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THE CHALLENGES OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS  
IN OPERATIONS AT THE TRAILING EDGE OF WAR

by

Susan G. Sweatt

Major, United States Marine Corps

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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War college or the Department of the Navy.

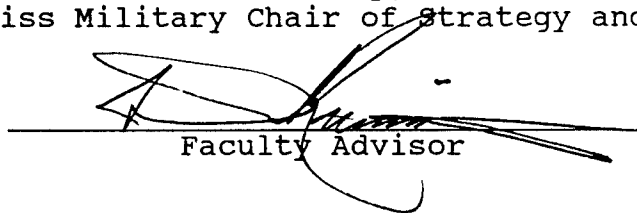
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Paper directed by  
Captain D. Watson, USN  
Chairman, Joint Military Operations Department

Advisor  
Colonel J.D. Keirse, USA  
Tasker Howard Bliss Military Chair of Strategy and Tactics

  
Faculty Advisor

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The U.S. military defines itself, almost exclusively, in terms of deterring or fighting and winning wars. In the past, it has not concerned itself with peace operations or a force structure focused exclusively toward them. In operations on the trailing edge of war, the interactions of military forces with Humanitarian Relief Organizations (HROs) must be complementary. Operation Restore Hope surfaced several aspects of these civil-military relationships that must be addressed when planning and training for future peace operations. This paper outlines them first in terms of identifying the problems that occurred, United Task Force (UNITAF) Somalia's solutions to them, and finally what future actions should be taken to prevent their reoccurrence. Specifically addressed are: the basic lack of understanding between the military forces and the HROs, weapons confiscation, and support provided to the HROs.

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## THE CHALLENGES OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN OPERATIONS AT THE TRAILING EDGE OF WAR

### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS ROLE IN FUTURE OPERATIONS

From 8 December 1992 to 4 May 1993, U.S. military forces were deployed to Somalia to conduct Operation Restore Hope. They found an already existing uncoordinated relief effort being conducted by various non-governmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, international/regional organizations, and religious organizations.<sup>1</sup> These Humanitarian Relief Organizations (HROs) and the U.S. military reconciled philosophical and organizational differences to accomplish the mission. This paper will review this civil-military relationship and will conclude with recommendations for facilitating civil-military relations in future peace operations.

Long after the U.S. military departs HROs will continue to perform relief actions and nation-building. The lack of a complementary civil-military relationship while the U.S. military is involved, will prevent either organization from accomplishing its mission. No longer should the term civil-military relations only bring to mind images of Moltke and Bismarck or Truman and MacArthur. The new meaning must include the complex interaction of HROs' massive relief efforts with significant U.S. military operations.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: for ease of reference the term Humanitarian Relief Organization (HRO) will be used to collectively identify these civilian organizations.

Today's security environment, with its diverse ethnic conflicts and emerging states/alliances that pose serious dangers to regional stability, challenges our Nation. U.S. military roles and missions are expanding to include operations on the trailing edge of war (peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement.) These peace operations will dominate our military mandate as we pursue our nation's strategic goals and protect our security interests. Past peace operations, far different from our more traditional warfighting functions, must be examined so that future operations may benefit. Operation Restore Hope was an example of what U.S. military operations will be in the post-Cold War era.

#### THE SOMALIA CRISIS

After the overthrow of Somali President Siad Barre's military dictatorship in early 1991, a civil war, fueled by ancient inter-clan hatred, ensued. This violent struggle for power between various clans, factions, and warlords resulted in closure of all government ministries and institutions. The poor economic situation and resultant food crisis, exacerbated by a drought in mid-1992, killed more than 300,000 and put another 1.5 million Somalis at risk.<sup>2</sup> Responding to public opinion and assistance requests from HROs, the United Nations (U.N.) initiated relief efforts. These early efforts were

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<sup>2</sup> President George Bush, "Letter," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Crisis in Somalia, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 113.

repulsed by local clans. Determining that the situation constituted a threat to international peace and security, the U.N. passed a subsequent resolution to authorize member states to use all necessary means to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations. As part of the multilateral response, President Bush deployed U.S. Central Command (USCINCCENT) forces to Somalia as "necessary to address a major humanitarian calamity, avert related threats to international peace and security, and protect the safety of Americans and others engaged in relief operations."<sup>3</sup> The mission assigned to the Commander, Joint Task Force Somalia (later designated as United Task Force, Somalia - UNITAF) follows:

