

**STRATEGY
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**GRUNT DIPLOMACY: THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY AS A THIRD
PARTY ACTOR IN PEACEBUILDING**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Grunt Diplomacy: The Role of the Military as a Third
Party Actor in Peacebuilding**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The US will selectively intervene in conflicts within transitional and troubled states. The US military, often first on the scene, can play a significant role as a third party actor in the post-conflict peacebuilding effort. The military must embrace this role in training and doctrine to effectively engage in peace operations.

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"I'M NOT BUILT FOR THIS"

As he stepped out of the tiny smoke-filled meeting room, the American battalion commander¹ took a deep breath of the cold February air of the Posavina River Valley. Catching a glimpse of his executive officer's questioning look, the commander grunted, "Brian, I'm not built for this." He was almost out of patience and certainly at the height of his frustration since crossing the Sava River into Bosnia six weeks before, shortly after New Year's Day, 1996.

The Bosniak² city fathers of Brcko, ousted by force from that key crossroads city in April 1992, sat in a makeshift meeting room in the battalion's base-under-construction. Chain smoking, shrugging their shoulders, and reminding the US officer that it was THEY who were ready for peace and not the Bosnian Serbs, the three politicians were ready to leave. They had come to the base -- purposely being built dead-center in the Zone of Separation so as to be "neutral" and "safe" territory where Implementation Force (IFOR) soldiers could foster dialogue and keep their eyes on the factions -- at the commander's invitation, to speak with the Bosnian Serb city fathers of Brcko who now controlled the city. It would be the first time the sides had spoken to each other since the war began.

He crunched through the frozen mud a few yards to another plastic and plywood enclosure, his fifth round trip in two hours across the battle-scarred pig farm that was fast becoming McGovern Base. There, the three Serbs from Brcko sat, allegedly without permission to "be in the same room" with Bosniaks or Croats. They, too, chain smoked and claimed to want peace, but they could not make a move without getting permission from their bosses in Pale, the capital of the Republic of Srpska.

The American officer sat down heavily, stared at their faces, uncomprehending. They would not face the other side -- was it residual hatred, true bigotry, or just politics? Simply opening a dialogue would bring their town great benefits: non-governmental (NGO) organizations were looking for any sign of moderation from the Serbs before they would commit substantial aid. The battalion commander had tried to reason with them; one would think a reliable power grid and windows and heating oil from aid organizations for their hospital might be good incentives for simply discussing local peace initiatives face-to-face. They continued to silently shrug their shoulders, point in the general direction of Pale, smoke, and drink Army coffee.

The American knew for today he was out of patience and had exhausted whatever diplomatic finesse an Infantry lieutenant

colonel could muster, so he simply switched to light conversation. Leaning forward and smiling at the Mayor, he said, "You know your old office mate from the factory, sitting next door, ...he told me some great stories about you, and the union picnics every May -- right up on that hill over there...those sounded like great fun." The Serb Mayor's eyes brightened. "He told you about that? What else did he say?" The commander related every story he had heard from the days of Brotherhood and Unity: the plum harvests, the watermelon festivals, service in the former Yugoslav army. The Serb in front of him and the Bosniak next door had, in fact, shared an office in the Brcko textile factory for many years before the war. They had attended high school together and played sports together, back when no one called attention to religion or ethnicity.

The mayor and his assistants joined in, gleefully telling stories about the old days, about the athletic and the romantic prowess of their old friends, foolish incidents, and poignant moments. The US officer listened, smiled, laughed and asked questions, trying to sustain the first happiness he had seen in any civilians since his arrival. The stories came out fast at first, almost like a stream, a release, nearly too fast for the interpreter. Then, they slowed down. Soon it was quiet again in

that little room, the three Serbs contemplating what once was. The lieutenant colonel broke the silence and said, "Well, look, I must go back to the other party, and see what their position is about the future of any discussion..." and the city council president cut him off. "Commander, we are making you look very foolish walking back and forth between two locations that are so close. We feel bad about that. We will talk to them ourselves."

The two groups came together. The icy looks and serious expressions broke as they all made fun of the battalion commander -- making the powerful American Army commander bounce between their meeting rooms like a pin ball, and shared the same opinion about Army coffee as compared to their own. A few comments about the old days, and then a handshake resolution to meet together the following week if IFOR promised to bring NGO help. The meeting broke, the Serbs disappearing to the north and the Bosniaks to the south. The lieutenant colonel gathered his staff, which was now reinforced with Civil Affairs, Public Affairs, and Information Operations personnel, and discussed what had just happened, what it meant, and how they would try to capitalize on it.

