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Leading Air Mobility Operations in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

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Foreword

In the last dozen years we have seen a tremendous increase in US participation in and leadership of complex humanitarian emergencies (CHE). Given the breadth and depth of challenges facing each mission, these operations are always complex in tactical and operational execution. But, of even greater import, is the unwavering requirement for our war fighters to truly understand the highly *strategic* nature of CHEs and just how complex they really are when even the most seemingly insignificant tactical task can have global consequences and hugely complicating impacts on US national objectives. Our joint and service doctrine has come a long way in the last decade toward providing a training foundation for war fighters tasked with leading these operations. However, we can and should do more to *educate* those who will and do lead CHEs on not only what makes CHEs so strategically complex but also on the crosscutting tasks that will go a long way toward achieving political and mission success.

A huge portion of the military burden in support of these operations falls on the shoulders of the Mobility Air Forces (MAF). Lt Col Eileen M. Isola's *Leading Air Mobility Operations in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies* provides just such an educational foundation for MAF war fighters charged with leading CHEs. She provides a superb synthesis of a dozen years of lessons learned from many resources and institutions, sifting through the tactical and operational lessons learned so as to focus her research into the most important tenets for strategic success in a CHE: build a team of teams, gather and share information (not "intelligence"), and establish centers for interagency success. She reviews key joint and service doctrine manuals, culling critical nuances that would likely be overlooked by war fighters new to the CHE environment, or rushed in a crisis deployment. Her cultural comparison of the military and nongovernmental organizations is insightful and valuable. Throughout her work Colonel Isola provides tangible, real examples from past operations of what worked and what did not—and why. The implications for the future are clear.

As with all Maxwell Papers, this study is provided in the spirit of academic freedom, open debate, and serious consideration of the issues. We encourage your responses.

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About the Author

Lt Col Eileen M. Isola is a graduate of the Air War College, Class of 2002. Prior to her current assignment, she was privileged to serve as the commander of the 463d Operations Support Squadron, 463d Airlift Group, at Little Rock Air Force Base (AFB), Arkansas, and as the chief of Joint Experimentation and chief of Modeling and Simulation for Air Mobility Command at Scott AFB, Illinois. She has completed tours at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Pope AFB, North Carolina; and Randolph AFB and Reese AFB, Texas; as well as having served in numerous operations and contingencies as an airlift pilot. Colonel Isola entered the Air Force in 1985 as a graduate of the Air Force Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Management and earned her pilot wings a year later. She is a command pilot with over 2,500 hours in both the C-130 and T-38. She holds a Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering from St. Mary's University and is a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College. She is a distinguished graduate of Squadron Officers School. Following her graduation from Air War College, Colonel Isola was assigned to the new United States Northern Command in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Leading Air Mobility Operations in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

The Mobility Air Forces (MAF) have sustained an extraordinary operations tempo for the last 10 years in performing peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations, not to mention a plethora of other operations and contingencies.[1] Surely—one would assume—there must be a surfeit of documents capturing the experiences, struggles, successes, and lessons learned of MAF war fighters who led the execution of these incredibly complex operations, which were studded with tactical risks and strategic effects speed bumps, especially since they often required miracles from the mere mortals leading them.

No such surfeit exists. There are a smattering of articles and reports, such as Col Clifton L. "Cliff" Bray's outstanding, jaw-dropping case study on the 86th Contingency Response Group's (CRG) involvement in Operation Shining Hope in Tirane, Albania, and a few "lessons learned" documents that are mostly from Army institutions. There appears to be little tangible, strategically crosscutting guidance that a MAF leader, whether a tanker-airlift control element commander or a director of mobility forces (DIRMOBFOR), could grab onto as he or she enters into what is one of our most difficult missions.

One also would assume, that given the war stories told the world over of the convoluted and thorny nature of these operations, surely the MAF *must* be teaching its student DIRMOBFORs the nature, doctrine, strategic implications, and practical execution of these operations *from the strategic perspective*. My contacts with the Air Mobility Warfare Center—owners of the DIRMOBFOR course—did not show that to be so.

I hope this paper will aid in the must-do educational effort for our MAF leaders. *Joint Vision 2020* speaks of future full spectrum dominance that includes "smaller scale contingencies" and "ambiguous situations residing between peace and war, such as peacekeeping and peace enforcement . . . as well as noncombat humanitarian relief . . . and support to domestic authorities."[2] It should give us all pause that we—the Defense Department, the Air Force, and the Mobility Air

