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## OVERVIEW OF THE RELIEF COMMUNITY

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The first step toward better coordination is for the military to gain a better understanding of relief agencies. The relief community is not monolithic. The actors vary tremendously in their capabilities, size, and attitudes, with considerable implications for cooperation with the U.S. military and for the success of the overall relief effort. Major actors include the United Nations family, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and NGOs. Understanding these various players is a precondition to coordinating their activities. This chapter identifies major actors within the relief community and categorizes NGOs in a manner that will help the U.S. military understand their various missions and capabilities.

### UNITED NATIONS FAMILY

The United Nations is a family of related organizations that includes six principal organs, numerous programs, and specialized agencies. Despite efforts at reform, coordination across these organizations remains poor.

#### Principal Organs

The United Nations has six principal organs: General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. Three of these organs are especially important during humanitarian interventions: the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the Secretariat.

According to the UN Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security. It expresses its will in resolutions, which must have concurrence (assent or abstention) from all five permanent members (Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States). The Security Council usually defines the mandates for peace operations by its resolutions. However, member states often act unilaterally or as part of an alliance without approval from the Security Council, as in Operation Allied Force.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has broad responsibility to coordinate the economic and social work of the entire UN family. It usually meets in plenum once annually, alternating between New York and Geneva. It routinely consults with NGOs whose work falls under its competence. Currently about 1,500 NGOs hold consultative status with the Council. It sorts these NGOs in three categories: Category I are routinely consulted; Category II have specialized expertise; and Category III are consulted on an ad hoc basis.

The Secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General, includes two entities that are important for relief operations: the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). DPKO provides direction and logistic support to UN-controlled peace operations. OCHA is intended to strengthen coordination among UN agencies that respond to emergencies. The head of OCHA is simultaneously the Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator for all specialized agencies.

### **Programs and Specialized Agencies**

In addition to the principal organs, the UN has a wide variety of programs and specialized agencies,<sup>1</sup> most falling under cognizance of

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<sup>1</sup>A list of some of the major programs and agencies would include United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Volunteers (UNV); United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the near East (UNRWA); United Nations University (UNU); World Food Programme (WFP); United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR); United Nations Centre for

the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. They are not subordinated to the Secretariat and therefore need not accept direction from the Secretary-General. They include several organizations that play important roles in relief operations, described below.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works on behalf of refugees to secure their protection, provide assistance to them, and seek durable solutions to their problems. It can serve as a lead UN agency, especially in the initial phase of a humanitarian crisis. These solutions might include repatriation, asylum in the country where refugees have fled, or resettlement in a third country. UNHCR maintains an office in New York, but its headquarters is in Geneva. It is advised by a large Executive Committee that meets annually and accepts direction from the General Assembly and ECOSOC. UNHCR has an annual budget of approximately \$1.2 billion, derived almost exclusively from voluntary contributions. It currently has over 5,000 employees working in 122 countries, but it works primarily through about 450 NGOs.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest multilateral provider of food aid. In contrast to the UNHCR, WFP is focused on logistics and food delivery and does not serve as a lead agency. WFP headquarters is in Rome and its current director is an American with experience in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A committee, half appointed by ECOSOC and half by the Food and Agricultural Organization, governs WFP. Most aid is donated in kind by member states with U.S. agricultural surplus playing a large role. During 1997, WFP delivered 2.7 million tons of food in 84 countries. To deliver this aid, WFP charters commercial carriers on a large scale.

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Human Settlements (Habitat); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP); United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); International Labour Organization (ILO); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); World Health Organization (WHO); World Bank Group; International Monetary Fund (IMF); Universal Postal Union (UPU); International Telecommunication Union (ITU); World Meteorological Organization (WMO); International Maritime Organization (IMO); World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); and World Trade Organization (WTO).

The World Health Organization (WHO) is headquartered in Geneva and gives guidance in health matters and works to strengthen government health programs. An assembly that includes all member states of the United Nations governs it. Its annual budget is about \$800 million.

