. The danger of the open and uncontrolled border as a vital issue for Afghanistan security was argued clearly by both NGO and military staff. Lane and Boswell, the two British military PRT commanders, both made statements on the need to secure the border and were matched by Clift who believes tighter border control would take away the insurgents ability to wage war (Clift, pers.com, 2006; Boswell, per.com, 2006; Lane, pers.com, 2006).

5) The civilian-military relationship must be scrutinised closely in light of the modern conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Opinions expressed by Boswell and Lane highlight the lack of understanding or sympathy from the military community and PRTs, particularly over the importance of NGO neutrality, highlight this fact (Boswell, pers.com, 2006; Lane, pers.com, 2006). PRTs need to be scrutinised to ensure NGO safety and neutrality are respected and recognised. For there to be any hope of a successful civilian-military relationship there has to be mutual understanding. It is clear that NGOs such as MSF regard the civilian-military relationship as a major contributing factor to the shrinking of humanitarian space (Cremoux, per.com, 2006; Gluck & Buissonniere, 2004). Having said that, some NGOs are still willing to accept help from the military to achieve their goals, HOPE International being one example (Joseph, pers.com, 2006).

6) As argued by Joseph, NGOs, as a collective, need to reaffirm publicly to beneficiaries, donors and the public at large their neutrality (Joseph, pers.com, 2006). Any attempts of military or political actors to co-opt NGOs have to be rebutted collectively and publicly to minimise neutrality becoming compromised (Hatting, 2004). However, it also became apparent that neutrality is not a black and white issue and some NGOs are willing to deal with the military where some are not, regardless of that fact that co-option of humanitarian goals for military purposes is unacceptable (Cremoux, pers.com, 2006; Joseph, pers.com, 2006; Krahenbuhl, 2004)

7) Coordination of aid delivery must be undertaken by impartial actors such as Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) to avoid duplication and to ensure aid delivery on a need-led basis, rather than a donor-led basis. This will increase the effectiveness of NGO resources by more effectively coordination and use of resources. This will limit criticism of NGOs from donors, beneficiaries and military actors such as those levelled by Lane who described aid delivery within the country as ineffective and un-coordinated (Lane, pers.com, 2006).

8) The Coalition forces must choose their military targets more carefully, perhaps with intelligence advice from the Afghan Government to reduce civilian casualties. Civilian casualties cause resentment in the local population and work to undermine the good work the Coalition has done. Towards the end of his time as NATO commander in Afghanistan, Richards began to realise that the military tactics his troops were employing were in fact loosing hearts and minds and, in turn, the country. His solution was a more people friendly force (BBC, 2006c).

9) Contractors need to be registered and monitored. The lack of accountability and the auditing standards of both military and civilian contractors is unacceptable, a point that was convincingly argued by Nawa (Nawa, 2006). The funding of aid projects being filtered through layers of sub-contractors, whom each take a cut before passing the job on to the next, is damaging development. Specific guidelines need to be made into policy to safeguard the quality of work and aggressively limit the excessive profiteering. There needs to be avenues of riposte for civilian-military contractors as the current situation of unaccountable guns for hire is highly undesirable (BBC, 2004a; Werve, 2004).

10) More international funding must be channelled through the Afghan Government to improve capacity and increase legitimacy. The funnelling of aid into Afghanistan undermines the government and does nothing to strengthen the government for the tasks that lie ahead (Nawa, 2006).

7.2 Value and Limitations

The research has highlighted several major issues in the shrinking of humanitarian space and offers recommendations on ways that these issues could possible be mitigated. During the research other questions were raised that were outside the remit of the research questions, or too large a topic to be looked into in sufficient depth, that also may have a bearing on humanitarian space in Afghanistan. They are as follows:

1) What impact does religion or the Christian-Islamic conflict have on NGO neutrality and humanitarian space and in which countries?

2) Is the money pledged for Afghanistan's reconstruction actually received and, if so, where does it go specifically?

3) How do Islamic or Afghan NGOs suffer from the shrinking of humanitarian space in Afghanistan compared to Western NGOs?

4) In what other countries is the shrinking of humanitarian space taking place and for what reasons? Doing a comparison between several countries may offer parallels.

5) Where does the funding for insurgent conflicts come from? Following funding from governments or actors like Pakistan ISI may shed more light on the shrinking of humanitarian space and how it can be controlled.

The limitations of this study are a Eurocentric or Western focus of both the literature review and the respondents. This was partly due to the cancellation of field work in Afghanistan after the primary field work site became too dangerous. The size of the

sample group was smaller than hoped but did not impinge on the worth of the responses received. Other facets that could not be looked at in depth due to the limitation in size and scope of the study were that of religions effect on neutrality of aid organisations, specifically after September the 11th.

