

Trends and challenges in humanitarian civil–military coordination

A review of the literature

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In crisis contexts, principled civil–military coordination is critical to protecting humanitarian principles and, therefore, ensuring an effective humanitarian response. However, in recent years it has faced a number of major and often interconnected challenges, including increasingly integrated international interventions in fragile and conflict-affected states, the growth in the frequency and scale of natural disasters and the rapid proliferation of ‘humanitarian’ actors, including NGOs, not-for-profit organisations and the private sector. Despite the fact that humanitarian organisations and militaries increasingly operate in the same environments there is limited analysis in existing literature of how their relationship functions in practice. In particular, there is little analysis of how the relationship has been affected, in operational terms, by the changing nature of conflicts and the development of more integrated approaches to international interventions. Rather, debates about civil–military coordination have tended to focus on conceptual issues and have been primarily concerned with questions of principle, with less analysis and debate on how the relationship works on a practical level, and more importantly how this relationship impacts on humanitarian outcomes for populations in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

This literature review is part of an HPG project entitled ‘Civil–Military Coordination: The Search for Common Ground’. This two-year research and public affairs project explores how recent global developments have affected the relationship between military and humanitarian actors, with the aim of facilitating more effective and principled collaboration to support better humanitarian outcomes for crisis-affected populations. This paper identifies key trends emerging from the literature on civil–military coordination in conflicts and natural disasters. It deals with the interaction between international humanitarian and international or foreign military actors operating in crisis contexts, and offers some reflections on the relationship between national military actors and the international humanitarian community.

The paper is in three parts. The first section explores ongoing or emerging trends and challenges in the relationship between humanitarian and military actors broadly, charting the rise of international military engagement in humanitarian action and the overarching problems this poses to coordination with international humanitarian actors. Building on this discussion, the second section outlines aspects of the relationship that are specific to natural disaster contexts, while the third section explores civil–military coordination in relation to the protection of civilians. Finally, the paper offers some preliminary conclusions towards improving civil–military coordination in crisis contexts.

Methodology

This paper is the product of a desk-based review of academic and grey literature pertaining to the concept and practice of civil–military coordination. The following research questions guided the authors:

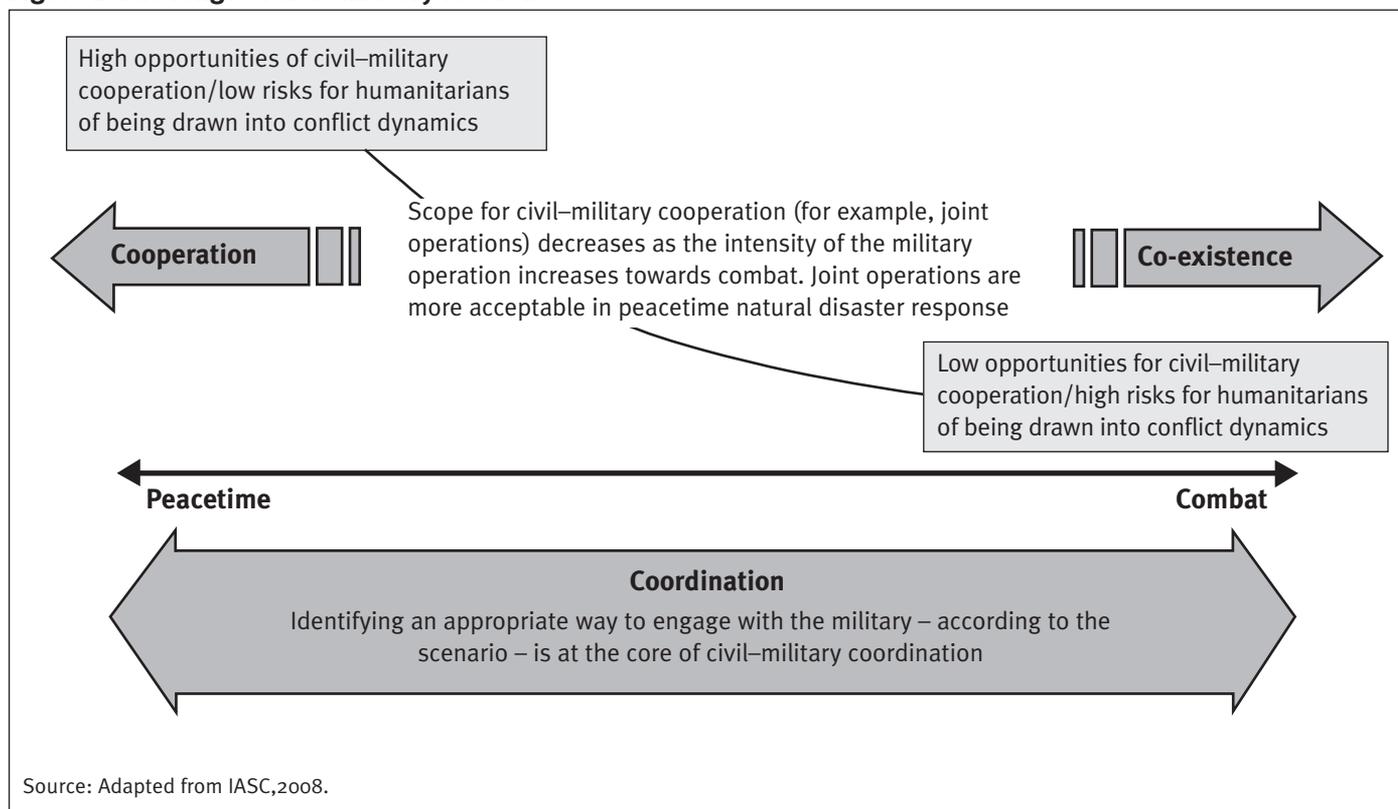
- Are existing civil–military frameworks (at policy, strategic and operational levels) sufficient?
- How can humanitarian and military actors engage more effectively and strategically with one another?
- What can they realistically expect of one another?
- Are existing frameworks and mechanisms of coordination fit for purpose?

References were primarily located through key word searches on the internet (see Annex). Where possible, policy documentation, evaluations, reviews, guidance and other grey literature was also gathered from humanitarian practitioners and, to a lesser extent, military actors. However, the authors did not generally have access to the internal documentation (internal evaluations, lessons learnt, after-action reviews) of military institutions or humanitarian organisations, and this paper is thus limited to the academic and grey literature that is publicly available. The authors also note that this literature review reflects the current state of research and writing in this area, which offers limited empirical analysis of how the relationship between international humanitarian and military actors has worked in practice, and still less data or analysis on the extent to which enhanced civil–military coordination can contribute to better humanitarian outcomes for affected populations.

Terminology

The terms ‘civil–military coordination’, ‘CMCoord’, ‘CIMIC’ and ‘civil–military relations’ are often conflated in the literature. This paper is concerned specifically with *humanitarian* civil–military coordination or ‘CMCoord’ as defined by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).¹ This is ‘the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and

¹ OCHA is the part of the UN Secretariat responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to make responses to emergencies more coherent. It was formed in 1998, with the reorganisation of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Its mandate includes the coordination of humanitarian response, policy development and humanitarian advocacy. For more information see www.unocha.org. The IASC is an inter-agency forum for humanitarian NGOs, UN agencies and international organisations. It provides coordination, policy development and decision-making on humanitarian issues, involving UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. It was established in 1992 and endorsed in UN General Assembly Resolution 48/57 in 1993. See www.humanitarianinfo.org.

Figure 1: The range of civil–military relations

promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and, when appropriate, pursue common goals' (OCHA, 2008: 1c). It provides for a spectrum of interaction between military and humanitarian actors, ranging from co-existence to cooperation, as depicted in Figure 1.

CMCoord refers specifically to the interaction between humanitarian organisations and military actors for humanitarian purposes, whereas the broader term 'civil–military relations' generally refers to the interaction between the military and a wider range of civilian actors, including civil society, government authorities, rule of law, security sector reform, human rights and development actors, and can be undertaken for a range of objectives.

CIMIC is a military term, for which there are varying interpretations, but essentially it refers to the engagement of military actors with civilians for military purposes. NATO defines CIMIC as the 'co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies.² Doctrinally CIMIC provides the 'military function through which commanders link to civilian agencies active in a theatre of operations' (NATO, s.a), CIMIC's core purpose is to obtain support and potentially assets from 'the indigenous population, co-ordination and joint-planning with civilian agencies, and the provision of expertise, information, security, infrastructure and capacity building to

² Articulated in MC 400/2 and MC 411/1 and quoted in AJP 9.

the local population in support of the military mission' (NATO, s.a.). As a consequence, the distribution of CIMIC effort tends to follow military priorities, and does not offer 'unconditional support to the humanitarian response' (SCHR, 2010: 7).

UN CIMIC as developed by DPKO places less emphasis on support of purely military objectives and instead focuses on the delivery of broader UN Security Council objectives and the preservation of appropriate relations with the civilian and humanitarian aspects of the overall UN response. DPKO describes UN CIMIC as 'a military staff function in UN integrated missions that facilitates the interface between the military and civilian components of the mission, as well as with the humanitarian, development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN mission objectives' (UN DPKO/DFS, 2010).

The EU understanding of CIMIC is similar to the UN's in that it 'takes account of the "Guidelines on the use of military and civil defense assets in disaster relief," updated in November 2006 ("The Oslo guidelines"), and the "Guidelines on the use of Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA)" to support UN humanitarian activities in complex emergencies' (European Commission, 2007: 317). Capacities 'must be deployed in a way which complements and supports the work of humanitarian organizations' (European Commission, 2007: Sec 3.5).

The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence will be referred to throughout

this paper. The general definitions of these terms as understood by the humanitarian community are as follows (see for example OCHA, 2010; IFCR/ICRC, 1996):

- *Humanity*: the provision of humanitarian assistance where it is needed and in a manner which respects the rights and dignity of the individual.
- *Impartiality*: the provision of humanitarian assistance without discrimination among recipients and guided solely by needs, with priority given to the most urgent cases of distress.
- *Neutrality*: the provision of humanitarian assistance without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature.
- *Independence*: the provision of humanitarian assistance in a manner that is autonomous from the political, economic,

military or other objectives of actors engaged in the areas where humanitarian action is being undertaken.

The term ‘impartiality’ is one of the basic principles of peacekeeping but has a very different meaning in that context. The UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations has defined ‘impartiality’ as follows:

United Nations peacekeeping operations must implement their mandate without favour of prejudice to any party. Impartiality is crucial to maintaining the consent and cooperation of the main parties but should not be confused with neutrality or inactivity. United Nations peacekeepers should be impartial in their dealings with the parties to the conflict, but not neutral in the execution of their mandate (UN DPKO DFS, 2008).

Chapter 2

The rise of military engagement in humanitarian action

The role of foreign or international militaries in delivering humanitarian assistance is not a new phenomenon (Brzoska and Erhart, 2009; Bessler and Seki, 2006). Engagement of military actors in humanitarian action has a long history, as illustrated by the 1935–36 Abyssinian Crisis and the Berlin Airlift in 1948 (Slim, 2011; Wheeler and Harmer, 2006). However, what is new is the purpose or goal underpinning this engagement and the nature and scope of military involvement. Perhaps the principal driver of military engagement in humanitarian action has been the succession of large-scale international interventions in crisis contexts, and their changing nature. Over the last decade in particular, interventions have become characterised by ‘comprehensive’ or ‘stabilisation’ strategies that have *explicitly* sought to combine humanitarian, military and other spheres of action under an over-arching political objective. Within this rubric, military forces have increasingly undertaken a range of humanitarian activities themselves in order to achieve strategic or tactical objectives.³ These two trends are challenging existing frameworks of civil–military coordination in the humanitarian sphere.

Military engagement in humanitarian action is not limited to conflict contexts. In natural disasters too, foreign military engagement in the relief effort has increased significantly in the last decade. Since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, many Western governments have deployed their militaries in support of states affected by earthquakes, floods, tsunamis and extreme weather conditions. The United States, for example, has deployed its military 40 times since 2004 in support of disaster response operations around the world (Hanley, 2010). The increased deployment of military assets and capabilities in disaster response is linked to the increase in the incidence of natural disasters (Wihart et al., 2008). It is also motivated by political factors, including the need to demonstrate the added value of national militaries at a time when defence budgets are coming under pressure. It is also linked to national and international security objectives and the need to improve the global image of certain Western militaries, particularly after their experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.

2.1 Key challenges to civil–military coordination

A common theme in the literature is that the different cultures of military and humanitarian actors present a major challenge to effective interaction (see for example IASC, 2004; GoA,

³ The expansion of the military into development activities in conflict and post-conflict contexts is even more pronounced; for example, out of the \$52 billion allocated by the United States to ‘Reconstruction Assistance’ in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2010, \$19bn was spent through USAID and the State Department, and \$33bn through the US military (Walmsley, 2011).

2008). The humanitarian community is described generally as a loosely configured system or network of actors which coalesce around common funding sources and voluntary standards, without an effective chain of command (Clarke, 2002; HPG, 2011a; Metcalfe, et al., 2011; Collinson and Elhawary, 2012). This contrasts with militaries, which are characterised as hierarchical and output-driven (Slim, 2011). Both sets of actors have spent insufficient time trying to understand each other’s structures and ways of working (Clarke, 2002). Humanitarian actors have often been openly hostile to foreign military forces, including UN forces, whilst literature from the military community does not generally reflect on the impact of their actions on humanitarian operations and beneficiaries. For their part, most militaries ‘make much of the alleged incapability of the humanitarian community to contribute to unity of effort’ (Clarke, 2002: 208).