Conduct joint/combined military operations in Somalia to:

- Secure major airports and sea ports, key installations, and food distribution points
- Provide security for convoys and relief operations
- Provide open and free passage of relief supplies
- Assist U.N. and non-governmental organizations in providing humanitarian relief under U.N. auspices

Thus began Operation Restore Hope, what may be considered a first for U.S. major force projection in a humanitarian assistance role to support U.N. relief efforts.<sup>4</sup> It was an example of the military's new emphasis on expanded roles and

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> General Joseph P. Hoar, "A CINC's Perspective," Joint Forces Quarterly, Autumn 1993, p. 60.

missions.

OPERATION RESTORE HOPE'S CIVIL-MILITARY PROBLEMS

Operation Restore Hope identified several aspects of civil-military relationships that must be considered when planning and training for future peace operations. This chapter will identify the three categories of problems; subsequent chapters will discuss UNITAF's solutions to them and what future actions should be taken to prevent their reoccurrence.

First, and foremost, the basic lack of understanding and familiarity of the different organizational cultures of the military and the HROs must be addressed. These conceptions were exacerbated by no clear command structure; the military's initial view that their only mission was to provide security for, not assist, the HROs; the HROs expectation that the military would solve all their problems; and the negative stereotypes that each held for the other.

Some forty-nine HROs operating during UNITAF had been in Somalia since the 1980's and viewed the arrival of the military as a control mechanism being forced upon them. They believed the military would disregard their accomplishments-to-date in infrastructure and agriculture improvements; would severely hamper or discontinue their delivery programs; and would be seen by the Somalis as an occupying army thus renewing fighting in the capital. They saw the military as inflexible, politically conservative, and excessively

bureaucratic. On the other hand, the military officers considered the HROs inefficient, politically liberal, over-educated, and anti-military.<sup>5</sup>

Independent and hard-working, HROs are loose-knit groups with little emphasis on detailed planning and no established chain of command. They maximize the delegation of decision-making to compensate for the rapid turnover among HRO staffs. This allows for quicker reactions to changing circumstances. However, the turnover made it difficult for the military to identify those who could act in an official capacity and resulted in the loss of continuity for the aid recipients. Military personnel, on the other hand, are accustomed to defined, established command and control hierarchies. Their decision-making is centralized and objective driven.

The second problem was an aggregation of several related ones categorized by one word -- support. Many HROs held unrealistically high expectations of the military as the solution to all their support problems. Since there was no sovereign nation to provide host nation support to the HROs, they overburdened UNITAF with direct requests for logistic, engineer, legal, health care, civilian air carrier, and DoD aircraft transportation support. Little precedent for providing HROs with this type of support created quite a dilemma for UNITAF.

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<sup>5</sup>Colonel, F.M. Lorenz, "Law and Anarchy in Somalia," Parameters, Winter 1993-94, p. 39.

The third and probably the most contentious problem for the HROs was that of weapons confiscation. Specifically excluded from the mission statement, disarmament became an implied UNITAF task. Initially, the weapons confiscation policy was to seize all crew-served weapons and individual weapons openly brandished with hostile intent. Before and, for a time, after the arrival of UNITAF, the HROs had hired vehicles with armed drivers to protect relief supply deliveries. These simultaneous actions resulted in a conflict between the objectives of the military and the needs of the HROs. Frustrated relief workers no longer enjoyed the protection of their own armed guards and were not provided the benefit of UNITAF protection. The principle reasons for the military-civilian discord over weapons confiscation were: the relief guards were viewed with suspicion by UNITAF because it believed the guards turned to banditry at night; weapons confiscation policies varied from sector to sector which left the relief workers defenseless as they crossed sector borders; and there was tighter security in the Mogadishu HRS than in any other.<sup>6</sup>

#### ORGANIZING UNITAF-HRO RELATIONS

"Instead of thinking about warfighting agencies like command and control, you create a political committee, a civil-military operations center (CMOC) to interface with volunteer organizations. These become the heart of your operations, as

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<sup>6</sup>Jonathan T. Dworken, Military Relations With Humanitarian Relief Organizations: Observations From Restore Hope, CRM 93-140 (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, October 1993), pp. 22, 29.