Forces—are not putting more effort into training and preparing our strategic leaders to be successful in what is arguably the most complex operating environment into which we send them. In a complex humanitarian emergency (CHE) absolutely nothing is straight-forward. Certainly nothing is straightforward about combat. The problem, as I see it, is little or no acknowledgement in our joint and service documents that such operations constitute a combat or high-threat environment from the strategic, not tactical, perspective. In short, "small scale contingencies" and "ambiguous situations" are *not* small, nor limited in scale, nor ambiguous in political consequence or military implications. Such CHE operations as peace and humanitarian operations are termed in defense parlance as at the "low" end of the spectrum of military operations with the implication, however unintended, being that these operations are of lesser complexity, import, or consequence. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The intent of this study is to coalesce and synthesize formal guidance and experiential information into tangible, practical guidance for a MAF leader tasked with executing or supporting a CHE, such as peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or humanitarian assistance. (Such operations also are called complex contingency operations or small-scale contingencies.) This paper does not explore or attempt to detail the air mobility-specific tactical or operational tasks commensurate with executing air mobility operations in CHEs or elsewhere. O*perational* and *tactical* guidance already exists in air mobility doctrine and other formal guidance.

Joint and Air Force air mobility doctrines are certainly part of this synthesis, but key documents are reviewed here only to highlight their existence. The issues of poorly established command relationships, too much or too little "help from above," and unclear or inadequate guidance and requirements remain omnipresent and, sadly, are almost expected by those sent forth to lead CHE operations.

Precious little is written anywhere in formal guidance about the CHE environment with regards to information management, civil-military relations, international organizations, private volunteer organizations (PVO), and non-governmental organizations (NGO) and their cultures; the

friction points between such organizations and the military; and the hard-core reality of the strategic constraints and effects endemic to these operations. Tenets with experiential value are scattered across so many documents that it would be impossible to search them all in the midst of responding to a crisis, and it certainly would be impossible to gain the vital understanding of the critical issues listed above.

Lessons learned across the literature heartily reinforce the criticality, at the *operational* level, of lines of communication, command and control, rules of engagement, logistics, and joint/coalition planning. The focus of this paper, however, is to underscore the highly *strategic* nature of CHE operations—even in the conduct of operational and tactical tasks—and to capture universal tenets for both political and mission success.

There's Doctrine for This Stuff?

And now for something completely different.

—John Cleese
Monty Python's Flying Circus

The Strategic Nature of Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

Peace operations are as much about hegemony as humanitarianism; they are frequently controversial, with a host of differing opinions about their nature and purposes. Whatever the case, "big kids on the block" in the international community intervene or conduct CHEs to pursue their national interests and accomplish their strategic objectives. Frequently over the last decade or so, US involvement has been mainly about making troublemakers behave. "The naked reality of peace operations is that they are the consequence of decisions by powerful outsiders to intervene in the affairs of less well-endowed local governments, groups, and factions."[3]

The United Nations (UN) activated just 13 peace operations in the 40 years between 1948 and 1988.[4] In the subsequent 10 years, the UN activated or endorsed 51 such operations, including a number of peace enforcement op-

erations.[5] Soft descriptions of CHEs as "humanitarian" and "neutral efforts" to promote peace, stability, and "mom and apple pie" do not explain why many of our finest and bravest have died in them.

CHEs are intrusions into local affairs. As such they are highly unlikely to be viewed as politically neutral events. Real neutrality is unattainable in CHEs. Therefore, they often demand the full range of our strategic and tactical capabilities—and often demand capabilities from military leaders for which they are not equipped. And, because CHEs demand so, they often "feel" like war, especially in terms of the resource pressures they impose and the "sandbox politics" they entail.

We have learned that effective responses to these situations most often require multidimensional operations composed of political, diplomatic, humanitarian, intelligence, economic development, security, and military components.[6] Hence the interchangeable terms: complex contingency operations, small-scale contingencies, and complex humanitarian emergencies.

Air Mobility and Air Force Doctrine

You already know all about air mobility doctrine—the Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-6, *Air Mobility Operations*, series covering airlift, tanker, and air mobility support operations. And, as promised, this paper will not be a recitation of doctrinal chapter and verse. However, there is another AFDD that is a "must read" for these operations: AFDD 2-3, *Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)*, dated 3 July 2000.

If you come away from AFDD 2-3 (and this paper) with nothing else, remember this: "*Political* objectives drive MOOTW *at every level* from strategic to tactical. A distinguishing characteristic of MOOTW is the degree to which *political objectives* influence *operations and tactics*." (Emphasis added.)[7] Make no mistake that in this realm of "not war–not peace" you *must* know and understand what the *political* objectives are. As with combat operations, you can achieve every operational and tactical task and fail miserably by not understanding the political objectives. You must continually analyze your mission and ensure your

military operations directly connect to and support the political objectives. A correct and thorough understanding of political concerns is a must for achieving the civil objectives at the heart of the original decision to engage in a military operation.

These objectives are often different from those of the NGOs involved. In many cases, senior policy makers view NGOs as separated from traditional political concerns, since NGOs' are thought to be focused on "moral" issues. NGOs' objectives also are often seen as secondary to the military mission; the military perspective is often—get in, fix the problem, and get out. It is critical you understand that "where you stand" depends on "where you sit." You can neither ignore nor negate the importance of NGOs' objectives in the attainment of your own military, strategic, and political objectives.