The ultimate result of the afternoon's efforts was a weekly civil-military seminar, well-attended by every aid organization

and NGO that could be drawn to the area, and the beginning of resettlement and reconciliation initiatives. For almost seven months, these meetings were the only place in Bosnia where officials from all three factions (local Bosnian Croats were also brought into the process) voluntarily sat together at the same table and discussed implementation of the peace accords.

But that particular February evening in a muddy forward operating base, all the soldiers knew at the time was that they had achieved a small victory. The Civil Affairs Officer asked his commander incredulously, "How did you ever get them in the same room?" He replied, "I have no idea. It just happened. I walked into it."

"Walking into it" is certainly not a method. However, to say soldiers are unprepared to be diplomats with guns is not accurate. Prior to the year-long deployment to Bosnia, the battalion had undergone challenging peace operations training at US Army Europe's Combat Maneuver Training Center, where they were presented a myriad of vexing problems, dealing with both military and civilian issues. Also, all battalion commanders and higher leaders received two days of outstanding political-military training that included negotiation techniques and a superb Bosnia primer. Commanders' Intent in brigade and division level orders

included guidance to the effect: "set the conditions for long term success" and "facilitate non-military efforts towards infrastructure development, economic growth and democratic practices."³

What was surprising was the extent to which soldiers and leaders at platoon, company, and battalion level became involved as third party actors. "Setting the conditions" and "facilitating" as directed in the Commander's Intent meant soldiers would assume roles as mediators, negotiators, and perform good offices. They became deeply immersed in the process of rebuilding relationships among the factions.

While the heaviest involvement was in the first few months of peace implementation, acting as a third party was a sustained role throughout this battalion's deployment. Yet available training time, the most precious of training resources, coupled with a general attitude by senior leaders that a third party role at battalion level was "out of their lane" put any in-depth preparation of junior leaders in third party actor skills very low on the training priority list.

The nature of the Bosnian conflict and similar conflicts require a special approach to their resolution. A key to keeping or enforcing the peace is the rebuilding of relationships. Those

who patrol in between and among sharply divided populations -- soldiers and their junior leaders -- find great value in sensible reconciliation efforts, mending of relationships, and any activity that will help avoid a relapse into violence.

There is debate on the extent of the military's role in peace operations, particularly in the implementation of a peace agreement. The purpose of this paper is to link the theory of peacebuilding and effective third party action to the practice of one unit's experience during the first year of peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia. This analysis concludes that the military's participation as a third party actor is, in fact, key to mission success. We can better prepare our armed forces to take on this role, so leaders are not gaining their experience through on the job training and do not find themselves saying, "I'm not built for this."

I. THE NEW NATURE OF CONFLICT

There is little argument that on the eve of the twenty first century, the great majority of armed conflicts in the world are intranational. At the beginning of 1996, more than forty violent ethnopolitical conflicts were under way, one in every region of the world.⁴ From 1945 to 1987, nine of fourteen UN peace operations were interstate, whereas from 1987 through 1997, only six of twenty-four UN peace operations were even partially interstate.⁵ What does this mean to the soldiers who implement peace?

Intranational conflict is significantly different from interstate conflict. It is embedded in long-standing relationships between people who live in close geographic proximity. They act on their deep-seated (often cross generational) fear, passion, and hate. In these conflicts, people seek security in and identify with something close to their control, perhaps a region, a religion or an ethnic alignment -- but many times NOT with their state.⁶

Power is diffused in numerous groups seeking collective rights along these lines of identity. Among the most challenging conditions for an intervening force is the fact there may be no statist hierarchy, or if there is, it may exercise little or no

control. The government-level leadership may lack legitimacy, may not even control its territory, or be driven to human rights violations and atrocities in its fight for survival.⁷ To prevail, conflicting parties resort to the denial of basic needs: food, shelter, physical safety, recognition, autonomy, and self-esteem.⁸

There is little argument that the United States will continue to selectively intervene in intranational conflicts. The current National Security Strategy cites them as threats to regional and global stability, potentially affecting US interests.⁹ What is debated is how, not whether, the US military will participate in peace operations.