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations promotes agricultural development and helps countries provide for emergency relief. It has headquarters in Rome and is governed by a biennial conference of member states. It administers approximately \$2 billion annually, received as voluntary contributions from government and private donors.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) promotes children's rights and supports programs that increase their well-being. It reports to the General Assembly through ECOSOC. It has an annual budget of approximately \$0.9 billion, derived from voluntary contributions. It employs about 6,200 persons in 133 countries and has several main offices.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funds programs for sustainable development and coordinates technical assistance. UNDP has its headquarters in New York and 132 offices worldwide. It is governed by an Executive Board, which represents developed and developing countries. It concentrates its efforts in the world's poorest countries. It has an annual budget of approximately \$700 million from voluntary contributions and administers another \$1.4 billion annually from a variety of special funds.

## **RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement straddles the gap between international organizations and NGOs. It is a private organization independent of all international organizations and governments, yet it has official status through treaty, agreement, and usage. The movement includes the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and affiliated national societies.

## **International Committee of the Red Cross**

The ICRC, the most important partner for the military in overseas humanitarian crises, is quite distinct from NGOs and UN agencies and is effectively in a class by itself as a relief provider. The ICRC has an international mandate to promote compliance with humanitarian law and to help victims of conflict. It receives funding from many governments, especially the U.S. government, and from nationally based Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. It administers an annual budget of about \$550 million. It has about 650 personnel in its Geneva headquarters and about 7,800 personnel worldwide, the overwhelming majority of them locally hired. It maintains a permanent presence in more than 50 countries.

The ICRC is formally tasked by the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949, which concern humane treatment of prisoners of war and civilian victims of conflict. To carry out its tasks, the ICRC must have freedom of movement within areas of armed conflict and across lines of confrontation. It ensures this freedom by being completely independent, impartial, and neutral. The ICRC reminds authorities involved in armed conflict of their obligations under international law to observe certain rules of conduct. In addition to its monitoring functions, the ICRC distributes relief supplies, provides emergency treatment, and administers care for the disabled.

To accomplish its mandate, the ICRC must be able to cross lines of confrontation and move freely throughout areas of conflict. It cannot expect to have this access unless belligerents are persuaded that the ICRC is neutral and impartial. *Any* indication that the ICRC may have intentionally or even inadvertently aided one side in a preferential fashion may destroy this reputation and serve as a pretext to limit its access. Understandably, the ICRC is anxious to preserve an unblemished record for neutrality and impartiality.

## **International Federation**

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes affiliated national societies and gives unity to the movement. It is governed by a General Assembly of all National Societies that meets biannually.

## National Societies

National Societies exist in most of the countries of the world. They focus on the well-being of their specific nations. The American Red Cross has an International Services Department with an annual budget of \$20–\$30 million that channels relief through the ICRC and the International Federation.

## NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

NGOs are voluntary associations independent of government control that seek to realize human rights and to provide humanitarian assistance according to need. By one conservative estimate, there are more than 26,000 NGOs that operate in more than one country, and several million more exist inside national borders.<sup>2</sup> Just about anybody anywhere in the world can establish an NGO if he pleases. As a result, there are thousands of NGOs and their composition fluctuates constantly. For example, 18,000 NGOs attended a parallel forum to the Rio Conference on the environment, and 1,400 were formally registered with the conference itself. NGOs vary widely in terms of their capabilities, professionalism, and willingness to cooperate with military forces, including the U.S. military. Successful coordination requires understanding these differences.

UN agencies and national governments often rely on NGOs as integral parts of their relief and development efforts. The European Union channels more than half of its aid through NGOs. Similarly, the WFP and the UNHCR rely heavily on NGOs to run refugee camps, deliver food, and otherwise conduct essential missions. By some measures, NGOs have surpassed the World Bank in dispersing money.<sup>3</sup>

The skills and size of NGO personnel vary tremendously.<sup>4</sup> There are NGOs with a staff of thousands that supplement a core of competi-

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<sup>2</sup>“The Non-Governmental Order” (1999), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>“Sins of the Secular Missionaries” (2000), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Undifferentiated generalizations about NGOs are not very useful because the community is so diverse. CARE and a local civic organization are both “NGOs,” just as the U.S. armed forces and, say, the Army of Luxembourg (one light infantry battalion) are both “militaries.”