opposed to a combat or fire-support operations center."  
LtGen. A.C. Zinni, USMC<sup>7</sup>

The U.N. established the Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) to prevent HROs from requesting support directly from the nearest military unit. The HOC's mission was to prioritize, plan, support, and monitor the delivery of relief supplies into the central distribution points in each of the nine Humanitarian Relief Sectors (HRS). It coordinated four areas of UNITAF-HRO interaction: escort for convoys, security for HROs, humanitarian and civic assistance projects, and weapons confiscation. Directed by a U.N. official with assistance from Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and UNITAF, the national HOC, located in Mogadishu, included representatives from the military, HROs, and the U.N.<sup>8</sup>

The military contingency at the national HOC was known as the Civil-Military Operation Center (CMOC). It had two missions: the first was to act as the focal point for liaison with the HROs and the second was to develop an overall relief strategy, arrange for military support to the HROs, and coordinate HRO logistics.<sup>9</sup> The CMOC was staffed by personnel from UNITAF's J-3. Since only two of the officers were

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<sup>7</sup>Joint Warfighting Center, Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations (Ft. Monroe, VA: Final Draft II/15), p. 22.

<sup>8</sup>DART is a section within the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), a division of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

<sup>9</sup>Dworken, p. 1.

experienced in humanitarian operations, the operation functioned inefficiently until the other officers were trained.

Establishing the HOC and the CMOC was the initial step to allay the preconceived stereotypes that the military and the HROs had of one another. However, it was not a panacea. The HOC's "chain of command" was non-existent; the direct impact was a lack of unity of effort. None of the groups answered to the other: the U.N. Director answered to the U.N.; the civilian Deputy Director from DART answered to the U.S. Liaison Office and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the military Deputy Director answered to UNITAF; and members of other committees answered to their appropriate headquarters. The unity of effort that eventually developed between UNITAF and the HROs was a result of the personalities of those involved, not the organizational structure. It was accomplished because they set an agenda, established liaison arrangements, and worked on consensus-building.

Additionally, the HOC was colocated with the U.N. headquarters, not UNITAF's. While there were political reasons for doing this, it resulted in coordination problems. The command structure and additional responsibilities of the J-3 officers required that they travel back and forth between UNITAF and the HOC. This delayed decisions and hindered relief actions.

Prior to the arrival of UNITAF forces into each HRS, Robert Oakley, Special Envoy for Somalia, and his staff met with clan elders, religious leaders, and local political leaders. The meetings had dual purposes: first to defuse potential resistance to the arrival of UNITAF forces by explaining their objectives and second to lay the groundwork for reinstating the political infrastructure.<sup>10</sup> In addition to these meetings, military movement into each HRS was preceded by a psychological operations (PSYOPS) group that dropped leaflets and employed loudspeakers to prepare the sector's inhabitants.

Locating mini-HOCs in each HRS added to the coordination problems; they were staffed with military officers, DART officials and HROs. Requests for assistance were approved at each mini-HOC before being forwarded to the national HOC. Requests were approved at the national HOC only after CMOC and OFDA concurrence. This process culminated when the approved request was forwarded to UNITAF headquarters to task the appropriate military unit with the required support. Since that unit was usually located in the HRS requiring the support, it soon became apparent that direct coordination with the HROs precluded forwarding the request to the national HOC and facilitated relief actions.

Since convoys were escorted by military units responsible

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<sup>10</sup>Robert B. Oakley, "An Envoy's Perspective," Joint Forces Quarterly, Autumn 1993, p. 48.

for each HRS, crossing a sector border necessitated a change of escorts. This system's most notable problems were communications difficulties between sectors which prevented notification of convoy delays and the inconsistent policies on weapons confiscation previously mentioned. Adding to the confusion was the boundary system used; HRSs were not designated according to tribal/clan boundaries. The safe passage allowed by one clan was not always honored by the neighboring clan.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that there were no full-blown combat operations to conduct gave the military forces time to devote to humanitarian and civic assistance, but the question became one of mission interpretation and appropriate authority. Interpretation of the mission fell into two categories: the first was to provide security only and the second was to assist the HROs, directly and indirectly, in any manner requested. Eventually, the two categories merged as the military commanders inferred mission requirements and civil-military relations improved. Logistical and engineering support was provided both with expertise and physical assets and included drilling for water wells, improving airfields and roads, and restoring a medical clinic, a schoolhouse, and an orphanage. Health care and transportation became available once UNITAF established that they were also a function of the

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<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of Defense, "Operation Restore Hope." Joint Unified Lessons Learned System Database, July 1994.

implied mission. This support was performed spontaneously in reaction to obvious needs and established a second principle of operations other than war -- legitimacy. The morality and correctness of these humanitarian and civic assistance actions won the hearts and the minds of the Somali people.