However, as Barry and Jeffreys (2002) and Hofman (2011) assert, the tensions between these actors are not simply to do with cultural differences, but also stem from fundamental differences in motivations, goals and approaches. The literature highlights several key factors or trends in this regard; the increasing politicisation and militarisation of humanitarian assistance, and challenges inherent in the nature of the humanitarian community itself. A further trend indicated in the literature relates to guidance on civil–military coordination, including both the poor record of military and humanitarian actors in adhering to their own guidance and gaps in guidance relating to certain types of context or actors. Notably, however, the literature focuses on these three trends largely from a process perspective and does not adequately explore the degree to which they impact upon humanitarian outcomes.

2.1.1 Politicisation and militarisation of humanitarian assistance

The literature indicates that the overarching challenge to effective humanitarian civil–military coordination in complex emergencies and natural disasters relates to the continuing politicisation and militarisation of humanitarian assistance. The use of humanitarian assistance for political or military gain is entirely contrary to the concept of humanitarian action, which should be ‘exclusively humanitarian and impartial in nature’.⁴ Particularly prominent in the literature are the specific challenges posed by comprehensive or stabilisation approaches and counter-insurgency. These trends are not new: since their conception in the 1950s, counter-insurgency strategies for example have consistently sought to use humanitarian assistance and the provision of basic services to pursue political

⁴ Article 18 of Additional Protocol II. See also HPG, 2010a.

or military objectives. The concerns of humanitarian actors regarding explicit linking of humanitarian action with political and/or military strategies relate primarily to both ‘contagion’ and ‘complicity’, and the implications these have for their own principles, strategies and operations (Slim, 2011).

Notwithstanding the comparative advantages the military may have in certain contexts and in relation to certain capabilities (which some humanitarian actors acknowledge, in principle at least (see for example IASC, 2004; SCHR, 2010; IASC, 2011; NMCG, 2011)), there remain serious concerns about the explicit linking of humanitarian and military or political objectives and the resulting expansion of the military into activities beyond their traditional mandates and areas of expertise. The discourse has focused mainly on conflicts, though the same principle applies in natural disasters. As Krahenbuhl (2011) asserts, in accordance with international humanitarian law the military have an obligation to undertake certain humanitarian activities, such as the evacuation of the wounded (see also Gordon, 2006; UNHCR, s.a). However, concerns regarding ‘contagion’ arise when humanitarian assistance becomes *part of the military strategy*: ‘if humanitarian assistance is perceived, rightly or wrongly, as associated with military activities, being support to, or as being partisan to, one party to the conflict, humanitarian actors at best lose the acceptance necessary to operate safely and at worst become deliberate targets of attacks’ (SCHR, 2010: 9; see also Fast, 2010; OCHA, 2011; Egeland et al., 2011; Metcalfe et al., 2011). The second concern many humanitarians have is ‘complicity’ (Slim, 2011), or the fear that their engagement with the military will mean that they are complicit in inappropriate or ineffective assistance that does not meet the needs of affected populations or fails to adhere to the principle of ‘do no harm’. Humanitarians also fear that coordinating with the military will be used to bring humanitarian action under military control (SCHR, 2010).

These concerns are not surprising given experiences in high-profile contexts such as Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, and in relation to UN integrated missions. However, there is little factual analysis in the humanitarian literature to support these concerns; as Slim argues, the humanitarian community has been ‘strong on ideology and weak on evidence of practical effect’ (Slim, 2011), and the humanitarian literature does not explain in practical terms why the direct provision of relief by the military is inappropriate, or how it has placed civilian populations or humanitarian staff at greater risk. The humanitarian literature also seems to offer no reflections on the impact the diversion of military resources into aid efforts may have on the obviously crucial role militaries play in reducing violence and enhancing security.

Counter-insurgency strategies

The contemporary origins of the use of humanitarian assistance by the military for tactical and strategic gains are closely linked to the counter-insurgency campaigns of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, principally the British experiences in Malaya, Oman

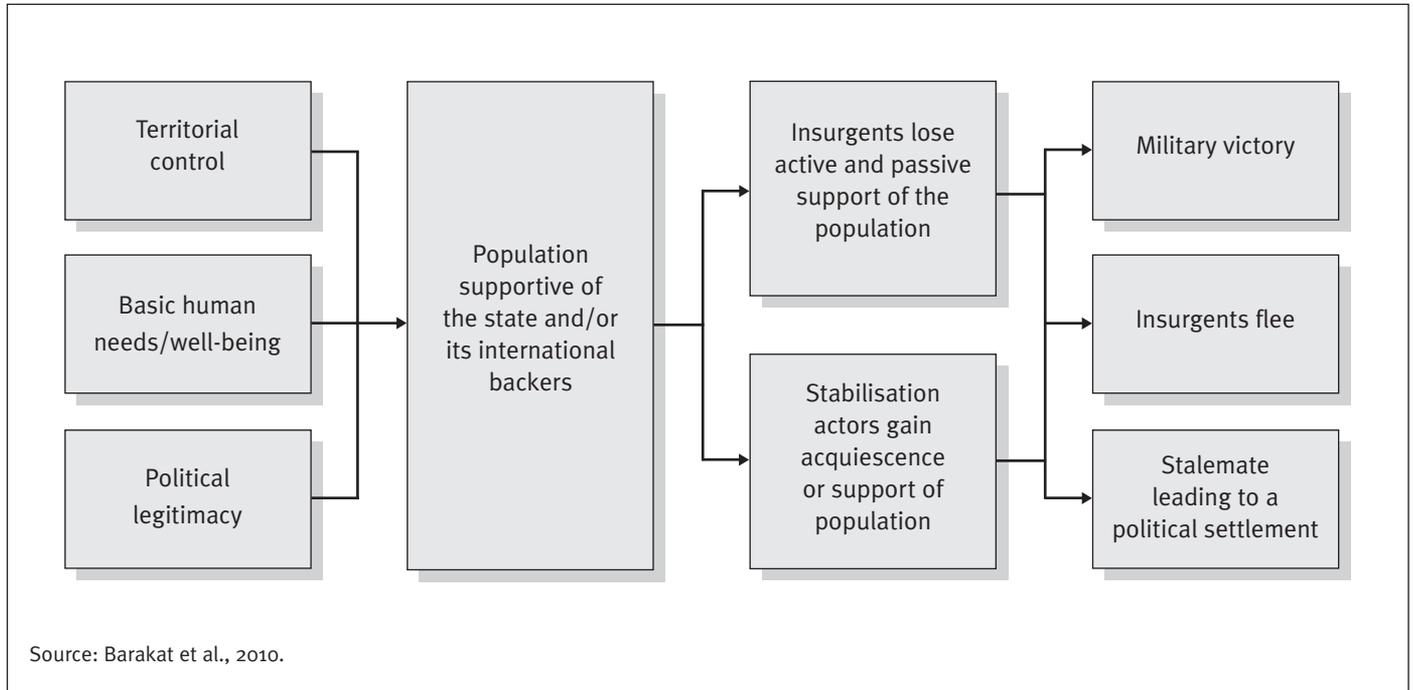
and Aden (see Barakat et al., 2011; Corum, 2008; Kilcullen, 2009; Nagl, 2002; Kitson, 1971; Stubbs, 2004). The US echoed Britain in its counter-revolutionary warfare, particularly in programmes such as the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support Programme (CORDS) during the Vietnam War (Herring, 1979; Willbanks, 2006). Contemporary counter-insurgency frameworks continue to bring together efforts to separate the population from the insurgents, whilst providing a variety of reconstruction programmes to win the sympathy of the population, hence the phrase ‘hearts and minds’ (Wilder, 2009). This population-centric view of conflict is rooted in the assumption that poverty, illiteracy and unmet aspirations are the fuels that drive insurgencies, and that remedies can be found in the provision of humanitarian, reconstruction and development assistance (see for example Wilder, 2009; Collinson et al., 2010). The idea is that small-scale project-based assistance can help to achieve military and political objectives; community rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, for instance, may be seen as essential to stabilise the local area, consolidate military gains and provide force protection (Gordon, 2006).

This approach is entirely contrary to the humanitarian principles of humanity and impartiality – providing assistance to all those who need it, with priority given to those in greatest need: ‘in Afghanistan, OPT, Somalia and elsewhere, donor and military forces have made aid *conditional* [emphasis added] on the political or military cooperation of communities and aid organisations and have used aid to buy information or compliance with military forces’ (Oxfam, 2011: 2; see also Donini, 2009). In addition, many have asserted that counter-insurgency operations not only reduce access for humanitarian organisations to populations in need, but also endanger recipients. Communities accepting assistance from the military may be seen to be taking sides in the conflict, thereby exposing them to the risk of retaliation from other belligerents (SCHR, 2010; HPG and UNHCR, 2010 Hofman, 2011; Metcalfe et al., 2011).

Comprehensive and stabilisation approaches

For many states, and for some multilateral organisations including NATO and the EU, ‘comprehensive’ or ‘stabilisation’ approaches are now the norm in their interventions in fragile or conflict-affected states (Mowjee, 2004; Petersen and Binnendijk, 2007; HPG and UNHCR, 2011). Although there is no common definition of ‘stabilisation’ and greater clarity on the concept is still required, stabilisation strategies generally combine aid, political, military, security, rule of law and governance interventions under one overarching political objective, and generally consider humanitarian assistance as a conflict management tool (Collinson et al., 2010).

Barakat et al. (2011) argue that the shift towards the language of stabilisation began in the post-Cold War period, with the growth of UN peacekeeping and peace-building in the 1990s. These mixed military and civilian missions, it is argued, laid the conceptual groundwork for the stabilisation drive of the post-9/11 era (Barakat et al., 2011). The US doctrine

Figure 2: Stabilisation's underlying logic of intervention

and practice of 'stabilisation' is considered one of the most sophisticated (HPG and UNHCR, 2011), and the wealth of reflection on it is perhaps illustrative of the direction in which many other member states and multilateral organisations are heading. For the United States, the key change has been the perception that fragile or conflict-affected states represent a threat to US national security, necessitating a reorientation of US military activity in response. This shift was reflected in both the 2008 National Defense Strategy and the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which noted that 'preventing conflict, stabilizing crises, and building security sector capacity are essential elements of America's national security approach' (US DoD, 2010a: 75).

Stabilisation has come to represent 'a core US military mission' that is 'likely to be more important to the lasting success of military operations than traditional combat operations' (US DoD, 2005: vi; see also Ackerman, 2008). The 2005 US Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 situated the military stabilisation response as part of a broader whole-of-government approach, and recognised that coordination with indigenous, foreign or US civilian professionals would be essential for successfully executing stabilisation tasks (US DoD, 2005: 2). However, the Directive also made clear that US military forces would be 'prepared to perform all tasks necessary to establish or maintain order when civilians cannot do so' (US DoD, 2005: 2). It also offered guidance on the objectives of stability operations, arguing that the immediate goal was not only to 'establish civil security and civil control, restore essential services, repair and protect critical infrastructure, and deliver humanitarian assistance' (p. 2), but also to support 'civil-military teams and related efforts so that there is unity of effort in 'rebuilding basic infrastructure;

developing local governance structures; fostering security, economic stability, and development; and building indigenous capacity for such tasks' (US DoD, 2005: 3). This represents an organisational, as well as financial, reconfiguration of military capacity in order to intervene in fragile and conflict-affected states and potentially assume responsibility for tasks that had traditionally been delivered by government civilian agencies and development and humanitarian organisations.⁵

A similar trend is under way in NATO, which in 2006 adopted the 'Comprehensive Approach' (CA) (Jakobsen, 2010). The CA arose out of the belief that the challenges that NATO faces in implementing 'a sustainable peace' in countries of concern cannot be overcome with military operations alone, and that a combination of civil and political elements is necessary to achieve stability and security (Jakobsen, 2008). However, unlike some of its member states NATO sees its comprehensive approach as a 'collective endeavour' which involves developing strategic partnerships with external civilian and political organisations, rather than the development of internal civilian capacity (Jakobsen, 2010: 79).

Despite the resources dedicated to these new approaches, the literature suggests that there is little evidence to show that they have been successful in achieving their multiple objectives (Collinson et al., 2010; HPG and UNHCR, 2011). In relation to Afghanistan, Jakobsen (2010) argues that NATO's

⁵ Ploch asserts that the creation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007 demonstrates this new approach: AFRICOM has 'all the roles and responsibilities of a traditional geographic combatant command, including the ability to facilitate or lead military operations, but also includes a broader "soft power" mandate aimed at building a stable security environment and incorporates a larger civilian component from other US government agencies to address those challenges' (Ploch, 2011: 4).