tively salaried professionals with unpaid volunteers, and NGOs that literally consist of one individual and a few friends. The four largest receivers of U.S. government funding—Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Save the Children, and World Vision—are skilled, dedicated, and able to participate in a wide range of humanitarian relief activities. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) (Doctors Without Borders), Oxfam, and several other international NGOs are highly capable and competent. At the opposite extreme are small organizations composed largely of relief amateurs, which may spring up overnight. In Rwanda, for example, a woman named Ruth formed an organization aptly entitled “Ruth Cares”—a single individual with no appreciable skills other than a desire to help. Often these groups involve concerned citizens in the United States. As another example, the Defense Department once helped some upstate New York women send sewing materials to South Africa to support a sewing club.

NGOs also vary by issue area, specialization, geographic coverage, and degree of institutionalization:

- NGOs focus on a wide range of issues, including natural disasters, refugees, underdevelopment, the environment, and child labor. Some NGOs define themselves primarily by an issue (the environment, women’s affairs, children’s rights, health, agriculture, animal rights, political prisoners, famine relief, recovery of avalanche victims, and so on), others by ideology (Third World solidarity, pacifism, etc.), by sympathy for a specific country, ethnic group, or region (e.g., immigrants from Central American countries helping victims of natural disasters in those countries), or by religious charity (Christian, Jewish, Islamic, etc.).
- Some NGOs consist of members of one profession only (e.g., health professionals or members of one medical specialty such as dentists or ophthalmologists) who may either work for that organization full time or donate a few weeks of pro bono work each year to go on a mission. Other NGO staff members have no skills as such but concentrate on collecting used clothing, food items, and other donations.
- NGOs may represent their club, their city, their locality, their ethnic group, their country, their continent, or their religion; or they may simply be international. They can be affiliated with

their local, state, or national government, their church, or some other organization, or they can eschew affiliations.

- NGOs can be designed as permanent organizations or be dedicated to one conflict only, such as the organizations that sprang up in response to the Bosnian conflict.

The above variables do not necessarily correlate with the success and prestige of an organization. Staid organizations such as the European Catholic monolith Caritas number among the big players, but organizations that use unconventional and sometimes drastic means of protest, such as Greenpeace, or that take a decidedly radical political stance, such as Médecins Sans Frontières also enjoy widespread public support and respect.

As a general rule, we can expect the financially more powerful, more reputable organizations with good media ties and an experienced staff to be more important in any given locale, but there are important exceptions. In emergency situations, size, experience, and reputation are not the only predictors of value. An obscure missionary organization may find itself in possession of the only functioning aircraft for a critical 48-hour period; a hitherto unknown group running a remote clinic might have the only available cartons of vaccine; a small partisan organization with a friendly relationship to a local warlord might be the only quick source of information about events in a particular region or safety guarantees to access it.

NGOs also vary widely in the types of aid they provide. Some are concerned with immediate assistance, some with long-term development, and some address both areas. In recent years, several of the larger NGOs appear to be devoting greater resources to immediate assistance.<sup>5</sup> Some NGOs specialize by region or by functional area. The Catholic Medical Mission Board, for example, provides emergency and long-term health care worldwide, while the American Refugee Committee helps care for and train refugees. Medical Care Development, Volunteers in Technical Assistance, and Africare all focus their relief efforts on Africa, while other NGOs are active in several regions or worldwide. In the developing world, some NGOs

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<sup>5</sup>Within major NGOs, individuals concentrating on short-term relief are often gaining more influence and resources than those concentrating on long-term development.



are government-run and may be highly politicized. In Kosovo, for example, the Albanian government ran an NGO that furthered its own policies in the months preceding the 1999 NATO air campaign.

Although a small number of well-established NGOs contribute most of the overall effort, hundreds of NGOs may operate in a region and cannot be safely ignored. Personnel from small NGOs may require disproportionate attention from the military if they attempt to cross lines of confrontation or operate in areas of intense conflict. Moreover, a small NGO may have an influential domestic constituency to whom it can plead its case, enabling it to exert political influence on the overall relief operation.