Current thought, reinforced in military doctrine, supports participation of armed forces to set the conditions for other organizations to do the peacebuilding after there is a peace settlement. Military units themselves do not get involved in the civilian aspects of peacebuilding, as such involvement has nothing to do with their warfighting skills, erodes their readiness, and is done better by other organizations.¹⁰ A counter point is that intrastate conflict resolution and peace operations in such an environment require military involvement as a third

party for mission success. General skill and awareness in this regard must be added to warfighting ability.

The reality is that peace operations are not sequential, and this has significant impact on the debate. There is not a clean break point between peace enforcement, peacekeeping, or peacebuilding. Conditions and requirements blur the lines and sometimes demand concurrent activities in all three categories. The warfighter will find a population split between fear of implementation and demand for implementation, demanding action from the military.

II. THE NATURE OF PEACEBUILDING

In these intrastate conflicts, the "state" is often out of control. The traditional diplomatic approach (i.e., dealing with the military and political hierarchies clearly in charge) will not work when power is diffused, when a general state of anarchy exists, or when those in power are reprehensible and unrecognized in the eyes of the world community.

Current theory and practice for the most part supports an approach to these conflicts within the framework of an interactive social process responsive to shaping peoples' needs (needs threatened or denied), and seeking to transform the conflict from violence to peaceful relationships where reconciliation, reconstruction, and economic development can be sustained.¹¹ This non-traditional approach is all about rebuilding relationships at the top, middle and grass-roots levels of leadership within a state.

The Agenda for Peace defines peacebuilding as action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.¹² Lasting success takes time. The nature of peacebuilding is the progressive rebuilding of relationships at all levels among the parties of these unique conflicts *to get things done --*

resettlement, reconstruction, economic development -- and make the improvements last. The process of reconciliation is central to rebuilding relationships, and reconciliation between groups fueled by hatred and fear needs a trusted agent, an "outsider."¹³ The trusted agent in the reconciliation process is the third party actor.

The importance of a third party actor in peacebuilding is widely recognized among the current practitioners of conflict resolution. The special characteristics of internal/intrastate conflicts make a third party even more valuable in such settings: it takes an outsider to facilitate and mediate among parties with deeply held animosity. During the post-conflict, peace settlement implementation phase, third party actors can help the antagonists see each other's needs and interests, and work to have the parties make gradual shifts towards compromise.¹⁴ It is the third party actors who climb into the "trench," and face the difficult requirement of implementing a settlement. They foster, support, and husband reconciliation through confidence building, changing perceptions and building trust among the parties.

Third party actors come from many different sources, including international organizations such as the UN, regional organizations, humanitarian and development agencies of various

states, and NGO's. The structure, capabilities and culture of the US military give it unique capabilities to be a credible third party actor in the post settlement phase of an internal conflict. Yet the overarching desire by the nation's civilian and military leadership to limit military involvement in these unique intrastate conflicts has left the military at lower levels very tentative when it comes to any activity on the ground that appears "non-military." The result is a general attitude of avoidance in assuming the role of a third party actor.

There is ample evidence of a credible third party role for the US military from the Bosnia experience, where military units were dispersed among the warring factions and day to day faced the realities of ethnic hatred with a mandate to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement. In fact, acting as a third party in Bosnia was a key way to implement the military mission. Many of the roles of a third party actor highlighted by theorists and practitioners came to life and were reinforced for Task Force 3-5, an American battalion serving in and around the volatile city of Brcko.

III. THIRD PARTY ACTORS IN FLAK JACKETS -- GRUNT

DIPLOMACY AT WORK

Brcko is a fair and representative example of the Bosnian challenge. It is home to all three entities; it has a key location astride the Republic of Srpska corridor;¹⁵ and large numbers of displaced persons of each ethnic group seek resettlement there. To this day, it is a highly contentious sector.

Forty days after the signing of the Peace Agreement, combined arms Task Force 3-5 (TF 3-5), a reinforced heavy US infantry battalion of 1,100 soldiers, arrived in sector. Initially, there were no NGO's operating consistently in the Serb area, and only a few NGO's doing absentee work (sustaining the flow of relief supplies to safe areas) in the Bosniak and Croat villages on the opposite side of the now silent front line.

Brcko was thought by the NGO community to be too dangerous, and it was: the factions were still at war; there was merely an absence of fighting. Trenches were still occupied. The few tanks and artillery pieces stood poised and ready. All border crossings were mined and overwatched by armed troops or police. The civilian population huddled in the few coffee bars away from the

front lines, depressed and untrusting. It was under these conditions that the soldiers and leaders of TF 3-5 applied themselves in a variety of roles as third party actors -- out of operational necessity.