Chapter 1 of AFDD 2-3 covers the principles of MOOTW: objective, unity of effort, security, restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy.[8] The first five principles are pretty self-descriptive. However, let me talk a bit about the concept of legitimacy.

It should be no surprise that you and your folks may or may not be welcome at your deployed location—by the host nation, by other countries' militaries, or by other organizations. Individuals and organizations may not believe that US involvement in the situation is legitimate. In the eyes of many people, even promotion of democracy, regional security, and economic growth can appear as assertions of cultural imperialism by the United States.

Sometimes operating under a UN Security Council resolution or mandate provides the needed legitimacy; sometimes such a resolution means nothing at the "local" level. During the refugee crisis that followed the Persian Gulf War, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 688 asserting that Iraq's treatment of its civilian population was unacceptable. Confusion arose almost immediately as coalition troops moved into northern Iraq. The United States, United Kingdom, and France believed they were acting under Resolution 688 in entering the area to create a safe haven for the Kurds. But, since the resolution made no reference to the use of force and the protagonists had not returned to the Security Council for

further endorsement, this view was not universally accepted.[9]

In the case of Afghanistan and Operation Enduring Freedom, the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) was established under the sanctions of Chapter VII of the UN Charter with a mission of nation building. However, the United States insisted that its forces prosecuting the war on terrorism must fall under the authority of the US Central Command.[10] This created a very real blurring of the legitimacy line *from the perspective of the Afghan populace*. If US forces are *not* part of ISAF, just how does an Afghani view them with respect to such legitimate peace operations as nation building? In short, who is operating under and for the United Nations, and who is a combat force, with a commensurate potential for additional security risks.

Sometimes multilateral operations may not involve the United Nations, as when a regional alliance chooses to handle a situation without UN participation. As AFDD 2-3 says, "While legitimacy is principally generated by our political leadership, legitimacy in the eyes of the host nation could be affected more by the actions of the military."[11] In order to "prove" the legitimacy of your operations to the plethora of individuals and organizations working with you at the local level, you must be *viewed* as working towards international interests—not just US interests, and certainly not your own.

Chapter 2 of AFDD 2-3 covers the 16 different types of operations that the Air Force doctrinally considers MOOTW. These 16 types cover the spectrum of combat and noncombat operations and those operations that overlap.[12] This is one of those areas, though, where what is in the doctrine books can radically depart from reality. For example, 86th CRG personnel running the Shining Hope humanitarian relief operation at Tirane, Albania, would hardly have considered themselves in a noncombat operation despite what AFDD 2-3 may say. They were in a high-threat combat environment. As the 86th CRG commander said in his case study on the operation, "In 20 years of special operations experience this was the furthest forward [I] had ever seen a force placed, Army or Air Force, without a viable emergency extraction plan."[13]

Chapter 3 covers one of the most critical aspects of any operation, command and control. Chapter 4 contains a great deal of information on planning and support considerations for a host of functional areas. Chapter 5 discusses training and education for MOOTW operations.[14]

Joint Doctrine

In the joint arena, the Department of Defense (DOD) does not make it easy for MAF war fighters to gain the requisite understanding of these operations as it spreads (and fragments) critical information across a number of documents. For starters, DOD does a disservice by lumping much operational air mobility guidance into the Joint Publication (JP) 4-series (logistics). Specifically, JP 4-0, *Doctrine for Logistics Support of Joint Operations*, and JP 4-01.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Airlift Support to Joint Operations*, have some great guidance on the requesting, planning, tasking, and executing of airlift movement requirements—more or less how the operational system works. Who would think to go looking in "loggie" publications for operator guidance? Nonetheless, it is there, and you need to know this. One of your CHE joint partners will no doubt come to you with a problem, a confused look, and JP 4-x, and say, "Yeah, but the book says you guys do it like this!" Why such guidance is not (also) properly included in the JP 3-series (operations) is beyond the scope of this paper.

Within the JP 3-series, several documents are pieces of the complex operational CHE pie. Here are the biggies:

- JP 3-07, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, 16 June 1995
- JP 3-07.3, *Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Peace Operations*, 12 February 1999
- JP 3-07.6, "Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance" (draft as of this writing)
- JP 3-17, *Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Theater Airlift Operations*, 18 July 1995 (under revision as of this writing)
- JP 3-57, *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations*, 8 February 2001

JP 3-07 is very similar to AFDD 2-3 (discussed above), JP 3-17 is pretty much reflected in the AFDD 2-6-series, and JP 3-07.6 is still in draft. Still, it is important that we take the time here to review the salient points of JP 3-07.3 and JP 3-57 because CHE operations are inherently joint *and* multinational—there's literally no room for US military participants not to be operating off the same sheet of music.