Comprehensive Approach had ‘failed to make a difference on the ground’. Studies undertaken by the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University (see Fishstein, 2010; Bradbury and Kleinman, 2010; Gompelman, 2011; Gordon, 2011) also indicate that local populations have lamented the ongoing lack of security. These populations were also often dissatisfied with the quality and nature of assistance provided by the military, and some military actors have acknowledged that they are indeed ‘a poor fit’ for aid work (Fishstein, 2010: 4). Gordon (2006) argues that ‘most militaries have overestimated the extent to which humanitarian “objectives” are linked to their own’ (Gordon, 2006: 42; see also Barakat et al., 2011; Crost and Johnston, 2010). Likewise, reflecting on the role of peacekeeping forces in humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected states, Clarke asserts that ‘a military force may hope to be seen as a humanitarian actor, but that is both logically impossible and militarily self-defeating’ (Clarke, 2002: 209).

For their part, many in the humanitarian community have expressed serious concerns regarding the impact of stabilisation, integrated or whole-of-government approaches on the humanitarian enterprise (see for example OCHA, 2008; Fishstein, 2010; Collinson et al., 2010). Much of the literature focuses on the experience of stabilisation in Iraq and Afghanistan (Wheeler and Harmer, 2006). In respect of Afghanistan, Hofman and Delauney (2010) argue that principled humanitarian action is highly restricted by ‘the co-optation of the aid system by the international coalition – at times with the complicity of the aid community itself – to the point where it is difficult to distinguish aid efforts from political and military action’. Similarly, Jakobsen asserts that ISAF has had little success in building stronger cooperation with NGOs, which viewed ‘the CA (Comprehensive Approach) agenda with scepticism, since they are extremely wary of being seen or used as force multipliers by NATO’ (2010: 88).

There are also concerns among some humanitarian actors that the concept of stabilisation itself is too vague, too ambitious and has not proved effective, even on its own terms: ‘recent stabilisation experience is likely to weaken fundamentally even the more willing and pragmatic aid agencies’ association with comprehensive stabilisation and peace-building, not least because these efforts have not delivered the kinds of improvements in humanitarian space and humanitarian outcomes that they consider paramount’ (Collinson et al., 2010: 19; see also HPG and UNHCR, 2011). However, Collinson et al. (2010) caution that, if humanitarians retreat entirely from any engagement with stabilisation actors, they will face even greater operational challenges and may be forced to withdraw from some contexts. Moreover, the debate on humanitarian action and stabilisation or comprehensive approaches appears to have focused largely on issues of ideology and coordination processes. There is far less analysis of the degree to which different levels or forms of engagement between humanitarian and stabilisation actors have impacted on humanitarian outcomes for affected populations.

Box 1: UN integration

The concept and policy of UN integration has evolved over several decades. Since the late 1980s, the UN Security Council has authorised multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions mandated to undertake political, military and civilian actions to support transitions from war to peace (Eide et al., 2005; Metcalfe et al., 2011). These are increasingly characterised by complex mandates spanning ‘immediate stabilisation and protection of civilians to supporting humanitarian assistance, organising elections, assisting the development of new political structures, engaging in security sector reform, disarming, demobilising and reintegrating former combatants and laying the foundations of a lasting peace’ (Eide et al., 2005: 3). The process of integrating diplomatic, human rights, military and development responses has been driven primarily by the requirement to more effectively consolidate tenuous peace agreements and the delicate transition from war to a lasting peace (UN, 2005), the fragility of which is often ‘ascribed to a lack of strategic, coordinated and sustained international efforts’ (Eide et al., 2005: 3). The concept of ‘integration’ was introduced formally by the UN Secretary-General in 1997 and has been reiterated in several policy documents since then, notably in the SG Decisions of 2008 (UN, 2008) and 2011 (UN, 2011). These asserted that the policy intended to ‘maximize the individual and collective impact of the UN’s response, concentrating on those activities required to consolidate peace’ (UN, 2008; see also Metcalfe et al., 2011).

Some of the humanitarian concerns regarding stabilisation or comprehensive approaches are echoed in the debate on the UN’s integration policy (see Metcalfe et al., 2011; Interaction, 2011; NRC, 2011). However, although there are synergies in terms of the quest for greater coherence between different policy spheres, UN integration differs from comprehensive or stabilisation approaches in several important respects. UN integration is focused on peace consolidation, a process which the UN, in policy terms at least, no longer sees as incorporating life-saving humanitarian activities (Eide et al., 2005; Metcalfe et al., 2011). Humanitarian action is not seen as a conflict management tool, but rather as a wholly separate sphere of action, governed by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, and with separate resources and structures.

UN humanitarian agencies and NGOs have consistently expressed concern at the real and perceived impact of UN integration on humanitarian action (Harmer, 2008; Collinson et al., 2010; Metcalfe et al., 2011). In particular, some have asserted that there is an inherent contradiction between the UN’s political/peacekeeping objectives and its humanitarian objectives, and that UN integration blurs the distinction between humanitarian actors and UN political or peacekeeping actors, subordinates humanitarian priorities to political or peacekeeping objectives and ultimately places humanitarian

action at risk (NRC, 2011; Interaction, 2011). Conversely, pro-integrationists have argued that the evidence for some humanitarian concerns is weak (see Harmer, 2008; Metcalfe et al., 2011); that “business as usual” is not a viable option for dealing with many actors in today’s humanitarian disasters’ (Hoffman and Weiss, 2006: 99); and that the humanitarian imperative cannot be maintained by *avoiding* engagement with political and military actors (Macfarlane, 2000; Minear, 2002; Eide et al, 2005); ‘in those complex situations that require integrated missions, humanitarian assistance and space are better protected from within. That is to say, official engagement with uniformed peacekeepers is better than not having access to them’ (Wheeler and Harmer, 2006: 51).

Although there is more recent evidence of both positive and negative impacts of UN integration on humanitarian space (see Metcalfe et al., 2011), over the last decade the debate on UN integration has been polarised and has focused primarily on ideology, operational efficiency and the high transaction costs of ensuring appropriate interaction. Far less attention has been given to the extent to which improved interaction between UN peacekeeping and political missions and humanitarian actors can lead to more positive humanitarian outcomes for affected populations.

Deployment of military assets in humanitarian response

The increasing politicisation of humanitarian assistance also relates to the political motivations for the deployment of military assets and capabilities in support of humanitarian operations. In theory the use of military and civilian defence assets (MCDA) in complex emergencies and natural disasters is restricted by international policy frameworks to situations of ‘last resort’ (see Box 2). However, in practice adherence to this principle has been problematic. Deploying MCDA in complex emergencies and natural disaster responses is often a highly political decision, motivated by a range of domestic and foreign policy concerns. Reviews and commentary on the use of military assets in the humanitarian response in Kosovo, for example, highlight the political motivations behind the huge amount of military resources and personnel deployed in building and running camps for displaced populations and other humanitarian activities (Clarke, 2002; Suhrke et al., 2000).

Political considerations have placed pressure on the military to deploy its assets, and on humanitarian actors to accept them even where their use may not be in conformity with the principle of last resort; in Libya in 2011, for example, the EU drew up plans to mobilise troops to support the humanitarian response, though in the end no forces were deployed (Pilkington et al., 2011; OCHA, 2011). For their part, militaries have long argued that the use of military assets is necessary because humanitarian actors are often slow to deploy. Certainly, military and government actors in Kosovo and Haiti expressed frustration with the delayed and inadequate response from the international humanitarian

Box 2: The principle of ‘last resort’

According to the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (OCHA, 2006) and the Guidelines On The Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets In Disaster Relief (the ‘Oslo Guidelines’) (2007) (see OCHA, 2008), the principle of last resort requires that military and civilian defence assets are used in support of humanitarian operations only in accordance with four key criteria:

- *unique capability* – no appropriate alternative civilian resources exist;
- *timeliness* – the urgency of the task at hand demands immediate action;
- *clear humanitarian direction* – civilian control over the use of military assets; and
- *time-limited* – the use of military assets to support humanitarian activities is clearly limited in time and scale.

community (Clarke, 2002; Suhrke et al., 2000). However, as Clarke argues, ‘If the world does not want to see its militaries engaged in international social work, then it must adequately fund and empower the civilian intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies that are the core of the humanitarian response system’ (Clarke, 2002: 208).

These political and economic factors are also prevalent in relation to the use of military assets to support the security of humanitarian workers. According to IASC guidelines armed escorts should only be used as a last resort, in situations where the host state is unable to provide a secure environment for operations, where assistance that is needed to avoid unnecessary suffering cannot be delivered without armed escorts, where such escorts can be provided in a manner which enhances the security of humanitarian workers but does not place affected populations or beneficiaries at risk, and where the use of an escort would not compromise the long-term ability of humanitarian organisations to safely and effectively fulfil their mandates (IASC, 2001). However, in practice adhering to these criteria has proved problematic. In UN peacekeeping contexts, for example, UN security management processes have tended to result in an automatic recourse to UN armed escorts by UN humanitarian agencies and their partners. This, the literature suggests, is because of insufficient investment in the civilian capacities and resources necessary to accurately assess security threats or invest in alternative access strategies (as seen in DRC, where some humanitarian organisations were using MONUSCO air assets due to financial considerations (Metcalfe et al., 2011)), or because the humanitarian community has become accustomed to using escorts irrespective of security conditions (as seen in Haiti in 2010 (IASC, 2011)). The use of foreign military escorts has been particularly problematic in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. In these cases, the foreign (NATO, AU) forces that are

or have been parties to the conflicts were mandated by the UN Security Council to provide security for all UN personnel, and there appears to have been limited effort to manage the risks inherent in this approach (OCHA, 2011; Metcalfe et al., 2011). There have also been more positive experiences. WFP, for instance, has asserted that the provision of maritime escorts by UNAFOR-Atlanta has effectively halted hijackings of WFP vessels (OCHA, 2011: 13).

2.1.2 The humanitarian community: inconsistency, diversity and division

Within the humanitarian community, views on civil–military coordination are at best diverse, at worst inconsistent and contradictory. This confusion stems from a range of factors, including a lack of awareness and understanding of the legal responsibilities of foreign military actors in particular contexts, the difficulties in adapting positions to the differing mandates under which such forces are deployed and the nature and scope of the humanitarian community itself. Reflecting on Afghanistan, OCHA refers to the ‘aggressive stance of some humanitarians towards the military which had resulted in a very complicated civil–military coordination dialogue’ (OCHA, 2011: 11). In relation to the early days of the Kosovo crisis, Clarke notes the ‘bitter resentment and opposition to the military profession’ (Clarke, 2002: 229). This hostility suggests a failure to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities that foreign military forces have with respect to international humanitarian law where they are parties to conflict, or the nature of the UN Security Council mandates under which many of them are deployed.⁶ It may also suggest a failure on the part of some humanitarian actors to understand their own roles, including promoting respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians.

The nature of the mandates under which foreign military or peacekeeping forces are deployed often means that it is difficult for the humanitarian community to understand, and agree upon, an appropriate level of interaction. This is particularly the case in situations where these forces are or become parties to a conflict. Perhaps the greatest challenge in this regard relates to situations where foreign military forces are not operating under a UN mandate, as was the case in the early stages of the Kosovo crisis in 1999 and in the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Clarke (2002) and Suhrke et al. (2000) explain the dilemma humanitarian actors faced in deciding what level of engagement with NATO forces was appropriate in Kosovo, given that the air campaign was ‘done without the sanction of a UN Security Council resolution, but judged illegal but legitimate by an Independent International Commission’ (Clarke, 2002: 213). Suhrke et al. assert with reference to UNHCR that ‘In the end, the imperative of saving lives made the High Commissioner

⁶ UN peacekeeping missions are commonly tasked with providing support to the humanitarian response. UN Security Council Resolution 2003 (2011), for example, requires the joint UN–AU mission in Darfur (UNAMID) to ‘ensure safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and humanitarian activities, so as to facilitate the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Darfur’.

accept NATO assistance. Lack of preparedness by the civilians, and the ready availability of NATO support, made use of the military essential in the relief operations during the first days of the emergency’ (Suhrke et al., 2000: 525). They go on to explain that UNHCR had hoped that this engagement would open up access to the military resources it needed in such a challenging environment. In practice, however, the relationship was problematic and UNHCR was often sidelined in planning and operational decisions by NATO member states (Clarke, 2002). In UN peacekeeping contexts, the mandate conferred by the UN Security Council can also pose challenges to humanitarian civil–military coordination, both in terms of the mission’s perceived or actual lack of neutrality (within the humanitarian meaning of the term) and in relation to tensions and competition arising from duplication of humanitarian responsibilities between the mission and UN humanitarian actors (Metcalfe et al., 2011).

Notwithstanding these challenges, the difficulties in achieving coherence across the sector on civil–military coordination relate primarily to factors internal to the humanitarian community, including the proliferation of actors engaging in ‘humanitarian’ activities, the expanding scope of those activities and political pressure from donors for closer engagement with the military. The sector has expanded enormously in the last decade, with the number of humanitarian workers in the field increasing by 6% each year over the past ten years (Stoddard et al., 2009), largely as a result of the sharp increase in the number of NGOs (Stoddard et al., 2006; ALNAP, 2010).⁷ The sheer number of humanitarian actors, with different mandates and agendas and different levels of professionalism, expertise and resources, presents a major challenge to operational coordination, as does the presence of multi-mandate organisations like UNICEF and WFP, which often pursue both humanitarian and development objectives in the same context. Likewise, the scope of activities undertaken by humanitarian organisations has expanded, and many are moving beyond the objective of saving lives to addressing the root causes of conflict and instability (Macrae and Harmer, 2004) promoting recovery (Bailey and Pavanello, 2009) and building the ‘resilience’ of local communities to future shocks and hazards (Pain, 2012). This is problematic in a number of ways, as Hofman and Delauney (2010) assert: ‘peace and stability are no doubt noble objectives, but when aid organizations seek to transform a society by promoting the strategy of one of the belligerents in the midst of a war, they are no longer seen as impartial by all sides and subsequently lose the ability to access and provide assistance to all people in need. For this reason, it is nearly impossible for any organization to simultaneously provide humanitarian assistance while also looking for ways to resolve a conflict’.