Confidence Building Role

The greatest levels of success in peacebuilding activities are directly associated with the durability and comprehensiveness of the confidence building measures put into place during the initial implementation phase of a peace agreement. Third parties can help a society make the transition from war to peace by ending violence and civil strife and set the conditions for reemergence of civil society.¹⁶ Introduction of a capable, professional and disciplined armed force is a de facto confidence building measure: despite the existence of any peace agreement, the basic human need of physical security is still in doubt.

In Brcko, the opposing armed entities were postured for renewed conflict. The arrival of the IFOR task force, with massive combat power, discouraged any resumption of hostilities. As small units occupied key terrain throughout the sector, the entity military units were coaxed out of their trenches and out of the Zone of Separation.¹⁷

TF 3-5 was tasked to supervise each faction in the simultaneous clearing of mines on key roads that crossed those old front lines. During the first such mine clearing operation, the local Serb commander whispered to the battalion's operations officer as they stood on a cleared road linking the two battle lines, "You must put someone here -- they will attack tonight." At the same time, one kilometer to the south, a Bosniak officer was saying the same thing to the battalion commander. Of course, no one attacked and weeks passed without incident. Buoyed by IFOR's presence, patrols, and frequent "work coordination meetings" held by the task force's company commanders, the armies returned to their barracks ahead of the implementation schedule.

The confidence built among uniformed personnel expanded to civilians. At every one of NATO outposts, gradually at first, then in greater numbers and frequency, groups of civilians started to move about and test the limits of the peaceful conditions. They began coming into the Zone of Separation to see houses and land they had not seen in four years. The local police chiefs and the task force commander brokered agreements for family visitation across boundaries because true freedom of movement could not yet be realized. But small successes in these early efforts increased confidence and eventually set the stage

for the initial resettlement effort of displaced civilians back to their original homes -- the first such effort in Bosnia -- that continues today.

Performing Good Offices Role

Good offices is a mediating activity of a third party, defined as the carrying out of specific requests, such as presenting one side's message to the other.¹⁸ In a post-war environment, where phone lines, power lines and postal links are still severed, performing good offices naturally falls to the first credible third party on the ground. Federation and Serb sides wanted to talk -- at local and grass roots level -- and soldiers were the conduit. On patrols and over strong coffee, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains listened and talked to the local civilians, gradually identified the informal and formal leaders, and determined the perceived needs of the people.

What started out as basic intelligence and information gathering turned into opportunities for good offices. A farmer on one side of the line wanted to know how his old neighbor across the minefield was -- would the soldiers deliver his message? Then came the queries about the power grid, the phone line, and the mail that had stacked-up over the years.

After shuttling between police forces and getting to know them well, the next step was a meeting between area police chiefs, sponsored by the brigade commander. Then there was a meeting between postal employees from both sides of the line, followed by electrical engineers with an NGO who had the expertise to help. Every one of these initiatives began with good offices performed by soldiers. Every one of these initiatives was one step further down the road to reconciliation and normalcy and contributed to the rebuilding of relationships.

Quasi-Mediator Role

A quasi-mediator is not neutral; he has his own interests and a point of view. He must be able to facilitate, negotiate, and arbitrate and manage multiple relationships between members and groups within his organization and between other parties. When he is negotiating, he is an advocate for his side. When he is mediating, he is managing and sustaining dialogue (facilitating) while influencing the agenda and format for talks, and formulating proposals for discussion. When he arbitrates, he makes decisions.¹⁹ Quasi-mediator best defines the most dominant third party role played by the leadership of TF 3-5.

Good offices created opportunities to meet. By the time these opportunities arose, the task force's soldiers were the most trusted agents in the Brcko sector. They had proven their impartiality through even-handed enforcement of all aspects of the peace agreement, and raised the population's confidence that conditions were improving. It naturally followed that someone in battle dress uniform with an American flag on their right sleeve would facilitate the meetings.