JP 3-07.3. This is not an "eye wash" document. It is a superb text, and it is essential you read it if you are tasked to lead any portion of a peace operation (peacekeeping or peace enforcement). It provides an introduction to peace operations from the strategic-political perspective and covers a host of subjects that typical military operators and leaders often have had little exposure to in their careers: US and multinational doctrine and terminology; roles and interactions of US national security strategy, national military strategy, and policy in peace operations; relationships with the diplomatic community; legal basis for these operations, specifically covering the UN Charter; and some key documents directly associated with these operations, such as a status of forces agreement (SOFA). Further, this publication goes into great depth on the differences in, fundamentals of, and key considerations for organizing, planning, and conducting these operations. It also discusses education and training considerations. Even its appendices, glossary, tables, and figures are information packed. This is a professional reading best seller; do not pass it up.[15]

JP 3-57. You have no choice but to buddy up to this publication if you are conducting *any* operation in which NGOs and/or the local civilian population are involved. Like its cousin discussed above, this text is rich in information; information that until recent years was the purview of politicians, diplomats, and philanthropists. JP 3-57's discussions of relationships between the military, its civilian partners, and the local populace are of utmost importance to achieving strategic *and* operational *and* tactical success.

A critical tool for enabling sound civil-military relations is knowing how to organize and communicate, and this is where JP 3-57 earns its ink. In the oxymoron of "not war–not peace" operations, you will have to depart from the highly structured, highly organized, and comfortable

military culture and operating environment to bring order out of the chaos that is often endemic in CHEs. As a result of the international community's breakneck pace of the last decade in conducting these operations, many organizing "best practices" have come to be viewed as "standard practices," and militaries and NGOs alike now expect them to be followed in CHEs. For the US military, these organizing practices are institutionalized in JP 3-57. This expression of joint doctrine explains interagency coordination, joint civil-military operations task forces (JCMOTF), and the variety of "centers" and "groups" you can organize and tailor to meet yours, the "team of teams'," and the entire operation's needs. As with JP 3-07.3, the charts and figures are invaluable.[16]

I'm Going Where? You Want Me to Do What?

And more and more US military men and women are gong to be involved in vague, confusing military actions—heavily overlaid with political, humanitarian, and economic considerations. And representing the United States—the Big Guy with the most formidable presence in the area—they will have to deal with each messy situation and pull everything together. We're going to see more and more of that.

—Gen Anthony C. Zinni
Commander in Chief
USCENTCOM

Having seen what the books say, let us turn our attention to some practical realities as to what must work well to achieve mission and political success. There are dozens of lessons learned from operations of the last decade—mostly focused at the operational level of conflict—from which I have tried to cull some key, universal strategic tenets. Three tenets were common among the sources. Following these three does not guarantee mission and political success, but I believe *not* following them almost assures political objectives will *not* be achieved.

Tenet 1: Build a Team

"How obvious," you say. Well, welcome to the wonderful crazy world of civil-military relations and operations. More

accurately, you must encourage and work to establish a "team of teams" within and between the US military, UN, host nation, coalition military, international and regional alliance organizations, State Department, and NGOs. To build this team of teams, you must work to gain an appreciation of not only the cultural commonalities but also the sometimes-vast cultural differences between the military and the NGOs responding to a crisis. These cultures and their institutional biases can create roadblocks to cooperation, trust, and efficiency. You must understand these differences and factor them into your planning and execution.

Values and Motivations. Both the military individual and the relief worker see themselves as part of a noble calling. Both are innovative and resourceful; both take pride in their courage and accomplishments. Both have strong "can do" attitudes and admire perseverance; both are willing to operate in high-risk areas. These commonalities are a great foundation upon which to build a partnership. But, you should also be aware that sometimes relief workers are doing what they do because they see themselves in opposition to the establishment and thus may be hesitant about accepting you as a partner. However, you should not view all NGOs or their members as parts of some monolithic bloc. Often the people in such organizations fully understand that the job cannot be done without the military, and they are truly grateful for, and admiring of, your work. Wide and distinct differences exist among the hundreds of NGOs in professionalism, political and religious viewpoints, operational scope, and funding sources.[17]

Organizational Structures. Organizational structures often differ quite radically between NGOs as well as between NGOs and the military. Within the relief community, each NGO has a unique organizational structure; often this structure is a reflection of its mission statement, which among NGOs are as varied as the NGOs themselves. What works for one may not work for another. Some NGOs are as small as a husband and wife team; many are large, highly professional, globally dispersed organizations, such as Médecins Sans Frontières (in English, Doctors Without Borders) and the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent. Some NGOs perform just one func-

tion; some represent only their country or city; and some focus on one particular area, such as the needs of children. In general, the larger and better-funded organizations are also more professional and capable. But, at times a small or specialized NGO may play a vital role in a particular crisis.