Security for HROs and weapons confiscation can be considered together. By disarming the hired Somali security guards, UNITAF removed the HROs' protection. It became apparent that an identification system for the hired guards was required to provide access to facilities and prevent confusion when crossing HRS borders. The first issue of standardized and serialized cards without names and photos was unsuccessful. They were easily transferred among personnel or duplicated and did not provide information on where and how weapons could be carried. The result was a general uproar among the HROs as weapons they considered legitimate were confiscated. A second issue of cards with pictures and explanations of how weapons could be carried had greater success but wasn't completely implemented until shortly before control of the operation transitioned to the U.N.<sup>12</sup>

One of the military's primary concerns was the use of an appropriate level of force while providing security for the HROs. Peace operations place our military in a controversial role as law enforcers in an environment where law has ceased to exist. The Rules of Engagement (ROE) established for the

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<sup>12</sup>Lorenz, p. 32.

commanders and soldiers/marines gave them maximum flexibility to use force to defend themselves. However, in the context of international humanitarian law, force was limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the objective and be proportional to the threat.<sup>13</sup> From the outset it became apparent that applying these ROE would include detaining civilians, dealing with the use of noncombatants as shields, and confiscating weapons from unauthorized personnel. Given the opportunities for overreaction, the military forces exercised great discipline to prevent episodes from becoming international media events or inciting unpopular local public opinion. While exercising a third principle of operations other than war -- restraint, the military forces accomplished a fourth, that of security.

UNITAF's restraint, legitimacy, security, and unity of effort attained Operation Restore Hope's mission objective: create a secure environment for famine relief and transfer the operation to the U.N. However, as previously mentioned, the mission was open to interpretation and initially lacked a well-defined end state. When the military and the HROs began to interact, this only added more confusion to an already uncertain relationship.

#### ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS

At the request of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping and Peace-Enforcement Policy, the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) reviewed current military training for peace operations. The resulting report recognized that tactical level decisions of soldiers/marines have an impact on the operational and strategic execution of all contingencies. It also acknowledged that combat skills, proficiency, and discipline are fundamental for success, but that specific-to-mission training for peace operations is necessary. Findings among the services included: Army - initiated major changes to doctrine in the form of new field manuals for operations other than war and now conducts training programs at three of its four combat training centers; Marine Corps - normal training programs are geared to operations other than war to a greater degree than other Services but placed greater emphasis on staff interfaces, organizational integration, and cultural awareness; and the Navy and Air Force - have initiated no changes to training programs but are using leadership development programs to increase awareness of operations other than war. Specifically this report recommended taking greater advantage of existing U.S. and foreign training and educational opportunities in the formulation of Service and joint training programs; more aggressively implementing the joint and combined peace operations training programs with existing software programs; and creating liaison positions for Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the State

Department.<sup>14</sup>

The Joint Warfighting Center, Ft. Monroe, Virginia, is staffing a Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations. It recommends that the JTF Commander establish a CMOC to serve as the primary interface between all HROs and military forces. A notional CMOC staff would incorporate the three elements of the Clausewitzian triangle: the military represented by the JTF staff, component staff, and liaisons from multinational forces; the political element represented by Department of State, coalition members, U.N. personnel, and other U.S. government agency personnel; and the people element represented by personnel from each of the HROs in country and the USAID. Frequent meetings to plan, support, and monitor the delivery of relief supplies and facilitate better communications will raise the JTF Commander's awareness of the responsibilities, objectives, capabilities, and limitations of HROs. Coordinating, explaining, and defending the JTF's policies is the CMOC's secondary role.<sup>15</sup>

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed a publication to set forth the doctrine and military guidance to govern joint operations. Joint Publication 3-08, currently being staffed, offers principles and procedures for combatant,