Other contributing factors included the fact that the only meeting sites considered safe by all sides were IFOR checkpoints and bases in the middle of the Zone of Separation, and the fact that the military were pushing to open as many channels of dialogue as they could. "If they're talkin', they ain't fightin,'" was a popular saying. Perhaps most importantly, during the first four months of the implementation there was simply no one else in the international community available to do it. At the five month mark, International Police Task Force (IPTF)²⁰ personnel took over the increasingly important joint police meetings, and at the eighth month mark, the chair of the task force's civil-military seminars was passed to UN Civil Affairs. In the beginning, however, there were only soldiers.²¹

A quasi-mediator role, though not stated as such, was clearly dictated for IFOR in implementing the military aspects of the peace agreement. Division and brigade headquarters drove the agenda for each joint military commission, and the TF 3-5 commander and his company commanders drove the agenda for military work coordination meetings at lower levels. The mandate for this effort was clear and it helped develop close professional relationships with the local military leadership. It was simply the way to get things done on the military side and keep the factions on the Dayton Peace Agreement Military Annex schedule.

However, the task force commander quickly found himself in the role of quasi-mediator between civilian parties, too. NGO's began arriving in sector as the physical security situation improved. But no significant work was being done as the NGO's conducted their assessment of needs. When materials were available to begin reconstruction, it was the task force commander's assessment that the best way to prevent local violence was to have the materials distributed equally among the Serb, Bosniak, and Croat communities.

The goal was to get NGO's working on projects without inciting violence. This would bring more NGO's to the area and

create activity that would give the local populace confidence that conditions were indeed moving towards full implementation of the peace agreement. To accomplish that, the task force commander had to take control of the agenda and discussion of the weekly civil-military seminars.

He started building the agenda at each weekly seminar to lead the parties in that direction. First, he asked each mayor to determine the number of houses that needed reconstruction, prioritized by village. At the next meeting, the commander put those village names and numbers on a chart for all present to see, and gauged reaction. The Serbs were agitated about the number of houses targeted for reconstruction by Bosniaks on the Serb side of the Zone of Separation. The Bosniaks felt they should get all the materials because they had the highest number of destroyed houses, and the Croats wanted anything they could get. Listening to their concerns, the commander planned for the seminar the following week.²²

The seminars were gaining in popularity among the NGO's, UN, and IFOR staff, and on the morning of the seminar, the makeshift meeting room at TF 3-5's base was packed with more than seventy people, fewer than a dozen in uniform. The commander presented the agenda, and walked the mayors through a participatory chain

of reasoning that led to an equal sharing of the materials to rebuild 120 houses, 40 to Serbs, 40 to Muslims, and 40 to Croat. The Serbs relaxed when they saw the first reconstruction target village was not in a contentious area. The Croats sighed in relief, as they were getting more than they expected. But the Bosniaks balked at not receiving a fair share relative to need. The commander stood firm on the agreements he had hammered out earlier in informal meetings with all three groups, and they soon agreed. The mayors shook hands, and the meeting adjourned amid applause to an NGO planning session, as the first reconstruction effort in Bosnia began.

True to the role of quasi-mediator, his actions in these meetings were driven by his interests and point of view. When Bosniaks decided to unilaterally increase the movement of people across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line,²³ and begin a massive and unregulated reconstruction effort in the Serb portion of the Zone of Separation, the Serbs countered with their own unregulated reconstruction effort, resulting in the establishment of what we called a "biological front line." The weapons were building materials, and the objective of both sides was mass resettlement of ethnic groups without regard to property ownership.

After informal bilateral efforts did not have the desired effect, the commander exposed the activities of each party at the weekly meeting and declared the Zone of Separation "closed." No reconstruction or resettlement of any kind would take place in the Brcko sector until the issues of ownership and building permits were sorted out. This was technically a responsibility of a Joint Personal Property Commission established by the peace agreement, but they were not yet capable of rendering assistance. The commander had to take action to avoid violent confrontations in the resettlement areas.

Closing the Zone of Separation brought these issues to the attention of the international community, and TF 3-5 sponsored the first joint personal property commission in Bosnia. Fortunately, the reservoir of good faith the commander had built with all sides carried through this difficult period; weekly meetings continued as scheduled, and dialogue remained open.

Not everything can be brought to the meeting table, and the negotiating maxim that declares more work is done "away from the table" is quite accurate. Even after the task force began weekly civil-military seminars, the commander would still meet once a week with each local faction civilian leader. Until the IPTF arrived in sufficient numbers, a similar meeting was held with

each police chief. In these meetings, the commander heard the true feelings of the local leaders, passed messages, tested their limits and determined a strategy for the next civil-military seminar that would keep things moving.

Role in Changing Perceptions and Building Trust

Offering good offices and acting as a quasi-mediator helps resolve disputes through sustained dialogue. Sustained contact can also help reconstruct relationships. Key in the reconstruction of relationships is the changing of the perceptions one side has for the other, and the simple building of trust between the two.