Military organizations are hierarchical and disciplined, and emphasize efficiency, control, and task execution. Military people are trained to take charge of everyone and everything in an assigned area or task. Usually this is a recipe for disaster in a CHE operation since it quickly alienates all the nonmilitary players. NGOs not only do not work for you, they most urgently do not want to be *perceived as working for the military*. For NGOs, success (and sometimes their very survival) relies upon remaining impartial, neutral, and nonaligned—virtually at any cost. Often, their manifestation of an inoffensive, under armed vulnerability is *central* to their efforts to gain credibility and the appearance of neutrality. To move freely in an area of conflict and provide assistance to all victims, NGOs must convince all belligerents that they will not assist any side preferentially. Some NGOs would rather forgo all manner of military support (e.g., logistics, medical, and security) than risk being seen as taking sides and thus losing the trust of the populace they are helping.[18] In Afghanistan some aid organizations flatly refused to work with US soldiers, saying that the military's aid efforts undermined the principle of neutrality that allowed aid groups to keep working in Afghanistan even during the toughest years under the Taliban.[19] The bottom line is (back to those strategic political objectives again) the multilateral nature of civil-military operations wherein diplomatic requirements balance geopolitical interests to produce arrangements that sometimes differ sharply from the unity of command military people are accustomed to.[20]

Decision-making Process. In the military, we value the leader who conducts good cross-functional coordination and makes decisions in a centralized and objective-driven manner. We also do not tend to empower low-level personnel to make decisions. While we encourage initiative, we reserve the making of policy for the higher levels. Relief agencies, on the other hand, actually prefer consensus building to coordina-

tion. In fact, they often have no coordination process of their own at all. They tend to maximize delegation of decision making, often to what we would consider very low levels. NGOs often give field representatives a great deal of authority to make and implement decisions. For us this can be frustrating in that sometimes overall NGO policy is difficult to establish. Similarly, we can be equally frustrating to the NGOs with our higher level, centralized process. So, not only is an NGO likely to intentionally take a seemingly disorganized approach but also, in doing so, NGOs collectively create a free-wheeling, disorganized conglomeration of organizations.[21]

Tenet 2: It's called Information, not Intelligence

It took several years of ever more intense involvement in complex operations before the United Nations quietly admitted what military folks have always known: intelligence is the key to any operation, including CHEs. To state the seemingly obvious, intelligence has a crucial role to play at the low end of the conflict spectrum as well as in other places.

Like the military, NGOs crave information (maps, transportation services, hazardous areas). Information exchange between the military and NGOs is essential to a CHE's success and can be the focal point for a trust-based partnership. The rub comes in the use of terms—*information* versus *intelligence*. To illustrate how "intelligence-phobic" the relief world is, even the UN does not call the multisource gathering of information by secure means intelligence; it's simply called information collection.[22]

Never overlook or underestimate the absolute criticality of good old-fashioned intelligence in your CHE operation. The fact that CHEs are often different in scope, complexity, and operation than force-on-force combat operations only makes the "fog and friction of relief" worse, and your need for sound intelligence is no less than in conventional operations. While intelligence has traditionally focused on the enemy, the definition of whom or what the enemy is in a CHE is not always clear. In Somalia the forces of Mohammed Aideed became the adversary, and our intelligence resources focused on them. However, your intelligence and information collection also needs to be geared to

indicators signaling the direction in which the operation is heading to monitor the status of resource distribution (e.g., food) and build better situational awareness. What signs would show if levels of violence are increasing or decreasing? How should these things be measured and by what part of your command? Such an unconventional approach to old-fashioned mission analysis may help you identify a missing piece of your puzzle.

As a rule, NGOs do not come close to having the information gathering and dissemination capability of US military forces. You need to do all you can to support their information needs without compromising force protection and security, being perceived as collecting intelligence on the NGOs or their operations, or causing them to be perceived as nonneutral (e.g., providing an informational "leg up" over another NGO or local leader or warlord). Significant unclassified resources exist that may be useful to NGOs and that could be provided with good coordination. The first step in sharing such information is to establish user-friendly standards for NGO use in requesting the information. The process should be simple, and it must allow you to retain some control of your people and resources. The process must be the same for everyone (neutrality) and responsive (team building).[23]

The military often overlooks the treasure trove of information NGOs can be. They often arrive before military forces, and they usually have been operating on the ground for years. They can provide key information about the host nation's political, cultural and social situations, which can help you seek out (or avoid) sensitive contacts that could affect local perceptions of your neutrality or legitimacy.[24] NGOs also can counter disinformation—a major fact of life in a CHE operation. You and your NGO partners will likely face concerted attempts by disagreeing (if not warring) factions to influence not only their own population but also international policy and action.[25] Information exchange between and within your operations and the NGOs' is absolutely critical, and the NGOs know that, too. In fact, the major NGOs have gone so far as to conduct an internationally, cross-functionally attended four-day "Symposium on Best Practices in Humanitarian Information Exchange" in February 2002. One outcome of

this gathering was establishment of the Humanitarian Information Center in Kabul, Afghanistan, as central to the conduct of the Afghanistan CHE.[26]

Which brings me to the last aspect of information management—the media. Hopefully, by the time you lead a CHE operation, you will have undergone media training. This is a must do. Just like the military, NGOs need to get their story out, and media attention is often their lifeline. In fact, since most NGOs survive and operate on donations, it's often crucial to their continued existence that their constituents see their good works and successes. Your trusty public affairs officer can be the key. Additionally, military civil affairs units can be crucial to the dissemination of information to the affected population. You, however, must keep close watch that neither you nor your folks consciously or inadvertently compromise neutrality, legitimacy, or any other issue that jeopardizes political objectives.