The research has highlighted the vital issues that are affecting NGO neutrality and security in Afghanistan. It has taken account of how governments, NGOs and military actors all influence the neutrality and safety of NGOs. The illumination of the topic of NGO neutrality and perception in this political climate of anarchic and militant states will only help bolster debate and recognition of this vital subject if we are to maintain humanitarian organisations and principles.

7.3 Conclusion

The research set out to answer questions outlined in chapter one under *Rationale of Study*, over humanitarian space in Afghanistan and to offer recommendations to mitigate the future threat. The recommendations for mitigation are listed in the first section of this chapter. The research questions were set to discover if there has been a change in neutrality and impartiality or the perception of change in NGOs and whether that change has affected their humanitarian space. These issues were explored with reference to funding, corporate aid and contractors, the civilian-military relationship and development progress. These questions have been answered in the Afghan context, a country where primary and secondary research conclude that humanitarian space has shrunk to such a degree that many parts of the country are to dangerous to operate in.

Afghanistan is not the first country to suffer from the NGO murders. However, the post-September 11th era has heralded a new operating environment for NGOs in Afghanistan and Iraq. NGOs are specific targets and have been legitimised due to perceived complicity with the Afghan Government and the Coalition forces. The modern environment in which NGO staff work in close proximity or indeed in conjunction with international military actors is relatively new. The current political climate regarding a Western led war on terror makes the civilian-military relationship fragile and potentially dangerous.

NGOs are heterogeneous by their very nature and rightly so as homogeneity would limit the various caveat roles that different NGOs fill. Heterogeneity, however, means that NGOs may align themselves more or less with various political ideals or various countries' foreign policy. NGOs consider neutrality to be fundamental to their work but in varying degrees. There is no universal NGO absolute on the standard operating procedures for NGOs working with the military in the field and due to NGOs' different characteristics there is unlikely ever to be one. However, NGOs should be aware that in Afghanistan the civilian-military relationship does contribute to the shrinking of humanitarian space, among other factors.

The question is, is it better to act with the military to help save lives or to maintain neutrality and possibly risk civilian deaths? That is an unanswerable question which should be a hotly debated topic within the NGO community. When it comes to saving lives it is impossible to categorically denounce a NGO that compromises their neutrality by accepting military logistical help or funding. Further debate will raise all the issues surrounding the argument, increasing the awareness of all the different factors allowing each NGO to make an informed decision according to its organisation's own principles.

The civilian-military relationship is not the only factor that is causing the shrinking of humanitarian space in Afghanistan and has in fact been attributed to improving it by some NGO staff. NGOs must be aware that the slow rate of progress and resentment of foreign intervention is growing due to a variety of factors. Religion and a clash of cultures make Afghanistan a particularly fragile environment to work in and NGOs must shoulder some of the responsibility for the shrinking or humanitarian space themselves. Inappropriate dress, consumption of alcohol, displays of wealth and working with the Afghan Government or the Coalition, or simply being Western, all act to make NGOs a target. NGOs and the humanitarian community must monitor humanitarian space closely and scrutinise themselves as closely as they do others to ensure that humanitarians have continued access vulnerable people anywhere in the world.

The research concludes that NGO neutrality has been compromised, causing a shrinking of humanitarian space. In the case of NGOs such as MSF who are staunchly neutral and

un-associated with any other group, the attack on their organisation was due to a perceived loss of neutrality or other reason. The slow rate of development angers the local people and is hampered by poor security. It is clear that working with the military and the Afghan Government does compromise NGO neutrality but, as highlighted by Joseph of HOPE International, sometimes it is better to receive help from the military in order to act rather than not. The choice that faces each NGO working in Afghanistan is whether and to what degree they should involve themselves with the military groups such as the PRTs. NGOs should be aware that their organisational morality may spur them to receive help, funding or perhaps even join forces on projects with the military. However, such moves would make NGO staff colleagues with military staff. Military staff whose job it is to win hearts and minds, and who, when questioned on about criticism over heavy handed and culturally insensitive tactics, excuse culturally insensitive behaviour by saying:

> "It is quite difficult to kill people with a light touch and in a culturally sensitive way!" (Boswell, pers.com, 2006).

As such, NGOs ally themselves with people and beliefs that are incompatible with their own and those of their organisation and are seen to be doing so by the local people. Latterly, when NGO staff get attacked, one reason for their loss of neutrality should be clear.