The greatest success in changing perceptions and building trust occurred when the soldiers of the task force fostered grass-roots level contact. The first such contact was when the unit sponsored meetings for return of remains. Again, the commander initially only pursued this because of its military benefit, specifically as a way to minimize the propensity for civil unrest in the sector. He had been accosted by organizations of families of those missing in action on both sides, demanding a full accounting of their relatives. The task force base was offered as a meeting place for representatives of the

organizations from both sides, and the commander offered to facilitate the first meeting.

The common bond of searching for missing sons made these meetings cordial, and there was plenty of informal discussion before and after the meetings. Unfortunately, they each brought local officials with them, who were distrustful and who sought to tie any recovery with some reciprocity. The commander and civil affairs officer broke through any red tape just to get them going. The end result was a group of Serb parents going into a Bosniak village to recover remains, and while there, local Bosniaks gathered around them, talked to them, and they shared experiences and compared each other's current situation. Similar initiatives of this type included physicians meetings with our task force surgeon and a meeting of local artists from both sides.

The military learned quickly that the greatest incentive for grass roots contact is economic. Near one of the task force's checkpoints, the brigade carved out and cleared a piece of land for roadside merchants known as the Arizona Market. Overnight, it became the best four acres in the American sector for changing perceptions. There, Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs mingled, shopped, bought and sold sugar, plum brandy, animals, cassette tapes, and

interacted with each other as though there had never been a war. It became a magnet for what can only be described as cross-boundary tail-gate parties, and was a superb environment to begin rebuilding relationships and trust.

Another indirect role the military played as a third party actor in this area was as an employer of local people McGovern Base. Each day at the 1,100-soldier encampment, a busload of thirty-five Serb workers would arrive at the gate at the same time as a busload of a near equal number arrived from the Federation. Together, they got in line, received their security badges and spent almost ten hours together working side-by-side in different areas of the base.

As the base was being built, the task force commander found the contractor assigned to the base was only recruiting Bosniak workers because going into Serb Brcko was "too dangerous." The commander convinced him to hire a balanced work force (and protected his recruiting effort in Brcko). The resultant mixed work force succeeded in changing the perceptions of area civilians. Work parties were mixed, they were recognized and rewarded together, and fired on the spot if their behavior was at all questionable. Work at the base was coveted by civilians on

both sides, and one of the reasons was that it was the closest thing to the pre-war relationship so many sought again.

IV. PITFALLS, LIMITATIONS AND DRAWBACKS

Ironically, the strengths of the military are also a source of its inherent drawbacks when assuming the role of third party actor. The credibility of the force -- its warfighting capability -- is the main reason why the military is brought into a peace operation. However, there is an established feeling within the military community that peace operations are NOT what the organization exists for and participation in the same will erode combat readiness. Once into the operation, the military leaders only become third party actors under duress and out of necessity; such a role is believed to be "out of their lane" or left to PSYOPS and Civil Affairs units.²⁴

Another potential problem exists even before deployment: the nature and the role established for the military in the implementation agreement. It is all a matter of timing. Who will arrive first, and what must be accomplished? Unreasonable timelines and expectations will impact the military's ability to act as a third party. A military annex to a settlement developed without a synchronous relationship with the civilian annex puts both the civilian and the military effort at a disadvantage before it deploys. "Expectation overload" among the local population for speedy implementation, which will be hamstrung if

the military and civilian annexes do not complement each other, will directly effect operations after entry.

This is precisely what happened in the Brcko sector (and all of Multi-National Division North's area): the military implementation, with realistic timelines and expectations was executed ahead of schedule; the civilian implementation, which included freedom of movement and resettlement, made no early progress. The Brcko citizens' patience waned quickly, resulting in great potential for explosive civil unrest. It was for this reason, actual operational necessity, that the TF 3-5 assumed a leading third party role. Some would refer to their expanded third party role as mission creep, and some would refer to it as mission evolution -- to the unit on the ground, it was the mission.

When implementing a peace process after a cease-fire, the "No Winner" factor is in effect. This means absolute impartiality is the key to success. Parties will watch closely for any indication, perceived or real, to question the fairness of implementation. The label of impartiality must be won through thoughtful action by soldiers at all levels. The nation's flag worn on the sleeve of the uniform immediately causes bias and prejudgement. A particular hurdle for American units was Equip

and Train, the effort to assist the Federation military sponsored by the US. To Serbs in and out of uniform, it was the American Army in Bosnia who were training the Bosniaks and Croats.