In this regard, distinguished visitor (DV) events are often ambiguous and typically will gobble up your time. In normal circumstances, when DVs visit your Air Force "patch," they are guests of someone in your official US chain of command. Thus, you roll out the red carpet, including the usual sundry of appropriate media. In CHE operations, you must always remember that "this" foreign minister or "that" government envoy may not be a guest of the US government and may not support stated US-, coalition-, or UN-sanctioned political objectives. As a rule, you should still roll out the red carpet being *very* careful in determining what role, if any, you will play—publicly or privately—in hosting the DV. You may or may not have the opportunity to consult with your chain of command, or even to advise them someone will visit, since these DVs frequently show up unannounced. In such cases, get a protocol team to join you as soon as you can but, as a general rule, in the CHE environment you neither can nor should get all caught up in the rigamarole typical of a stateside base visit.

Tenet 3: Establish Centers for Interagency Success

NGOs swarm to crises like bats returning from a night's feeding or, as one uniformed participant in Operation Pro-

vide Comfort described them, "disaster junkies and groupies."[27] During Operation Uphold Democracy, more than 400 NGOs operated in Haiti;[28] in Somalia there were at least 49 different international agencies;[29] for Operation Support Hope in Rwanda, there were 109 in Kigali alone;[30] for Operation Shining Hope in Albania, there were over 100;[31] and in Afghanistan there are an estimated 105 and growing.[32] The breadth and depth of the international military response can be similar: Before Operation Shining Hope was finished, Rinas Airport was home to 19 nations assisting in the refugee relief effort.[33]

Civil military operations centers (CMOC) originated during Operation Provide Comfort, the 1991 Iraqi Kurdish humanitarian assistance operation, and are now institutionalized in doctrine. Doctrine also discusses such groupings as the humanitarian operations center (HOC), the on-site operations coordination center (OSOCC), and the humanitarian assistance coordination center (HACC) and talks at length about the critical roles they play in CHEs.[34]

Here's the bottom line from the field: There is no set or formal organizational and communication structure for you and the team of teams that will get the job done. What you must do is establish a "floating" and continuous process that focuses on collaboration and coordination between the NGO community and the military. This process may include no more than a regular meeting place and time where all can come to the table, but you must understand that NGOs will not come to a meeting unless they hope to gain something, such as logistical support or information. The converse is also true: the military hopes to gain economy of effort from the NGOs.[35]

In the Rwanda operation, the NGO representatives at the CMOC meetings varied—they showed up according to their need to move their "stuff" or themselves into or out of the area. However, the information the NGOs had was of great importance to the military's ability to monitor the entire situation: shipments coming and going, events, needs, and so on. Per the principle of altruistic self-interest, the CMOC came up with two high-value "commodities" to exchange for NGO information: "chits" that could be exchanged for military airlift and a bulletin board outside the CMOC office on which NGO personnel could tack their

business cards, thus enabling them to locate friends and colleagues. Once at the CMOC, the NGO representatives would be asked the pertinent questions of the day.[36]

Note that in discussing this "coming to the table," I did not say "coming to the table to make decisions"; decisions may or may not be made at every meeting. Key representatives from the team of teams need a forum to exchange information, make requests, gather, evaluate, collate, disseminate, assist—you get the picture. But, remember that this particular gathering must be a meeting sponsored by the military so civil-military operations can be worked. No doubt there will be many other meetings hosted by other agencies, such as the United Nations or host nation, many of which you should attend. But this one is yours. Give the meeting a name so that everyone can refer to a common data point. The "Military Meeting" was used in Albania where there was no CMOC for the first month.[37] The NGO community self-organized the Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Center in Islamabad, Pakistan, to provide the international aid community with information about the security situation and safe routes in and out of Afghanistan.[38] The "CMOC Meeting" worked in Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti where CMOCs were focal points. In Haiti, CMOC briefings were conducted every four hours to keep everybody up to speed, and the CMOC became not only a secure, warm, dry place to get a cup of coffee but also a place to swap potentially lifesaving information.[39]