APPENDICES

Fig 1

The parcel on the left is a humanitarian aid parcel and the one on the right is a deadly cluster bomb, both of which are dropped from aircraft. The latter should explode on impact but has a high failure rate. If the device fails to explode on impact they remain live and the slightest touch can set then off, maiming the victim. In the snowy or muddy conditions that prevailed throughout rural Afghanistan during the winter months when these where dropped, it is not difficult to see how these items could be easily confused, with devastating, deadly and sadly ironic repercussions.

The copied symbol of the German Africa corps on the KSK Gelädewagen

http://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/:Afghanistan-KSK-Wagen-Wehrmachtssymbol/575319.html

Millitary Humanitarian Space Interview

1) How long was your PRT in Afghanistan and where?

2) How much experience do you have in Afghanistan?

3) How would you describe the security situation in Afghanistan at the moment?

4) What has caused the improvement or decline?

5) where your PRT operations curtailed or changed to adapt to deterioration in security?
6a) Where
6b) Why
6c) In what way? Has it been scaled down, cancelled or perhaps no presence in an area where otherwise would be working?

6) What are the objectives of the British PRT. Does it include the combating of opium production or helping with development and reconstruction?

7) What was the hoped outcome of the PRT's objectives and were you successful? Yes/No why?

8) What has been the change in security due to your presence?

9) Do you think neutrality is an important facet of humanitarian work? Yes/ No- why?

10) PRTs came under heavy criticism for blurring the boundaries between civilian and military actors by doing things such as the setting up of a mobile health clinic outside a hospital in Saripul, in December 2003, where the International Red Cross was already working? Do you feel these criticisms are fair? and why?

11) Do you think PRTs, not necessarily British, had a negative or positive impact on humanitarian space and the security for NGOs?

12) PRTs were accused of being a cheap answer to the improvement of security, a force unable to implement security but more trying to negotiate it. Is this fair, do you think PRTs are enough to improve security, or is a more robust (and expensive) force needed with the ability to tackle errant war lords and deal with opium production and lawlessness?

13) The UK PRT is widely regarded, even among NGO groups, as the most successful out of all the countries' PRTs. The US PRTs use of unmarked vehicles and military PRT team personnel wearing civilian clothes, carrying concealed weapons. Also the dispersal of flyers threatening to withhold aid if information on the Taliban was not forth-coming from communities was criticised for endangering NGO and humanitarian workers lives. Do you think this is valid?

14) What are the positive impacts that the UK PRT has had?

15) Do you believe that PRTs are a valuable and the right tool in Afghanistan?

16) What needs to be done, and by whom, to ensure peace, security and development in Afghanistan?

17) Do you see that as a goal that is likely to be realised?
17A) If not, what do you think will be the likely repercussions for the Afghan people in the region?

18) Who are attacking the military in Afghanistan, is it just the Taliban and terrorist groups or opium farmers and an emerging mafia?

19) In the media recently it is portrayed that the situation is deteriorating and that the coalition forces are loosing their grip. This has been blamed on many factors such as the alienation of the people by heavy handed and culturally insensitive military forces, military contractors like Dyncorp working outside the law with no regulations to limit their actions and the fact that the Americans where preoccupied with their hunt for Bin Laden when they first arrived that they did not start reconstruction and local capacity building. The fact that the reconstruction that was promised has not come and that the people are becoming increasingly disenfranchised and anti coalition and foreigner feelings are growing. Do you believe the coalition is winning and are the factors I have mentioned pertinent or distractions from the real issues?

20) It is widely regarded that the British PRTs are the most effective due to there lack of preoccupation with force protection allowing troops to go out on long mobile patrols and mix with the local people. Do you believe that other coalition countries PRTs have been as successful as the British yes/no why?

21) Are there any questions that I may have missed, or any thoughts or facts that you think might be relevant or interesting to my research?

I would like to thank you very much for taking the time to help me with my research. If you have any comments, questions or information that you think might be useful to me later, please do hesitate to contact me.

NGO Humanitarian Space Interview

<u>Preparation before the interview: I will have filled in the below from background research.</u>
-How long the organisation has been running...
-How long it has been active in Afghanistan and doing what type of
work..
....
-Have any or the organisations staff been victims of attacks...
....

1) How long have you been with your current organisation?

2) How would you describe the security situation for humanitarian workers in Afghanistan currently? (Answers may vary due to variations listed below and if so ask why it makes a difference)
 a) organisation
 b) region
 c) task
 other

3) If the interviewee responds that the security situation is good or improved they will be asked if it has improved recently and why they think it is good (i.e. what has made it safer: e.g. the UN, police or NGO security policy)

4) If the interviewee responds that the security situation is bad they will be asked why they think it is bad. (What has made it dangerous? politics, military development, loss of neutrality?)