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Defense Inspector General, Program Evaluation of Specialized Military Training for Peace Operations (Arlington, VA: 1994), pp. i-ii, 41, 47.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Warfighting Center, Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations (Ft. Monroe, VA: Final Draft II/15), pp. 23-26.

subunified, joint task force, and subordinate commanders to best accomplish coordination among themselves, other U.S. government agencies, and HROs.<sup>16</sup>

Training that identifies the culture, philosophy, skills and resources of HROs and integrates them with the operational capabilities of the U.S. military is currently in process. Operations Emerald Express and Northern Exit conducted at Camp Pendleton, CA and Ft. Polk, LA, respectively, are excellent examples of the type of training that must be scheduled.<sup>17</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The U.S. military defines itself, almost exclusively, as deterring or fighting and winning wars. In the past, it has not concerned itself with peace operations or a force structure focused exclusively toward them. However, U.S. military operations in the post-Cold War era will expand our roles and missions to include operations on the trailing edge of war. As such, the U.S. military must be prepared to change its role from traditional warfighting to peace operations. Doing so with great forethought and caution will benefit future peace operations. General Shalikashvili's guidance must not be ignored: "Because these kinds of operations will

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<sup>16</sup>U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-08 Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations (Washington: Draft 1994), pp. i-v.

<sup>17</sup>Liz Lukasavich, "Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Roles," Lecture, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 25 January 1995.

be infinitely more complex and demanding than the traditional and more benign peacekeeping missions of yesterday, they will demand unity of command and the most robust and experienced command, control, and communications system we can make available."<sup>18</sup>

The following recommendations will preclude commanders of future peace operations from experiencing the civil-military relationship problems encountered in Operation Restore Hope and provide the mechanisms to deal with anticipated and unanticipated ones. First, the integration of HROs and military activities in operations on the trailing edge of war must occur by combined planning, preparing, and training. As directed by President Clinton, professional education must include the operational and planning considerations unique to peace operations.<sup>19</sup> New training and doctrine, at all levels of military structure, should address the demands placed upon the military and non-military communities in-theater. It must facilitate establishment of consensus-building networks to ensure connectivity and synchronization of JTF and U.N. operations. Additionally, it should define mission areas and guide military forces through the intricacies of conducting non-traditional operations.

Specifically, JTF commanders should ensure that

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<sup>18</sup>General John Shalikashvili, "The End of the Cold War Opens A New Future for NATO," The Officer, August 1993, p. 53.

<sup>19</sup>U.S. President, Decision Directive, "Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations", Executive Summary NWC 2187 (May 1994) p.14.

operations involving non-military organizations are synchronized in time, space, and purpose. The dividends of achieving common objectives will be worth the considerable effort. It is inherent that the JTF commander be cognizant of and understand the capabilities of HROs and look to them as resources with vital experience. This unity of effort begins with training exercises that recognize core competencies and operational structures and synthesize them into a complementary and completely successful relationship.

Third, including OFDA at operational level military and political decision points is a criteria for success. OFDA can explain the various HROs' objectives, roles and mandates, scopes of activity and authority with respect to each other, as well as agree on ground rules for collaboration and information sharing. Most importantly, early interaction with HROs will dissolve stereotypes and reduce misunderstandings.

Fourth, establishing a CMOC, without the additional political layer of the HOC, will facilitate communications and continuous coordination. However, it should be formed, staffed, and trained as a standing unit. Including Civil Affairs and PSYOPS units as part of its structure is a force multiplier. Organized to win the hearts and minds of the people, they can reduce casualties, gain intelligence and lessen friction with the local population.

Finally, coordinating all instruments of national power, military and non-military, will enhance the probability of

achieving stated and implied objectives. If the national strategic objectives are clear at the beginning of an operation, they can be translated into an appropriate description of the battlefield once the operation is complete. Endpoint conditions must be set prior to committing forces to any operation. Coordination between the CMOC and the JTF staff will focus the end-state and mission objective. Furthermore, this will ensure that the principles of operations other than war are integrated into the overall mission execution plan by guiding CMOC's activities.

Early dialogue among strategic, operational, and tactical levels of military and HROs will provide the link between strategic aims and tactical employment of forces. However, ultimate success can be achieved only if we educate, train, and organize our military forces with those that play a vital role in future operations on the trailing edge of war -- the HROs. The result will be a complementary civil-military team that functions as effective instruments of U.S. foreign policy.

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