The contradictory and often inconsistent positions adopted by many humanitarian actors are undermining the relationship

⁷ ALNAP estimates that the global INGO community is composed of about 250 organisations and multinational federations, collectively accounting for \$5.7 billion of the international humanitarian system’s expenditure and the majority of humanitarian staff in the field (ALNAP, 2010).

with the military and weakening the influence that humanitarian actors could have on their policies and practices (SCHR, 2010). The IASC for example has repeatedly reiterated the need for ‘a more coherent approach to humanitarian civil–military coordination’ (IASC Global Health Cluster, 2011: 2). The humanitarian community may agree in principle on common frameworks for interaction with military actors at the global level, and even in a given context, but adherence to these frameworks is often problematic (Bennett, 2011; Sida, 2005; Metcalfe et al., 2011). Egeland et al. (2011) explain that ‘while simultaneously calling for respect for humanitarian principles, in the recent past many humanitarian organisations have also willingly compromised a principled approach in their own conduct through close alignment with political and military activities and actors’; as Krahenbuhl (2011) argues, ‘aid agencies cannot have it both ways, asking for armed escorts to reach populations in need one day and criticising those same military forces for blurring the lines the next cannot be a solution’.

The experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan were particularly polarising for the humanitarian community, and there is much reference in the literature to the divisions that resulted from the differing positions taken towards international forces in these contexts. In Iraq, for example, ‘reflecting pre-existing differences in aid agency attitudes toward interaction with military forces, some NGOs – of all nationalities – eschewed all contact with the [US military’s Humanitarian Operations Centres] HOCs, while others welcomed it’ (Hansen, 2007: 42). In reference to Afghanistan, Donini notes that ‘UN agencies are not all immune from direct linking of military action and relief’ (Donini, 2009: 6). Some humanitarian actors acknowledge that inappropriate engagement with the military by individual humanitarian organisations has implications not just for themselves but for the wider humanitarian community operating in the same context (Hofman, 2011), since perceptions and expectations of one humanitarian actor often influence how the sector as a whole is perceived (IASC, 2004; SCHR, 2010; IASC, 2011).

2.2 Guidance on civil–military coordination

The growing complexity of operational and policy spheres and the increasing number of situations in which humanitarian and international military forces have come into physical proximity with one another has resulted in a proliferation of guidelines regulating civil–military interaction on humanitarian issues. However, the literature highlights that there has been poor adherence by humanitarian and military actors to the basic principles of existing policy and guidance. It is also apparent that existing guidance does not currently meet the demands of today’s operating environments; in particular, there are gaps relating to coordination with national militaries and private military companies, and in relation to contexts where humanitarian actors are responding to the combined impacts of natural disasters and conflict (NMCG, 2011; OCHA, 2011; IASC, 2011).

The two primary sources of (non-binding) policy and guidance are the MCDA guidelines (IASC, 2003)⁸ and the Oslo Guidelines (IASC, 2007). Both were developed in consultation with UN member states and international organisations, and were intended to establish principles and standards that would improve coordination and ensure the appropriate use of military and civil defence assets in response to natural, technological and environmental emergencies in peacetime (the Oslo guidelines)⁹ and in complex emergencies (the MCDA guidelines). In addition, both the military and the humanitarian communities have developed additional or supplementary guidance on civil–military coordination.

From the perspective of the humanitarian community the development of multiple guidelines is driven by the need to preserve humanitarian ‘space’ and define the nature and scope of interactions with the military, and the role the military can/should play in humanitarian response. However, guidance has also been intended to provide cohesion within the sector on this issue (see for example SCHR, 2010). Rana and Reber (2007) have produced the most comprehensive compilation of the various guidelines, collating them into three broad categories:

- *General guidance in matters of civil–military relations* (e.g. the IASC Reference Paper, the ICRC Code of Conduct, the Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response and the various general position papers of NGOs).
- *Guidelines on civil–military relations in a specific complex emergency* (e.g. the guidelines for Iraq and Afghanistan and for countries hosting peacekeeping missions, both from inter-governmental and non-governmental sources).
- *Guidelines on particular aspects of civil–military relations* (such as the MCDA Guidelines and the ‘Use of Military or Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys – Discussion Paper and Non-Binding Guidelines’).

Whilst the UN and the IASC have produced the widest range of guidance on civil–military coordination, a number of individual UN agencies, NGOs and other international humanitarian actors (Studer, 2001; WVI, 2008; Oxfam, 2003; Care International, 2009) and NGO consortia (including Interaction and SCHR) have also developed institutional guidance on their interaction with military actors in different contexts. Much of this guidance acknowledges that coordination is necessary to avoid duplication, identify gaps and ensure best use of available resources, whilst ensuring the safety of affected populations and humanitarian personnel (see SCHR, 2010; IASC, 2008). More recently, there has been debate on humanitarian engagement with military actors in the different

⁸ The MCDA guidelines were developed through a consultative process involving 33 UN member states, several multilateral bodies and the IASC. They were formally endorsed by the IASC in 2003.

⁹ The Oslo Guidelines were originally established in 1994 in a consultation process involving 45 states and 25 international organisations. They were updated in 2006 following a consultation process led by Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UN. See Wiharta et al., 2008.

levels of cluster coordination. The Global Health Cluster, for example, issued guidance on its engagement with military actors in early 2011 (GHC, 2011; OCHA, 2011).

Perhaps the most comprehensive inter-agency guidance for humanitarian actors remains the IASC Reference Paper on *Civil–Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies*, developed in 2004 (IASC, 2004). As Bessler and Seki (2006) explain, the Reference Paper ‘spells out a common understanding on when and how as well as how not to coordinate with the military in fulfilling humanitarian objectives. It does so by identifying fundamental principles and concepts that must be upheld when coordinating with the military and by elaborating on key practical considerations for humanitarian workers engaged in civil–military coordination’ (Bessler and Seki, 2006: 7). The Reference Paper is also seen as a generic tool designed to facilitate the formulation of country-specific guidelines (Bessler and Seki, 2006).

Although the Reference Paper recognises the role of military actors in humanitarian response, it draws a distinction between ‘humanitarian assistance’ and the provision of ‘relief’ by the military. This recognises that, in circumstances where civilian humanitarian organisations are unable to operate or where the military is an Occupying Power and assumes responsibilities for the civilian population, military support for assistance may be necessary (see also UNHCR, s.a). It also recognises the reality of the military’s employment of relief for essentially political purposes associated with state-building and other objectives. It makes clear that relief activities ‘undertaken for “political” or “military” purposes are by their nature and definition not “humanitarian”’ (Bessler and Seki, 2006: 6).

Despite the plethora of frameworks and operational guidance, there are concerns regarding the lack of adherence to the basic principles of civil–military coordination in field operations. The literature indicates that there is, to some extent, recognition by both humanitarian organisations and some states of their respective poor records of compliance with existing policy and guidance frameworks on civil–military coordination (OCHA, 2011). However, there is insufficient reflection on the degree to which the poor record of adherence by humanitarian and military actors relates to poor dissemination or training, lack of clarity in the guidance or political or other factors. From the humanitarian perspective, this lack of adherence has related in some instances to political or other pressure on humanitarian actors to use military assets or engage with military actors in a manner which may not conform with humanitarian principles, and the diversity of the humanitarian community evidently makes it difficult to reconcile competing priorities and agendas. With respect to the military, inconsistent compliance seems to be linked to a lack of awareness at various levels within governments and militaries of the international use of MCDA. The IASC for example has stated that ‘education of relevant and appropriate military commanders and staff through participation in military organised simulation exercises and conferences has

an undoubted positive effect’, although gaps remain in pre-deployment training for troops sent to international missions (IASC, 2011: 3; see also OCHA, 2011). Some humanitarian actors have cautioned that joint contingency planning may raise expectations that humanitarian actors will use military assets or will support increased coordination with the military, noting that greater clarity is required on the purpose of such processes (OCHA, 2011; SCHR, 2010). Poor compliance by states and their militaries may also relate to the tensions between the international guidelines and national political or security priorities.

In an attempt to contextualise and promote adherence to international frameworks, context-specific guidelines have been developed through a consultative process involving both military and humanitarian actors in a number of situations (OCHA, 2011; IASC, 2011). However, Egeland et al. (2011) suggest that these are not sufficient and that a more direct approach is required. They explain that ‘[l]essons from the field, particularly Afghanistan, suggest that what is really needed is practical action with a direct communications link into the operational and planning cells of the military command structure at a decision-making level. Civil–military coordination (CIMIC) bodies generally possess less influence and access. Debating guidelines and principles in civilian–military fora as a rule will not be as helpful as pushing on specific practical issues for actual access on the basis of the Geneva Conventions’ (Egeland et al., 2011: 25).

Box 3: Private military and security actors

It seems that the humanitarian community has been slow to develop guidance on interaction with private military and security actors. Guidance for NGOs developed by the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF, 2011) indicates that there has been ‘silent utilisation’ (p. 2) of private security services, and Harmer et al. (2008) suggest that ‘every major international humanitarian organization (defined as the UN humanitarian agencies and the largest international NGOs) has paid for armed security in at least one operational context’ (p. 9). However, Singer (2006) found that only three humanitarian agencies – Oxfam, Mercy Corps and the ICRC – ‘had formal documents on how their workers should relate to PMFs [Private Military Firms] and their staff’ (p.70).

Guidance on this issue is particularly important given the rapid expansion of this sector and the challenges it poses to humanitarian action. Whilst Vaux et al. (2001) identify a range of potential benefits of such engagement, they also indicate some of the negative implications, including alienation from local communities and the erosion of the ‘acceptance’ model of security. Joachim and Schneiker (2012) also caution that PMFs are using their association with humanitarian actors in an attempt to recast themselves as ‘new humanitarians’, which may lead to further blurring of the distinction between military and humanitarian actors in certain contexts.

The literature also indicates that existing policy and guidance frameworks do not sufficiently address the varying circumstances in which humanitarian and military actors are required to interact. Existing IASC guidance, for example, outlines four types of situation in which interaction between military and humanitarian actors is necessary or likely: peacetime; peacekeeping; peace enforcement; and combat (IASC, 2008: 24). But with the inclusion of enforcement provisions in the majority of UN peacekeeping mandates, the differences between ‘peacekeeping’ and ‘peace enforcement’ have eroded significantly over the past decade and it is difficult to make such clear divisions between each scenario. Similarly, the mandate and nature of an international military or peacekeeping force may change over time. In Afghanistan, for example, ISAF was initially deployed with a role akin to contemporary peacekeeping operations. As the conflict intensified, particularly after 2006, ISAF’s strategy subsequently evolved into a counter-insurgency mission and it significantly expanded its presence and operations across the country. This list of categories also omits situations of ongoing conflict, or a context of generalised violence in which a natural disaster occurs.

In addition, there is no generic guidance or policy on the relationship between national military actors and the humanitarian community, although this is often a major challenge for humanitarian actors in both complex emergencies and natural disasters. This relationship has been highly problematic in Sri Lanka, for example, where the national military ‘remains a major stakeholder in resettlement and the authorities have their own “hearts and minds” strategy tied up in resettlement processes’, and where it is not clear what role humanitarian actors are playing in this strategy (HPG, 2010: 6). As noted by the IASC, ‘[u]ncertainties of the legal basis necessary to conduct effective advocacy with the military forces to protect humanitarian space in these circumstances, as well as fear of repercussions on the organisation for engaging in such debates, make it difficult for humanitarian actors to engage in a principled manner with national military forces’ (IASC, 2011: 3). Led by OCHA, country-specific guidance has been developed in a number of instances in order to contextualise the generic policies and ensure clearer guidance for specific situations. However, the literature does not offer any analysis of the degree to which these guidelines are useful in addressing the gaps in generic guidance.

Chapter 3

Civil–military coordination and disaster response

Much of the literature specific to civil–military interaction in natural disasters focuses on ‘mega-disasters’ such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake in Pakistan and the large-scale flooding that affected the country in 2010 and 2011, and Hurricane Mitch, which devastated large parts of Central America in 1999. There is far less discussion in the literature of the challenges, lessons learnt or practice from the more regular small- to medium-scale disasters that require less or even no international response (Hofmann and Hudson, 2009; NMCG, 2011).

The literature indicates that foreign military engagement in disaster response began in earnest with the deployment of significant international military assets in support of the response to Hurricane Mitch in 1999. Twelve states of the 30 that responded contributed military support (Wiharta et al., 2008:17); in an evaluation of the US military response, the US Army Peacekeeping Institute stated that ‘complex humanitarian emergencies such as those created by Hurricane Mitch in the Central American region are likely to be harbingers of future US military operations’ (US Army Peacekeeping Institute, 1999: iv). Wiharta et al. (2008) state that the United States ‘deployed its military assets most frequently and in the greatest volume – 15 times between 2003 and 2006 for disaster relief’ (p. 12; see also Hanley, 2010), reflecting the scale of its military resources, its unmatched network of overseas military bases and its ‘explicit policy of making its forces available for international humanitarian work’ (p. x).