5) Has your organisation had to curb or cancel work in certain areas due to the threat of violence in the last two years? If so;
a) Where?
b) Why?
c) In what way? Has it been scaled down, cancelled or perhaps your organisation choose not to work in an area it otherwise would?

6) Would you say the security situation is getting better or getting worse for humanitarian staff? What do you think the reason for this is?
Better:
Worse:
No change:
Not sure:

7) What has been the change in security in the areas in which your organisation has worked in over the last two years?

8) What, in your opinion, has caused the improvement?
8a) What, in your opinion, has caused the deterioration?

9) Has your organisation been targeted for aggression over the last two years? (The background history of the organisation would be checked and if any known violence towards workers had taken place the question would be phrased as: Members of your organisation were the victims of violence in (place) during (year). If no attacks had taken place, examples of other NGO attacks would be used for the next question.

10) What do you think the reasons were behind these attacks?

11) Is neutrality an important facet of humanitarian work?
11a) Why is it, or is it not, important?

12) Do you think humanitarian organisations' neutrality has changed since 9/11? and if so, why?
Yes:
No:
Perception has changed:
Not sure:

13) What needs to be done, and by whom, to ensure peace, security and development in Afghanistan?

14) Do you see that as a goal that is likely to be realised?
15a) If not, what do you think will be the likely repercussions for development in the region?

15) What do you think the impact of military humanitarian programs such as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) has been on development and security, and why?
Positive aspects:
Negative aspects:

16) Would your organisation work with military PRTs? If yes why? If no why?

17) Are there any questions that I may have missed, or any thoughts or facts that you think might be relevant or interesting to my research?

I would like to thank you very much for taking the time to help me with my research. If you have any comments, questions or information that you think might be useful to me later, please do hesitate to contact me.

References

(ACBAR) Agency coordinating body for Afghan Relief (2006) ACBAR Briefing Paper 2006: *Aid effectivness in Afghanistan at a cross roads*. Retrieved 29th, November, 2006 from: http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2006/acbar-afg-01nov.pdf

Agier, M & Saulnier, F, B. (2004) Humanitarian spaces: Spaces of Exception. A chapter in *The Shadows of Just Wars* by Medecins Sans Frontieres (2004) C. Hurst & Co Ltd, London.

Annan, K. (2006) Statement made by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the opening session of the London Conference on Afghanistan, 31 January 2006 Retrieved 30, May, 2006 from: http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front/TextOnly?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1136906260508&to=true&a=KArticle&aid=1136909440960

The Associated Press (2005) U.S. contractor accused of shooting Afghan interpreter. *USA TODAY*. Retrieved 24, July, 2006 from: http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-09-30-afghan-killing_x.htm

Baker, A. (2006) Deadly Notes in the Night. *Time Magazine July 2006:24-25*.

Barker, P. (2004) Why PRTs Aren't the Answer. *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*. Retrieved 17, July, 2006 from: http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2004/1103prts.htm

Barnett, A. (2003) Scandal-hit US firm wins key contracts. *The Observer News paper*. Retrieved 19, June, 2006 from: http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,935689,00.html

BBC News (2002) Agencies threaten Afghan pullout. Retrieved 1, March, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/2047675.stm

BBC News (2003) Red Cross cuts Iraq operations. Retrieved 12, March, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3252723.stm

BBC News (2004) Baghdad terror blasts kill dozens. Retrieved 12, February, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3216539.stm

BBC News (2004a) US chides 'hostile' Karzai guards. Retrieved 25 , August, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3743188.stm

BBC News (2004b) Headscarves in the Headlines. Retrieved 2 , November, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3476163.stm

BBC News (2004c) Profile: Jonathan 'Jack' Idema. Retrieved 16 , November, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3569552.stm

BBC News (2005) US held youngsters at Abu Ghraib Retrieved 20, February, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/4339511.stm

BBC News. (2006a) Curfew in Kabul after deadly riot. Retrieved 30, May, 2006 from: http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5028416.stm

BBC News. (2006b) NATO to press Pakistan on Taleban. Retrieved 10, October, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6032721.stm

BBC News. (2006c) NATO promises new Afghan tactics. Retrieved 4, June , 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5045560.stm

BBC News (2006d) US soldier admits Iraq girl rape. Retrieved 15th, November , 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6152118.stm

BBC News (2006e) 'Civilians killed' in NATO raids. Retrieved 26th, October , 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6086064.stm

BBC News (2006f) German troops in skull photos row. Retrieved 25th, October , 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6083388.stm

BBC News (2006g) German skull row troops suspended. Retrieved 1st, November, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6106546.stm