Your meeting should be held in a safe, nonthreatening location within walking distance of your secure military operations center. *Safe, nonthreatening* is a perspective-dependent term; be sure and consult with your NGO counterparts to establish a mutually agreed upon location that also fits their definition of what *safe, nonthreatening* means. It's important to appreciate that NGOs define their security in terms of the larger context: What is the situation developing around us, and what is driving the relationships around us? To an NGO, security is based on having both an acute situational awareness and the legitimacy that results from acting in a humanitarian manner appropriate to the overall situation.[40] Neutrality, legitimacy, and no intelligence collecting are again crucial. Finally, in addition to your own military meeting, try to quietly provide NGO rep-

resentatives a place where they can hold their own internal-NGO meetings.[41]

In Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, the military's need for operational security limited the flow of information from the military to humanitarian assistance organizations. The military did establish a CMOC to coordinate efforts with these organizations, but it was placed in an area to which the humanitarian assistance people had limited access. The military also wanted one person in charge of the overall operation, to include the efforts of the NGOs, while the NGOs wanted a cooperative arrangement. These and other issues led to some cases of alienation between the military and the NGOs. Over time these issues were resolved, but in the interim they hampered the total effort.[42]

In Somalia many NGOs were concerned their neutrality might be questioned if they were too closely associated with the military. As a result, to provide the critical NGO-military link, a HACC was established apart from the CMOC.[43] The same was done in Haiti where the CMOC's primary function was to process NGO requests for support sent over from the HACC.[44]

From the military's perspective in Somalia, the decision to locate the CMOC apart from the HACC had as much to do with security as with neutrality. As part of its mission, the US military was tasked with disarming Somalis. Yet, NGOs had hired Somali gunmen to protect them (and the delivery of food—with the growth of the famine, whoever had food had power). Collocating the HACC with the CMOC would have meant allowing unknown armed "locals" into a secure, restricted access, military operations center and having to discern which gun-toting Somalis were "legal" (NGO employees) and which gun-toting Somalis should be disarmed. By all accounts, despite not being collocated, the CMOC did everything possible to collaborate and contribute to a cooperative atmosphere.[45]

Of equal importance, the Somalia CMOC was collocated with the UN-run HOC. The HOC had to be completely accessible to everyone. The HOC was able to work closely with the CMOC, thus providing a single focal point for all agencies operating in country.[46]

As if that's not Enough

Three other important issues were common in the many documents I read. I do not classify them as tenets since I argue they are not critical to success because they are quite situationally dependent. None- theless, I believe they are of high enough interest to mobility leaders to be included.

First is the omnipresent battle to gain complete visibility of airfield operations. Specifically, I'm referring to the inability to "see" non-DOD and/or non-US aircraft and missions transiting "your" airfield, as well as all aircraft ground support operations. For example, personnel at Rinas Airport simultaneously supported aircraft from more than 40 nations. These included everything from small, single-engine propeller aircraft to DC-10 wide-bodies and from commercial airliners to helicopters. These aircraft provided combat rotary-wing operations, air ambulance services, DV support, humanitarian (NGO) rotary-wing operations, media flights, tactical ground refueling, and other functions.[47] There is often little, if anything, that we can do electronically within our command and control systems to affect this problem.[48] This issue simply adds emphasis to the absolute criticality of good civil-military relations and information sharing.

Second, simultaneous DOD, non-DOD, combat, noncombat, fixed-wing, and helicopter operations popped up in more than a couple of documents as an item to pay attention to. Part of the issue has to do with the pervasive lack of visibility on total airfield operations. The other part of the issue is the very real airspace management and air traffic control problems that had to be solved to support combat rotary-wing aircraft training requirements (communications-out, blacked-out tactical arrivals and departures). During the peak of Operation Shining Hope, over 200 rotary-wing sorties were flown in a single day out of Rinas Airport by more than 40 helicopters from 13 nations and organizations.[49] In short, the addition of not only rotary-wing aircraft to fixed-wing operations but also the combination of all six variables (DOD, non-DOD, combat, noncombat, fixed, and rotary wing) had a multiplicative effect on the complexity of air operations beyond that which the on-scene air commanders expected.[50]

The final issue has to do with your security posture or, more specifically, the changing nature of operations resulting from how you are being perceived as a threat to an in-country faction or force. Simultaneously with the combat in Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, the United States also led the international humanitarian relief effort at Rinas Airport in Tirane, Albania, in support of more than 450,000 Kosovar refugees. Within days of the start of Operation Shining Hope, NATO decided to forward deploy a battalion of Apache attack helicopters (Task Force Hawk) in support of Allied Force. Sure enough, the only airfield able to support the task force's operations was, you guessed it, Rinas Airport. Task Force Hawk grew to over 7,000 people, 40 attack helicopters, and more than 200 vehicles. This *combat* force, deployed in support of *combat* operations against Serbia and conducting *combat* training flight operations (blacked-out, communications-out, night operations), had to be folded in on top of what had been a high-threat but *noncombat* relief operation. From the locals' perspective, the presence of the task force completely changed the nature of operations at the airport. Rinas Airport was seen as a legitimate military target for the Serbs. This changed the fundamental nature of the security environment for the humanitarian relief operation, and posed a near impossible balancing act for the leaders of both Task Force Hawk and Operation Shining Hope.[51]