This trend is not limited to the United States. Wiharta et al. (2008) report that ‘European countries have deployed military assets for natural disaster responses in Africa, Central America, the Middle East and, more recently, Asia. The Netherlands, for example, reported 18 deployments between 1997 and 2006, including in Suriname and Pakistan’ (p. x). Disasters that have witnessed multiple deployments of foreign military assets include floods in Venezuela in 1999, the 1999 earthquake in Algeria, the Bam earthquake in Iran in 2003 (13 states of the 60 responding countries provided military assets) and the Yogyakarta earthquake in Indonesia in 2006 (Wiharta et al., 2008). Much of the literature indicates that such deployments are likely to be a recurring feature, and will involve Western and non-Western militaries. The US Department of Defense has declared such deployments a ‘core military mission’ (US DoD, 2010). Although the Chinese government does not currently lend many military assets to international humanitarian relief and disaster response missions, it may look to expand its involvement in the future (Thompson, 2008), and ASEAN is considering options for increased regional coordination

around the deployment of MCDA (Santosa, 2011). Inter-governmental bodies have also deployed in such contexts; the UN mission in Haiti was specifically mandated by the UN Security Council to support recovery and reconstruction efforts after the earthquake in 2010 (UN, 2010), and NATO deployed forces in support of the Hurricane Katrina response in the United States in 2005, providing relief flights, deploying a NATO Liaison Officer to Washington to work with the US Federal Emergency Management Agency and using NATO’s Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRC) to coordinate the international response (UK MoD, 2008).

The rationale for this increased engagement relates to both humanitarian and political or security priorities in states where the West already has a strategic interest: Hanley (2010) asserts that ‘the US and other governments recognise that helping hands in uniform can boost their image and security ties to stricken nations’; in relation to the Pakistan flood response in 2010, Stokes (2010) explains that ‘When the severity of the floods became clear, Western leaders saw an opportunity and began calling for stepped up aid to a country known as a “breeding ground” for terrorism as a way of helping to improve safety back home’. During a visit in August, Democrat Senator John Kerry, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee and co-author of a \$7.5 billion piece of aid legislation, promoted assistance to flood victims because ‘there is obviously a national security interest ... we don’t want additional jihadists, extremists, coming out of the crisis’ (Stokes, 2010). Experiences in Haiti, Pakistan, Myanmar and Aceh illustrate that foreign military engagement in disaster response is often determined by political objectives as much as by humanitarian needs (Hanley, 2010; NMCG, 2011). However, Lipner and Henley (2010) and Hanley (2010) argue that increased foreign military engagement in disaster management is necessary because more and more people are expected to be impacted by natural disasters: ‘the planners expect the world’s natural disasters to grow in scope and frequency, as expanding populations crowd vulnerable coastlines and quake and flood zones, and climate change threatens more extreme weather events’ (Hanley, 2010).

A number of commentators assert that the increasing engagement of foreign militaries in disaster response has further blurred the distinction between military and humanitarian spheres and competences (Donini et al., 2004; Hubert and Brassard-Boudreau, 2010). Lipner and Henley (2010) assert that whole-of-government approaches have meant that the ‘civilian face of response tends to be subsumed by the ... military face’ (Lipner and Henley, 2010: 15). However, this does not appear to have elicited a significant reaction

from humanitarian actors. Rather, SCHR states that ‘from the humanitarian perspective, organisations appear to be less inclined to advocate for their relations with the military to be guided by humanitarian principles in natural disasters as compared to situations of conflict’ (SCHR, 2010: 7), and warns that humanitarians rarely consider the longer-term consequences of the use of military assets in such contexts.

3.1 Challenges to civil–military coordination in disaster response

The literature illustrates several challenges relating to the relationship between international humanitarian and military actors that are specific to disaster response contexts. These include a lack of coordination between military and humanitarian actors at the operational level and in pre-planning and after-action reviews/evaluations, weak structures and processes to facilitate regular and appropriate interaction and substantive gaps in existing guidance on specific issues.

3.1.1 Operational coordination

Since the evaluation of the Hurricane Mitch response, the lack of effective operational coordination between military and humanitarian actors has been consistently highlighted in evaluations, news articles, reviews and other documentation. Some commentators have indicated that this relates more to the humanitarian sector itself than to its relationship with the military (Lipner and Henley, 2010). Coordination efforts during emergency responses to natural disasters appear to have been hampered by the sheer number of humanitarian organisations involved (Lipner and Henley, 2010: 7). The literature also highlights a lack of coordination amongst the many military actors involved in some disaster contexts.

These internal issues are clearly linked to ineffective coordination between the two groups. In Haiti, for example, although the 2010 earthquake response is credited with delivering a very large volume of assistance in a very difficult working environment, coordination was identified as a significant shortcoming (Grünwald and Binder, 2010; Bhattacharjee and Lossio, 2011; HPN, 2010). Coordinating such a large number of humanitarian actors was problematic, and this, combined with the negative stance of some towards the military, meant that coordination with the military was weak (Bhattacharjee and Lossio, 2011), including with the UN mission MINUSTAH. In Haiti, as elsewhere, differing positions have been particularly prominent at the operational level. It was apparent unclear how military actors should engage with the cluster system, or how OCHA and the cluster system related to the UN mission (Butterfield et al., 2010; Bhattacharjee and Lossio, 2011). In Pakistan, by contrast, the national military was closely involved in the cluster system, and ‘coordination between Pakistani civilian and military authorities and the humanitarian system was facilitated through an up-and-running cluster system in Peshawar headed by UN agencies and co-chaired by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), a body of

Box 4: Disaster response and civil–military coordination in Pakistan

Pakistan presents a particularly interesting case study because it has experienced a succession of large-scale disasters that have required both a significant humanitarian and military response. The most prominent large-scale disasters were the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and the 2010 floods, but Pakistan has been affected by regular large-scale flooding. In the 1990s, for example, floods affected more than 4 million people (EMDAT, 2003).

Coordination with the military in this context has been particularly complicated because many of the areas where these disasters have struck (e.g. Balochistan, Kashmir, the North West Frontier Province) were already affected by armed conflict or instability, with the national military both a belligerent in the conflict and the primary responder to the disaster. Given this complexity and in the absence of policy guidance on such issues, international humanitarian actors in Pakistan have often struggled to define what an appropriate level of engagement with the national military might be (see Bennett, 2011). In 2010, the Humanitarian Country Team developed civil–military coordination guidelines in an attempt to ensure a clear and consistent position with national and foreign militaries.

A further complicating factor in both the 2005 Kashmir earthquake response and the 2010 floods was the deployment of foreign military assets, including from states that are belligerents in the neighbouring conflict in Afghanistan and, in some cases, had undertaken air operations in parts of Pakistan. The humanitarian community has also struggled to take a consistent line on how to engage with these actors. Whilst there has been some reflection in the humanitarian literature on these experiences, there is little exploration of the positions that local humanitarian actors adopted with regard to engaging with the Pakistan military, despite the fact that local NGOs were very often implementing partners for UN agencies and INGOs in these disaster response situations.

the Pakistan government] agents’ (Pechayre, 2011: 10), albeit the government expressed frustration with the reluctance of some cluster members/leads to share information with the military, claiming that this hampered the response (NMDA, 2011). In general policy-level discussions, views on operational coordination continue to vary; in discussions at the NGO–Military Contact Group (NMCG) conference in October 2011, for example, many stakeholders regarded the participation of military actors in cluster meetings as an important component of coordination in disaster response (NMCG, 2011). However, this view contrasts with that of the SCHR (2010), which considers that the participation of military actors in cluster meetings is not appropriate.

The plethora of foreign military actors can also present operational challenges to engagement with the humanitarian community. In large-scale disasters such as the Indian Ocean

and Japan tsunamis, the Pakistan earthquake and floods and the Haiti earthquake multiple foreign militaries were deployed. In the Haiti earthquake response in 2010, 26 different foreign militaries deployed assets and 19 different militaries sent personnel, often with little coordination between them (NMCG, 2011: 23; IASC, 2010). For their part, the military are not always willing to coordinate with humanitarian actors in such contexts. In Haiti, the US military played a large role in the response, providing medical support, logistics and relief supplies, assisting MINUSTAH in maintaining law and order and establishing what became the largest IDP camp, Camp Corail (IASC, 2010). However, some reports indicated that the US military were initially reluctant to engage with the UN humanitarian coordination leadership and mechanisms because of security procedures and resistance to taking instructions from the UN (Hanley, 2010; Butterfield et al., 2010). Coordination was reportedly problematic, including on access for relief flights to the US military-controlled airport, until a series of *ad hoc* formal agreements were developed and a joint UN/US centre was established for the secure delivery of assistance (Hanley, 2010).

A number of commentators have also highlighted the tendency of foreign militaries and the international humanitarian community to lose sight of the central role of the national military in crisis response, especially in the Asia-Pacific region (NMCG, 2011). As Shah (2011) explains in relation to the flood response in 2010, at times the international humanitarian community was reluctant to coordinate with the Pakistani military, despite the fact that it dominated the national response and international actors had greater capacity to influence its strategies and behaviour than local actors and affected populations. Such engagement was also important because the Pakistani military played a vital role in coordinating foreign military support including US, British, NATO and Australian forces (Pechayre, 2011). Similar difficulties were highlighted during the Kashmir earthquake response in 2005, where there was an initial period during which some humanitarian actors were reluctant to coordinate with the Pakistani military. However, as Pechayre explains, most humanitarian actors eventually accepted coordination with the national military ‘pragmatically as the most effective solution to urgent needs in rescuing people, setting up extensive camps, and providing the camps with basic medical, water, sanitation, and food assistance’ (Pechayre, 2011). The Pakistan response has often been cited as an example of best practice in relation to civil–military coordination (Pechayre, 2011).

The literature indicates that the challenges in effective coordination between the international humanitarian and foreign or national military actors in disaster response in part relate to insufficiently robust coordination structures, processes and mechanisms. In Haiti, for example, UN CMCoord officers were deployed quickly by OCHA and were ‘beneficial to the overall humanitarian effort’ at the strategic level but, at the field level, they were far too few given the number of actors and were concentrated in the capital (Butterfield et

al., 2010). Butterfield et al. (2010) also stress the importance of structured coordination processes and mechanisms with dedicated capacities since ‘focused humanitarian-led direction needs to be provided to the military to ensure that they are appropriately informed as to what is required, when it is needed and how it should be utilized’. Butterfield et al. (2011) point to the Joint Operation Tasking Centre, which had been set up by OCHA and MINUSTAH in the Haiti earthquake response as a ‘clearing house’ for requests for use of military assets in the response (Butterfield et al., 2010). This contrasts with Hofmann and Hudson (2009) who argue that, in general, coordination should focus on personal relations whilst giving the outside appearance of separation.

Some of the humanitarian literature also highlights the importance of early structured engagement with the military, i.e. before a disaster strikes (NMCG, 2011; OCHA, 2011). Butterfield et al. (2010) emphasise the need to build relations, clarify roles and ensure appropriate preparations for disaster response. SCHR (2010) and Lipner and Henley (2010) both point to the importance of early engagement, arguing that cooperation in military exercises and training, for example, may raise awareness of the distinct nature of humanitarian action and preserve the integrity of humanitarian principles. There are reports that exposing military decision-makers to humanitarian concerns has a positive impact on coordination in the field, but the interactions which generate this familiarity need to be more strategic (OCHA, 2011). In reference to the Asia-Pacific Lipner and Henley (2010) recommend that ‘joint simulations and trainings in Australia and in disaster-prone regional locations, involving all key stakeholders in disaster response, should be encouraged. This also offers particular opportunity to promote best practice from a civil–military perspective’ (Lipner and Henley, 2010: 7). This recommendation is echoed by the Pakistan NDMA in its evaluation of the 2010 flood response, which called for ‘a strategic planning network on disaster management comprising all key stakeholders including Government Ministries/Departments/agencies, PDMAs, DDMAAs, military, civil response agencies ... donors, UN, humanitarian communities’ (NDMA, 2011: 6). However, such an approach to integrated or joint planning raises concerns amongst many humanitarians, as noted by SCHR (2010) (see also HPG and ICRC, 2012). In some instances, contingency planning has raised expectations amongst member states that military assets will be used (OCHA, 2011).

3.1.2 Limitations of existing guidance

Many of the problems in operational-level coordination between humanitarian actors and the military in disaster contexts are related to the fact that the current IASC guidance framework does not reflect the increasing complexity of the operating environment. As SCHR (2010: 6) asserts, the Oslo Guidelines ‘are currently the leading international instrument concerning the role of militaries in the response to natural disasters’, but they ‘provide no guidance on relations with the host state military despite this being one of the most problematic areas

in terms of military-humanitarian relationships, particularly if the disaster accompanies a conflict in which the domestic military are a party' (SCHR, 2010: 7; see also IASC, 2011). This is a major omission given that the national military are very often the first responders in a disaster, as in the Indian Ocean tsunami, landslides in Nepal and the Sichuan earthquake (Hoyer, 2009).