BBC News (2006h) Torries criticise BBC over Taleban. Retrieved 26th, October, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6086276.stm

BBC News (2006i) Afghan ultimatum over corruption. Retrieved 12th, October, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6045082.stm

BBC News (2006j) Afghanistan's neglected drought. Retrieved 22th, November, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6165304.stm

BBC News (2006k) School sacks woman after veil row. Retrieved 28th, November, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bradford/6179842.stm

BBC News (2006l) Violence 'eroding Afghan hopes' Retrieved 7th, December, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6213244.stm

BBC News (2007) Al-Qaeda 'rebuilding' in Pakistan. Retrieved 23rd, January, 2007 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6254375.stm

Borders, R. (2004) Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan:
A Model for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. *Journal of Development and Social Transformation* (1):5-12.

Bradol, J, H. (2004) The Sacrificial International Order. A chapter in *In the shadow of 'just wars':*1-22. Cornell University Press: New York.

Bush, G, W. (2001a). Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People: September 20th 2001. Retrieved 30, May, 2006 from: http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html

Bush, G, W. (2001b) Address to the nation announcing strikes against Al Qaeda training camps and Taliban military installations in Afghanistan :October 7th, 2001. Retrieved 21, February, 2006 from:
http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=65088

Buissonniere, M. (2004) Threats and insecurity, transcripts of a press conference held in Kabul, July 2004. Retrieved 21, July, 2006 from:
http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/transcripts/afghanistan_pressconference.cfm

CARE & the Centre on International Cooperation (2004) Afghanistan policy brief: the cost of doing too little. Retrieved 9, February, 2006 from:
http://www.care.de/uploads/media/Afghanistan_The-cost-of-doing-too-little_CARE-CIC.pdf

CARE (2005) 'Afghan counter-narcotics policy: too early to judge'. Retrieved 28 October, 2005 from:
http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/articles/2005/03/20050331_afghanistan_policy_brief.asp

CARE & ANSO (2005) NGO In security in Afghanistan. Retrieved 12, February, 2006 from:
http://www.care.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/20050505_ansocare.pdf

Calas,F. & Salignon, P. (2004) Afghanistan: from 'militant monks' to crusaders. A chapter in   *The Shadows of Just Wars* by Medecins Sans Frontieres (2004) C. Hurst & Co Ltd, London.

Christian Aid (2006) Christian aid in Afghanistan. Retrieved 28, February, 2006 from:
http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/world/where/meeca/afghanip.htm

CIA (2006) The World Factbook: Afghanistan. Retrieved 28, March, 2006 from:
http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/af.html

Coghlan, T. (2004) Millitary and aid in Afghanistan. Retrieved 20, April, 2006 from:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3995759.stm

Doucet, L. (2006) Afghanistan: A job half done. Retrieved 4th, December, 2006 from:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6205220.stm

Dummet, M. (2006) UN warns over Afghanistan drought. Retrieved 19th, July, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5189052.stm

ECHO (2003) Protecting the humanitarian space. Retrieved 20, April, 2006 from:
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/pdf_files/annual_reviews/2003_en.pdf

ECHO (2004) Report on security of the humanitarian personnel: standards and practices for the security of humanitarian personnel and advocacy for humanitarian space.

Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from:
http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/srilanka/catalogue/Files/Info%20Centre/Security%20and%20Health/Security/S2_echo2.pdf

ECHO (2005) European humanitarian aid values and principles. Retrieved 20, May, 2006 from: http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2005/echo-gen-13jun.pdf

Edwards D, B.(2002) Before Taliban: genealogies of the Afghan Jihad. University of California press Ltd. London, England.

Egeland, J. (2006) Rescue workers at risk. Retrieved 15, November, 2006 from: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KKEE-6TJMRC?OpenDocument

Esfandiari, G. (2004) Afghanistan: killings raise concerns for aid workers' safety. Retrieved 11, February, 2006 from: http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/05/69afb372-d9bc-4795-8ba5-b74de69cc827.html

European commissions humanitarian aid office ECHO (2004) Report on security of humanitarian personnel. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/other_files/security/echo_security_report_en.doc

Ferguson, N. (2003) *Empire: how Britain made the modern world*. Penguin Books Ltd. London.

Fife, W. (2005) *Doing Fieldwork*. Palgrave MacMillan. New York.

Frean, A. & Syal, R. (2006) Community divided on terrorism and security. Retrieved 21, February, 2006 from: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article682585.ece

Furniss, C. (2006) A global addiction. *Geographical* vol.78 (8):37-47.