When you are conducting humanitarian relief activities that are recognized as pure, unbiased, and legitimate, there is a general hope (if not outright but unspoken understanding), that your airfield operations do not constitute a threat to local factions. Hence, your force protection measures and collective behavior reflect that understanding. However, that understanding can rapidly change with the addition to the operation of aircraft that are perceived to be a threat. The entire airfield operation immediately becomes suspect, and legitimacy is questioned and possibly challenged.[52] You may respond with appropriate force protection measures, and rightfully so. But, you should think through second-, third-, and fourth-order effects on the team of teams—the potentially changed dynamics of neutrality, information versus intelligence, threat environ-

ments, and other such issues and the strategic effects these changes may have.

Conclusion

Smell the cheese often so you know when it is getting old.

—Spencer Johnson
Who Moved My Cheese?

Given the operations tempo of the last dozen years, one would presume we have vigorously undertaken to ensure that MAF leaders charged with conducting complex humanitarian emergencies well understand the potential political quagmire such operations can pose. That presumption is only partially correct.

Our commanders need to be well equipped not only with a doctrinal compass but also with core tenets for success based on analysis and synthesis of a decade of US experiences. This paper has endeavored to contribute to that effort, with the hope of imprinting three key tenets. Following these tenets will not guarantee mission and political success, but neglecting or ignoring them in all likelihood will ensure failure, surely at the strategic/political level and possibly at the operational and tactical levels.

Build a team of teams and work hard to understand your NGO, joint, coalition, and host-nation counterparts' perspectives. Managing information is nothing new, but in the organizationally chaotic CHE environment, it takes on a whole new meaning and priority. Establishing simple, fair processes for sharing information is a solid first step. Providing a way and means—a floating process—to meet with NGO representatives face-to-face to work issues is necessary. There must be extraordinary effort at redundant communication and development of an information network to aid in comprehending the overall emergency. Always and above all, be mindful of the strategic implications that even a seemingly low-level, tactical undertaking can have, especially in the damage it can do to your operation's impartiality, legitimacy, and, most important, the safety and security of your people.

There are so many factors and components in a complex humanitarian emergency that no single organization can

possibly account for them all. However, MAF leaders in CHEs must at least understand the inherent social, economic, political, and civil dimensions of such operations and properly appreciate their place in the continuum of effort.[53] Complex humanitarian emergencies at the supposed low end of the operational spectrum are frequently termed small-scale contingencies, but they most certainly are not small, limited in scale, nor without serious political consequences and military implications.

Notes

1. The genesis of this study came in the Air War College's "International Organizations and Peacekeeping Operations" elective course. Dr. Stephen F. "Doc" Burgess of the Air War College faculty lent his great expertise on the United Nations and peace operations, and he provided the impetus to enlarge the original paper via his margin comment, "Publishable," a first for me. Col Ben Young, the Air Mobility Chair to Air University and an officer of the highest caliber, has an enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, air mobility operations and doctrine that is catching. Lt Col Karen Kwiatkowski, a political-military officer assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, found time to provide invaluable feedback on this study. Chris Seiple, a former Marine, of the Institute for Global Engagement, also provided a bounty of information. Lt Col June Sellers helped by reading several drafts. Special recognition and thanks also go to Col Clifton "Cliff" Bray for his report on Operation Shining Hope. Colonel Bray not only afforded me access to his personal notes from his tenure as the commander of the 86th Contingency Response Group but also interrupted his busy schedule to read drafts, answer questions, and provide priceless feedback. Finally, I wish to thank—and honor—the legions of air mobility war fighters and professionals who are the backbone and unsung heroes of this nation's defense. With style and professionalism, they plan it, schedule it, build it, on-load it, haul it, refuel it, airdrop it, off-load it, fix it, translate it, connect it, debug it, protect it, and come home safely only *after* making sure the mission is successfully completed. Thank you.

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43. Wilkins, 13.
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45. Seiple, "Operation Restore Hope," 116.
46. Institute for National Strategic Studies, 18.
47. Bray, 29.
48. Based on the author's personal experience.
49. Bray, 12.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., 13–14.
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53. Seiple, "Operation Provide Comfort," 52.

Glossary

AFDD	air force doctrine document
CHE	complex humanitarian emergency
CMOC	civil-military operations center
CRG	contingency response group
DIRMOBFOR	director of mobility forces
DOD	Department of Defense
DV	distinguished visitor
HACC	humanitarian assistance coordination center
HOC	humanitarian operations center
JCMOTF	joint civil-military operations task force
JP	joint publication
MAF	Mobility Air Forces
MOOTW	military operations other than war
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OSOCC	on-site operations coordination center
PVO	private volunteer organization
SOFA	status of forces agreement
TALCE	Tanker-Airlift Control Element
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USCINCCENTCOM	United States Commander in Chief Central Command