The relationship between national military and international humanitarian actors was a particularly crucial issue in the Pakistan flood response, where there were evident tensions between the international humanitarian community and the national authorities, who argued that the UN 'intervened against the knowledge of the government' in relation to the NATO air bridge (see below), launched the Pakistan Floods Relief and Early Recovery Response Plan 'without the sign-off of the GoP' and resisted the government's directive to conclude the relief phase on 31 January 2011 (NDMA, 2011: 3). The government view contrasts with that of the IASC, however, which asserts that the 'previously agreed and extant guidance by the HCT' was followed, and there was 'appropriate and selective use of national military assets, and despite political pressure from Member States, the HCT agreed that use of the NATO offered air-bridge was not necessary due to adequate, existing and available resources' (IASC, 2011: 3).

The Oslo Guidelines also fail to provide for how the relationship between international military and humanitarian actors may change when undertaking disaster response activities in situations of ongoing armed conflict, generalised violence or political instability (see for example NMCG, 2011; OCHA, 2011). Neither the MCDA Guidelines nor the Oslo guidelines offer practical help on how the relationship should function in situations where these factors overlap. For example, between 2001 and 2003 US combat forces in Afghanistan were deployed under Operation Enduring Freedom whilst more conventional peace support forces were deployed under the UN-authorized ISAF framework. Both forces were engaged in responding to the earthquake in the north of the country during that period. In northern Uganda, the US regional command, AFRICOM, and the Ugandan People's Defence Force both operated in highly volatile, conflict-prone areas subject to droughts, landslides and floods. Whilst humanitarian policy frameworks are still struggling with these issues, some military actors have sought to provide guidance on their engagement in disaster response in such contexts. For example, in Afghanistan ISAF has recently developed, in consultation with OCHA, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outlining the circumstances under which it would support disaster response (ISAF, 2011; OCHA, 2011) (see Box 3). The UK MoD's operational-level doctrine (JDP 3-52) on disaster relief operations also acknowledges that disasters may occur in regions in conflict. However, this is discussed in relation to providing safety and security for military actors when providing humanitarian assistance. While the document recognises the concerns humanitarian

Box 5: Natural disaster response in conflict-affected areas: the case of ISAF SOPs

The ISAF Standard Operating Procedures HQ-00310 describe how ISAF should relate to the international humanitarian community, the ICRC, the Afghan government and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). It specifies that: 'All requests for ISAF assistance, whether originating in one of the regional commands or in Kabul, should be directed to HQ ISAF. HQ ISAF *will coordinate with OCHA* [emphasis added] and the embassy of the donor country whose troops will be employed ... Regardless of the origin of the request, ISAF will ensure the requirements have been defined by the IHC and GIRoA [Afghan government] and the mission is appropriately scaled and non-duplicative'. The document sets out key principles for engagement in disaster response.

- It clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the different actors involved in a disaster relief response, further explaining the concept of 'last resort' in relation to these roles.
- It clearly establishes that the standard procedure is that ISAF will wait for a request for assistance from the international humanitarian community or the Afghan government.
- In the event that the request comes from the government, the document states that ISAF's response will be coordinated with OCHA.
- It states that ISAF's response will only last as long as it continues to fulfil 'a unique capacity'.

The document also explains that humanitarians will treat Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) as they do the military. The document is unclassified, thereby making ISAF's procedures transparent.

organisations may have regarding coordination with the military in disaster contexts, pre-existing conflict is not identified as posing a heightened challenge to coordination with humanitarian actors (UK MoD, 2008).

As discussed earlier, one of the key principles in existing guidance is that of 'last resort'. Whilst this principle applies to all contexts, much of the literature focuses predominantly on disaster response (NMCG, 2011). In Haiti, Bhattacharjee and Lossio (2011) assert that humanitarian actors had different understandings of the principle of last resort, and the IASC explains that decisions on the use of foreign military assets were 'protracted and convoluted, and by no means uniform in its application ... [and this] resulted in the majority of deployed military assets being employed without reference to humanitarian coordination structures, with both incumbent peacekeeping forces and a vast amount of foreign military and civil defense assets being either not used, or used

in an inefficient and ineffective manner’ (IASC, 2011: 2). The IASC concluded that this related in part to the lack of context-specific guidance on the use of MCDA (IASC, 2011). Such guidance was developed in Pakistan, but there were still problems in implementation. As Bennett explains, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) had developed an agreed framework for determining the application of the last resort principle, including outlining five key criteria against which to assess requests to use military assets in the flood response:

- Use of the asset is based solely on humanitarian criteria.
- It is a last resort, when a highly vulnerable population cannot be assisted or reached by any other means and there is no appropriate civilian alternative.
- The urgency of the task at hand demands immediate action.
- Use of the asset is clearly limited in time and scale.
- Use of the asset is approved by the HCT (Bennett, 2011).

Although this framework was a useful tool in decision-making, there were different positions within the HCT on the use of NATO air assets to bring in relief supplies from outside the country; although the HCT had agreed that this did not fulfil the above criteria, at least two UN agencies used the air bridge. The Pakistani military and NATO states, including those who were also humanitarian donors, felt that the HCT position on the air bridge was contradictory given that it had agreed to use Pakistani military assets (Bennett, 2011). In this instance, the NDMA considered that the ‘UN had overstepped their mandate in not respecting the wishes of the Government’ (NDMA, 2011: 3).

From the military perspective problems relating to implementation of the principle of last resort arguably relate to the failure of some states to adequately translate the guidelines into policy and doctrine. Wiharta et al. explain that ‘Governments interpret the Oslo Guidelines, particularly the “last resort” principle, differently. They also apply the Oslo Guidelines in different ways and to different degrees during

their decision-making on deployment of military assets in disaster response situations. For example, Canada and the UK have created their own national guidelines based on the Oslo Guidelines. Germany has no SOP or interdepartmental agreements applicable to the deployment of military assets in IDRA; and instead decisions are made on an ad hoc basis using the Oslo Guidelines’ (Wiharta et al., 2008: 20). Rana and Reber (2007) go on to suggest that the ‘Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery’¹⁰ weaken the last resort concept since they state that ‘military assets should be deployed for disaster relief or initial recovery assistance only at the request of and with the express consent of the affected State, after comparable civilian alternatives have been considered’.

The implementation of the last resort principle is also complicated by the mechanisms employed by the UN to trigger the deployment of military assets in support of disaster relief. In theory, upon the request of a disaster-affected state an UNDAC team should be deployed and should conduct an initial needs assessment ‘in cooperation with the government of the country and the Humanitarian Coordinator or Resident Coordinator. If it is deemed necessary and appropriate – in accordance with the Oslo Guidelines – targeted requests for military assets should then be transmitted to countries that have the required assets available’ (Wiharta et al., 2008:17). However, UN agencies and other organisations routinely choose alternative means for channelling military assets, and the MCDA register of military assets available for disaster relief is based on the assumption that military assets will remain dedicated to the register above other priorities associated with national defence. Hanley (2010) states that the US had not placed any assets on the register and that the system had ‘faltered’. More recently, the MCDA Directory, as part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, has been discontinued (UN, 2011). The Oslo Guidelines have not yet been updated to reflect this.

¹⁰ Also known as the ‘IDRL Guidelines’, they were adopted at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 2007.

Chapter 4

Civil–military coordination and the protection of civilians

Over recent decades, the concept of the protection of civilians in armed conflict has evolved significantly, largely in line with the changing nature, location and scope of war. As De Rover (1999) argues, there has been a reduction in the number of international armed conflicts and a contrary increase in internal armed conflicts. At the same time the nature of combatants has changed, with a shift from conflict between regular armed forces to conflict between irregular armed groups, individuals, police and security actors. There has also been a shift in the location of the battlefield to urban centres. Experiences in the Balkans, Rwanda, Darfur and Libya have shown that protection threats are complex and dynamic, and no one actor can mitigate them (HPG and ICRC, 2012). There is a significant literature on the issue of protection of civilians, including on the evolution of this legal concept and the different roles of international military actors (including UN peacekeeping forces and other international coalition forces deployed under UN Security

Council mandates) and humanitarian actors in protecting civilians. However, as Lilly notes there is very limited analysis of the interaction between these two groups (Lilly, 2010).

4.1 Conceptual evolution

There appears to be consensus in the literature that protecting civilians means mitigating or reducing the threats facing them in armed conflict or other situations of violence (see for example O’Callaghan and Pantuliano, 2007), and both military and humanitarian actors acknowledge that they each have an important contribution to make in this regard (Lilly, 2010; HPG and ICRC, 2012). However, whilst both sets of actors commonly work towards the same goal or objective (i.e. reducing threats to civilians), their tactics and strategies are quite different (see Table 1). This makes a common conceptual understanding difficult to achieve.

Table 1: Humanitarian and military approaches to protection of civilians (taken from HPG and ICRC, 2012)

	Humanitarian actors		Military actors		
Conceptual understanding	Core protection activities/ protection as a sector	Mainstreaming protection (safe programming, do no harm)	Protecting by respecting rules	Implementing protection activities (e.g. as an external peacekeeping/ mandated force)	
			Code of conduct (individual behaviour, not directly related to use of force) Respect for protective norms while using force (IHL, refugee law)	Enhancing PoC; addressing external threats	
Approach/means of implementation	Non-coercive: depends on mandate and context, includes the five modes common to humanitarian action: denunciation, mobilisation, persuasion, support and substitution. Can take the form of legal assistance, material assistance, advocacy, training and public outreach.		Coercive: dependent on mandate and resources, includes patrols, manoeuvres, kinetic engagement		
	Stand-alone protection programmes	Integrating protection objectives in existing programmes	Training, coaching	Offensive: proactively search out threats with aim of defeating belligerent	Responsive: presence of force as deterrent, or defensive action
Rationale for PoC	Organisation mandated for protection with a specific role and accountability (status determination for refugees; visits to PoWs) Humanitarian imperative: protection as key priority to be addressed		Legal obligation: compliance with IHL, refugee law, IHRL	Tactical: component of counter-insurgency, stabilisation/ integration approach/ protection as a subsidiary objective	Mandated responsibility (e.g. UNSC Resolution)

With respect to the military, the concept of protection of civilians in armed conflict is perhaps most closely associated with the UN system. Protection of civilians has been formally considered as a thematic issue by the UN Security Council since 1999, when the Council noted that ‘large-scale human suffering is both a consequence of and a contributing factor to instability and further conflict, and bearing in mind its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council affirmed the need for the international community to assist and protect civilians affected by conflict’ (UN, 2009a: para 7). Since then the concept has evolved significantly within the UN system, and has also gained prominence in policy debates within regional organisations such as NATO, the African Union and the European Union, and in individual states (see for example Holt et al., 2009; Lie, 2008). The concept has taken on a multi-dimensional meaning, involving a range of spheres of action including political, military and peacekeeping, human rights, security and humanitarian assistance.

4.1.1 Protection as a humanitarian objective: policy and practice

For the humanitarian community, the clearest definition of protection was developed in the 1990s through a series of workshops held by the ICRC. Adopted by the IASC in 2001 and endorsed again in 2006 by the IASC Protection Cluster in its mission statement (PCWG, 2007), the definition of protection is as follows: ‘all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. Human rights and humanitarian actors shall conduct these activities impartially and not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language or gender’ (ICRC, 2009).

Over the last two decades, the humanitarian community has shifted significantly in its understanding and operationalisation of this concept. This change is manifested in the increasing number of actors engaging in ‘humanitarian’ protection activities, with the ICRC and UNHCR joined by a number of UN specialised agencies, including UNICEF and OHCHR, as well as a growing number of NGOs engaging in protection programming. In addition, there has been a significant expansion in the scope of humanitarian protection activities and programmes. As O’Callaghan and Pantuliano (2007) explain, ‘no longer primarily related to refugees and civilians and ex-combatants in conflict, protection now includes people displaced as a consequence of all forms of disaster, as well as broader at-risk populations’. Humanitarian organisations have increasingly incorporated protection elements into their natural disaster programming, as well as conflict-related work. As a result, over the last two decades there has been a major effort to develop policy and guidance on how humanitarian actors can contribute to enhanced protection of civilians (see for example ICRC, 2001; Slim and Bonwick, 2005; Mahoney, 2006; ICRC, 2009) and, under the Humanitarian Reform agenda, increased efforts to ensure more effective

Box 6: The ‘Protection of Civilians’ and the ‘Responsibility to Protect’

The literature suggests that the protection of civilians has ‘become deeply associated with the “Responsibility to Protect (R2P)”’ (de Coning et al., 2008: 5), and that this is a serious concern for many humanitarian actors. Whilst these two concepts share some common elements, including requiring states to uphold their legal obligations to protect civilians as provided for in international law, there are some important differences in their scope and applicability and in how they are implemented. The ‘responsibility to protect’ is a political concept that was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in the World Summit Outcome Document (UN, 2005a). The concept is based on three pillars:

- The responsibility of the state to protect its citizens.
- The obligation of the international community to assist states in this regard.
- The obligation of the international community to intervene to protect civilians from international crimes, if the state fails or is unwilling to do so (UN, 2009).