(GAO) United States General Accounting Office(2004) Afganistan reconstruction: deteriorating security and limited resources have impeded progress; improvements in U.S.strategy needed. Retrieved 12, July, 2006 from: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/gao/d04403.pdf

(GAO) United States General Accounting Office (2005) Afganistan reconstruction: despite some progress, deteriorating security and other obstacles continue to threaten achievement of U.S. goals .Retrieved 12, July, 2006 from: http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05742.pdf

Gluck, K & Buissonnière, M. (2004) Threats and insecurity, transcripts of a press conference held in Kabul, July 2004. Retrieved 21, July, 2006 from: http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/transcripts/afghanistan_pressconference.cfm

Guttieri, K. (2005) Humanitarian space in insecure environments: a shifting paradigm. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Nov/guttieriNov05.asp

Hasnain, G. (2006) Pakistan's other war. *Time Magazine 25:28-30.*

Hatting, H. (2004) Relations with armed forces. *Refugee Quarterly 23(4):74-76.*

Hulton, A. C (2002*) The Price of indifference: refugees and humanitarian action in the new century.* UK: Oxford University Press.

Huntington, S, P. (1993) The clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22-49.

(HRF) Human Rights First (2006) Non-governmental organizations (NGO) under attack in Sudan. Retrieved 16, October, 2006 from: http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/international_justice/darfur/table/ngo-table.aspx

Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2001) Cluster bombs in Afghanistan. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/arms/cluster-bck1031.htm

Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2002) On the precipice: insecurity in northern Afghanistan. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan/afghan-bck.pdf

Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2005). Private military contractors and the law. Retrieved 2, July, 2006 from: http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/05/05/iraq8547.htm

IRIN (2003) Afghanistan: NGO continues operating despite armed attack. Retrieved 9, February, 2006 from: http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=33902&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN

IRIN UN (2006a) Afghanistan: Four health workers killed in explosion. Retrieved 18, November, 2006 from: http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=53489&SelectRegion=Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN

IRIN (2006b) Afghanistan: Humanitarian work is the task of aid workers, not soldiers, security council team told. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=56405&SelectRegion=Asia

Jakobsen, P, V. (2005) PRTs in Afghanistan: successful but not sufficient. *Danish Institute for International Studies..* Retrieved 8, April, 2006 from: *http://www.nps.edu/CSRS/Resources/Civ-mil/Jakobsen%20PRTs_danes.pdf*

Johnson,C. & Leslie, J. (2004) *Afghanistan: The Mirage of Peace*. Zed Books, London.

Jurisic, A. (2004) Is the humanitarian-military relationship moving in reverse? An analysis based on two snapshots: Iraq and Afghanistan. Retrieved 16, February, 2006 from: http://coe-dmha.org/Liaison/Vol_3No_2/Feat07.htm

Kakar, M, K. (1995) *Afghanistan: the Soviet invasion and the Afghan response, 1979-1982. Berkley* California, University of California press.

Khan, M, I. (2006) Musharraf's misunderstood Afghan strategy Retrieved 10, October, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6038206.stm

King, D. (2002) Paying the ultimate price: Analysis of the deaths of humanitarian aid workers 1997-2001. Retrieved 22, April, 2006 from: http://www.odihpn.org/report.asp?ID=2454

Krahenbuhl, P. (2004) Is there a future in independent humanitarian action?. *Refugee Survey Quarterly 23(4):28-33.*

Lansford, T. (2003) *A bitter harvest: US foreign policy and Afghanistan*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot England.

Lapping, B. (1985) *End of an empire*. Glasgow: Collins.

Left, S. (2004) Médecins Sans Frontières to leave Afghanistan. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,1270916,00.html

Leithead, A. (2006) The heroin trail. Retrieve 20, June, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5005640.stm

Loescher, G. (2004) An idea lost in the rubble. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://www.un-ngls.org/cso/cso4/an_idea.htm

Loescher, G. (2006) Threatened are the peace makers. Retrieved 1, February, 2005 from: http://www.nd.edu/~ndmag/sp2005/loescher.html

Lyon, D. (2006) Afghans customs chief 'removed by mafia'. Retrieved 31, October, 2005 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6101372.stm

Maas, C, D. (1999) The Afghan conflict: external involvement. *Central Asian Survey 18(1):65-78.*

MacAskill, E. (2004a) Aid agency quits Afghanistan over security fears. Retrieved 12, February, 2006 from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,1271197,00.html

MacAskill, E. (2004b) Pentagon forced to withdraw leaflet linking aid to information on Taliban. Retrieved 18, February, 2006 from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1210358,00.html

Mackintosh, K. (2000) Humanitarian Policy Group: principles of humanitarian action in international humanitarian law. Retrieved 21, June, 2006 from: http://www.crid.or.cr/digitalizacion/pdf/eng/doc13593/doc13593.pdf

Marsden, P. (2002) *The Taliban: war and religion in Afghanistan*. Zed Books: London.