NGOs also differ widely in their ability and willingness to cooperate with the military. In general, European NGOs tend to avoid close cooperation, while U.S. NGOs are more amenable. But even well-established U.S.-based NGOs differ in the degree to which they will openly associate with the U.S. military. Some welcome closer ties; others fear that their impartiality might be compromised. Some religiously affiliated NGOs eschew the use of force and regard the military with suspicion. For example, Quaker and Mennonite NGOs have a long tradition of nonviolence and are highly reluctant to endorse any use of force.

Several large NGOs are trying to improve cooperation with the military. For example, CARE and World Vision have hired former military officers to facilitate better cooperation. In ideological terms, the end of the Cold War has made such cooperation more palatable. While the Cold War was still in progress, many NGOs hesitated to cooperate with the U.S. military because it stood on one side of an ideological divide. More importantly, NGOs have grown increasingly concerned about security for their personnel in such places as Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, making them more welcoming of security that the military can provide.

## **CATEGORIZING NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

It would be practically impossible to coordinate with all NGOs during an emergency if each demanded the same amount of attention. Coordination becomes a more manageable problem if NGOs are categorized in a useful way, enabling the military to determine which

NGOs are most likely to cooperate and which have the most to offer in any particular operation. We suggest the following taxonomy, which will enable the military to concentrate its resources accordingly:

- Core-Team: highly competent, broadly capable, and predisposed to cooperate with the military.
- Core-Individual: highly competent and broadly capable, but less eager to cooperate with the military.
- Specialized: highly competent and capable in select functional areas.
- Advocacy: dedicated to promoting human rights but not normally providers of material assistance.
- Minor: competent but having less capability than the core-team.

### **Core-Team**

The core-team NGOs devote appreciable portions of their resources to immediate relief of suffering. Most of them receive substantial support from the U.S. government, including grants, contracts, and in-kind transfers. Most of them work closely with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of USAID to coordinate the U.S. response to an emergency, both in Washington and in the field. During emergencies, OFDA may invite these organizations to send representatives to its operations center. Several of these NGOs send representatives to participate in conferences, seminars, and exercises sponsored by the military. During interviews, officers from these organizations expressed willingness to cooperate more closely with the military.

Taking as a threshold a gross annual revenue of \$30 million or more,<sup>6</sup> the following organizations fall into this group: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Africare, American Jewish

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<sup>6</sup>Total annual revenue as reported in Geoghegan and Allen (1997). In the highly competitive world of NGOs, high revenue generally indicates strong capability. It implies that an NGO has maintained a level of performance over time that attracts donors, including in most cases the U.S. government.

World Service (AJWS), American Red Cross (International Services Department), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Church World Service (CWS), International Aid, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Mercy Corps International (MCI), Save the Children (U.S. chapter), United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and World Vision Relief and Development (WVRD).

### **Core-Individual**

These organizations are international and most of their assets are located outside the United States. Although they often receive funding from the U.S. government, they display highly independent attitudes. They may reject support from the military or criticize the military in strong terms, even while accepting its support. Their criticism might include allegations that the military is obsessed with self-protection, insensitive to cultural differences, and disruptive to already established patterns of aid. It might also include allegations that the military is taking sides unnecessarily or being used to pursue political goals that will not allay or might exacerbate the conflict.

Two international relief organizations falling into this group are Médecins Sans Frontières and Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam). Both organizations receive U.S. government aid but strive to maintain their distance from the U.S. government's agenda. Médecins Sans Frontières was founded in 1971 by French doctors who wanted to provide medical assistance during emergencies completely independent of political, religious, or economic considerations. It provides not only medical care and training but also limited humanitarian assistance of other kinds. Its medical personnel are highly skilled in emergency medical care, immunization, sanitation, and basic hygiene. In addition, NGOs may speak out against violations of human rights they observe during their work. Oxfam was founded in England during 1942 to address suffering caused by the war. It provides emergency relief and also carries out programs to promote long-term development.

Core-individual organizations are not opposed to all coordination with the military, but their ideals and preferences often make planning and sustained coordination more difficult. These NGOs at times will accept and even request U.S. military assistance. As insti-

tutions, however, they will try to avoid open identification with the United States, particularly the U.S. military. As one MSF official noted:

We try as much as we can to differentiate from any military that is present. The image of cooperating with the Air Force is scary for us. This would mean recognizing that we are part of the conflict, and it would send a confusing message to the populations we are trying to help.