In terms of scope, this concept differs from the ‘protection of civilians’ in that it is limited to the most serious international crimes, namely genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, as defined in international law. The protection of civilians, as understood in the UN system and by other international organisations, including the ICRC, has a much wider agenda. It refers to a range of threats facing civilian populations, including, but not limited to, physical violence (Blatter, 2011). The ‘responsibility to protect’ is also not limited to situations of armed conflict, unlike the ‘protection of civilians’ concept. Finally, though not ‘an automatic licence for military intervention’ (Paris, 2012), the ‘responsibility to protect’ has developed strong military connotations (Lie, 2008; de Waal, 2012). In contrast, the ‘protection of civilians’ concept has included a range of responses including political, diplomatic, military/peacekeeping, humanitarian and human rights action.

coordination of the protection response by the humanitarian community. Concerns have been expressed however regarding the quality and objectives of protection programming by humanitarian actors (see Pantuliano and O’Callaghan, 2006; Du Bois, 2010).

Two distinct areas of humanitarian protection work have emerged. The first relates to dedicated or specialised protection programmes, which the Global Protection Cluster has categorised into thematic areas including child protection, mine action, housing, land and property rights, rule of law and justice and gender-based violence.¹¹ The second area relates to the integration of protection concerns into humanitarian programmes to ensure that humanitarian activities do not expose civilians to

¹¹ For more information see www.onerresponse.info/globalclusters/protection.

greater risk of physical or other abuse (see for example Slim and Bonwick, 2005; ICRC, 2009; HPG and ICRC, 2012).

4.1.2 Protection as a military objective: doctrine and practice
Broadly speaking, military doctrines have tended to touch on protection in a piecemeal fashion. Military forces are obliged to draw distinctions between combatants and military objectives and civilians and civil objects (Beadle, 2010). Protection is also a routine component of counter-insurgency strategies, particularly separating civilian populations from insurgents and creating conditions for the extension of government and economic growth. As Gordon explains, it also features as part of stabilisation doctrine in relation to the extension of host nation governance and the protection of key individuals and institutions (Gordon, 2010). However, whilst the literature indicates that most counter-insurgency or stabilisation doctrines include elements of a protection of civilians strategy, there is little guidance on how this translates into broader doctrine. As a result, it is difficult to crystallise the concept into a coherent framework that can be readily understood by soldiers and politicians alike. Whilst the European Union and the African Union have begun to address this doctrinal gap in their peace support operations (see Durch and Giffen, 2010), the literature largely relates to policy and operational developments within the UN and NATO.

UN peacekeeping

Since the 1990s, the UN Security Council has increasingly mandated UN peacekeeping missions to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, and the language of ‘civilian protection’ is now included in the majority of peacekeeping mandates.¹² As Holt and Berkman (2006) assert, this represents a fundamental shift in approach, since historically the UN Security Council, even in the course of enforcement action, has generally sought to end wars or force compliance with a political objective, rather than intervening directly to protect civilians. However, protection of civilians has increasingly been seen as central to UN peacekeeping mandates because the ‘safety and security of civilians is critical to the legitimacy and credibility of peacekeeping missions (Holt et al., 2009: 3). Blatter (2011) suggests that the protection of civilians is a prerequisite for establishing an enduring peace settlement.

The first UN Security Council resolution giving peacekeepers a protection responsibility was Resolution 1270 (UN, 1999), which authorised peacekeepers in Sierra Leone to use force to protect civilians ‘under imminent threat’ of physical violence. In 2006, the Council passed Resolution 1674 ‘committing it to

¹² UN-led missions that have been mandated to include civilian protection elements include UNAMSIL in UNSCR 1270 (1999), MONUC in UNSCR 1291 (2000); UNMIL in UNSCR 1509 (2003), UNOCI in UNSCR 1528 (2004), MINUSTAH in UNSCR 1542 (2004), ONUB in UNSCR 1545 (2004), UNMIS in UNSCR 1590 (2005), UNIFIL in UNSCR 1701 (2006), UNAMID in UNSCR 1769 (2007), and MINURCAT in UNSCR 1778 (2007). Currently active missions with a protection of civilians component include Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), Darfur (UNAMID), DRC (MONUSCO), Haiti (MINSUTAH), Lebanon (UNIFIL), Liberia (UNMIL) and Sudan (UNMIS).

take action to protect civilians in armed conflict’ (UN, 2006). It also established civilian protection elements in the mandates of specific missions, including MONUSCO, UNAMID and UNMISS. Gradually the ‘emphasis on civilian protection has increased and become a frequent staple for UN peacekeeping operations’ (Blatter, 2011: 2), and in some instances a discrete aim in itself (Lilly, 2010).

With these normative developments, however, has come a raft of political and operational obstacles to the effective implementation of protection mandates by UN peacekeeping operations. Under-resourcing, insufficient troop numbers, weak transport and logistics infrastructure and competing demands and priorities have all presented operational challenges; according to DPKO: ‘the scale and complexity of peacekeeping today are mismatched with existing capabilities. The demands of the past decade have exposed the limitations of past reforms and the basic systems, structures and tools of an organization not designed for the size, tempo and tasks of today’s missions’ (UN DPKO/DFS, 2009: iii). The DPKO- and OCHA-commissioned study *Protecting Civilians in the Context of Peacekeeping: Success, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges* highlighted major weaknesses, concluding that the ‘presumed chain of events to support protection of civilians – from the earliest planning, to Security Council mandates to the implementation of mandates by peacekeeping missions in the field – is broken’ (Holt et al., 2009: 5).

One of the primary obstacles to providing protection for civilian populations highlighted in the literature is the inability to define ‘the objective in terms that military personnel recognize and can take action to support’ (Holt et al., 2010: 201; see also Beadle, 2010). The first significant document to describe protection in operational terms was the UN’s Capstone Doctrine (UN DPKO/DFS, 2008). However, Holt et al. (2009) criticise it for failing to provide an operational definition around which planning for specific missions could take place – reflecting both the difficulty involved in producing a clear definition of protection and the absence of consensus on what the term means in practice. Giffen (2010) argues that existing doctrines have simply ‘fallen short in providing guidance on *how* to go about *protecting civilians*, leaving it to those planning and implementing such operations to develop the conceptual approaches required to turn ambition into reality as they go’ (Giffen, 2010: 7). The drafters of Security Council Resolution 1894 (UN, 2009b) tried to remedy precisely this issue by requesting the Secretary-General ‘to develop in close consultation with Member States including troop and police contributing countries and other relevant actors, an operational concept for the protection of civilians, and to report back on progress made’.

The DPKO concept of operations, developed in 2010, states that ‘perhaps the single largest contribution a mission can make is to protect civilians’ (UN DPKO/DFS, 2010: 18). It outlines three tiers of action:

- Tier 1: Protection through political processes.
- Tier 2: Providing protection from physical violence.
- Tier 3: Establishing a protective environment.

The concept explains that that the DPKO approach ‘goes beyond the domain of physical protection from imminent threat’, encouraging a multi-disciplinary approach to planning and delivery that enables the three tiers to be mutually reinforcing and ‘taken forward simultaneously’. The DPKO concept represents a major step forward. However, as Giffen (2011) notes, several issues still require clarification. The drafters do not offer a definitive definition of the concept, largely because of the political sensitivities involved. In addition, the document does not offer guidance on how to approach decisions that require a balancing of competing priorities. Whilst undoubtedly a pragmatic response to the practical and political challenges involved, these ‘grey areas have been raised by practitioners as some of the most difficult to tackle in theatre, and as such would need further clarification’ (Giffen, 2011: 8). Weir (2010) cautions that there remains a significant gap between what is expected of UN peacekeeping forces and what they are able to deliver: ‘these efforts will show no results if peacekeepers are left blind, overstretched, and immobile. Peacekeeping missions routinely operate with a shortage of troops, civilian staff and equipment in some of the most insecure and logistically challenging environments in the world’.

NATO

NATO doctrine tends to treat protection of civilians as an implicit product of the restraint of arms carriers, rather than as a discrete approach in its own right, reflecting NATO’s historical role in defending national territories rather than protecting foreign individuals, and national political cultures that regard the protection of civilian populations as primarily the responsibility of the governments of the states concerned. In this approach the principles of distinction (particularly drawing distinctions between military targets and civilian persons or objects) and proportionality (limiting the collateral damage entailed in attacking military objectives) are rooted in an assumption that warfare is about compelling enemy combatants to submit, and that targeting civilians has little strategic value (Bruderlein and Leaning, 1999). It is also based on a belief that states will hold their armed forces to account. In this sense NATO doctrines have been sufficient for a non-interventionist Cold War territorial alliance but have clearly been stretched by operations in Afghanistan and Libya.

Whilst not treated as a discrete topic, some components of protection, such as the restoration of law and order, protection of humanitarian organisations, the creation of a safe and secure environment, freedom of movement and the preservation of basic human rights, are included in other NATO doctrine. For example, AJP-3.4(A), *Allied Joint Doctrine For Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations*, makes brief references to supporting the rule of law as a specific

potential mission, albeit only in ‘exceptional circumstances’ (NATO, 2010: para 304). Largely as a response to the broader challenges encountered in Afghanistan, NATO published its Bi-SC Counter-Insurgency Joint Operational Guidelines (JOG) in May 2010. As Beadle (2010) explains, these guidelines include the traditional emphasis on securing the population from insurgents and a recognition that ‘early provision of basic protection is a key determinant for sustainable progress because political progress is unlikely to take place in the midst of chronic human insecurity’. JOG provides some detail on possible protection tasks, such as ‘protecting civilians from local bandits in refugee camps, escorting humanitarian convoys, patrolling in villages, and the importance of protecting civilians from attacks at night’ (NATO, 2010a: paras 513–15).

National doctrine and protection of civilians

A number of states contributing to international military deployments through the UN or NATO have also included the concept of protection in national doctrine or policy. The United States and Britain are the most advanced in translating the concept into an operational or tactical task. In 2006, the US released its *Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3–24* (US DoD, 2006). This was one of the earliest doctrinal adaptations to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Its influence was felt beyond the US military, being unofficially adopted as the NATO counter-insurgency doctrine. It broke with the US military’s preoccupation with the decisive use of military force, stressing instead a ‘population-centric approach’ that reframed counter-insurgency war as ‘a struggle for the population’s support’ with the ‘protection, welfare, and support of the people’ being ‘vital to success’.

In 2009, the UK military produced its equivalent of FM 3-24, *Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40: Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution* (UK MoD, 2009). This borrowed heavily from US thinking but also sought to bring in the UK’s broader experience with a more civilian-oriented approach to ‘stabilisation’. Whilst both FM 3-24 and JDP 3-40 stressed the need to win the support of the population, Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 3-40 went further in its emphasis on human security as one of the keys to the consolidation of military success and a prerequisite for economic and political progress. Unlike many of the other doctrinal developments of the early part of the decade, JDP 3-40 provides a range of techniques for implementing such a strategy, including static protection of key sites, such as marketplaces and refugee camps, patrolling and checkpoints, targeted action against adversaries, e.g. search or strike operations, and population control, e.g. curfews and vehicle restrictions (UK MoD, 2009, para 515).

The UK’s peacekeeping doctrine also makes several valuable contributions to the elaboration of a civilian protection strategy (UK MoD, 2011: paras 406–407). In particular:

The military contribution to protecting civilians from physical violence is an integral part of an overall

solution to protect civilians and therefore must be integrated with the overarching civilian-led planning process. It is essential that this integration takes place from the outset of planning activity to incorporate and recognise different actors' operating cultures, capabilities and constraints (para 407).

The doctrine also picks up a number of traditional themes: the importance of understanding the political context; the challenge of 'positioning' in relation to potential and actual spoilers; and difficulties in maintaining impartiality in the use of force. Whilst the doctrine identifies the challenges in establishing a concept of operations for civilian protection, it provides little advice on what approaches might prove useful in resolving these issues. Perhaps most significant is its suggestion that the UK may distinguish between protecting civilians in peacekeeping operations and the approach it has adopted in a counter-insurgency environment such as Afghanistan. Whereas the 'purpose of protecting civilians in a counter-insurgency environment may be to reduce local support for the insurgent, in peacekeeping it is based on the moral imperative of protecting human rights and to help restore confidence in the overall peace process' (UK MoD, 2011: para 408). The doctrine explicitly suggests that approaches currently being employed by NATO forces in Afghanistan 'may be inappropriate for a peacekeeping mission' (UK MoD, 2009: para 406). It is questionable whether this distinction is sustainable – or even desirable – in practice. It implies that civilian protection is more a moral than a pragmatic response, whereas significant elements of the peacekeeping literature stress both the moral component of civilian protection and its practical significance in building the legitimacy of peacekeeping deployments and the political sustainability of a peace process.

Not all the work on elaborating the concept of protection has been conducted by the military or by traditional humanitarian actors. For example, Sewall et al. (2010) have produced the *Mass Atrocity Response Operations* (MARO) handbook, which explores conceptual approaches to atrocity situations and military planning, as well as discussing areas for future research and operationalisation. It also provides a range of practical approaches spanning preventive action, intervention and reconstruction. The document is essentially a practical guide for policy-makers and military commanders, while also serving a political purpose within the US security establishment, where civilian protection generally tends to be viewed as a problem of political engagement rather than an issue that requires a military, doctrinal response. Echoing the approach of the DPKO/DFS, Sewall et al. (2010) advocate translating the 'MARO' concept into 'military doctrine and training in order to provide guidance on genocide prevention and response. While the context of each mass atrocity may be different, there are some common themes that have important implications for operational and political planning for intervention' (Sewall et al., 2010: 43).