Martin, S & Lari, A (2004) Zimbabwe: humanitarian access denied
to increasingly vulnerable former farm workers. Retrieved 1st, Decemeber, 2006 from:
http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2004/0723farm.htm

McGivering, J. (2006) Disappointment and distrust in Afghanistan. Retrieved 28th,
November, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/6218590.stm

Mills, G. (2006) Calibrating ink spots: filling Afghanistan's ungoverned spaces.
Journal: The Royal United Services Institute 151(4):16-25.

Mojumdar, A. (2006) Fighting "NGOism". Retrieved 26th, Febuary, 2006 from:
http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2006/0113fighting.htm

(MSF) Medicins Sans Frontieres (2004) News from Afghanistan: last operational
update. Retrieved 12th, May, 2006 from:
http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news/afghanistan.cfm

 Meo, N. (2004) Aid Agencies Desert. Retrieved 28, February, 2006 from: *Afghanistan*
http://www.countercurrents.org/afgan-meo290704.htm

Mojumdar, A. (2006) Fighting "NGOism", Retrieved 6, March, 2006 from:
http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2006/0113fighting.htm

Muse, T. (2005) US troops 'tried to smuggle cocaine'. *The Guardian News Paper.*
Retrieved 17, July, 2006 from:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/colombia/story/0,,1455559,00.html

Nawa, F. (2006) Afghanistan inc. *A corpwatch investigative report.* Retrieved 10,
October, 2006 from: http://corpwatch.org/downloads/AfghanistanINCfinalsmall.pdf

Nobelprize.org. (2006) Henry Dunant: The Nobel Prize 1901. Retrieved 14, November,
2006 from: http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1901/dunant-bio.html

Norton-Taylor, R. (2006) Fear Grows Over Mission. *The Guardian Weekly* vol:175
no:12 Printed in Sydney

North, A. (2004) Aid worker killed in Afghanistan.Retrieved 12th, May, 2006 from:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3540789.stm

OSAC (2006) ANSO incident report: NGO staff ambushed, murdered in Balkh
province. Retrieved 9th, June, 2006 from:
http://www.osac.gov/Reports/report.cfm?contentID=48531
Powell, C. (2001) Remarks to the national foreign policy conference for leaders of
nongovernmental organizations. Retrieved 30, May, 2006 from:
http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/5762.htm

Purvis, A. (2006) Bones of contention. *Time (6)44:11-12.*

Rasanayagam, A. (2003) *Afghanistan: a modern history*. I.B.Tauris and Co. Ltd, London

Rashid, A. (2001) Arrested aid workers insulted us, say Taliban. Retrieved 16, April, 2006 from:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2001/08/08/wtali08.xml

Rashid, A. (2006) Afghanistan: Taliban's second coming. Retrieved 30, May, 2006 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/5029190.stm

Rennie, D. (2006) Newspapers challenge Muslims over cartoons of Mohammed Retrieved 12th, October, 2006 from:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/02/02/wcart02.xml&sSheet=/news/2006/02/02/ixnewstop.html

Richards, D. (2006) NATO in Afghanistan: transformation on the front line. *Journal: The Royal United Services Institute* 151(4): 10-15.

Roberts, D, L. (2006) Staying alive: safety and security guidelines for humanitarian volunteers in conflict areas (ICRC). Retrieved 25, March, 2006 from:
http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p0717/$File/ICRC_002_0717.PDF!Open

Save The Children (2004) Provincial reconstruction teams and humanitarian relations in Afghanistan. Retrieved 30, April, 2006 from:
http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/darfur/uploads/military/Military%20PRTs%20in%20Afghanistan_Sep04%20by%20SCUK.pdf

Schakowsky , J. (2006) Schakowsky calls for contractor accountability returns to subcommittee on national security to press for transparency and oversight. Retrieved 29, June, 2006 from:
http://janschakowsky.org/tabid/53/ctl/ArticleView/mid/456/articleId/352/Schakowsky-Calls-For-Contractor-Accountability-Returns-To-Subcommittee-On-National-Security-To-Press-For-Transparency-And-Oversight.aspx

Schetter, C. (2005). Ethnoscapes, national territorialisation, and the Afghan war. *Geopolitics 10*,1: 50-75.

Scheyven, R. & Storey, D. (2003) *Development fieldwork: A Practical Guide*. SAGE Publications Ltd. London.

