

TASK 8

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRIBUTION OF AID AGENCIES, AND HOW MILITARY DOCTRINE NEEDS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEIR CONCERNS

Task

- 113 Misperceptions of the availability and application of military resources lead to military officers frequently bemoaning the demands of aid agencies on military forces engaged in PSOs. These normally relate to requests for materiel, transport, protection and escorting, among others. Aid workers also tend to be critical of military missions and methods, often because they will be on the spot first and will remain in country, and required to work with the government and/or the factions, after the PSO has concluded and the troops have departed.
- 114 Nevertheless, co-ordination with aid agencies is essential for the effectiveness of PSOs, especially as part of the longer term conflict resolution strategy. But co-operation with the agencies requires doctrinal flexibility: at times, military forces have to divert effort from military tasks to satisfy these demands. Discussion in syndicate was therefore framed by the following questions:
- *How can the military co-ordinate its work with that of aid agencies, even if the agencies are at first reluctant to associate with them?*
 - *What do aid agencies want from the military?*
 - *What assistance can the military reasonably expect from aid agencies?*
 - *What doctrinal arrangements would incorporate aid agencies' requirements?*

Summary of points raised in discussion

- 115 It was noted that aid agencies, in effect, do have an approximate 'doctrine'. They divide potential tasks into roughly six sectors: refugees/internally displaced persons, water and sanitation (WATSAN), health, education, food and nutrition, and civil society. The general practice is that each agency will define its programmes based on one or a combination of these broad areas. However, aid agencies have a fundamentally different culture and ethos from those of the military. There is therefore an ever-present potential for mutual misunderstanding arising from basic misperceptions related to these inherent differences. This need not necessarily translate into hostility between aid agencies and the military in a PSO, because they both seek the same basic purpose – to improve the lot of the people of the host nation. The friction that does arise

is therefore not the result of a generically adversarial relationship. It is mainly a problem of a mutual lack of understanding, communication and co-ordination.

- 116 For example, aid agencies themselves sometimes have an (understandable) image of the military as having greater resources relative to their own. They feel that this 'excess' could quite easily be utilised in support of aid provision. This, in turn, creates unrealistic expectations about what the military can or should contribute to their own objectives. There is growing consensus among aid agencies, however, that accepting direct military assistance can backfire when the neutrality of PSO forces is compromised, leading to an improved distance from military resource requests. Military operations and aid operations also have different timeframes and different strategies imposed on them, and there is nothing that can be done about this. For instance, the military seeks an 'end state', while an aid operation is supposed to fit on a 'relief to development continuum'.
- 117 However, the success of a PSO should be measured not just by military standards, but by the success of the operation in handing over its own functions to civilian structures: i.e. it is the civilian and not the military aspect of the operation that is in the end a more important determinant of success or failure. Nevertheless, the military tends to make political evaluations on the efficacy of humanitarian assistance during the course of PSOs. In African conditions, for instance in Angola, food deliveries by aid agencies to rebel-held areas have inadvertently directly assisted combatants. Combatants are likely to be local residents, and may return to their villages at night to eat delivered food. This is not only an issue for peacekeepers, however. Within the humanitarian sector, there is already an in-depth debate on the 'dark side' of humanitarian aid, and what can be done to limit the unintended negative consequences of aid provision.
- 118 Aid agency requirements for greater military transparency and accountability

TABLE 1: CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONCERNS OF AID AGENCIES

What do aid agencies contribute?	What are agencies' concerns?
Humanitarian 'doctrine'	Neutrality
Technical inputs	Political involvement
Community orientation	Military priorities
Advocacy	Abuses of power
Human rights	Inappropriate use of assistance
The critical voice agenda'	Separateness of the 'humanitarian
	Market share?

TABLE 2: CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONCERNS OF THE MILITARY

What does the military contribute?	What are the military's concerns?
The establishment of a secure environment mutual area of operations	Inaccurate reporting by aid agency workers of human rights practices, without consultation with the commander concerned
Direct protection of aid delivery vulnerability	Security risks created by the of aid agencies to infiltration by belligerent agents
Protection of designated sites	Unrealistic expectations of the military's capacity to provide protection beyond existing operational tasking
Use of collateral capacity for direct humanitarian assistance	Misappropriation of aid by belligerents

TABLE 3: CIVIL-MILITARY INTERACTION

Military response to concerns?	Opportunities for co-operation
Training/awareness	Assistance planning
Liaison roles	Aid delivery
Joint committees	Military protection
Transparency	Community Involvement
Accountability	Accountability
	Human rights

were also discussed. It was noted that the military often distrusts the seconcepts, seeing them as threatening to operational security. Also, a soldier is principally 'accountable' to his mission and its success. But if impartiality is really sought, then there should be no problem in principle with greater military transparency during PSOs. Transparency and co-operation may also be enhanced by the incorporation of some of the major donors/sponsors in the process of formulating the political-military plan for any given PSO.

1119 Finally, answers to the questions posed to the syndicate for Task 7 were provided and presented in table format as follows:

Unfinished business/Recommendations for further research

- 120 It was felt that research is needed into the problem of developing a relevant and acceptable approach to military-humanitarian joint contingency planning for future PSOs in Africa. This may be informed by a comparative case study of good, bad and non-existent military/aid agency co-operation in three African crises – for example, in Liberia, Somalia and Guinea Bissau.