There is also the danger of dependency. People can get very comfortable with someone else making the effort and problems and reasons for inaction can be deflected to those third parties. People develop trust in credible mediators and depend on their reliability. Soldiers acting as quasi-mediators must get the parties to shift their trust from the individual mediators to the process. This can only happen through a combined and coordinated effort at all levels by the organizations and agencies charged with the implementation.

Dependency is also dangerous because it can stifle the initiative of local entities to help themselves, or slow the assumption of leadership duties by the appropriate organization. This is a significant problem in establishing the rule of law. Soldiers with automatic weapons and armored vehicles become a very tempting resource to resolve civil complaints. The military must fight to get a credible law enforcement body on the ground as soon as possible, while recognizing that rule of law involves a wide range of institutions, including an independent judiciary and a penal system. In short, establishing the rule of law takes

time, and in the initial phases of implementation the military may be the only law. The military must balance its operational needs to fill certain vacuums initially while avoiding dependency.

Finally, being overly concerned about taking casualties could lead to a "bunker mentality." This is a dangerous condition. Units will be sacrificing the critical information gathering that can only take place when they are "out," on foot, and making direct contact with everyone in sector. Intelligence gathering and information flow is bottom-up. The bunker mentality also sacrifices the opportunity to engage leaders from all sides, denying credibility and essentially rendering those in the bunker ineffective as third party actors and mere spectators to peacebuilding efforts.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The nature of intrastate conflicts and the requirements for lasting success demand a more open-minded approach to the roles and limits of military participation in peacebuilding. Initial implementation missions may place units in some of the most contentious areas of the post-conflict environment. The tactics, techniques and procedures of implementation operations -- patrolling, monitoring, and engaging entity security forces on compliance issues -- place the soldier at the grass roots and middle range leadership level of all the parties in conflict. Early on, soldiers can begin work as third party actors.

The Bosnia mission, now extended, has shown and continues to show the role of the military as a valuable third party actor and catalyst for and sustainment of the reconciliation process. The military in Brcko was the key player in issues of resettlement and reconstruction. But soldiers and leaders grew into their roles as third party actors. Although they stumbled into them, these unplanned and unexpected roles were appropriate for the situation and within the commander's intent at brigade and division level. Soldiers built confidence in the region and were approached for good offices based on trust won. This trust and

confidence moved them to greatly expanded roles as quasi-mediators.

Initiatives as third party actors arose from requirements to prevent violence and protect the force. They were fueled and reinforced by "small victories," small steps forward in the process of reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships. The task force organizational structure supported unity of effort among other third parties. This led to a comfortable working relationship and a functional interdependency between the unit and NGO's in the area.

Being a third party actor is an operational necessity for the military in peace operations. Institutional fear of distraction from warfighting is denying the force necessary doctrine, guidelines and techniques that could be applied in training to make implementation forces more effective.

Although the US Army Europe training model was appropriate, current doctrine in joint and service publications avoid, and by lack of inclusion discourage, the role of third party actor for units implementing peace. Though doctrine is merely a guide, there is still inconsistent interpretation. Some commanders will use doctrine as a constraint rather than a point of departure. This has a telling effect on the ground: there is a general

difference of opinion at varying levels of command on what third party activities are actually an operational necessity and what are considered out of the operational "lane."

Doctrine is slow to develop. Non-doctrinal publications such as the Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook, white papers from Europe's Combat Maneuver Training Center, the re-writing of the heavy task force field manual to include stabilization operations, and the efforts of the US Army Peacekeeping Institute are bridges in the institutional gaps. But we need to do more. We must direct some training resources toward the familiarization of successful techniques in executing third party roles for the leadership from company to brigade level prior to any deployment.

The military should make no apologies for, soften, or "water down" their warfighting capabilities or force protection efforts. Those are aspects of a credible force. One can negotiate quite well in a helmet and flak jacket, but one cannot be effective from inside a bunker. The bunker mentality must be avoided.

Where possible, the military and the primary civilian implementation organizations should be involved in the development of the peace settlement prior to implementation so provisions in each area complement and support each other. Ultimately, the implementation must be civilian-led. In the

beginning of an operation this is not practicable; no civilian organization exists with the planning and execution capability of the military. No other organization has the pragmatic flexibility to incorporate the variety of non-state actors required for this type of conflict resolution.