Senlis (2006) Helmand at war: the changing nature of the insurgency in southern Afghanistan and it's effects on the future of the country. Retrieved 23, July, 2006 from:
http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/010_publication/documents/Helmand_Report_June_2006

Senlis (2006a) Afghanistan's instability and the return of the Taliban. Retrieved 23, July, 2006 from:

http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/014_publication/documents/5y_chapter_01

Senlis (2006b) Five Years On, the US-led International Community has Failed Afghanistan. Retrieved 23, July, 2006 from: http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/014_publication/documents/5y_chapter_05

Shawcross, W. (2000). *Deliver us from evil: warlords and peacekeepers in a world of endless conflict.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Sheik, M; Gutierrez, M. I; Bolton, P; Spiegel, P; Thieren, M; Burnham, G. (2000) Deaths among humanitarian workers. *British Medical Journal 321:166-8.*

Simpson, J. (2005) Rethinking the war on drugs. Retrieved 29 October, 2005 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/south_asia/4282306.stm

Slim, H. (2004) With us or against us? Humnitarian agencies and Coalition counter-insurgency. *Refugee Quarterly* 23(4): 34-47.

Slim, H (2004a) A Call to Alms: Humanitarian action and the art of war. *Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.* Retrieved 1, November, 2006 from: http://www.hdcentre.org/datastore/files/Calltoalms.pdf

Smith, M. (2006) Iraq: Is there no hope of getting it right? Retrieved 20, March, 2006 from: http://timesonline.typepad.com/mick_smith/2006/03/ieaq_is_there_n.html

Stephens, (2005) Afghanistan: A rebuilding plan full of cracks. Retrieved 10, November, 2006 from: http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=12825

Stern (2006) KSK car with armed forces symbol. *Stern News Paper 1-11-06.* Retrieved 1st, November, 2006 from: http://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/:Afghanistan-KSK-Wagen-Wehrmachtssymbol/575319.html

Stoddard, A. (2003) With us or against us? NGO neutrality on the line. Retrieved 2, February, 2006 from: http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/fund/2003/1200against.htm

Scheyvens, R. & Storey, D. (Ed.). (2003). *Development fieldwork: A practical guide*. London: SAGE.

Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting qualitative data.* London: Sage publications Ltd Tanner, S. (2002) *Afghanistan: a military history from Alexander the great to the fall of the Taliban.* Cambridge USA, Da Capo Press.

Time (2006) Numbers. *Time* August 7-14 Vol:168 No 6/7

Torrente, N. D (2004) Humanitarianism sacrificed: integration's false promise *Ethics and International Affairs* 18(2): 3-12.

Traynor, I. (2003) The privatisation of war. Retrieved 17, April, 2006 from:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1103566,00.html

(UNDP) United Nations Development Programme (2004) Afghanistan: a country on the move. Retrieved 18, August, 2006 from:
http://www.undp.org.af/home/afg_on_the_move.pdf

UN Office of Security (1998) Security in the field. Retrieved 2, April, 2006 from:
http://www.unep.org/restrict/security/security.doc

UN-OHRLLS (2007) List of least developed countries. Retrieved 16, January, 2007 from: http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/list.htm

(URD) Urgence Réhabilitation Développement (2006) Linking relief rehabilitation and development in Afghanistan: a review based on a multi and cross sector approach. Retrieved 10, July, 2006 from:
http://www.urd.org/fichiers_urd/pole_dactivites/recherche/lrrd/Multisector/LRRD_Chp1_cross_cutting_issues.pdf

UN News Centre (2006) UN deplores 'cowardly' murder of Afghan aid worker. Retrieved 28, February, 2006 from:
http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=17705&Cr=afghan&Cr1=

Vogelsang, W. (2002) *The Afghans*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd

Walsh, C. (2005) *The essential research skills*. Amokura Publications. Fiji.

Walsh, D. (2006) US faces new challenge after riots in Kabul puncture illusion of calm. Retrieved 30, May, 2006 from:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,,1785599,00.html

Watts, C. (2004) Indicators of NGO security in Afghanistan. Retrieved 28, February, 2006 from:
http://sand.miis.edu/research/student_research/2004%20Student%20Work/04Watts_Indicators_Afghanistan.pdf

Werve, J. (2004) Contractors write the rules. Retrieved 17, April, 2006 from:
http://www.publicintegrity.org/wow/report.aspx?aid=334

Wikepedia: Online Encyclopaedia (2006) Force multiplier. Retrieved 14, July, 2006 from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_multiplier

Wishart, I. (2007) Helen hoodwinked by preachers of hate. *Investigate* 74:24-41.