4.2 International civilian police and protection of civilians

One of the key issues not adequately covered in the literature concerns the role of international police deployments in protecting civilians, and their interaction with humanitarian actors in this regard. What literature does exist is focused on the protection role of UN Police. In the last decade the demand for policing in conflict prevention missions and post-conflict settings has increased dramatically. Though not widely used before the 1990s, UN CivPol are now an integral part of the UN's largest peacekeeping operations. As of February 2011, the UN was authorised to deploy 17,300 police officers – the highest number ever (Challenges Forum, 2011). These deployments have expanded both in size and frequency, and in relation to the mandates and tasks conferred on them. Not all international police deployments are under UN mandates. NATO, for example, has deployed police forces in Kosovo and Bosnia, and there are currently 40 NATO-ISAF teams operating in Afghanistan. The EU, for its part, has deployed police missions in several Eastern European states and in the DRC and Afghanistan (see HPG and ECHO, 2012).

The rise of policing in UN peacekeeping operations is driven by a recognition of the need to support restoration of the rule of law in the type of fragile conflict-affected situations in which many peacekeeping missions operate. As Durch and England (2011: xii) explain: 'Dysfunctional or abusive local police forces pose dire risks to fragile peace processes, undermining public confidence in nascent governments, and increasing the likelihood of renewed conflict'. International police contingents are therefore seen as playing an important role in state-building through supporting law and order, for which military actors are ill-suited (Serafino, 2004). Rotmann (2009) also asserts that they are a key component of stabilisation strategies. However, the literature illustrates that there is currently little doctrine or policy guidance detailing what and how international police can contribute to the protection of civilians. Hunt (2008) suggests that development of guidance or doctrine would be 'invaluable for understanding what they can and cannot be expected to contribute under a protection mandate. It should be an on-going objective to ensure that developments in the operational procedures of military, police and civilians feed into cross-cutting coordination policy of inter-agency arrangements and multifunctional organisations such as the UN'. The United Nations Civilian Police Principles and Guidelines (2000) is the first formal statement of doctrine for UN police, but it has been criticised for being abstract and is not well known outside UN headquarters. As a result it has not been implemented (Rotmann, 2009). DPKO's New Horizon report also identified gaps in the police contribution to peacekeeping, and Giffen (2011: 9) explains that DPKO has subsequently worked with INTERPOL to develop a joint plan 'to raise awareness and understanding of international police peacekeeping and its challenges and to enhance international support therein'.

More progress has been made with respect to training. A pre-deployment training curriculum for all UNPOL personnel was developed in 2009 ('UN Peacekeeping Training Standards for Pre-deployment Training of UN Police Officers'), and a standardised Formal Police Unit (FPU) curriculum was due to be finalised in 2011, along with a Training of Trainers programme and Mobile Training Units for corrective training in ongoing missions (Greener, 2011; Hansen, 2011). Training is considered crucial to equip forces to operate with 'great responsibility in unstructured, dangerous, and highly politicized environments that are often characterized by conflicting guidance and limited or nonexistent judicial systems' (Schoenhaus, 2002: 7). It is also intended to even out differences between national police forces, and raise policing standards in contributing countries (Greener, 2011).

4.3 Challenges to civil–military coordination on the protection of civilians

The literature indicates that there is broad recognition of the need for more complementary approaches to protecting civilians, as well as steps to ensure that the contributions different international actors can make have maximum effect (HPG and UNHCR, 2011; HPG and ICRC, 2012). However, despite doctrinal and policy developments aimed at elaborating the concept of protection and the differing roles of international military and humanitarian actors in achieving protection objectives, the literature also demonstrates that there remain key challenges to ensuring a coherent and mutually reinforcing response from international military and humanitarian actors. These challenges relate to the differing priority afforded to protection objectives by humanitarians and the military, and the lack of clear guidance on minimum levels of interaction on protection issues.

There are areas of convergence in the understanding of protection between military and humanitarian actors (HPG and ICRC, 2012). For example, DPKO's approach has clear synergies with the three levels of responsive, remedial and environment-building protection activities that the ICRC developed in the 1990s, and which much of the humanitarian community has subsequently adopted (see ICRC, 2001). There is agreement between both sets of actors on the need for preventive action to protect civilians under imminent threat, and to support the creation of an environment where threats are reduced and the security and welfare of civilians is respected (HPG and UNHCR, 2011; HPG and ICRC, 2012). However, there are often fundamental differences in the way in which different international actors prioritise their efforts to provide protection, and the tactics or activities they use.

Some humanitarian actors are concerned that the desire of some states and multilateral bodies, including the UN, for more 'integrated' or 'comprehensive' approaches is problematic because it further blurs the distinction between military and humanitarian action. Although some have argued that protection is, to an extent, a shared objective between military and

humanitarian actors, particularly in the UN context (Wheeler and Harmer, 2006; Metcalfe et al., 2011), others have cautioned that the expanding responsibilities assumed by foreign military and peacekeeping forces potentially create 'new areas where the lines between humanitarian and military [action] are blurred.' (SCHR, 2010: 6). These concerns relate to the fact that humanitarian actors consider protection as a primary objective, whereas military actors, particularly those operating within a stabilisation strategy, often view it as a secondary objective that contributes to more important security or political aims (HPG and UNHCR, 2011). Humanitarian actors are also concerned about the impact of coercive military tactics on their operations. At the same time, however, there is a recognition that the 'non-coercive' actions humanitarians can take may have more limited impact (HPG and ICRC, 2012).

There is currently little guidance for either military or humanitarian actors on how they should interact in relation to protection of civilians. However, the literature does provide some reflections on how this interaction has taken place in practice and to what effect, particularly in respect of coordination structures and information-sharing. In particular, there is no guidance or documented experience on how humanitarians do or should interact with international police. World Vision International found that its staff interacted with police (domestic and international) more frequently than any other security actors, including private security firms (Thompson, 2008). Although positive experiences of the police contribution to protection of civilians are emerging from places such as Darfur, there is much more to be learned about how humanitarians and the police can share analysis of threats and otherwise coordinate for better protection outcomes (see HPG and ECHO, 2012).

With respect to the African Union Mission in Darfur, Pantuliano and O'Callaghan (2006) assert that there were missed opportunities for strategic engagement between the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and the humanitarian protection actors operating in Darfur in 2004–2006. AMIS, they explain, was often inconsistent in its engagement with the protection working groups established by the humanitarian community, failing to follow up on agreed actions including sharing information on protection threats: 'the lack of a system for coordination has meant that liaison between humanitarian and AU personnel has been largely sporadic and dependent on individuals', even if 'responsibility for any failings should not be pinned on the AU alone' (Pantuliano and O'Callaghan, 2006: 26).

There are also positive examples of interaction. In the DRC a more structured approach to coordination on protection has been put in place by MONUC/MONUSCO. DPKO and DFS explain that there was 'an established pattern in MONUC of civil-military cooperation and a "joint protection" concept in operation since at least 2006' (UN DPKO/DFS, 2010: 13). Metcalfe et al. (2011) assert that 'formalised integrated protection mechanisms' had been useful and that 'the UN

humanitarian agencies and their partners ... generally felt that they were able to influence the way that MONUSCO prioritised its military and political capacities in support of protection of civilians in parts of Eastern DRC' (Metcalfe et al., 2011: 35). More broadly, Macdermott and Hanssen (2010) assert that the engagement between MONUC/MONUSCO and the protection cluster increased 'familiarization and develop[ed] an understanding of each other's approaches to protection of civilians and conditions for coordination' (Macdermott and Hanssen, 2010: 41). In consultation with humanitarian actors DPKO has also developed guidance on drafting comprehensive protection strategies. This states that the mission should engage humanitarian actors in developing a common analysis of protection threats in the mission area and outline respective roles and responsibilities and coordination mechanisms (UN DPKO/DFS, 2011). In Afghanistan, the consistent engagement of humanitarian and civil society actors with ISAF on its protection responsibilities has resulted in a significant shift in policy and improved practice in protecting civilians (Metcalfe et al., 2011). As reported in an HPG and UNHCR roundtable in March 2011, this engagement 'has also influenced policy and practice on other issues such as detention, compensation and situation analysis' (HPG and UNHCR, 2011: 6).

Despite improvements in coordination efforts, information-sharing remains a challenge. Many NGOs are reluctant to share protection-related information with military actors, including UN peacekeeping forces, for fear that it will be used to further a military objective (see for example NRC, 2011; Metcalfe et al., 2011; HPG and ICRC, 2012). Concerns regarding information-sharing have resulted in inconsistent positions on the engagement of military actors in protection cluster discussions and other coordination structures. In Darfur in 2005–2006 AMIS was allowed to participate in the protection working group, and in DRC the Senior Protection Policy Group involves all the components of the UN mission (including the military), as well as OCHA and UNHCR (Metcalfe et al., 2011). However, many NGOs apparently oppose military participation in humanitarian protection coordination fora and may start to withdraw from coordination mechanisms as a result (NRC, 2011: 6). Although there is guidance on sharing protection information with other actors (see ICRC, 2009; HPG and ICRC, 2012), there is currently little on the interaction between the military and humanitarian actors more broadly (HPG and ICRC, 2012). The global protection cluster is reportedly developing guidance in relation to engagement with UN peacekeeping missions (Metcalfe et al., 2011).

Chapter 5

Conclusions

In many of the most difficult operating environments, the relationship between humanitarian and military actors has been fraught and unconstructive. The literature suggests that this is linked to a number of factors including differences in terminology, cultures and concepts. However, perhaps the principal problem is the fundamental difference in the motivations, goals and approaches of military and humanitarian actors in their engagement in humanitarian action. In essence, the political or tactical motivations of military forces and those deploying them are at odds with the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality which humanitarian actors, in theory at least, strive to adhere to. These differences impact on interaction at the policy, strategic and operational/tactical levels, as evidenced in all the major theatres in which these actors have been deployed, from Kosovo in the 1990s to Libya in 2011. The humanitarian community has largely focused on highlighting the ideological implications of these differences, but without sufficiently explaining the operational relevance of humanitarian principles and the impact that linking military and humanitarian objectives or the direct engagement of military forces in humanitarian action may have for humanitarian operations, and for the populations in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. Still less consideration has been given to how to overcome these differences through constructively identifying where there is or can be complementarity, and accepting where this is not possible.

However, whilst the literature highlights the key challenges to more effective civil–military coordination, it also offers some suggestions for how to improve the relationship between military and humanitarian actors. In particular, the literature indicates that, where the relationship has been more positive, this has been a result of consistent efforts on both sides to develop clear structures and mechanisms for coordination and leadership, particularly within the humanitarian community, and the deployment of dedicated capacities to support the coordination process. The literature also suggests that, where there is common ground or shared goals, such as the protection of civilians, it has been possible in some instances to develop more effective engagement – particularly at the operational level. The more positive experiences of interaction also indicate that investment is needed *over time* to establish a relationship, to explore areas of common ground, establish boundaries and increase mutual awareness and understanding. Whilst experiences in Pakistan, Haiti, DRC and Afghanistan are far from perfect, they demonstrate how a more constructive relationship between the two communities might be built. Documenting operational experiences and best practices would make

an important contribution to strengthening humanitarian civil–military coordination.

The literature also offers some suggestions on how the humanitarian community could improve its approach to military actors. First, existing humanitarian guidance is insufficient for some of the more complex environments where foreign or international militaries and the humanitarian community interact. In particular, greater clarity is needed on how to *operationalise* key aspects of the civil–military relationship, including the principle of last resort and with regard to information-sharing protocols. Analysis of how the relationship should or does change in relation to different mandates and types of forces (e.g. UN peacekeeping forces, other UN Security Council-mandated forces, non-UN Security Council-mandated forces) and different contexts, including disaster response in an ongoing conflict or other situations of violence, would address key gaps in knowledge and help in developing more comprehensive guidance. In addition, reflection is urgently needed on how humanitarians should interact with other military actors, particularly national militaries but also private security or military companies.

Second, whilst the literature demonstrates that neither military nor humanitarian actors adhere consistently to established guidelines and basic principles, it is not clear whether this is because of a lack of clarity in the guidance, a lack of basic awareness or institutional capacities or a lack of political will. Answering this question would be an important step in securing a more constructive and effective relationship at strategic, operational and tactical levels. Third, generic guidance by its very nature cannot take account of national or regional variations in how civil–military relationships are understood. Political traditions and past experiences shape civilian approaches to coordination with the military, and vice versa. Although some reflections are implicit in some of the recent evaluations of disaster response, the extant literature does not provide sufficient analysis of the varying country- or region-specific understandings and experiences of the civil–military relationship, or how global policy frameworks apply to different geographic contexts. Addressing this knowledge gap would help to inform more appropriate strategies for coordination with different military actors in different contexts. Finally, perhaps the most glaring gap in the literature is the absence of an analysis of the extent to which the civil–military relationship impacts upon affected populations. Analysis of how more effective civil–military coordination can support humanitarian outcomes for these populations would inform more effective policy and guidance on this issue, and act as a motivation for improved practice.

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