To be truly effective third party actors, the military should seek assistance from other third party actors. They should bring the largest organizations into the planning process as early as possible, and maintain a liaison representative, if not a co-equal planner, throughout the initial implementation phase until a proper handover of leadership can be made.

Soldiers secure the foothold of peace in this environment, and set the conditions for other organizations and agencies to expand that foothold. We are not tapping our full potential. The military should seize the role of a third party actor, understand that role is a key to success in accomplishing its objectives, and embed it in the guidance, mission and intent of the initial phases of peace operations at all levels of command.

Word Count: 6,579

ENDNOTES

¹ The author commanded the unit whose experience is described in this paper. The nucleus of the unit was the 3rd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, a Germany-based mechanized infantry battalion of the 1st Armored Division. For duty in Bosnia, the battalion was organized with three infantry companies, one tank company, and a variety of combat support and service support attachments. This organization was designated Task Force 3-5. After eight months, the unit was reorganized, redeploying the tank company to Germany and accepting an airborne military police company. Throughout the paper, the terms *task force* and *battalion* are interchangeable.

² *Bosniak* is a term used to describe a citizen of the former Republic of Yugoslavia who supports a united Bosnia-Herzegovina and who prefers not to be labeled by his or her religion -- Islam. This paper will refer to the parties in conflict as Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks vice Christians, Catholics, and Muslims. *Bosniac* is another accepted spelling of the term.

³ Task Force 3-5 OPLAN 96-09 (Black Knight Endeavor), Headquarters, 3-5 CAV, 151100DEC95.

⁴ Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds., Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁶ John Paul Lederach, Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 9-10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸ William I. Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen, eds., Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 195.

⁹ William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century: National Security Strategy of the United States, May 1997 (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1997).

¹⁰ Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, 563.

¹¹ Zartman and Rasmussen, 41.

¹² Boutros Boutros Ghali, An Agenda for Peace (New York: United Nations, 1995), 46.

¹³ Lederach, 40-47.

¹⁴ Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations (FT Monroe, Virginia: Joint Warfighting Center, June 1997), IV-25.

¹⁵ The corridor is a narrow strip of land, five kilometers wide, controlled by Bosnian Serbs, between the Sava River and the intrastate boundary with the Federation of Bosniaks and Croats. The corridor was once home to approximately 65,000 Bosniaks and Croats, displaced by force in the Spring of 1992. The corridor is seen as strategic for the Bosnian Serbs, as it links the eastern and western halves of their republic, and gives them unconstrained access to the border with Serbia proper. The city of Brcko sits astride the corridor at the narrowest point, and sovereignty of the area and the city was left undecided in the Dayton Peace Agreement, pending a later arbitration.

¹⁶ Fen Osler Hampson, Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 9-10.

¹⁷ The Zone of Separation is a special area, measured and marked by IFOR troops, 2 kilometers north and 2 kilometers south of the final battle line when the last cease fire was declared in Bosnia. It is a four kilometer wide strip of land, subject to specific standards of demilitarization and exclusion in Annex 1-A of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

¹⁸ Cameron Hume, Ending Mozambique's War: The Role of Mediation and Good Offices (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994), 25.

¹⁹ Thomas R. Colosi, On and Off the Record: Colosi on Negotiation (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1993), 26, and Hume, 26.

²⁰ IPTF personnel were unarmed, UN sponsored law enforcement professionals, from a variety of nations. Their primary role was to monitor faction police activity and educate faction police on proper law enforcement practices.

²¹ Multi-National Division North had a very capable Political Advisor, with a small administrative support cell. This individual had responsibility for the entire division area, and dedicated as much effort as possible to assist the TF 3-5 commander. Though UN Civil Affairs established a permanent office in Brcko in April 1996, they, too, were a small office (one individual and one interpreter). TF 3-5 was the only organization resourced and staffed to affect civil implementation for the first six to eight months.

²² Every week the TF 3-5 commander conducted very tough "away from the table" bilateral discussions with each local faction leader. These discussions set the stage for the moderate success "at the meeting table." Each party wanted assurances that their concerns were accounted for in any decision. The commander, as civil-military seminar chairman, could give credible assurances and gain consent from all for a workable outcome.

²³ Also known as the IEBL, it is the physical boundary line between the Federation and the Republic of Srpska. It is in the middle of the Zone of Separation.

²⁴ Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, 328.

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