As with all NGOs, the particular response of a core-individual NGO will be shaped by local circumstances and the individuals involved.

Government support, even something as limited as accepting stipends to pay for conference attendance, usually provokes much agonizing and soul-searching among NGO officials. Offers of significant funding can often be turned down on the chance that it might make the organization appear partisan or dependent. MSF policy requires at least half of all funds to come from private sources, and “has shied away from French government funding.”<sup>7</sup> Yet these requirements are often honored more in the breach. Oxfam received roughly a quarter of its 1998 budget from the British government and the EU; MSF received 46 percent from various governments.<sup>8</sup>

### Specialized

Some NGOs lack the broad capabilities of the core organizations but are highly competent and capable in functional areas, such as emergency medicine. Awareness of their capabilities is vital, as they can be useful in certain kinds of crises. Often, they are more important than core NGOs when a crisis falls into their area of specialty.

Such organizations include Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Voluntary Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA), Action Against Hunger, African-American Institute (AAI), American Refugee Committee (ARC), The Brother’s Brother Foundation (BBF), Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB),

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<sup>7</sup>Brauman and Tanguy (1998).

<sup>8</sup>“Sins of the Secular Missionaries” (2000), p. 25.

Childreach, Christian Children's Fund (CCF), Direct Relief International, Food for the Hungry International (FHI), Heifer Project International (HPI), MAP International, Medical Care Development (MCD), Winrock International, World Relief Corporation, and the U.S. Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

ACDI/VOCA provides technical expertise to business and government agencies. Action Against Hunger is the U.S. arm of an international organization known in France as *Action Contre la Faim* that specializes in disaster relief. With strong support from the U.S. government, AAI conducts exchange, information, and conference programs in Africa. ARC works to ensure survival of refugees and displaced persons. BBF promotes international health and education by distributing donated resources. CMMB provides emergency health care and conducts longer-term programs to make health care available to impoverished people. Childreach strives to assist needy children through sponsorship. CCF works to protect children and promote their development. Direct Relief International provides emergency medical supplies and shelter to victims of disaster and also conducts training for medical personnel. FHI provides food and material aid for disaster victims. HPI specializes in providing income-producing livestock. MAP International provides emergency medical care and distributes medical supplies. MCD designs and implements programs to provide emergency relief and promote public health. Winrock International works to increase agricultural productivity. World Relief Corporation provides disaster relief on behalf of evangelical churches. YMCA focuses on education and vocational training.

### **Advocacy**

Advocacy organizations promote human rights or other goals but do not normally provide material assistance. Examples include Amnesty International, Immigration and Refugee Services of America (IRSA), International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), Refugees International (RI), United States Catholic Conference (USCC), and United States Committee for Refugees (USCR).

Amnesty International advocates observance of human rights as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. IRSA promotes fair and humane public policy concerning people in migration. ICRW raises awareness of women's contribution to development. PHR uses forensic science to investigate violations of human rights. RI seeks to bring the plight of refugees to the world's attention. USCC advocates policies to address the needs of migrants and refugees. USCR defends the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons.

Although advocacy organizations often are of little immediate utility during relief operations, the military cannot afford to ignore their needs or activities. These agencies may play a key role in shaping U.S. political objectives and domestic opinion on the efficacy of the relief effort. Moreover, they often have strong grassroots components to gain political support for their objectives.

### **Minor**

Minor organizations may or may not be competent in providing relief. They range from organizations with substantial annual revenues (\$5–\$30 million), which can make strong contributions in certain fields, to much smaller organizations, which can make only small contributions. Most NGOs fall into this category. Although minor organizations contribute little materially when compared with core and specialized NGOs, they can play important roles in a particular country or during a particular crisis. Some have political connections or may create problems on the ground because of their activities. Because of their small size, NGOs in this category may not be well known, even to specialists, prior to a particular crisis.

The above typology is not exact and members in each category vary considerably by country and region. Nevertheless, understanding the different capacities and inclinations of NGOs is useful in helping the military employ its scarce resources. The discussion in subsequent chapters draws on this typology when discussing problems and noting possible solutions.